

POLITICAL SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY CLUSTER
Thursday, March 24, 2011
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Lake Worth Campus

Before separating, the Political Science/Geography Cluster met first with and discussed Items 1, 2 and 4 with the full Social Sciences Cluster.

ITEM 1. What are discipline-specific ethics that are currently being used in your courses?

Discussion: Since ethical concerns are an integral part of the study of politics, cluster members regularly discuss ethics in all their classes, looking at ethics in government, covering differences between what is legal and what is ethical, and discussing current events to illustrate and stress the importance of understanding ethics as a key part of the discipline.

Data/data source: (where appropriate) None. Discussion only.

Action: No action taken.

ITEM 2. Information literacy is the ability to find, evaluate, organize, and use information and it is one of the general education learning outcomes at the College. How do faculty in this Cluster approach information literacy through assignments, projects or activities. Please provide some examples.

Discussion: Cluster members regularly approach information literacy through a variety of assignments, projects and activities, most particularly through research assignments. There is regular and detailed discussion with students about proper selection of sources, the importance of working with scholarly data, recognizing biased sources of information, and use of appropriate source citation and format.

Data/data source: (where appropriate) None. Discussion only.

Action: No action taken.

ITEM 3. Nomination of Courses for Inclusion in General Education – discussion and cluster approval (if applicable).

Discussion: The cluster discussed the various courses offered in Political Science and Geography and determined that no changes to the General Education were needed in these areas.

Data/data source: (where appropriate) Palm Beach State College Catalog, listing of General Education courses and courses offered in Political Science and Geography.

Action: The cluster was unanimous in its consensus that no courses from the Political Science and Geography disciplines should be added to General Education at this time.

ITEM 4. **The General Education Assessment Committee** has selected two learning outcomes for the College to target for improvement. They are:

Communications: Develop effective communication skills for a variety of audiences.

Critical Thinking: Engage in purposeful reasoning to reach sound conclusions.

Please review the assessment material in the handouts and indicate: 1) how your cluster can support the proposed improvement strategies; 2) other strategies that you plan to carry out directly in your classrooms/clusters that will improve student learning in communications and critical thinking; and 3) new ideas for improvement strategies that can impact the College as a whole.

Discussion: Cluster members noted that they would have liked to have had more time to review the data and information provided in the “Summary of General Education Assessment” and its corresponding “Handout for Cluster.doc,” as these materials had been received by email two days prior to the cluster meeting. Also, cluster members believed that further information, a clearer explanation and more specifics about both the suggested improvement strategies and the provided data were needed. The detailed assessment results at <http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x17021.xml> did not provide enough additional information to facilitate as meaningful a discussion as cluster members would have liked, but they reviewed and discussed the provided documents.

Data/data source: (where appropriate) General Education Results: 2010-2011, Institutional Measures: 2010-2011, and Suggested Improvement Strategies: 2010-2011.

Action: Cluster members reached a unanimous consensus that they would like an additional opportunity to provide input on 1) the proposed improvement strategies, 2) other strategies that are classroom- and discipline-specific that would improve student learning in communications and critical thinking and 3) new ideas for improvement strategies that can impact the college as a whole, but agreed that they did not support changes to current writing requirements or writing across the curriculum as a way to further the two learning outcomes.

OTHER. TEXTBOOKS.

Discussion: Cluster members discussed the textbooks currently being used in all the courses and the possibility of future changes. No textbook changes will be made at this time.

Data/data source: (where appropriate) None. Discussion only.

Action: No action taken.

Attendance:	Victor Aikhionbare	Terry Randolph
	Andrew Luma	Shari MacLachlan

Submitted by:

Shari L. MacLachlan, Scribe

c. Minutes Distribution List