

Eastern Wyoming College

Instructional Program Review 2012-2013

Program:

Social Sciences Cluster

Including:

**Degrees - History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology (now under Social Sciences)
and Communication**

Courses - American Studies, Anthropology, Geography, Women's Studies

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EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE Instructional Program Review

Program Name: Social Sciences

Part I: Statistical Data from the past three years:

	2009-2010	2010-2011 *	2011-2012 *	5-Year Average
Annualized FTE Enrollment	332.8	382.3	365.7	330
Annualized FTE Faculty	8.7	8.3	10.5	9.1
# Students	40	46	43	33
# Graduated	7	6	7	5

FTE = Full-time equivalent Notes:

Modes of Delivery:

online compressed video face-to-face

Advisory Committee Members: N/A

Community Partners or Internships (if applicable): The SOSC degree continues to offer internships in POLS for students interested in working during the Wyoming Legislative Session and also in Topics courses. For example, in the spring of 2013, a student used the topics course to gain experience working in museums.

Revisions in Curriculum: In the spring of 2012, a new degree, SOSC (Social Science) replaced four existing degrees (HIST, POLS, PSYC, SOC). The goal of this new degree was to offer a more broad-based program that could lead to a variety of careers in government, law, education, business, social or counseling work, or international relations and offer students a broader degree for transfer purposes. Students would transfer this degree and then specialize at their four-year institution. The hope was that they would take advantage of a wider variety of electives and choices in their time at Eastern Wyoming College. The other goal was to increase enrollment in this degree. After years of discussion with students who switched majors before completing their History, Political Science, Psychology or Sociology degrees, it was evident that those degrees were too narrow for students who are unsure of the specific area of social science they wish to pursue and who need to be exposed to lots of different social science areas to be able to make that determination.

Part II Narrative Analysis

Description of Community Need

Current Community Need/Growth of Industry: These are academic transfer programs. After obtaining four year degrees, many students obtain employment in the fields of government, law, education, business, social or counseling work, international relations, advertising, analyses,

archiving, broadcasting or consulting. Some find work as congressional aides, foreign service officers, foundation staffers, information specialists, intelligence agents, journalists, legal assistants, lobbyists, personnel managers, or public relations staffers. Some of our students also pursue graduate degrees.

Activities in Support of Student Recruitment and Retention

The Social Science program faculty believe that the SOSC degree implemented in the fall of 2012 will account for an increase in graduates. It is an attractive program with its flexibility and transferability. We would expect to see positive retention with this new program as well.

Numbers of students in the Communication and Mass Media program will increase with recruitment for the Forensics Team and the renewal of the Lancer Post newspaper.

Social Science faculty members have been heavily involved in encouraging and/or sponsoring a variety of student activities. Examples of these include attendance at the Matthew Sheppard Symposium held each spring at the University of Wyoming, developing and conducting a special topics spring break trip and class to north American Indian sites, encouraging student participation at special speaker presentations such as National Geographic's renowned photographer and writer Mark Jenkins' talks, and overall support or sponsorship of various student clubs such as the LGBT club. In addition, service learning projects and involvement have become a common outcome of many of the social science classes.

Our students have access to a variety of scholarships including the Division Scholarship and the Hathaway Scholarship. These scholarships aid in recruitment of students.

Assessment of Student Learning

Analysis of Student Learning—The program assessment for SOSC is a capstone project. Students complete an online portfolio containing their transcript, a resume, a goals statement, samples of completed coursework, and a reflection on their educational experience in the program at EWC.

Statistical Data Results: Since the capstone course is required for graduation, the graduation rates in each program reflect capstone completion.

What has been learned? The majority of students completing the Social Science or Communication program at EWC transfer to four-year institutions to pursue degrees in those respective fields. There are few job opportunities available to graduates who possess only Associates Degrees. The Social Science and Communication programs are vital to the institution because they provide not only courses for majors but also multiple courses that fulfill general education requirements.

Students who transfer to the University of Wyoming are fully accepted at junior standing and have had no problems completing degrees in social science areas.

Strengths of the Program and Faculty

The Social Science and Communication/Mass Media program maintain consistently high enrollment in core courses as well as providing courses satisfying a General Education requirement for many educational programs at EWC. For several years, faculty have been devoted to developing program courses for distance delivery, increasing enrollment and course offerings.

The Social Science and Communication/Mass Media degrees at EWC provide a high quality transfer education for an affordable price in a non-threatening and supportive environment; this is a place where students *want* to come to get a good education and good college experience. When they leave EWC, students are prepared to meet academic, technological, social, and cultural demands. EWC keeps our community young and vibrant by producing quality graduates and by offering quality programs.

The full-time faculty in the social sciences and communication/mass media is well-qualified and well-respected. They have the requisite graduate training and stay current in their fields with graduate course work and conferences.

Part III Recommendations

Faculty Recommendations

Faculty need to stay current with technology in the classroom. Classrooms need to continue to be standardized and updated so that each room has the same capabilities. Faculty need to have updated laptops and access to those for students for work with distance courses and access to budgets for conferences and teaching tools such as DVDs, I-Pads and professional development.

The faculty members are also concerned with the loss of a full-time person in the departments of history and political science. These departments used to have 1.5 faculty dedicated to them; currently there are two faculty teaching these courses part-time with other vital and core courses being taught by adjuncts. The loss of either one of those two faculty positions would lead to the inability to teach the range of courses needed to keep students at EWC for a full two years, thereby weakening the program. It would also lead to the overuse of adjuncts who, while qualified, do not take ownership in these areas nor in the growth or advising of students. While it is an asset to have faculty who can teach in many social science and humanities areas, it is a problem to have faculty spread so thin that there is no one taking ownership of these areas. Similarly, in communication/mass media, offerings are limited by the lack of a full-time faculty position devoted to that department.

Finally, the faculty is concerned about the situation that exists with respect to upper level courses. In psychology and sociology in particular, upper level face to face classes are not successful because of the lack of student enrollment (these courses do not meet the “minimum” number – for this division - of students for a class to be offered: 8). The faculty has successfully put these courses on-line, but student comments reflect that they are frustrated with the number of classes that are ONLY offered on-line without an in class equivalent.

Advisory Committee Recommendations: N/A

Division Chair Recommendations

I have read the Social Science Group's Instructional Program Review 2012-2013 for the Social Sciences Cluster and the faculty members present an optimistic and meaningful appraisal of the department's strengths, limitations, successes and objectives. Their remarks support the following observations. Are the students enrolled in the program learning? The answer is yes. It is noted in the Assessment area of the review that "the majority of students completing the Social Science or Communication Program transfer to four year institutions..." and "Students who transfer to the University of Wyoming... have no problem completing degrees in the social science areas." A sub-topic to the learning question and particularly important in the Social Science field is—Are the students learning to connect with the communities they will serve? The answer is yes. The program offers field trips, internships and service learning experiences and students take advantage of these opportunities.

In the area of student recruitment and retention, the program faculty set the special objective of clustering individual areas together to present a unified Social Sciences Program. The goal being to increase graduates and new enrollees with the added benefit of improved flexibility in course selection and transferability. This change, I believe, builds on the fundamental capabilities and strengths of the faculty. As noted in the report the faculty is "well-qualified and well-respected... having the requisite graduate course work." This change should also help develop a program faculty partnership-- strengthening teamwork. Added to this group are a strong cadre of adjunct faculty who are effective and enthusiastic contributors to student success, the program and EWC.

In conclusion—strength in learning, curriculum, organizational culture matched by innovation and resourcefulness should overcome any limitations or obstacles the future may present. I would therefore recommend continued promotion of value added services to students accomplished by capitalizing on the ideas, talents and strengths of this team—the Social Sciences Program faculty members.

Vice President's Recommendations

I concur with the Division Chair's assessment and statements regarding the Social Sciences area and faculty members. The FTE being generated in this area is significant for the overall institution. In the last few years, the Social Sciences area and faculty members have initiated changes which have resulted in positive directions and successful outcomes. Noteworthy items include:

- The redesign and development of a social science program which includes a broad-based degree that allows students to emphasize a social science area if they desire, but does not make them choose at the freshman-sophomore level.
- The development and growth of distance learning options in the Social Science area which include most of the course offerings that are included in the catalog. In fact, these courses have proven to be popular choices for students in outreach not only to fulfill their general education requirements but also as electives.

- The invigoration of faculty involvement in student activities, clubs, or special topics classes highlighting some of the Social Science areas.
- The number of students actually majoring and graduating in the social sciences area is growing and although the statistics on page one of this report show some small inclines, the comparison to years further back than three years, shows significant inclines in student majors and annualized FTE.

I am aware that we need to keep our full-time faculty represented well in our social science areas. The College chose to not replace the full-time position recently vacated, but to build instead a strong cadre of qualified adjuncts to help in this area. At this time, the Division Chair and others have recruited some excellent adjuncts who are excited to teach for us and who have the necessary qualifications to do an outstanding job. In at least one instance, it was the qualifications of the adjunct which allowed us to teach a course that had been in the catalog for many years but had not been taught for several. On-campus or distance learning adjuncts include Glenda Banta, Christin Covello, Debbie Ochsner, Ed Wright, and Don Hodgson. Off campus includes a variety of equally well-qualified instructors. As enrollments continue to grow, this is an area we will be monitoring closely to ensure adequate staffing. Budgetary constraints have influenced these decisions to some degree.

We are still in the rebuilding phase of the forensics team. This effort is led by full-time communications instructor John Hansen. This past year saw more involvement and success by the student participants. Similarly, we will be monitoring enrollments and participation in the newly resurfaced Lancer Post. At this time, the journalism enrollment has been slight.

I have the following recommendations regarding the Social Science Cluster.

1. Continue to work as a team to develop distance learning and course rotation schedules to help ensure the likelihood of courses making with more than minimal enrollments.
2. Work closely with recruiters and others to encourage more majors in these areas. As we build the numbers by increasing majors, the likelihood of the sophomore level courses making on-campus will increase.
3. Encourage further development of good advising techniques to encourage students to complete their courses and their degrees before transferring to other institutions.
4. Monitor and study the staffing patterns and the overloading of full-time faculty members in this area and recruit new faculty as appropriate and affordable.
5. Continue the College's review of general education courses and modify programs and courses to encourage improved graduation rates.