
Department of Political Science and International Relations Annual Report 2015-16

During the 2015-16 academic year, the Department of Political Science and International Relations (11 tenured faculty, two tenure-track faculty, two full-time non-tenure-track faculty, eight adjuncts, and one executive aide) worked with 2,036 students in 182 classes/sections/independent study courses, including 36 sections of the two general education courses (PS 1005 Introduction to American Politics and PS 1010 Introduction to Global Politics) and 15 online courses. The Department and Department faculty administered two baccalaureate programs, three concentrations -- serving a total of 342 undergraduate majors -- six minors programs, including three interdisciplinary minors, a number of highly active student organizations and intercollegiate academic teams, and a master's degree program in international affairs, and continued its work to strengthen the quality of our programs, enhance student participation through a range of active learning initiatives, improve self-assessment, and develop and promote strategies to improve student success and retention. Department faculty also contributed to scholarship through research, publications, and presentations, and participated actively in wide range of professional and institutional endeavors on campus, in the community, and around the world.

This brief report provides an overview of the work of the Department during the year, presents the results from the major assessment tools used to evaluate student learning outcomes, and a brief plan for 2016-17.

I. YEAR IN REVIEW

Overview

- 154 classes (including 15 online and RODP sections) and 28 independent study courses enrolling a total of 2,036 students for a total of 6,014 student credit hours (fall and spring)
- 36 sections of the general education courses PS 1005 and PS 1010 enrolling 672 students (fall and spring)
- 59 student internships totaling 270 credit hours, including the Washington Center program and the Legislative internship program.

Majors (fall 2015)

- Political Science
 - 79 General Focus down from 90 last year
 - 149 Pre-law concentration up from 143
 - 20 Public Administration concentration down from 25
 - 7 Teaching Licensure, no change from last year

- 76 International Relations up from 63 last year
(342 Total Undergraduate majors, up from 328 last fall)
- 11 Masters in International Affairs, down from 13 last year

New Students

- 55 New First Time Freshman (fall 2015/spring 2016) up from 37 last year
- 55 New Transfers (fall 2014/spring 2015) up from 45 last year

Graduates (summer 2015/fall 2015/spring 2016)

54 – BA/BS Political Science

16 – BS International Relations

1 -- Masters in International Affairs

Highlights/Innovations

- **New course PS 2000 PS and IR as a Profession** was taught for the first time in the spring, producing excellent feedback from the students. One student, for instance, commented:
“Something that I've always struggled with was trying to pin point exactly what i want to do post college. This course has really helped me focus on questions to ask myself to help me. Thinking about things that I can put into a resume and portfolio up to this point is also helping me see what skills I have and see where my interests are. I really need to visit the career counseling center so I can talk to someone who can help me figure my career goals out.”
- **Scholars Week.** Department enjoyed record level participation at Scholars Week events with Caitlin Henderson presenting her research “To Control or Not to Control, that is the Question: An Analysis of Population Control in Asia” during CLA day and seven students presenting research posters.



Left to Right: Justin DeMello, Kayo Beshir, Olivia Nodine, Emily Lupo, Ashley Martinez, Greg Mayfield, Amanda Freuler

- Two students, Agnes Porter and Jessica Shotwell, **presented research** at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

- Students from Kent Syler's class studying the presidential primaries appeared on **News Channel 5+ OpenLine** discussing the latest developments in the primaries.



From Left to Right: WTVF OpenLine anchor Ben Hall, Janita Hendricks, John Langsdon, Kent Syler, Brooke Grimsley, John Carter, Jami Averwater

- **Internships.** 59 students participated in internships in a variety of areas, including the legislative internship in the spring (shown below).



- Student organizations
 - **Mock Trial** teams participated in national invitational tournaments in Chicago, Champaign, Illinois and MTSU's Mid-South Tournament, enjoying a top ten finish at the Illini-Invitational in Champaign, as well as individual awards by Freya Cartwright, Cole Hodge, Dajah Sutton, and Jodi Shockney.
 - **Moot Court** remained active, participating in conference in Georgia.
 - **Mediation Team** competed in two tournaments: the Brenau University Invitational, in Gainesville, Georgia, and the International Academy of Dispute Resolution

Tournament, in Des Moines Iowa, receiving numerous awards, including multiple awards for top advocate/client pair, and top team.

- **Model UN** attended the Florida Model United Nations conference in October 2015 and a conference in Atlanta in the spring (see pic)



- Department-sponsored Student events
 - Talk by visiting scholar, Dr. Timothy Ehresman on “Does Justice Matter? Foreign Direct Investment, Poverty and the Environment”
 - Talk by Lt. Gen. Keith Huber on “The Impact of Culture on Negotiations,”
 - Election 2016 PRE-GAME SHOW.



- Talk by alumnus Patrick Pratt, US Department of State, “Working Globally”



- LSAT Practice Test and Prep Sessions offered in the fall and the spring.
- Two PolSci/IR Night at the Predators Game
- First Annual PolSci/IR Bike Ride
- Spring Picnic

- Tutoring was provided for PS 1005, 1010 and 3001.

- Department sponsored communications
 - Fall and Spring Newsletter
 - Student Handbooks for Political Science majors, International Relations majors and Masters in International Affairs
 - Virtual Mentoring program
 - Student services Portal on the web site
 - Facebook, emails, internship information on bulletin boards

- Student Awards/Recognition:
 - Asha Patel was selected by the Organization "Doing Good" as the Nashville Volunteer of the Month for her work with the student organization Ambassadors of VSA Tennessee.
 - Matthew Lauderback, a summer 2015 graduate in Political Science, was awarded a Fulbright to teach in Germany.

- Recruitment
 - Community Colleges outreach
 - Established contact and provided materials to colleagues at Motlow, Nashville State, Columbia State, Chattanooga State, and Volunteer State
 - Vanessa Lefler delivered a lecture and recruitment talk to students at Columbia State
 - David Carleton will be delivering a lecture and recruitment talk to students at Motlow
 - New Admits. Recruitment materials routinely sent to the students. Follow up with a personal email.
 - Personalized letters to students with an 'A' in PS 1005 or PS 1010.
 - For the Graduate Program, collected an extensive list of local organizations, agencies and regionally academic programs to target with letters and recruitment materials. Mailing is in process.

- Department Teaching Initiatives
 - **Teaching Forum.** Began a monthly series focused on teaching. Initial presentations/discussion on the redesign of PS 1005 and PS 1010.
 - **Peer review** of teaching. Small committee developed a template, and observed and evaluated teaching of tenure track faculty.
- Faculty
 - Department successfully recruited two new faculty to replace one open line and the retirement of Clyde Willis. Both faculty, **Dr. Jennifer Woodward** and **Dr. Donald Campbell**, will teach in the pre-law area beginning this coming August.
 - **Dr. Willis** selected as CLA Outstanding Faculty Advisor
 - **Dr. Morris**, along with Dr. Chaney in Global Studies, led a group of 12 students in an Education Abroad program in Cuba in January (pic below)



- **Dr. Carleton** served on the Social Science Symposium Committee and the Distinguished Lecture Funds Committee.
- **Dr. Franklin** published “Black Youth at the Forefront of Social Movement Activism,” in *Black History Bulletin (BHB)* 79 (1): 5-14, delivered lectures on black youth activism, African Americans in a cross-national setting, and erasing barriers to rehabilitation at Tennessee State University, for Vanderbilt’s Black Law Students Association, and MTSU’s Chapter of the NAACP, offered a panel presentations on various topics for the Transportation Innovation Academy in Nashville, at James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference at Emory, at the Leadership Nashville First Amendment Center, at TSU, at the Nashville Public Library, at the annual meeting of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, at the annual State Convention and Civil Rights Advocacy Conference, and at MTSU’s undergraduate Social Science Symposium. He also served as program co-chair for the annual meeting of the National Black Political Scientists’ – a time consuming task -- and taught a three-hour short course at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association on “The Role of Scholar Activism: How Political Scientists Can Bolster Resistance Movements” **Dr. Franklin** also served on

the Planning Committee of the Tennessee Caucus of Black Legislators' Town Hall Forum on Criminal Justice Reform. He also assisted with organizing the Nashville Convening of the Solidarity Summit – II with the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Open Society Foundation, and the Proteus Foundation, Caza Azafran, serving also as a panelist for the event, and on the Coordinating Committee of Democracy Nashville, and wrote "Fair Chance Hiring: A Policy Proposal for Metro Nashville," submitted to the Civil Service Commission, and two op/ed pieces: "Learning from the Watts Rebellion, 50 Years Later" for the *Boston Review*, and "There Are Better Southern Legacies to Celebrate than Dixie, and There Are Bigger Battles to Fight than the Rebel Flag," for *Nashville Scene*.

- **Dr. Korobkov** presented multiple scholarly papers at the 9th World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies, the 47th annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, the Gaidar Forum on "Russia and the World: The View of the Future," the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, where he also participated in a roundtable discussion on the media coverage of crisis, and the "Rethinking Russia" International Conference in Moscow. **Dr. Korobkov** also wrote/published a dozen pieces including book chapters and op-ed pieces in Russian-language outlets on migration and Russian politics, including "Why Kerry's visit to Moscow won't improve U.S.-Russia relations," and "What Russia and the West miss in the Syrian conflict" both in *Russia Direct*, and conducted numerous interviews with Russian media.
- **Dr. Langenbach** received an MTSU Course Revitalization Grant for our general education course PS 1005 Introduction to American Politics, a TBR Course Revitalization Initiative for an alternative version of PS 1005 to make the course more accessible to underrepresented groups, and a Ramp-Up TBR Course Revitalization Grant for fall 2016 to take the flipped classroom version of PS 1005 to Motlow State Community College. As part of this latter initiative, she recruited two professors from Motlow to take part in the project. In addition, **Dr. Langenbach** was the only non-STEM faculty member chosen to work on an NSF grant out of Geosciences.
- **Dr. Lefler** obtained a Faculty Research and Creative Activity Committee Summer Research Grant for summer 2016 on the project "Bargain Shopping for Peace? Examinations of the Strategic, Structural, and Cultural Influences on Interstate Conflict Management." She also presented research at two major conferences: the Annual Meeting of the Peace Science Society (International) and Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (national).
- **Dr. Livingston** served as editor of the journal *Global Commerce*, authoring the lead articles for the four issues that appeared during the year, while continuing his work on US foreign economic policy, consumer boycotts in international affairs, and the utility of trade theories for IPE empirics, presenting a paper on the latter project at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association. **Dr. Livingston** also

- continues working with lead PI Murat Arik on a \$40,000 grant “HCA in Tennessee” and received a Faculty Development Grant to attend a STATA conference in Washington D.C.
- **Dr. Maynor** presented a paper entitled “The bastard child of the cat listicle and the concern troll: Soft-news, Social Networks, Democratic Practices and Domination” at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the Mid-West Political Science Association (MPSA) and another entitled “Millennials to the Rescue: Slacktivism, Domination and Power” at the MPSA
 - **Dr. McDaniel** served as the faculty advisor to Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honor society, College Democrats, and Presbyterian Student Fellowship, chaired MTSU’s Veterans Memorial Committee.
 - **Dr. Morris** published “Controlling Society/Controlling the State: Crime and Corruption with a Focus on Mexico” in the Russian journal *Tractus Aevorum* and an encyclopedic entry on Mexican President “Carlos Salinas de Gortari in *Iconic Mexico: An Encyclopedia from Acapulco to Zócalo*. He also presented a paper at the meeting of the Southeast Council on Latin American Studies and delivered the keynote address at the conference on corruption at El Colegio de Jalisco in Guadalajara.
 - **Kent Syler** continued to represent the department as a top local analyst on local and national politics, appearing on: *WTVF Morning Line*, *WTVF Open Line*, *WTVF Inside Politics*, and *WGNS The Truman Show* and also quoted in national and international outlets such as *US News and World Reports*, *Raycom Media*, *Sputnik News*, *Baltimore Post-Examiner* and in local outlets such as *The Tennessean*, *Daily News Journal*, *WGNS*, *WMOT*, *WSM*, *WTVF*, *Murfreesboro Post*, among others. He spoke before the League of Women Voters and served on the Rotary Club, as Chair of the Murfreesboro Greenways Committee, and on the Murfreesboro 2035 Planning Committee.
 - **Dr. Tesi** completed a book chapter titled “Politics and Society in Cameroon: Change and Continuity” that is set for publication and continued work on his book manuscript for Lexington Books entitled *Cameroon Foreign Relations*, presenting research from the manuscript at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association. **Dr. Tesi** also served as editor of the *Journal of African Policy Studies*.
 - **Dr. Vernardakis** continued work on his book manuscript on the National School of Administration in France. He is working on an NIA grant application to complete a series of interviews as part of the project. He also attended the annual conference of the American Society for Public Administration
 - **Dr. Wang’s** article “Government Work Reports: Securing State Legitimacy through Institutionalization” was accepted for publication in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *The China Quarterly*. She presented research papers at the national meetings

of the American Association for Asian Studies and the Midwest Political Science Association -- work she hopes to submit for publication soon -- and received an MTSU Faculty Research and Creative Activity grant to conduct fieldwork in China over the summer.

II. ASSESSMENTS

Major Field Test

	U.S. Gov't	International/Comparative	Public Administration	Normative/Empirical Theory	OVERALL
All Seniors (n=45)	476	479	510	478	483
PS (n=15)	491	492	535	491	504
Pre-law (n=16)	477	448	467	455	452
Pub. Adm. (n=4)	448	412	560	454	464
IR (n=11)	469	539	522	500	510

Scores on the Major Field Test for 2015-16 were down this year for both PS and IR majors with an average of 527 for both last year. Disappointingly, this is the first year that the average score for PS fell below the 500 mark since 2011.

General Education Test -- Data not yet available

Major	Mean	Analytical 0-7	Deduction 0-17	Evaluation 0-11	Induction 0-17	Inference 0-16
IR (n=)						
PS (n=)						
Liberal Arts (n=)						
MTSU (n=)						
Major	Mean	Analytical 0-7	Deduction 0-17	Evaluation 0-11	Induction 0-17	Inference 0-16
IR (n=)						
PS (n=)						
Liberal Arts (n=)						
MTSU (n=)						

LSAT

During the testing periods for which information is available -- June, October and December 2015 and February 2016 -- 41 majors took the exam with an average score of 145.72 for the 36 scores reported. Looking at the comparable period for the prior year -- June, October, December 2014 and February 2015 -- 43 majors took the exam with an average score of 147.47 for the 35

scores reported. In short, while the proportion of majors sitting for the exam remained stable, average scores dropped slightly.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations from the past fall 2015 and spring 2016 continued to rank teaching within the Department at or above the averages for the college and the university. As shown, the average scores for the department fell below the college average in both semesters in only one the category: “Organization and Clarity.” The scores in the areas of “Intellectual and Scholarly Approach” (spring), “Incorporation of Student Interaction” (fall), “Motivating the Students” (both semesters) and “Effectiveness and Worth” (both semesters) surpassed the averages for the college and the university.

Factor Averages (Standard Deviations)	Department Avg	College Avg	University Avg
I. Presentation Ability	4.5 (0.91)	4.5 (0.86)	4.4 (0.95)
II. Organization and Clarity	4.4 (0.95)	4.5 (0.89)	4.3 (1.00)
III. Assignments and Grading	4.5 (0.86)	4.5 (0.86)	4.4 (0.91)
IV. Intellectual and Scholarly Approach	4.5 (0.88)	4.5 (0.86)	4.4 (0.92)
V. Incorporation of Student Interaction	4.5 (0.91)	4.4 (0.93)	4.3 (1.01)
VI. Motivating the Students	4.4 (0.98)	4.3 (0.98)	4.2 (1.04)
VII. Effectiveness and Worth	4.3 (1.06)	4.2 (1.05)	4.1 (1.10)

Factor Averages (Standard Deviations)	Department Avg	College Avg	University Avg
I. Presentation Ability	4.5 (0.90)	4.5 (0.86)	4.4 (0.93)
II. Organization and Clarity	4.4 (0.92)	4.5 (0.90)	4.4 (0.98)
III. Assignments and Grading	4.5 (0.86)	4.5 (0.87)	4.5 (0.90)
IV. Intellectual and Scholarly Approach	4.6 (0.78)	4.5 (0.85)	4.4 (0.89)
V. Incorporation of Student Interaction	4.5 (0.90)	4.5 (0.92)	4.3 (0.99)
VI. Motivating the Students	4.4 (0.95)	4.3 (0.97)	4.3 (1.01)
VII. Effectiveness and Worth	4.3 (1.01)	4.2 (1.06)	4.2 (1.08)

Senior Survey

The Senior Survey is a large instrument with many questions. The following pulls questions used as part of the Department’s institutional effectiveness report:

MTSU’s Contribution to Knowledge, Skills, Personal Development

Percent selecting “Somewhat” or “Very Much”

	PS (N = 31)	IR (7)	CLA (330)	MTSU (2,390)
Q19 Applying scientific methods of inquiry	55	57	50	70
Q22 Developing tolerance for divergent views	68	71	60	71
Q23 Understanding of diverse cultures and values	84	71	89	82
Q26 Appreciating racial and sexual equality	84	71	84	74

Major Degree Program

Percent selecting “Good” or “Excellent”

	PS	IR	CLA	MTSU
Q59 Content of courses in major	90	86	93	91
Q60 Availability of courses in major	81	57	81	74
Q62 Quality of instruction in major	89	86	91	84
Q64 Academic advising by faculty advisor	74	57	82	73

Q74 Opportunity to apply what was learned in classroom	87	40	89	85
Q76 Quality of courses in preparing for employment	81	71	81	79

Supplemental Questions

The Department asks a series of specific questions on the Senior Survey. These focus on advising, overall student satisfaction, and the rigor of the program:

Advising 2015-16

The ideal is for students to be advised from the start, relatively often, at least once a year, preferably by the same advisor, and find their advisor available. This year 41.7% first sought advising during their freshman year down from 49% last year. At the same time, the percentage of respondents first seeking advising during their junior or senior year stood at 41.6%: a number far higher than in prior years. Unfortunately, the question wording refers to “faculty advisor” rather than advisor generally so it might not include meetings with the college advisor. More encouragingly, 74.9% of students sought advising at least once a year. In terms of advisor availability, the proportion claiming the advisor was always available stood at 75%. Matching the results from the past two years, 58.3% reported seeing the same advisor on multiple occasions.

Satisfaction 2015-16

Levels of satisfaction with the educational experience in political science fell below last year with 47.2% as ‘very satisfied’ and another 38.9% as ‘somewhat satisfied’.

Rigor 2015-16

This year 72.2% of students felt their political courses were much more difficult or somewhat more difficult than other courses, up from 64% last year.

III. Plans for 2016-17

Next Academic Year, 2016-17

- **Faculty Needs:** With the successful completion of two searches, the department will not be requesting authorization to search. However, the department will be engaged in filling the chairs position for the four-year term beginning in August 2017.
- **Staff Needs:** The department has long requested additional staff, particularly given the number of programs and activities within the department.
- **Budget Needs:** The department has no pressing budgetary issues on the horizon. Supplemental funds for tutoring and recruitment have been helpful and will continue to assist us in those areas. The department will continue to seek funding to help students participate in internships, study abroad, and student travel.
- **Programmatic Needs:** At this point, I do not foresee any major changes to the undergraduate programs. The department should discuss ways of incorporating MTEngage, especially since many of our courses already comply with key aspects of the new initiative and students will begin developing an e-portfolio in PS 2000. With respect

to the graduate program, the department will discuss ways to tweak the program to focus it more on professional as opposed to an academic training track.

- **Graduate program:** The department needs to increase its efforts to increase the number of students enrolled in the program and the number of graduates. Failing to increase both numbers may result in the phasing out of the program.
- **Recruitment Needs:** The department may need to consider developing a more aggressive and comprehensive recruitment strategy at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Submitted by Stephen D. Morris, Chair