***STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM***

***SUMMARY FORM AY 2017-2018***

Please complete a separate worksheet for each academic program (major, minor) at each level (undergraduate, graduate) in your department. Worksheets are due to CASA this year by **June**

**15, 2018**. Worksheets should be sent electronically to [kjsanders@eiu.edu](mailto:kjsanders@eiu.edu) and should also be submitted to your college dean. For information about assessment or help with your assessment plans, visit the Assessment webpage at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/> or contact Karla Sanders in CASA at 581-6056.

Minor in Pre-Law Studies (Interdisciplinary)

**Degree and**

**Program Name:**

# Submitted By:

**Karen Swenson**

**Please use size 10 font or larger.**

**PART ONE**

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| What are the learning objectives? | How, where, and when are they assessed? | What are the expectations? | What are the results? | Committee/ person responsible? How are results shared? |
| 1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the structure and operation of the American legal system. | The instructor of relevant courses in the Political Science Department that are options for the “case-oriented courses”\* required for the Pre-Law Minor reports the score on the objective portion of the Midterm Examination, which is designed to test students’ knowledge of the structure and operation of the American legal system.  \*Spring 2018: PLS 3543; Fall 2017: PLS 3523. (The Pre-Law Minors taking this course are mostly juniors and seniors. N=17) | A score of at least 80% will indicate that student learning was satisfactory, in that the student exhibited “competence.” Goals for the percentage of students who meet expectations (50%); those who significantly exceed expectations by getting a 90% or better (25%); and those who do not meet expectations (25%). | The average of all scores was 82.1%.  64.7% (11) not only met but significantly exceeded expectations; 35.3% (6) did not meet expectations. | The instructor of the courses in which the traits listed at left are taught is aware of the results; if the instructor chooses to do so, the courses will be revised as necessary to insure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate required skills. In addition, the results are shared with the Pre-Law Minor Advisory Committee. |
| 2. Students will demonstrate the ability to understand and analyze legal conflicts. | The instructor of relevant courses in the Political Science Department that are options for the “case-oriented courses”\* required for the Pre-Law Minor completes a Primary Trait Analysis rubric of the essay portion of the Final Examination, which is designed to test students’ ability to understand and analyze legal conflicts. \*Spring 2018: PLS 3543; Fall 2017: PLS 3523. (The Pre-Law Minors taking these courses are mostly juniors and seniors. N=17) | A score of 3 on each of the five parts of the PTA: provide factual information relevant to the conflict; identify and discuss the key legal issue involved in the conflict; discuss the arguments raised by each side in the conflict; explain how the conflict was resolved; and explain the broader impact of the conflict. Goals for the percentage of students who meet expectations (50%); those who exceed expectations (25%); and those who do not meet expectations (25%). | The average score was 3.86. 76% (13) met or exceeded expectations;  24% (4) did not meet expectations. | Same as above. |

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| 3. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in writing. | The instructor of relevant courses in the Political Science Department that are options for the “case-oriented courses”\* required for the Pre-Law Minor completes a Primary Trait Analysis rubric of the Research Paper. \* Spring 2018: PLS 3543 and PLS 4853; Fall 2017: PLS 3523. (The Pre-Law Minors taking these courses are mostly juniors and seniors. N=23) | A score of 3 on each of the five parts of the PTA: establish and maintain a clear focus; organize her writing; develop her writing sample; display a sophisticated writing style; and exhibit error-free mechanics. Goals for the percentage of students who meet expectations (50%); those who exceed expectations (25%); and those who do not meet expectations (25%). | The average score was 4.07. 78.3% (18) met or exceeded expectations. 21.7% (5) students failed to meet expectations. | Same as above. |
| 4. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and synthesize relevant information. | Same as above. | A score of 3 on each of the four parts of the PTA: conduct research for her writing sample; support her findings and conclusions; exhibit knowledge of the subject area; and demonstrate critical thinking skills. Goals for the percentage of students who meet expectations (50%); those who exceed expectations (25%); and those who do not meet expectations (25%). | The average score was 3.77.82.6% (19) met or exceeded expectations. 17.4% (4) students failed to meet expectations. | Same as above. |
| 5. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively orally. | The instructor of relevant courses in the Political Science Department that are options for the “case-oriented courses”\* required for the Pre-Law Minor completes a Primary Trait Analysis rubric evaluating several aspects of how well students communicate orally during an Oral Presentation. The rubric also offers an overall holistic score of each student’s oral communication skills. The instructor ranked student oral performances on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being not competent and 4 being highly competent.  \* Spring 2018: PLS 3543 and PLS 4853 (The Pre-Law Minors taking these courses are mostly juniors and seniors. N=12) | We anticipate that 80% of students will achieve a score of 3 on the holistic score component of the PTA. A score of 3 will indicate that student learning was satisfactory, in that the student exhibited “competence.” | The average score was 4. 100% (12) rubrics scored the students at a 4. | Same as above. |
| 6. Students will demonstrate the ability to function as responsible citizens. | A ‘Responsible Citizen’ survey was developed by the Pre-Law Coordinator, with the help of the Internet. The survey was delivered to all Pre-Law Minor students by way of Qualtrics in May 2018 (N=46). The Survey has 10 questions with 3 possible answers geared to gage a high (1), medium (2), or low (3) level of responsible citizenship. (Sorry that the directionality of the responses is coded differently for this learning goal than the others, i.e., low numbers are good rather than bad.) | The expectation is that the average score for all questions relevant to learning objective #6 will be less than or equal to 2.0. | The average rating was 1.24. For four of the questions, all responders selected a (1), indicating the highest level of responsible citizenship. All students met or exceeded expectations.  The survey response rate was only 10/46 (21.7%). It certainly makes sense that the students with the highest levels of ‘responsible citizenship’ self-selected to respond to the survey. I therefore place limited stock in these results. | Same as above. |

**PART TWO**

Describe what your program’s assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the CASA Director’s comments on last year’s report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

The “responsible citizenship” learning objective was assessed for the first time. The Pre-Law Coordinator developed an assessment rubric (a Pre-Law Citizenship Survey, with questions adapted from a survey discovered on the Internet). The Survey was administered to all Pre-Law Minors using Qualtrics.

As the data above indicates, our students met or exceeded our expectations for all learning objectives but one. The percentage of students that did not meet our expectations for learning objective one, “students will demonstrate an understanding of the structure and operation of the American legal system”, was a bit higher than anticipated. However, results were better than they were last year. This may be because the Instructor in the courses that teach this material took last year’s assessment results to heart, and placed more emphasis on the nuts and bolts basics that this learning goal embodies. It must also be noted that the Pre-Law Minor attracts some students that do not have the ability or motivation to in fact attend law school. Some of these students sign up for the Minor, and their performance in some of the courses included in the Minor causes them to drop their minor.

There has been some discussion of including a learning goal for “quantitative reasoning”, but there is little enthusiasm for following through on this as there is not a clear way to assess this in the courses in the Pre-Law Minor curriculum that most students take. That includes the required courses, and most of the ‘case-oriented’ courses.

Overall: During this academic year, we continued to employ our assessment rubric as a tool for direct measurement of our learning objectives. We have found that this tool continues to be useful in assessing the key learning measures adopted by the Pre-Law Minor Advisory Committee. We intend to continue its use.

**PART THREE**

Summarize changes and improvements in **curriculum, instruction, and learning** that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

The coursework for PLS 3523 and PLS 3543 placed more emphasis on the basics of the structure and operation of the legal system, to promote more student learning concerning learning goal one. While some improvement occurred over last year, better learning is still expected. Thus for the upcoming academic year, PLS 3523 and PLS 3543 will place even more emphasis on these basics.

The assessment effort for the “responsible citizenship” goal will continue, but strategies will be employed to improve the survey response rate. One idea is to send out the survey right after spring break, when students have a refreshed commitment to academics at EIU. Also, follow-up reminders can be used to contact students that did not complete the survey.

We are pleased with the writing and speaking skills of our students, and will continue efforts in and out of the classroom to assist students in developing those skills.

We will continue our efforts to improve the quality of the Pre-Law Program. While there had been a national decline in student interest in law school over the past few years, that trend is reversing course. The national decline was reflected in a diminishing number of Minors here at EIU, and we expect that to reverse course as well. As such, maintaining a high quality Pre-Law Program is a priority.

While this is not a direct result of assessment, we are pleased that EIU has entered into an Accelerated Law Degree Program Agreement (or 3+3 agreement) with Northern Illinois University College of Law beginning Fall of 2018. Students would be eligible to enter law school after completing 3 years at EIU. The 3 year undergraduate curriculum at EIU includes some, but not all aspects of the Pre-Law Minor. We anticipate that this program will generate more student interest in Pre-Law at EIU.