

Department of Political Science Annual Report 2012-2013

Overview: The 2012-2013 academic year found the department in the beginning of a period of transition. The long time chair, Dr. George Jarnis, retired in 2012 and the current chair retires in 2013. This left a department consisting of two full-time temps and a couple of VL's transitioning into the next academic year. Complicating this, one of the FTT's went part-time in the spring due to contractual obligations.

Academic Plan Priorities:

1. Develop and retain quality faculty and staff:
 - The year began with the successful search for and hiring of a new department chair, Dr. Christopher Latimer.
 - With generous support from the Office of Academic Affairs two members of the department were able to travel and take advantage of several professional development opportunities
 - One member of the department presented papers at a couple of conferences. She will attend two methodology workshops at the University of Michigan this summer.
 - Another member traveled to Costa Rica for research and to establish contacts for student study abroad.
2. Strengthen new student preparation, induction and early academic success
 - For the first time, the department began the year with a social gathering of majors and minors in order to introduce a new faculty member and new students.
 - Through the advising process we worked with juniors and seniors on career counseling. Many of these conversations addressed law school vs. graduate school and possible internships that could lead to jobs (or at least help determine interest in a field). One of last year's graduates is now working for the probation office where he interned the year before.
3. Pursue excellence and engagement in the academic experience
 - A large part of the year went into developing an assessment plan. We believe we finalized a viable process. The process begins during the 2013-2014 academic year.
 - One member of the department will work this summer with the Assessment Office on general education assessment.
 - We continued our relationship with noted political scientist Dr. Sanford Levinson (University of Texas/Austin and Harvard University) who presented a lecture to the FSU community.
 - State Representative Mary Keefe attended a section of Introduction to American Politics and discussed legislating.
 - Dr. Stephen Wasby (University of Albany, Emeritus) lectured to the Judicial Politics class and participated in a discussion in Constitutional Law
 - El Shafei DaFalla Mohamed from the Sudan, an FSU visiting scholar who we cosponsored lectured in the Politics of Globalization on his experiences in the Sudan.
 - We awarded the John Ambacher Award for highest GPA in the major to senior Julie St. Andre.
 - Several members engaged in internships during the year or will over the summer. Two worked on campaigns. Another worked in Boston for a local legislator.

- In the Fall, we offered a new special topics course on Environmental Politics. We hope that this can be sustained in the future.
4. Prepare students for global citizenship and competitiveness
- Introducing our International Relations minor continues to be on hold until there is at least one international relations tenure line.
 - The chair was able to assist two of our majors study overseas this year (one for a full academic year in Hong Kong, the other in Ulster for the spring). He helped students from other departments substitute courses to facilitate their study.

Conclusions and the agenda going forward

The lack of stability made it difficult to pursue long term goals. Instead the department began conversations around major requirements, student writing, and outreach to the University community. This conversation drew upon results from past assessment, evaluation of current student skills, and thoughts on what a political science degree should encompass. The following are recommendations for the department over the next few years.

- Nothing transcends the need to get the department fully staffed. This means, at a minimum, three tenure lines. Ideally we should return to four.
- The department identified the need for a course focused on political science methodology. This could be similar to the History Department's Historical Research and Writing offering.
- In preparation for the five year review, the department identified the need to re-evaluate the major requirements.
- The department hopes to resurrect the Model UN and Moot Court/Mock Trial programs. This might be achieved through the revival of the Politics Club.
- The department seeks to plan activities around the Constitution Day week. This would encompass both the Massachusetts and US Constitutions and possibly add a comparative dimension.