

**Outcomes Assessment Plan**  
**Public Affairs: Concentration in Political and Governmental Processes**

M.A. Public Affairs, Concentration in Political and Governmental Processes

Report Year: 2016-2017

**New Mexico Highlands University: Mission Statement (Adopted as part of new Strategic Plan, 2016)**

New Mexico Highlands University is a public comprehensive university serving our local and global communities. Our mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

**Mission of the Public Affairs Program**

The Master of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary program in the Social Sciences that provides academic training for careers in public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. The multidisciplinary core curriculum includes courses in political theory, social theory and historical thought, human culture and economic theory. These courses foster a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural environment or public and private organizational policy design and implementation. The program prepares students for professional positions in managerial and leadership roles in government agencies, consulting firms, human services, public-interest organizations and businesses significantly affected by public policies, as well as training them for doctoral studies.

**Goals of the Public Affairs Program, Political and Governmental Processes Concentration.**

Political and historical awareness and understanding constitutes one of the chief attributes of a functional and involved citizen of the United States. Our goal is to provide an education that will contribute to the realization of this ideal by every student. We seek to train graduates to work in a variety of public and private sector jobs, utilizing their historical and political skills and knowledge.

**College/University Goals Supported:**

The university aspires to develop broadly literate citizens and leaders, educated in analytical and critical thought and the appreciation of the arts and sciences.

**Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage & Institutional Mission Reference:**

The University's commitment to programs focusing on a diverse campus community, especially the rich heritage of regional traditions and cultures. Our program is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region.

**Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:**

1. Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach in relation to the work they eventually do and the social environments in which they live.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior in all aspects of politics, government, and political processes through practical application, moving beyond observations to scientific inquiry in the study of politics.
3. Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for policy-making and administrative positions in governmental and non-governmental organizations, political campaigns and political office, and research/data-oriented positions, advancement into JD or PhD programs.
4. Students will master the scholarly literature and theoretical knowledge in their chosen field of concentration (Political Science).
5. Students will have participated in civic engagement activities, project-based research, or an internship/practicum for the purpose of developing a better understanding of community issues and resources, thus cultivating a connection between students and community, whereby students develop a sense of social and political responsibility.

**Student Learning Outcome 1:**

Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach to graduate education.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1:**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

**Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Students will successfully complete the program's Interdisciplinary Core requirements earning a "B" or above in four (4) of the following courses:

- ANTH 651 – Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture (3)
- POLS 563 -- Political Economy (3)
- POLS 654 -- Seminar: The State (3)
- SOC 638 -- Advanced Classical Social Theories (3) or SOC 639 Contemporary Sociological Theories
- HIST 651 – Contemporary Historical Thought

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\*A course may be approved for substitution for one of the core requirements which may be considered into the assessment.

ANTH 651 – Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture

Total number of students assessed	3		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	3	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for ANTH 651:**

Three of the four students enrolled in ANTH 651. All three students obtained an “A” for the course.

POLS 563 -- Political Economy

Total number of students assessed	3		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	3	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for POLS563:**

Three of the four students enrolled in POLS 563. The three students obtained a “B” or better for the course. Two of the three students obtained an “A” for the course.

POLS 654 -- Seminar: The State

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for POLS654:**

All four students enrolled in POLS 654, and all four students obtained an “A” for the course.

SOC 638 -- Advanced Classical Sociological Theories (3) or SOC 639 Contemporary Sociological Theories

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for SOC638:**

All four students enrolled in the Contemporary or Advanced Sociological Theories class. The four students obtained a “B” or better for the course.

HIST 651 – Contemporary Historical Thought

Total number of students assessed	1		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for HIST651:**

One student enrolled in HIST 514 The American Presidency course, a substituted course for the HIST 651 course. The student obtained an “A” for class.

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

All four students acquired a grade of “B” or better in four of the five interdisciplinary core requirements. The cumulative gpa for each of the four students was 3.5 or better. Successful completion of this outcome was met.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior in all aspects of politics, government, and political processes through practical application, moving beyond observations to scientific inquiry in the study of politics.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2:**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective use of technology

**Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

Students will achieve a grade of “B” or above in POLS 520: Research Methods in Political Science. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 75% of students earning an “A” or “B.”

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Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

Four students were assessed for outcome 2. Students acquired a grade of “B+” or better for POLS 520 Research Methods in Political Science. Three of the four students obtained an “A” for the course. Students successfully met outcome 2.

**Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for policy-making and administrative positions in governmental and non-governmental organizations, political campaigns and political office, and research/data-oriented positions, advancement into JD or PhD programs.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3:**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective Use of Technology

**1<sup>st</sup> Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Students will achieve a grade of “B” or above in two of the following courses: POLS 563: Political Economy or POLS 654 Seminar in The State or POLS 519 Public Administration or POLS 614 Seminar in Public Policy. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 75% of students earning an “A” or “B.”

POLS614 Seminar in Public Policy

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.1:**

All of the students enrolled in POLS 614 Seminar in Public Policy. The four students achieved a grade of “A” for the course. Successful completion of 3.1 was met.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Student secured a position with:

- a) policy-making and/or administrative governmental or non-governmental organizations,
- b) a political campaign/s,
- c) a political office, or
- d) a research/data-oriented positions, or
- e) advancement into JD or PhD program.

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.2:**

All four students were assessed for outcome 3.2. One of the students was accepted to the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, Minnesota and will start the fall of 2017. One student was elected to the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners. Two students are actively seeking employment.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Students fill out the survey (see Attachment B) upon leaving the program, included are questions asking students to comment on the program’s impact on their research, writing, and analytical skills. Criteria for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3.3:**

All four students are in the process of completing the survey. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2016-2017 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

### Student Learning Outcome 4:

Students will master the scholarly literature and theoretical knowledge in their chosen field of concentration (Political Science).

#### NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

A faculty evaluator will complete the examination rating form (see attachment A) of the graduating students' work product (written comprehensive examination, professional paper or thesis). Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by an overall (total rating) of rating of good or excellent on the relevant evaluative measure.

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	3	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1

#### Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4.1:

Two students completed their program of study by taking the comprehensive examination. Two students are currently completing their program of study—one student completed his oral examination and is scheduled to complete his professional paper in the summer, and one student is scheduled to take his oral examination in June and complete his professional paper during the summer. Three examination rating forms were completed and one examination form will be completed in June. When all four examination forms are completed the results will be interpreted and the 2016-2017 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Students fill out surveys (Attachment B) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including a question about the program's impact on their mastery of the literature relevant and theoretical knowledge to their programs of study. Criterion for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4

#### Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4.2:

All four students are in the process of completing the survey. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2016-2017 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.

**Student Learning Outcome 5:**

Students will have participated in a civic engagement activity, project-based research, or an internship/practicum for the purpose of developing a better understanding of community issues and resources, thus cultivating a connection between students and community, whereby students develop a sense of social and political responsibility.

**NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 5:**

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

**Means of Assessment for Outcome 5:**

The student survey (Attachment B) includes a question addressing their participation in civic engagement activities, project-based research, or internship/practicums. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 50% of graduating students participating in one or more of those activities.

Total number of students assessed	4		
Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 5:**

All four students are in the process of completing the survey. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, the results will be interpreted and the 2016-2017 Outcome Assessment Report will be updated.