

Social Science Department
Annual Unit Plan for Academic Year 2017-2018
October 2016

Describe Department/Unit

Mission/Connection to College Mission

The mission of the Social Sciences Department is to promote student success and critical thinking by offering high quality course offerings that enable students to fulfill general education, major and transfer requirements through traditional and distance education. To accomplish this mission the department provides • Transfer, general education and major classes in all modes of delivery and at all sites, including Associates of Arts Transfer degrees in Anthropology and Psychology • Learning opportunities that develop ethical and effective citizenry • Working relationship with the Learning Resource Center (LRC), Learning Assistance Center (LAC), and Counseling.

Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year

Student Equity

Age range consistently has lower retention and success rates compared to students 19 and younger, across all disciplines in the department

Population:

Age: 20 to 24 years

Analysis and Plan:

We are a transfer course department and our 100 level academic courses most likely become more difficult for students the longer they have been out of school, especially with regards to research, writing, reading competency, and navigating APA guidelines.

The department is in the process of working with the library and LAC to help ensure adequate and accessible resources exist outside of the classroom so that non-traditional students have more, and more clear, opportunities for supplementary guidance when it comes to social science research, analytical and argumentative writing, and APA style. The department is also discussing ways to emphasize the importance of completing basic skills requirements before attempting transfer level courses in social science.

Age range consistently has lower retention and success rates compared to students 19 and younger, across all disciplines in the department

Population:

Age: 25 to 39 years

Analysis and Plan:

We are a transfer course department and our 100 level academic courses most likely become more difficult for students the longer they have been out of school, especially with regards to research, writing, reading competency, and navigating APA guidelines.

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Age range consistently has lower retention and success rates compared to students 19 and younger, across all disciplines in the department

Population:

Age: 40 or older

Analysis and Plan:

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Retention and success rates were consistently lower across social science disciplines when compared to White/Asian populations

Population:

Ethnicity: African American

Analysis and Plan:

There is likely a significant overlap between minority students and economically disadvantaged limited resource students. Meaning that textbook costs and timely textbook acquisition may be a problem. Also, this overlap with socioeconomic status may mean that many of these students are first generation college students without the same educational support network in their personal life and experience that other students may enjoy.

The department is in the process of working with the library and LAC to help ensure adequate and accessible resources exist outside of the classroom so that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have more, and more clear, opportunities for supplementary guidance when it comes to social science research, analytical and argumentative writing, and APA style. The department is also discussing ways to emphasize the importance of completing basic skills requirements before attempting transfer level courses in social science.

The department is also focusing significant effort on moving toward low or no cost textbook requirements in all courses and sections in which this is feasible without sacrificing rigor. The department is also discussing the adoption of a best practice guideline that no materials requiring student purchase be required during the first week of class.

Retention and success rates were consistently lower across social science disciplines when compared to White/Asian populations

Population:

Ethnicity: Hispanic

Analysis and Plan:

There is likely a significant overlap between minority students and economically disadvantaged limited resource students. Meaning that textbook costs and timely textbook acquisition may be a problem. Also, this overlap with socioeconomic status may mean that many of these students are first generation college students without the same educational support network in their personal life and experience that other students may enjoy.

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Retention and success rates were consistently lower across social science disciplines when compared to White/Asian populations

Population:

Ethnicity: American Indian

Analysis and Plan:

There is likely a significant overlap between minority students and economically disadvantaged limited resource students. Meaning that textbook costs and timely textbook acquisition may be a problem. Also, this overlap with socioeconomic status may mean that many of these students are first generation college students without the same educational support network in their personal life and experience that other students may enjoy.

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Outcomes Assessment: Overall Report

There has been no formal or official department wide changes as a result of outcome assessment results during the 2015/16 academic year as there were no SLO gaps during the assessments recorded during that academic year. All SLOs assessed had a student success rate of at least 70%, which is the threshold of concern.

Outcomes Assessment: Gaps Identified in Prior Year's Assessments

Progress Made on Program Review

Liberal Arts Behavioral and Social Science Degree

Year of Last Program Review:

2014

Progress in the last year on two-year strategies:

In anticipation of the changes resulting from SB 1440 transfer degrees, the department has completed the application process for

AA-T degrees in Anthropology, Sociology, History, Economics, and Political Science. Anthropology has received approval from the state, the other four applications are awaiting approval.

Progress in the last year on five-year strategies:

N/A

Progress Made on Prior Year Initiatives

Increase percentage of courses with completed and current Student Learning Outcome assessments

The number of social science courses with completed SLO assessments increased from 66.67% to 71.43% by 8/16/2016. The process for deleting PHIL 164, Survey of World Religions has been initiated and should remove that missing course assessment by the end of the academic year. There are eight remaining classes that need to have SLO assessments entered in for them. Of these, five of them have assessment data that can be officially recorded by March 1st 2017, which should bring the percentage of social science courses with completed SLO assessments to around 90%.

Creation of Transfer Model Degree for History, Political Science, and Sociology

Transfer Model Degrees for History, Political Science, and Sociology have been created, shepherded through CIC, and submitted for state approval. They are now awaiting action by the state.

Evaluate and refine the department-wide term paper policy and rubric

All full-time faculty in the social science department constructed their major writing assignments (if they assigned one) around the department's term paper guidelines and rubric during the Spring 2016 semester. Three out of the six full-time faculty members were able to meet at the end that semester and review samples of term papers from History, Political Science, Anthropology, and Sociology in order to assess the guidelines and rubric. The result was a an agreement that the guidelines were appropriate and reasonable, and that the rubric was largely on point though it could potentially use minor alterations in the future. Another review of sample papers was agreed upon for the end of the Spring 2017 semester.

Plan Initiatives for Next Year

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Data collection on department textbook costs

Action Plan:

The department will collect the data on what textbooks are being required in each of its 40 active course offerings and how much those textbooks cost the last time they were assigned. This way the department has a useful set of data on which and how many of its courses can be said to have textbook costs to students of below \$100 or, preferably, below \$50. As the department continues to work toward minimizing textbook costs to students when reasonably possible this data will be a useful foundation from which to have future discussions about which courses are reasonable opportunities for further reductions in textbook costs and which courses are not.

Measure of Success:

The creation of a document that lists with reasonable accuracy the common required readings and required reading costs for each of its active courses. The document will eventually be placed on the department canvas shell.

Person Responsible:

Department Chair in consultation with full-time and part-time faculty in the department.

It addresses a gap in student equity

Lower income and socio-economic class students.

Department Canvas Shell

Action Plan:

Once a Canvas shell has been created for the department it will be incumbent upon the Chair and full-time faculty in the department to create useful tools and content in that shell. The current ideas being planned for the shell include the following:

- news and discussion forums for posting announcements and for allowing common public asynchronous discussions between faculty in the department
- section for posting documents regarding all department policies, preferred practices, rubrics, data collection documents, etc.
- section for posting departmental meeting minutes
- current email addresses for all faculty teaching in the department
- section for posting current working or submitted versions of proposed schedule for following semester
- section for posting sample syllabus for each active course with permission of syllabus author
- section for posting agreed upon SLO assessment mechanisms and questions for each course being assessed in a semester, along with links to SLO assessment database and resources for assessing and entering SLO assessments
- other content and tools as the department shall deem necessary through department discussions and meetings

Measure of Success:

A completed Canvas shell with at least the following content included:

- news and discussion forums for posting announcements and for allowing common public asynchronous discussions between faculty in the department
- section for posting documents regarding all department policies, preferred practices, rubrics, data collection documents, etc.
- section for posting departmental meeting minutes
- section for posting current working or submitted versions of proposed schedule for following semester
- section for posting sample syllabus for each active course with permission of syllabus author
- section for posting agreed upon SLO assessment mechanisms and questions for each course being assessed in a semester, along with links to SLO assessment database and resources for assessing and entering SLO assessments

These sections should each have at least one document or link in them as a start.

Person Responsible:

Department Chair in consultation with full-time and part-time faculty in the department

It directly addresses a college Strategic Goal or Objective

This initiative directly addresses Strategic Goal #5: Organizational Effectiveness, by improving communications internally, which is item number 3 under that strategic goal.

Evaluate Resource Needs

Facilities

None at this time.

Information Technology

None at this time.

Marketing

The Social Science Department is exploring the need for color posters, flyers, and perhaps brochures in an effort to market our elective offerings and the new AA-T degrees in Psychology and Anthropology (and others as they gain state approval). The department would also like to explore more advertising of these electives on the Cerro Coso website.

Professional Development

None at this time.

Staffing Requests

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

Sociology

Location:

College-wide

Justification:

Sociology currently has one full-time faculty member with a half-appointment to sociology (the faculty member's other appointment is to Anthropology). This faculty member's half-appointment allows her to fill only a fraction of the (on average) 20 sociology sections we offer during the academic year. The other sections are filled by instructors whose primary appointments are in other disciplines, and adjunct instructors. Sociology has no full-time primary appointment faculty even though in the 2015/16 academic year it had a first day enrollment of 727 and a census day enrollment of over 537 students over 20 sections, along with a total first day waitlist count of 24. Except for an unusually low enrolled and low section count 2014/15 academic year, previous years have shown numbers at or higher than these numbers. Sociology classes contained 52.9 FTES during the 2015/16 academic year and had a productivity of 13.9.

Sociology courses are core courses for the AA-T degree in Sociology awaiting approval by the state, and are at least elective courses for majors in Administration of Justice, Psychology, Liberal Arts/Arts & Humanities, and Liberal Arts/Social & Behavioral Sciences. The course will also serve as electives for Political Science, History, and Anthropology degrees once they are approved. The total number of awards given for these majors in the 2015/16 academic year was 155.

This year in particular, the lack of primary appointment faculty has created difficulties in terms of finding qualified excellent instructors for courses, resulting in the department assigning more sociology classes to a faculty member who is not appointed to sociology and having sections in her primary discipline taught by more adjunct instructors. It has also resulted in not being able to offer the same number of sociology sections for the Spring 2017 semester. The department has no established adjunct instructors in sociology to teach the online sections, which is where the need is felt most acutely.

Hiring a full-time faculty member in sociology would allow more sections in these core mission courses to be taught by established,

invested, and more qualified instructors whose primary discipline and training is in sociology instruction.

2000 Category - Classified Staff