

intentionality regarding their choice of study abroad locations, and predeparture and returnee orientation programs.

### **Micro Reforms: Changes inside Political Science Departments**

Track participants agreed that political science departments have a special opportunity—perhaps even an obligation—to be at the forefront of internationalization in the academy. Working groups of the APSA have endorsed calls in higher education to internationalize undergraduate education in the discipline. This effort has led to greater attention to how to best examine contemporary challenges across cultures, expand student knowledge of and familiarity with the world, and broaden critical and analytical perspectives.

Papers and participants discussed characteristics that we believe are associated with strong internationalized political science degree programs. We agreed that departments should not be complacent, simply “covering” a range of global issues or areas. Rather, they should be purposeful in developing new courses that cross disciplines and force students to think critically about global issues. If the goal is to help educate global citizens, then course contents can reasonably be broadened to add dimensionality to the training of students within the discipline.

In “Teaching the Unfamiliar to a Crowd,” Meredith L. Weiss and David Rousseau focused on even more micro-level techniques for fostering global engagement. They noted, “Teaching about politics in far-away places to undergraduates with minimal prior familiarity poses inherent challenges.” Weiss and Rousseau’s paper explored the literature on instructional and learning styles to describe some best practices for comparative politics and international relations classes, such as team-based learning, interactive approaches, and “micro-writing” exercises. These student-centered active learning strategies have been used successfully for classes at SUNY–Albany.

### **Strategies for Internationalizing the Curriculum**

Track participants concluded that a number of strategies can help us introduce students to international themes, as well as promote cross-cultural understanding. First, we recommend that departments consider curricular revisions using purposeful reflection on international engagement. We encourage departments to foster a certain level of adaptability in course development whenever possible to avoid setting arbitrary barriers between subfields. In other words, we recommend that internationalization be considered for classes well beyond those in comparative politics and international relations. The theme of internationalization can also be used to encourage innovations in course design, team teaching, or interdisciplinary approaches. These changes are not only intrinsically important in the twenty-first century, but they will also enhance the value (and marketability) of the major for a new generation of students.

Second, because internationalization involves garnering commitment from all significant stakeholders, we recommend that faculty members, students, academic departments, administrators, and key offices on campuses be included in such efforts. Not only must stakeholders agree on the objectives of internationalization—such as the achievement of intercultural competency or empathy—they should also agree on strategies to achieve these objectives. Faculty should try to form a consensus on rationales for internationalizing the curriculum and move

beyond traditional “zero-sum” thinking and competition. Administrators must be clear that internationalization represents a major institutional priority. In the end, the likelihood of success of these projects will be greatly influenced by the size of the coalition of stakeholders.

Third, we note that resources are critical to move from conceptualization to implementation. There are low-cost avenues to promote consideration of international themes, but these will likely fall short if no resources are available to enable the achievement of objectives. Papers in our track described successful internationalization efforts that relied on obtaining outside sponsorship, grants, or endorsements. Large foundation grants can provide incredible leverage to encourage curricular innovations. Assuming that resources are available and administrators have signaled institutional priorities, faculty should also be rewarded for their commitments to these goals. Such incentives might play a role in faculty recruitment, as well as reviews for promotion and tenure.

This article represents only a brief summary of the engaging discussions and paper presentations in our track. We found many points of agreement and are enthusiastic to work with colleagues in the discipline to take up the charge of global innovations for the twenty-first century.

### **TRACK: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

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Assessment, particularly program assessment, has reached a new height in the APSA with the publication of an edited volume, *Assessment in Political Science* (2008), followed by the appointment in 2010 of an association-wide working group on assessment. This task force has been asked to investigate current practices in program assessment and make recommendations regarding the role that the APSA should play to help departments and faculty conduct assessment better. Track participants were encouraged to think about how the issues they raised could help guide the APSA’s overall approach to assessment.

Track papers focused on many topics, including methods of course delivery, pre- and postcourse assessments, and a comparison of British and U.S. approaches to political science curricula and assessment. Participants also discussed issues related to P–16 initiatives, the vital role that top administrators play in expressing support for assessment, and the benefits of involving students in assessment programs and research. However, this track summary focuses primarily on the discussion that occurred during the last session of the conference, when each participant was asked to discuss key issues raised by track papers and discussion.

One of the challenges for improving the status and quality of program assessment in political science is the need to better integrate courses and program assessment. Several participants observed that faculty members typically think about their courses in isolation from the rest of the political science curriculum. Thus, participants concluded that faculty members may be more receptive to classroom and course-level assessment than they are to program assessment. Paradoxically, regional academic accrediting bodies require programmatic and/or institutional-level assessments. While classroom assessment is applauded, it must be

integrated with program assessment to meet the standards of regional and other accreditors. Several track contributors noted that the logical way to address this challenge is to identify how each course in the curriculum supports larger programmatic purposes, thereby aligning course assessment with programmatic student outcomes.

Track participants acknowledged that this effort will not be easy, since the challenges of connecting course and program assessment are symptomatic of larger issues identified by several track papers. Typically, program curricula in political science are idiosyncratic and distributional, and faculty members primarily seek to create and teach courses that align with their individual specialty. If the curriculum is not intentional in its development of students' knowledge and skills, then it will be difficult to create program assessments that accurately measure the essence of the degree program.

Although most track participants reported that their interest in assessment stemmed from accreditation pressures, a number of participants argued for a larger, more purposive motivation for assessment. Rather than just doing assessment to comply with accreditors' requirements, they believed that the APSA should be helping departments think about using assessment more strategically. Specifically, these participants suggested that more assessment should be designed to respond to the larger higher education predicament. As higher education comes under increased pressure and scrutiny from regional accreditors and the public, demonstrating strong evidence of improved student learning outcomes in important skills, knowledge, and attitudes could be the most successful way to change the public's view. Embracing assessment as a change agent could also help programs avert even more draconian assessment mandates. Collecting information on successful assessment strategies would help the discipline identify political science's unique learning outcomes and role in higher education. Given the discipline's use of social scientific methods and its development of policy analysis, several participants envisioned the potential for political science to serve as a policy consultant for higher education. Why not use our discipline to help advance the interests of higher education in general? Better curricular planning, data collection, and dissemination strategies could enable higher education to "tell its story" more effectively.

The opposite strategy for assessment was also outlined by track participants. This perspective suggests that it is important for the APSA working group to identify ways to comply with assessment mandates that do not require much time or investment of other resources. Those who suspect that the assessment movement will be a temporary feature of accreditation might be more likely to embrace a minimal compliance model. Similarly, those whose administration provides neither resources nor support for assessment are likely to favor the minimal model.

The pressures from accreditors, the public, and a highly competitive world economy suggest that demands for accountability are here to stay for the foreseeable future. Some panel participants focused their assessments and analyses on the macro-level needs of higher education, while others limited assessment efforts to minimal compliance. In this regard, the Program Assessment track seems representative of higher education. As political science departments consider which strategy to pursue, the APSA working group should investigate programs in the country, offer support materials, and report on the costs and benefits of effective practices in assessment to help departments navigate their place on the assessment spectrum.

## TRACK: SIMULATIONS AND ROLE PLAY I: AMERICAN POLITICS AND INSTITUTIONS

**Chris Stangl**, *West Chester University*

**Henrik M. Schatzinger**, *Ripon College*

**Christopher J. Schaefer**, *George Washington University and Ripon College*

**Ryan Emenaker**, *College of the Redwoods*

The Simulations and Role Play I track conducted a series of engaged discussions regarding what a successful simulation requires and what aspects are customizable, given the wide variety of contexts in which a simulation may be used. Recognizing the presence of significant variance in available time, institutional support (both financial and technical), student demographics, and class size, the track concluded that any successful simulation must include several core components, which can be presented in a variety of ways. Chief among these components are a balance between providing necessary structure and allowing room for engaged student creativity and the need for thorough, reflective debriefing.

Several of the presentations made note of the importance of role assignment, especially the strategic value of having the instructor assign roles. Despite the potential cost of student disgruntlement at not being allowed to choose their roles for themselves, track participants largely coalesced around the view that role assignment was an effective check against the free-rider problem, and that it helped bring competitive balance to more involved simulations. Jeffery Osgood and Chris Stangl ("Teaching Millennials Urban Political Theory: The Case of the Local Government Simulation") imposed roles after administering a personality inventory that took different learning styles into account. This step was well-received by other track members and may be a particularly effective strategy when dealing with both the various learning styles of Millennials and classes featuring a high number of nontraditional students from different backgrounds. Moreover, the prudent assignment of roles provides an opportunity for more cynical students to work through a political decision-making process, perhaps shedding new light on the reality of political institutions and policymaking.

Another point of discussion was how to best ensure that student enjoyment of the simulation is connected to learning goals and is not just a function of the "game" element involved. To this end, several presenters incorporated a reward structure into their simulations that was tied to effective performance. Luke Perry ("Comparing Electoral Simulations for the Presidency and Congress") ran a successful election simulation that intentionally assigned students with different ideological views to the same campaign team and rewarded the team that won a congressional election. Kent Park ("Learning by Experiencing the Law Making Process: Congressional Simulation Exercise") imposed a forced distribution of grades at the end of a competitive simulation that assigned students to one of a number of specific political profiles and required the students to compete against each other in acquiring political capital. Both presenters reported a high level of student creativity that largely stemmed from how well the structure of the simulations allowed game elements to dovetail with course objectives.

Simulations that placed a greater emphasis on performative elements also stressed the need to link the role-playing aspect