

**Summary of Critical Trained PLO**  
Department of Political Science  
2013-14

**1. Assessment Method.** The Political Science Department used two direct assessment methods during the 2013-14 academic year. First, we applied the AAC&U's "Inquiry and Value Rubric"

research, and more consistent emphasis of methodology in our upper-division courses. Second, Drs. Penksa and Knecht have discussed ways to better connect what students are learning in POL 40 with what we are doing in our upper-division courses. We believe that considerable improvement will come from very simple changes, like using consistent terminology (e.g., using the phrase “qualitative methods” instead of “case study methods”). Third, the results suggest upper-division students need more guidance and review on research methods than we’ve been giving them. Fourth, we will continue to build and learn from our pre/post dataset. The results have been very interesting and have already lead Prof. Knecht to change the way he teaches POL 40, which will hopefully improve students’ understanding and retention.