

# Political Science Showcase

## Why we chose to showcase Political Science:

The Political Science Showcase was chosen because the program assessed critical thinking at the capstone level, uses a rubric, reports evidence at the dimension level and made a data-informed decision to implement systematic change. Additionally, faculty engaged in a norming process for their rubric prior to assessing student products.

## Assessment Plan:

The Political Science Program has five student learning outcomes measured through writing assignments and course products analyzed with rubrics as well as surveys. For this showcase, the faculty measured the outcome, "Students will develop critical thinking skills" through writing assignments that were analyzed using a critical thinking rubric.

## Evidence of Student Learning:

46 Senior Seminar research papers from three courses PS418, PS462 and PS431 were analyzed using a six dimension rubric on a four point scale. The scores were reported on the dimension level as:

1. Maintain Coherent Focus, (Mean=2.96)
2. Identify the status of existing research on the topic, (Mean=2.43)
3. Implement a rigorous research design, (Mean=2.67)
4. Analyze results, (Mean=2.39)
5. Reach founded conclusions, (Mean=2.41) and
6. Recognize the limitations to their work and the implications of their conclusions, (Mean=2.15).

Analysis of these dimensions demonstrated strength in coherent focus and the implementation of rigorous research design. The most notable area for improvement was in the limitations of the work and implications.

## Use of Student Learning:

The faculty determined that students in the Political Science program need better training specifically on "acknowledging the limits to their research findings and discussing the implication of their conclusions." Additionally, faculty have decided to "undertake a systematic review of syllabi and course assignments to ensure that course-level student outcomes and assignments are consistent with department goals of developing critical thinking skills in our majors."