

Program Review Year 2010 – 2011

Name of Program:

LIBERAL ARTS: POLITICAL SCIENCE OPTION

Program Review Team Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Stephen E. Slaner	Assistant Professor of Government, NECC, and Program Review Team Leader
Stephen Russell	Professor of History, NECC, and Global Studies Department Chair
Meredith Gunning	Professor of Philosophy, NECC
Andrew Morse	Assistant Professor of History, NECC
Jane Gagliardi	Associate Professor and Coordinator of Human Services, NECC
Harry Wessel	Professor of Political Science and Department Chair, Merrimack College

NOTE: Special thanks are due to Ellen Wentland, Assistant Dean – Academic Program Review, Assessment, and Academic Effectiveness, for her assistance in preparing this document.

DATE: ___ February 22, 2011 _____

SECTION SIX: SUMMARY

I. CONCLUSIONS: PROGRAM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A. List and describe the program's major strengths, based on information obtained in the Program Review. Cite evidence for each identified strength.

AREA OF STRENGTH	EVIDENCE
Fosters a global awareness of the interconnectedness of different cultures and the understanding of government structures and processes.	Please see Section One, II(A).
Offers a comprehensive introduction to the skills needed in political science, including critical thinking, that prepares students for careers and/or transfer to other institutions.	Please see Section One, II(C) and II(D).
Encourages respect for diversity and fosters personal and professional growth by students.	Please see Section One, II(D).
Engages students as active learners.	Please see Section One, III(A).
Encourages student success through faculty mentoring of clubs and advising of students; and through awards ceremonies for best papers and best paper in the area of human rights.	Please see Section Two, IV(D).
Attracts and retains high-quality faculty members with doctorates and/or master's degrees.	Please see Section Four, I(D).

B. List and describe the program’s weaknesses or areas in which improvement is desirable, based on information obtained in the Program Review. Cite evidence for each identified weakness or area for improvement.

WEAKNESS OR AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	EVIDENCE
<p>Course offerings need to be expanded by revitalizing inactive courses and developing more higher-level (200) courses. Opportunities for service learning within the framework of political science courses need to be expanded, and the issue of fitting internships or co-ops into a student’s schedule needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>Please see Section One, III (B) and Section Two, I (D).</p>
<p>Curricular requirements need to be updated to allow students to take philosophy as part of their liberal arts electives.</p>	<p>Please see Section One, III(B).</p>
<p>A working definition of “global awareness” needs to be formulated, accompanied by a discussion as to which courses can include this component as part of their overall structure.</p>	<p>Please see Section One, III(B).</p>
<p>The program would be strengthened by developing more effective ways of tracking graduates after they leave NECC for other institutions or careers. We also need to explore why there are relatively few graduates and why students drop out of the program. An action plan needs to be drawn up to explore this issue.</p>	<p>Please see Section Two, I(D).</p>
<p>The program would benefit greatly from an additional full-time faculty member.</p>	<p>Please see Section Four, I(C).</p>
<p>Students need to be better prepared to write essays and research papers, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.</p>	<p>Please see Section Four (IV).</p>

II. ACTION PLAN

For each identified weakness or area in which improvement is desirable, submit an Action Plan. (When designing the Action Plan, a suggested plan would include the elements of Process Management using a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.) (Note: Add as many of the following tables as necessary.)

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Address issue of low number of graduates by expanding course offerings and offering more opportunities for service learning.	<p>Revitalize inactive courses.</p> <p>Develop and publicize new higher-level courses.</p> <p>Discuss service learning with political science faculty members.</p> <p>Address issue of fitting co-ops and internships into students' schedules.</p> <p>Create a slot for a coordinator to work with students and host organizations.</p>	Department chair in cooperation with program review chair; CIT for help in publicizing new courses on the NECC website; individual faculty members with respect to adding service learning; VP for Academic Affairs.		

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Overly restrictive curricular requirements.	Update curricular requirements to allow students to take philosophy as part of liberal arts electives.	Department chair in cooperation with program review chair.		

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Inadequate data on why there are relatively few graduates, and why some students drop out; also on what happens to graduates of or transfers from program.	Develop more effective ways of gauging student satisfaction with program; also of tracking students after they leave NECC.	Institutional Research		

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Only one full-time faculty member in the program.	Hire additional full-time faculty member.	Division Dean, Assistant Dean.		

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Issue of plagiarism and inadequate preparation of students to write research papers.	Incorporate library component into courses.	Department chair and librarian.		

Problem	Improvement Activity	Person Responsible	Date of Activity	Findings
Need working definition of global awareness and strategy for incorporating it into political science courses.	Define global awareness and explore how it might be relevant to course offerings.	Department chair in cooperation with program review chair; work with relevant NECC committee in this area.		