

Annual Assessment Report Template

This form is intended to facilitate reporting program outcomes assessment to accrediting agencies, Board of Trustees, Strategic Planning Committee, and other internal or external audiences.

The department mission statement, PLO's, curricular map and multi-year assessment plan should be posted on the departmental website.

Department: Political Science

Date: 8/26/2015

Department Chair: Susan Penksa

I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

Program Learning Outcome	Active Social Engagement: Students will apply disciplinary knowledge in the service of others
Who is in Charge	Tom Knecht
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	We modified and applied the AAC&U's "Value Rubric" to assess six final papers in Prof. Knecht's POL 190: <i>Political Internships</i> course. The "Rubric" uses a scale of 1 (Developing) to 4 (Capstone) to assess student work along four criteria: (1) Diversity of Communities and Cultures, (2) Analysis of Knowledge, (3) Civic Identity and Commitment, and (4) Connection to Christian Service. Our goal was that our students would average a 3 or better on each criterion.
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	
Major Findings	The average results from our coding are as follows: (1) Diversity of Communities and Cultures = 3.2, (2) Analysis of Knowledge = 2.5 (3) Civic Identity and Commitment = 3.2 and (4) Connection to Christian Service = 3. Our department has learned several things from the data. Overall, we are pleased that our students are committed to and understand the importance of service and civic engagement. Many students remarked that they plan to continue their public-spirited work after graduation and believe there is a strong biblical call to serve others. We are happy with these results, but there are things we can improve upon. We can do a better job linking service back to theories in the discipline. Collectively, our students had the lowest score in the "Analysis of Knowledge" category (2.5 average on a 1-4 scale), which asks students to connect theories in political science to civic engagement. Part of the problem is the prompt that we used to assess engagement: the prompt did not expressly ask students to link their service back to their political science major (discussed below). Nevertheless, the internship course will pay greater attention to connecting service and service-learning back to issues and theories in political science.
Closing the Loop Activities	We are examining the possibility of adding more service-learning components to our existing course schedule. We are encouraged by our student experiences in internships, and we hope to make community-based learning a larger part of our curriculum. We are committed to sharing our knowledge with the Westmont faculty. Tom Knecht served on the service-

	learning taskforce and gave a faculty forum presentation on service-learning and internships. In addition, he just had a paper on service-learning published by the journal <i>PS: Political Science</i> . In short, we are always willing to share our experiences with the broader Westmont community.
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Discussion

II. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome	
Who is in Charge	
Major Findings	
Closing the Loop Activities	
Discussion	

III. Other assessment or Key Questions-related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge	
Major Findings	
Action	
Discussion	

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IV. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

V. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents/samples (optional)

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org



The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Framing Language

Preparing graduates for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society has historically been a responsibility of higher education. Yet the outcome of a civic-minded graduate is a complex concept. Civic learning outcomes are framed by personal identity and commitments, disciplinary frameworks and traditions, pre-professional norms and practice, and the mission and values of colleges and universities. This rubric is designed to make the civic learning outcomes more explicit. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. For students this could include community-based learning through service-learning classes, community-based research, or service within the community. Multiple types of work samples or collections of work may be utilized to assess this, such as:

- ⑩ The student creates and manages a service program that engages others (such as youth or members of a neighborhood) in learning about and taking action on an issue they care about. In the process, the student also teaches and models processes that engage others in deliberative democracy, in having a voice, participating in democratic processes, and taking specific actions to affect an issue.
- ⑩ The student researches, organizes, and carries out a deliberative democracy forum on a particular issue, one that includes multiple perspectives on that issue and how best to make positive change through various courses of public action. As a result, other students, faculty, and community members are engaged to take action on an issue.
- ⑩ The student works on and takes a leadership role in a complex campaign to bring about tangible changes in the public's awareness or education on a particular issue, or even a change in public policy. Through this process, the student demonstrates multiple types of civic action and skills.

- 10 The student integrates their academic work with community engagement, producing a tangible product (piece of legislation or policy, a business, building or civic infrastructure, water quality or scientific assessment, needs survey, research paper, service program, or organization) that has engaged community constituents and responded to community needs and assets through the process.
- In addition, the nature of this work lends itself to opening up the review process to include community constituents that may be a part of the work, such as teammates, colleagues, community/agency members, and those served or collaborating in the process.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Civic identity: When one sees her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes.
- Service-learning class: A course-based educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity and reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.
- Communication skills: Listening, deliberation, negotiation, consensus building, and productive use of conflict.
- Civic life: The public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests.
- Politics: A process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals. Politics necessarily arises whenever groups of people live together, since they must always reach collective decisions of one kind or another.
- Government: "The formal institutions of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts." (Retrieved from the Center for Civic Engagement Web site, May 5, 2009.)
- Civic/community contexts: Organizations, movements, campaigns, a place or locus where people and/or living creatures inhabit, which may be defined by a locality (school, national park, non-profit organization, town, state, nation) or defined by shared identity (i.e., African-Americans, North Carolinians, Americans, the Republican or Democratic Party, refugees, etc.). In addition, contexts for civic engagement may be defined by a variety of approaches intended to benefit a person, group, or community, including community service or volunteer work, academic work.

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones	
		3	2
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Analysis of Knowledge	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
Civic Identity and Commitment	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.	Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.
Connection to Christian Service	Meaningfully connects biblical calls to service to deepen understanding of Christian development and social justice.	Identifies biblical calls to service. Sees service to others as essential to Christian development and/or social justice.	When prompted, can connect biblical calls to civic engagement with contemporary issues.