

Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Politics
Off-Campus Programs
Master of Arts in International Affairs
Master of Arts in Congressional and Presidential Studies

Assessment Measures

The Department of Politics uses the following measures to assess learning outcomes in its two off-campus Master of Arts programs:

- Capstone courses and comprehensive exams
- Grades and enrollment totals from capstone courses and comprehensive exams
- Pass rates for comprehensive examinations
- Number of graduates each academic year
- Job placement/career advancement for students

Assessment Findings

Capstone Course Discussion (Attachments 1, 2, 3):

The Department of Politics analyzed the grades and enrollment totals in the capstone courses in the off-campus programs in International Affairs (MAIA) and Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) over a five year period (AY0203 to AY0607).

CPOL 500: Introduction to International Affairs is the MAIA program's capstone course. It is also the only required course for the M.A. degree. Thus, achieving effective student learning in this course is vital to the success of each student and of the overall program. CPOL 500 has had a relatively stable course enrollment and grade outcome over the measured period (see attachment 1). With the exception of Fall 2004, the course has had an average enrollment of over 10 students. Over the period of time analyzed, the average grade outcome for the course was 3.54 (between B+ and A-). The data derived from this course along with the high pass rate for the MA degree in International Affairs, suggests that the department is meeting its student learning goals in the MAIA program.

CPOL 671: The Modern Congress is one of two required capstone courses in the Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) program. (See attachment 2). Here too, achieving student learning that can be measured effectively is imperative. During the 2003-2007 period CPOL 671 has maintained an enrollment between five and ten students, and an average grade outcome of 3.28 (between B and B+). Two withdrawals and one incomplete were given over the measured period.

CPOL 626: The Modern Presidency became a CAPS program capstone/required course in AY 06/07 (see attachment 3). It is taught annually in sequence with CPOL 671. During the only year in which data was available, the course had ten students, and their grades were evenly split between the A/A- range and B+/B range. The overall grade outcome was 3.41 (slightly below B+). The enrollment numbers and grade achievements for both CPOL 671 and CPOL 626 indicate that the department is meeting its student learning goals in the CAPS program.

Comprehensive Exam Discussion (Attachment 4):

The Department of Politics analyzed the pass rate and enrollment numbers for its off-campus programs' comprehensive exams in International Affairs (MAIA) and Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) during the Spring 2007, Fall 2007, and Spring 2008 semesters.

Passage of the comprehensive exam is a degree and graduation requirement for both the MAIA and CAPS programs. Enrollment in the exam increased in each semester analyzed (5, 7, 14 over both programs).

Over the three semester period, 23 MAIA students and three CAPS student took the M.A. comprehensive exam in their respective fields of study. Of the 23 MAIA test takers, 22 passed on the first attempt, and one failed and then passed on the second and final attempt. All three CAPS test takers passed the exam on the first attempt. The exam format has remained consistent through this period of time, and the high first attempt pass rate, combined with the perfect overall pass rate, indicates that the department is meeting its goals for measuring student learning in both the comprehensive exams and in the overall programs.

Graduate Degrees Awarded Discussion (Attachment 5):

The Department of Politics analyzed the number of graduates in the off-campus programs in International Affairs (MAIA) and Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) over a six year period (AY0203 to AY0708).

Rates of graduation in both programs fluctuated annually with the increases and decreases in enrollment over the measured period. The CAPS program, much smaller in comparison to the MAIA program, had one semester in which no student graduated. Beyond this anomaly, the CAPS program consistently graduated an average of three students each academic year; the MAIA program consistently graduated an average of ten students each academic year. The regularity with which both programs have graduated students indicates that the department is meeting its goals for student learning in both degree programs.

Job Placement/Career Advancement Discussion:

The Department of Politics has informally monitored the job placement/career advancement of its off-campus students in International Affairs (MAIA) and Congressional and Presidential Studies (CAPS) over the last three academic years.

Graduates of the CAPS and MAIA programs are employed in various departments within the executive and legislative branches of the United States government, the United States military, and private sector organizations. Such employment includes the Capitol Hill Police Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the United States Army, the United States Navy, the United States Coast Guard, the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, ARINC, Inc., the Institute of Defense Analyses, the National Association of Schools of Public Administration and Affairs, and the American Gaming Association. That our students are able to obtain careers and advance careers in fields related to their graduate studies in our programs is further evidence that the department is meeting its goals for student learning.

Curricular Improvements

This assessment analysis and the department's ongoing review of its off-campus programs and students have led to two conclusions about curricular improvements.

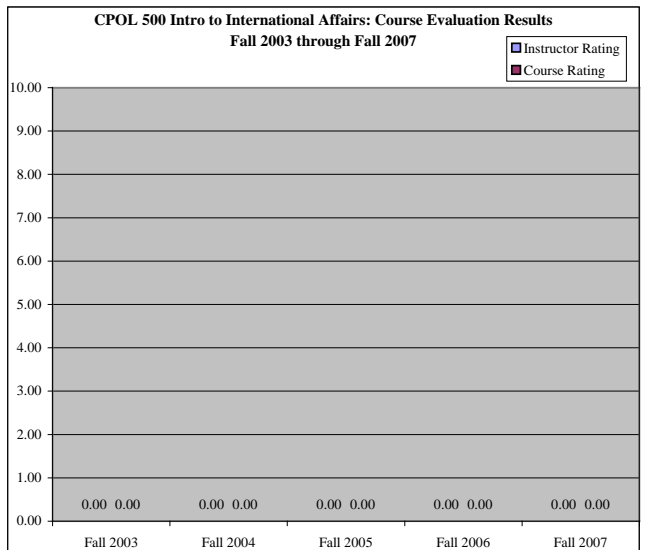
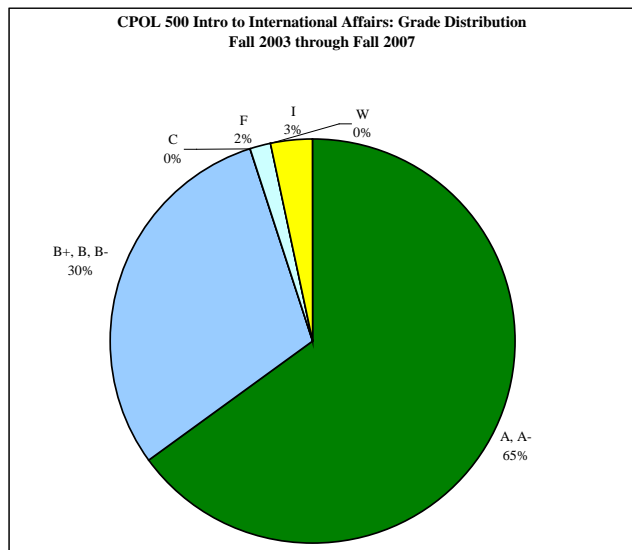
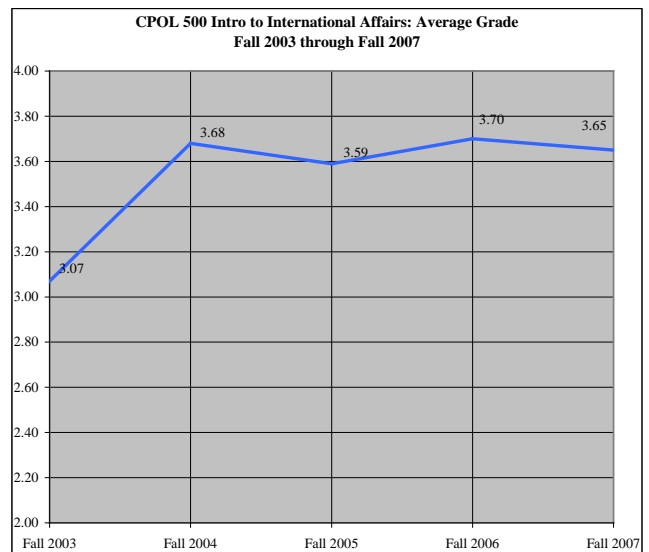
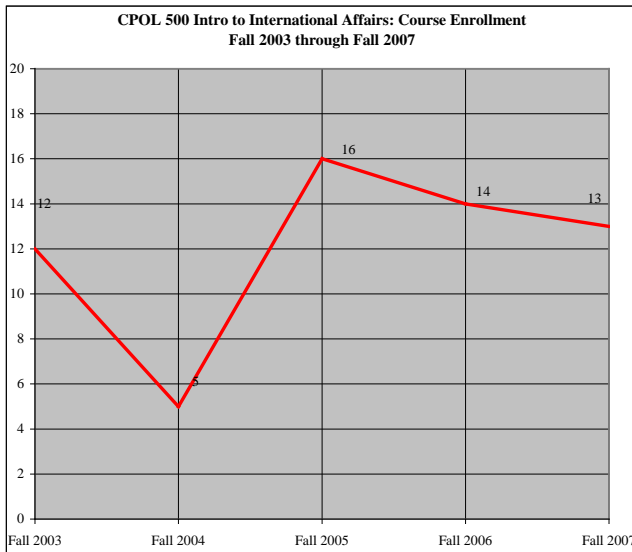
1. During the last two years, review of data and consultation with faculty and students has led to a major change in the CAPS program. As was indicated above, the CAPS program introduced a second required course for the degree beginning with the Spring 2007 semester. The addition of a capstone course on the Modern Presidency (CPOL 626) was made as a result of student and faculty desires for an expanded horizon of degree learning from this program's previous incarnation as the Congressional Studies Program. The quantitative success of this new capstone course has already been indicated in attachment 3. Its success is likely to continue in the future. An indirect quantitative measure of this course's success can also be observed in that all CAPS students have passed the comprehensive examination within the context of this additional course work requirement. In light of the success of this addition to the CAPS program curriculum, a similar review of structural changes to the MAIA program capstone course design has been initiated.
2. Job placement and career advancement is an important aspect of the off-campus programs. The data presented above has been captured informally through periodic surveys and informal conversations with students. A more effective and consistent mechanism for capturing this data needs to be generated for the future. This will likely take the shape of entrance and exit interviews with students in the program, combined with annual surveys of the off-campus student body.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Institutional Assessment

COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
CPOL 500 Intro to International Affairs

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution							Course Evaluation Results				
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	F	W	I	Course Eval. #	%	Instructor Rating Avg.	StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	StDev.
Fall 2003	12	3.07	1.11	5	5		1			1		0.00%			
Fall 2004	5	3.68	0.25	4	1							0.00%			
Fall 2005	16	3.59	0.34	10	6							0.00%			
Fall 2006	14	3.70	0.32	10	3					1		0.00%			
Fall 2007	13	3.65	0.23	10	3							0.00%			

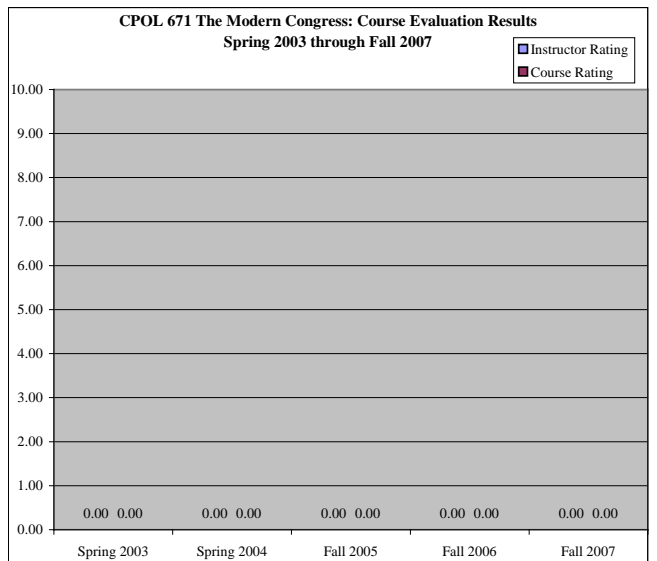
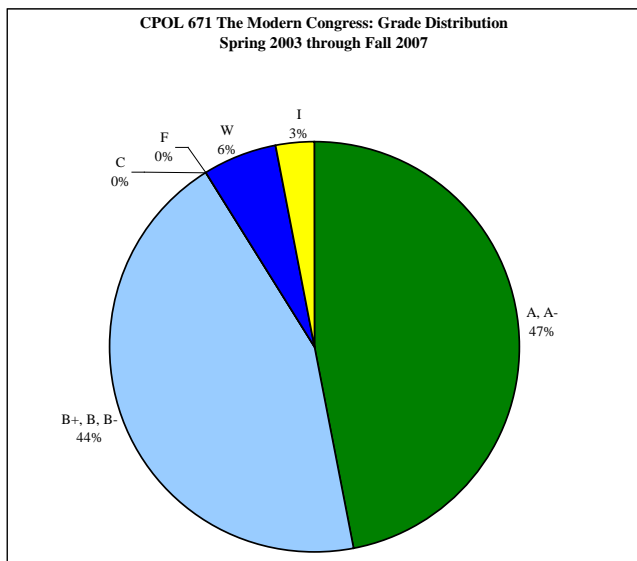
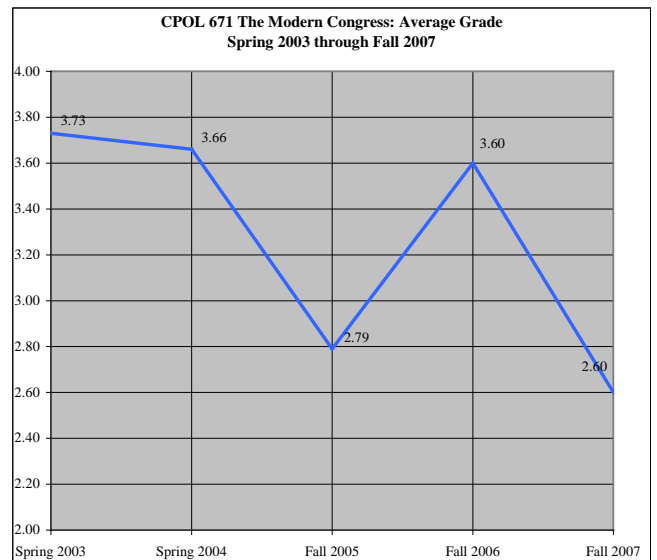
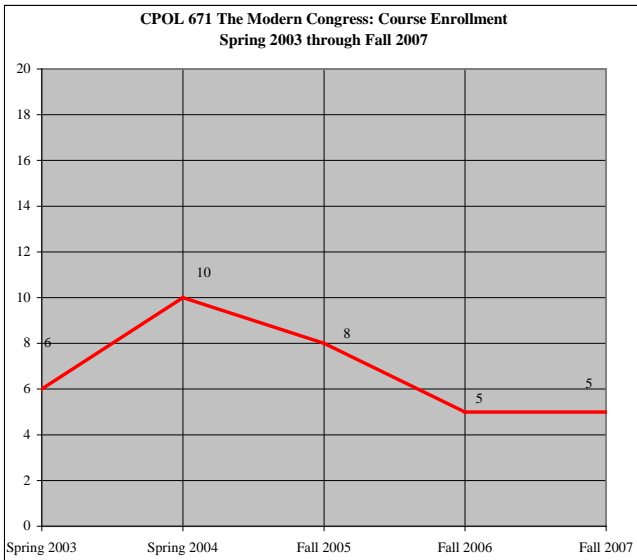
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COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
CPOL 671 The Modern Congress

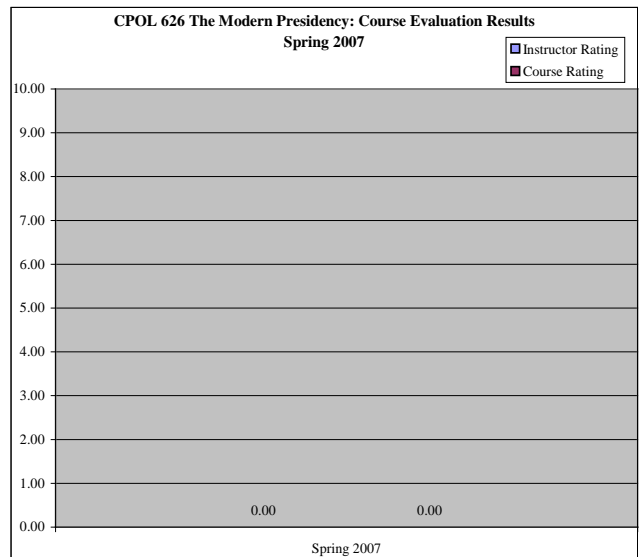
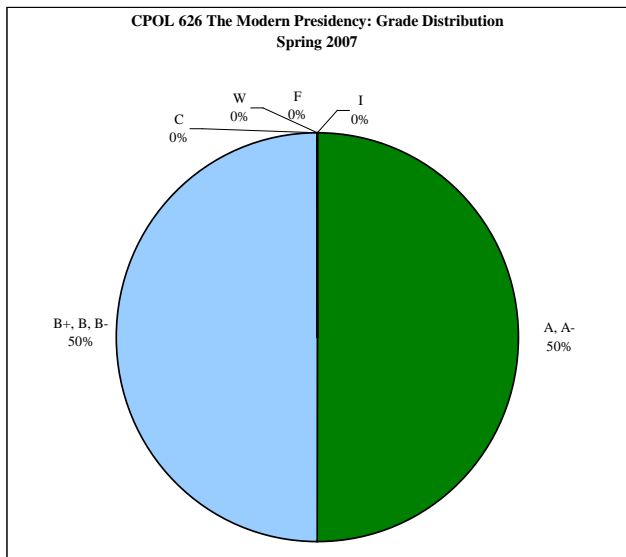
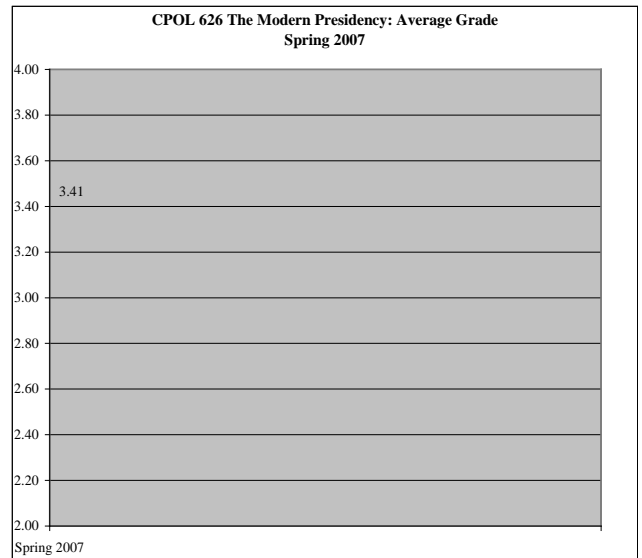
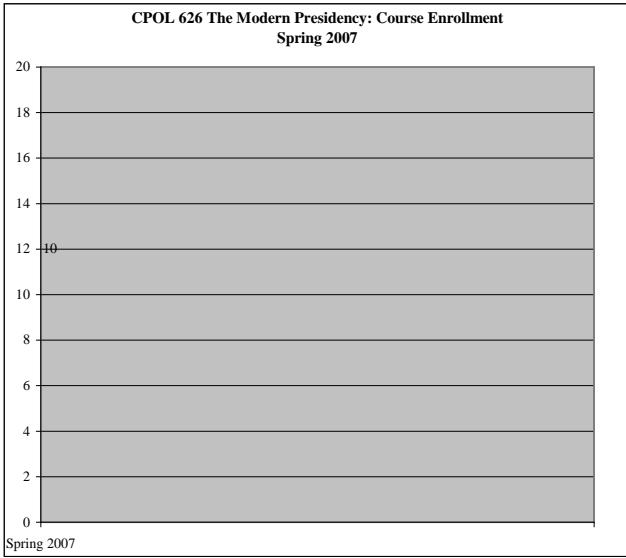
Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution						Course Evaluation Results							
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	F	W	I	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.		
Spring 2003	6	3.73	0.26	5	1							0.00%					
Spring 2004	10	3.66	0.32	5	3			2				0.00%					
Fall 2005	8	2.79	1.18	2	6							0.00%					
Fall 2006	5	3.60	0.20	3	1					1		0.00%					
Fall 2007	5	2.60	1.53	1	4							0.00%					
		3.276															



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COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
CPOL 626 The Modern Presidency

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades Grade Distribution						Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	F	W	I	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.	
Spring 2007	10	3.41	0.45	5	5							0.00%				



Attachment 4

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Outcomes Assessment

**OFF-CAMPUS POLITICS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM
DATA: DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS**

Masters in International Affairs (MAIA)

	Spring 2007	Fall 2007*	Spring 2008*	Totals
Test Takers	5	6	12	23
Pass	4	6	12	22
Fail	1	0	0	1
Pass Rate (%)	0.80	1	1	0.96

* Failed test taker from S07 passed exam in F07

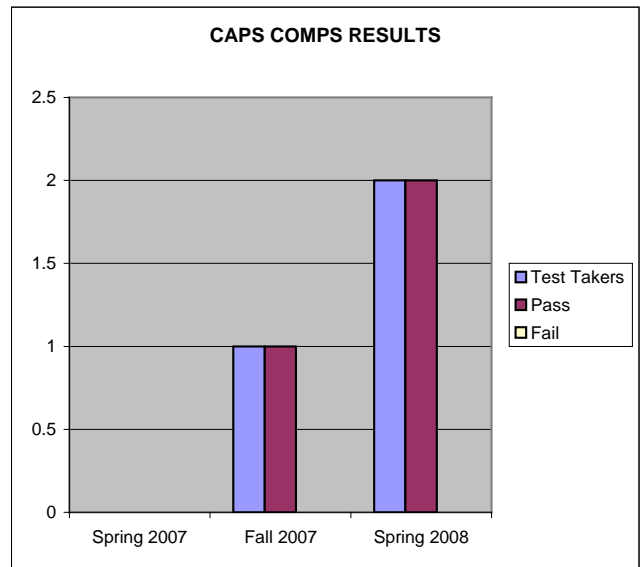
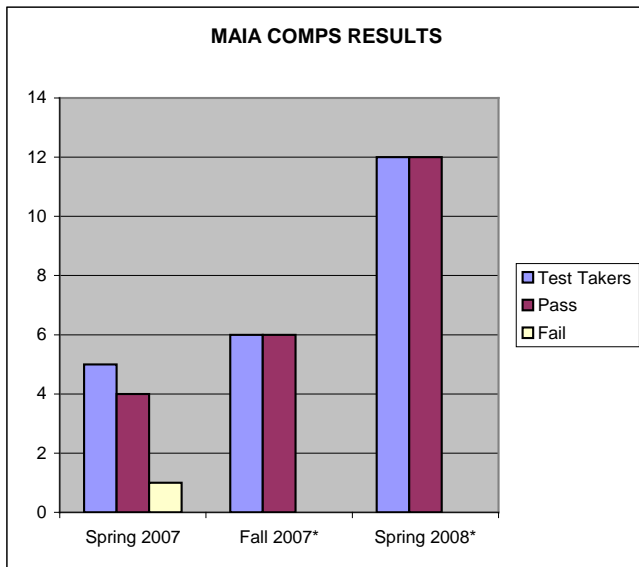
* 2 test takers joint J.D./M.A. program

Congressional and Presidential Studies Program

	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Totals
Test Takers	0	1	2	3
Pass	0	1	2	3
Fail	0	0	0	0
Pass Rate (%)	N/A	1	1	1

Overall Pass Rate (%) for Both Programs 0.96

Overall Pass Rate (%) for Both Programs (1st and 1.00



Attachment 5

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Institutional Assessment

**GRADUATE DEGREES AWARDED BY DEGREE LEVEL, PLAN AND SUBPLAN
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS--OFF CAMPUS
AY0203 to AY 0708**

		AY0203	AY0304	AY0405	AY0506	AY0607	AY0708	Average	Totals
Plan	Subplan								
Master's									
CONGRST-MA		2	2	7	0	2	3	3	16
INTLAFF-MA		8	16	6	5	7	18	10	60
Total		10	18	13	5	9	21	13	76

