Program: Political Science BS

College and Department: College of Arts & Sciences, Sociology & Political Science

Contact: Lori Maxwell

Mission:

The Program of Political Science has the primary mission of offering strong academic programs in political science, legal studies, and cyber security. It provides students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and postgraduate educational possibilities. Students are educated to not only master a diverse body of knowledge but also to think critically, analyze data, and clearly communicate what they know and discover. Recognizing that we live in an increasingly technological and diverse world, we seek to incorporate technological expertise and appreciation of human diversity into our courses. The Department also strives to serve the wider university, the Upper Cumberland region, and the nation through research and public service.

Attach Curriculum Map (Educational Programs Only):

Attached Files: See Appendix 1

Define Outcome:

PG 1: The Program of Political Science will not decrease more than 10% annually in student enrollment in order to sustain a strong educational program and promote lifelong learning in support of the strategic plan (Strategic Goal Two: Tactics www.tntech.edu/strategic) .

Assessment Methods:

The Program will monitor enrollment rates.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

The **THRESHOLD FOR ASSESSMENT** direct measure for Political Science is no annual decrease of more than 10% in student major enrollment, and this was met successfully for 2024-2025. Political Science will continue to **SEEK IMPROVEMENT** in enrollment with the below-listed faculty recruitment initiatives.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.B General Education Curriculum,2.D Diverse Faculty and Staff,3.B Endowment for Scholarships

Results and Analysis:

Table 1: Political Science Enrollment

Enrollment by Year	Total Majors
2024-2025	71
2023-2024	75
2022-2023	76
2021-2022	82
2020-2021	86

The Program of Political Science (and Sociology) is also delighted to partner with the College of Engineering as part of an overall $4.4 million dollar National Science Foundation (NSF) grant toward an interdisciplinary "Cyber Crime, Law and Society" (CLS) Minor housed in our Department to educate and train students for the overwhelming demands of the workforce in the cybercrime prevention, interdiction and enforcement arenas at the local, state, national and international levels. As is evidenced by Table 2

below, enrollment has increased significantly since the CLS Minor became available to students in Fall 2022.

Table 2: Cyber Crime, Law and Society Minor Enrollment

Enrollment by Year Fall Semester Enrollment	Cyber Minors
2024-2025	50
2023-24	37
2022-23	3

Program Goal 1 is clearly identified and is measurable. Annual enrollment did not decrease more than 10% annually, and thus, Program Goal 1 was met each year during the Program Review period.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

To supplement Program Goal 1 toward continuous improvement, the faculty annually participate in several student recruitment initiatives toward continuous improvement, as indicated below.

Faculty Recruitment Initiatives of New Majors

1. (Weekly) Faculty one-on-one VIP Student Recruitment sessions; and
2. (Fall) Preview Day recruitment of freshmen Saturday Event; and
3. Fall "Race to Tech" recruitment of underrepresented minorities; and
4. Spring Showcase recruitment of freshmen 2 Saturday Events; and
5. Summer: 15 Faculty-led Department Introductions during: "Student Orientation, Advisement, Registration, Scheduling" (SOARS)

PO 2: Offer Sufficient Curricular & Co-Curricular Activities

Define Outcome:

Majors in Political Science will have sufficient curricular options.

Assessment Methods:

A departmentally designed Qualtrics student satisfaction survey is now annually circulated among Political Science Majors. Students are surveyed regarding the sufficiency of their curricular options, and the results are attached. The **THRESHOLD FOR ASSESSMENT** is that 50% or more students should respond "agree" or "strongly agree" and the threshold was met. A curriculum map is also attached.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

SEEKING IMPROVEMENT: Political Science will seek to improve the response rate on the annual student survey. The 2024-2025 response rate was 16.9% of majors and the goal will be a 30% response rate. Political Science will better advertise the survey and incentivize responses by awarding gift cards to the first several students who complete the survey.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.A Experiential Learning,1.B General Education Curriculum,2.D Diverse Faculty and Staff,4.A Sustainable Partnerships

Results and Analysis:

The Department of Sociology and Political Science annually surveys student majors to assess their level of satisfaction with the departmental curriculum. The survey is anonymized and completed via Qualtrics. 2024-2025 Political Science majors' responses to these questions are provided below.

Table 3: ASSESSMENT- Political Science Student Survey Response: Curricular Options

Thinking about the entire political science curriculum, please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements: 12

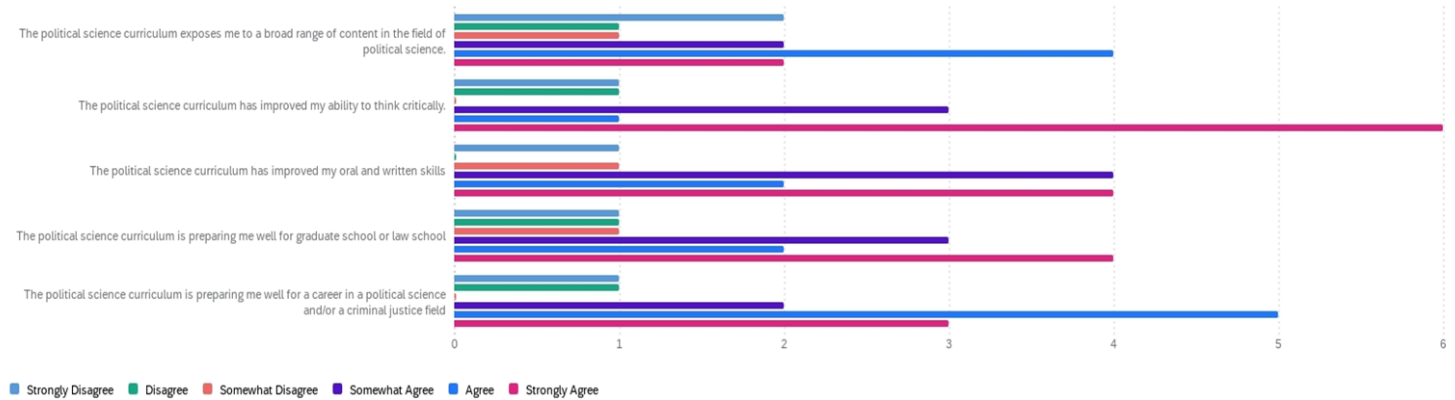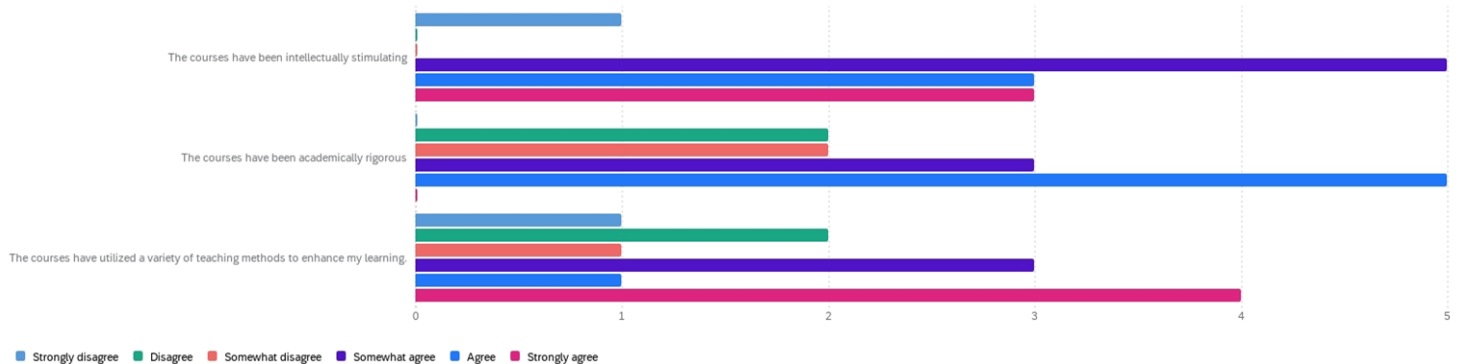Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Table 4: ASSESSMENT- Political Science Student Survey Response: Curricular Satisfaction

Thinking specifically about the Political Science or Legal Studies courses you have taken at TN Tech, please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements: 12

Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:
In summary, the threshold for assessment is that 50% or more students should respond "agree" or "strongly agree" and the threshold was met. A curriculum map is also attached.

SEEKING IMPROVEMENT in Political Science, the department will seek to increase the student response rate for the annual student survey to 30% of majors. The 2024-2025 response rate was 16.9, or approximately 17% of majors. This response rate should increase in future years. We already incentivize the survey with a chance for students to win a gift card, but we can increase the value of the gift cards for students.

SLO 1: Majors in Political Science will demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level comparable to the national mean.

Define Outcome:
Students will score an average over (5 years) on the ETS Major Field Test within 10 points of the national ETS score and not fall below the national average for more than two years in a row.

Assessment Methods:
The Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field examination is administered each fall and spring semester to all enrolled majors with senior classification. If students fall below the national average on this direct measure by more than ten points for more than two years in a row, study sessions will be added.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
ETS THRESHOLD FOR ASSESSMENT: Does not fall below the ETS national average by ten points for more than two consecutive years in a five-year period.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:
1.A Experiential Learning,1.B General Education Curriculum,2.D Diverse Faculty and Staff,4.A Sustainable Partnerships

Results and Analysis:
Political Science Majors at Tech are required to take two different exams during their final semester: the Senior Exit Exam and the Major Field Exam. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test Political Science sub-score is monitored twice annually by the Political Science faculty and students are expected to score comparable to the annual mean. The ETS is a "comprehensive assessment designed to measure the critical knowledge and understanding obtained by students in an academic major" https://www.ets.org/mft/about.html. The majority of students graduate in spring semester although the ETS is administered in both spring and fall annually. As is evidenced by Table 4, below, Political Science graduates scored within close proximity to the national mean for all five years on the ETS Major Field Political Science Subfield Scores. More specifically, POLS Majors did not fall below the ETS national average by ten points for more than two consecutive years.

Table 4: POLS ETS Report

		20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
TN TECH	*N*	12	15	13	18	15
	Overall Score	147	141	145	156	143
ETS	Overall Score	152	152	152	150	150*
	National Comparison	96%	93%	96%	104%	95%
TNTECH SUBSCORES	U.S. Gov. and Politics	50	44	47	54	46
	Comparative Gov. and Politics	49	40	47	52	42
	International Relations	43	43	46	52	42

*2023-24 National Norms; 2024-25 norms not available as of the IE report deadline

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

ETS scores reflected that POLS Majors scored within the threshold of assessment. That is, the scores were not ten points lower than the national norm from the previous year. However, the national norm for 2024-2025 was not available at the time of the IE report deadline. Another way to increase co-curricular options towards **continuous improvement** is to offer Political Science internship students the option of additionally created an e-Portfolio to use as they transition to job or graduate school applications. The e-Portfolio is already used with our Sociology internship students and is considered a best-practices model for undergraduates nationally.

SLO 2: Majors in Political Science will demonstrate critical thinking skills comparable to the Tech and national averages on the CCTST.

Define Outcome:
Students will score within five points of the Tech or national average annually on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test results by Majors (CCTST).

Assessment Methods:
The **THRESHOLD FOR ASSESSMENT** is that POLS majors will score within five points of the TTU or National average on the CCTST. This direct measure indicates students met the threshold and surpassed the national average.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
Political Science majors met the threshold requirement of scoring "comparable to the Tech university-wide and national averages" by scoring higher than both of these cohorts.

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:
1.B General Education Curriculum,2.A Technology Infused Programs,4.A Sustainable Partnerships

Results and Analysis:
As is indicated by Table 5 below, Political Science ***majors scored above*** national average on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST).

Table 5: Political Science Critical Thinking Scores (CCTST)

Year	Political Science Average	TTU Average	National Average
2024-2025	73.5	74.8	72.8
2023-2024	76.1	74.4	72.8
2022-23	77.0	74.3	73.3
2021-22	74.5	75.2	73.3
2020-21	75.3	74.5	74.0

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:
Student majors outpaced the national average in critical thinking. Towards continuous improvement, however, we will seek to continue to increase these scores and match or surpass the TTU annual average.

Summative Evaluation:

In Political Science, all program goals and learning outcomes were met within the designated threshold. The Program Goal of enrollment was met as enrollment remained steady and increased significantly in the Cyber Minor. For the Program Goal of sufficient curricular options, students indicated they have sufficient curricular and co-curricular options. POLS majors also scored within a ten-point threshold of recent national averages on the ETS Major Field Test, but national norms for 2024-2205 were not available at the time of the IE report deadline. Finally, student majors outpaced the national average in critical thinking.

While all program goals and learning outcomes were met within the designated threshold, room for improvement remains. Students indicated they have sufficient curricular and co-curricular options on the annual student survey, but we can both improve response rates and offer e-Portfolios next year.

More specifically, as note above in the "Seeking Improvement" section, response rates for the annual student survey should increase to reflect continuous improvement. Approximately 17% of POLS majors completed the survey in 2024-2025, but that number should increase to 30% in 2025-2026. We will offer gift cards to randomly selected students who complete the survey and market the students survey more extensively. Notably, in 2024-2025, the faculty completely revised the Annual Student Survey to incorporate suggestions from our two most recent Program Reviews, in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Assessment Plan Change

Another way to increase co-curricular options is to offer Political Science internship students the option of additionally developing an e-Portfolio to use as they transition to the work force or graduate school. The e-Portfolio is already used with our Sociology internship students and is considered a best-practices model for undergraduates nationally.

List of Appendices:
Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

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POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES COURSE TITLES AND NUMBERS		1. Demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level comparable to the national mean. * *The ETS Major Field measures this, but we also seek your evaluation of courses.	2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills at a level comparable to the national mean. * *The NSSE measures this, but we also seek your evaluation of critical thinking as reflected in POLS courses.	3. Demonstrate proficiencies in POLS concentration(s). *
American Government	POLS 1030	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intro to Political Science	POLS 1100	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mock Trial	POLS 2250	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data Analysis	POLS 3000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model United Nations I	POLS 3100	Yes	Yes	Yes
Model United Nations II	POLS 3101	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intro to Legal Reasoning and Analysis	POLS 3110	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legal Research and Writing	POLS 3120	Yes	Yes	Yes
Moot Courts	POLS 3130	Yes	Yes	Yes

Course	Code			
American Political Thought	POLS 3200	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intro to Latin American Politics	POLS 3300	Yes	Yes	Yes
Politics of Developing Nations	POLS 3310	Yes	Yes	Yes
U.S. Policy Towards Latin America	POLS 3320	Yes	Yes	Yes
State and Local Government	POLS 3330	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gender and Politics	POLS 3400	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political Conspiracy Theories	POLS 3500	Yes	Yes	Yes
International Politics	POLS 3610	Yes	Yes	Yes
International Organizations	POLS 3650	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foreign Policy	POLS 3670	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Legislative Process	POLS 3700	Yes	Yes	Yes
The American Executive	POLS 3710	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judicial Process	POLS 3810	Yes	Yes	Yes
International Law	POLS 4100	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Political Parties	POLS 4210	Yes	Yes	Yes
Campaigns and Elections	POLS 4220	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scandal and Corruption in U.S. Politics	POLS 4230	Yes	Yes	Yes

Course	Code			
Political Communications	POLS 4250	Yes	Yes	Yes
CON LAW I: Struggle for Federal Powers and Accountability	POLS 4310	Yes	Yes	Yes
CON LAW II: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	Pols 4320	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political Satire	POLS4400	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political Theory: Ancient and Medieval	POLS 4410	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political Theory: Early Modern	POLS 4420	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power and Privilege on the Screen	POLS 4430	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparative Government: Europe	POLS 4510	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparative Political Behavior	POLS 4520	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Administration & Public Policies	POLS 4610	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee Trial Practices	POLS 4700	Yes	Yes	Yes
First Amendment Law and analysis	POLS 4730	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seminar in Public Law	POLS 4910	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special Projects	POLS 4911	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seminar in Comparative Politics	POLS 4920	Yes	Yes	Yes

Course	Code			
Political Participation Internship	POLS 4950	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seminar in World Politics	POLS 4960	Yes	Yes	Yes