

Blending Qualitative and Quantitative Methods for Program Evaluation: The Application
and Insights of the Exit Interview

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Synopsis

In the panoply of approaches to assessment, this paper will argue that we need to examine the advantages of blending qualitative and quantitative methods. Each has specific advantages and limitations not only in the types of information it yields, but also in its ability to produce changes in academic programs and practices. Following an investigation of these advantages and limitations, this paper will focus on the unique contributions of exit interviews. This method has not received a lot of attention in the assessment literature, but provides a relatively simple, cost-effective means for eliciting important and sometimes provocative insights into how students actually experienced their academic program. Some of these insights will reflect unique personal experience, varying from student to student. Others will be quite consistent. Both types of information are important to understand and suggest different reforms for the program. In addition the interviews can help elicit explanations and meaningful supplements for data gathered from quantitative methods such as standardized exams and surveys. The quantitative methods yield data that is easy to report to external audiences, but interpreting the data and using it to produce changes in the program can be quite challenging. In addition survey and test data often raise more questions than they answer. Interviews with students can assist faculty in understanding the puzzlements raised by other measures. They also have the advantage of providing students the opportunity to reflect upon and explain their learning experiences and priorities. Truman State University's experience with interviews permits others to observe issues of design, reporting, and use. It also provides a concrete example of blending qualitative and quantitative data that as is advocated by many social science methodologists.

For social scientists, expectations for assessment pose methodological challenges and debates similar to more traditional research in the field. Various quantitative and qualitative techniques are viable with ardent support offered by the proponents of each. Initially demands for assessment are hostilely received and departments' assessment motivation is low. (McClain, Krueger & Kangas, 1989) During this initial phase, the tendency is to resist assessment or to look for the easiest way possible to meet the requirements for minimal compliance. Over time and depending on the organization environment, motivations to move beyond compliance may permit a more ambitious set of assessment choices. Many articles and conference papers have focused on the organizational conditions that contribute to effective assessment programs. (Young & Knight, 1993; Ewell, 1988; Cartwright & Young, 2000; Cartwright & Young, 1999, Peterson & Einarson, 2001.) Willingness to blend multiple assessment measures often requires that the faculty members have the motivations and resources characteristic of post-resistance stages of assessment. However, adoption of the qualitative measures also enhances acceptance of assessment by more members of the academic academy.

The recent advances in the scholarship of teaching and learning have added new incentives for faculty to see assessment as an activity worth their time. However, even as faculty warm up to the concept of assessment as an academically worthy enterprise, the methodological debates that were characteristic of the assessment movement in the 1980s (and best captured in a brief article by Alexander Astin's (1982) characterization of the nihilistic perspective) continue to play out. The heated nature of the debates seems to reflect a similar set of arguments to the debates between the behavioralists and the traditionalists. In a small attempt to move the dialogue forward, this paper posits that in the panoply of approaches to assessment, there is a need to examine the benefits of blending qualitative and quantitative methods – (perhaps somewhat analogous to the post-behavior movement).

Each type of assessment has advantages and limitations not only in the types of information it yields, but also in its ability to produce changes in academic programs and practices. Following an investigation of these advantages and limitations, this paper will focus on the unique contributions of exit interviews by presenting a brief case history of Truman State University's experience with adding exit interviews to its existing assessment system of nationally recognized exams, surveys, and capstones. While a fair amount of literature exists on the latter three, much less attention has been devoted to the use of interviews for assessment in political science. Kelly and Klunk (2003) found that 24% of political science departments indicated that they exit interviews, but there was no elaboration beyond this finding. Similarly in Banta's encyclopedic attempt to document 165 successful assessment programs, only one was interview-based, and upon reading, it was really a focus group program. (Banta, Lund, Black, & Oblander, 1995) The political science program at Truman has been using interviews as part of its assessment of the major since 1989 and has found them a relatively simple, cost-effective means for eliciting important and sometimes provocative insights into how students actually experience their academic program. This paper attempts to document the potential for this integrated approach. It will also suggest several propositions about the relative

advantages of quantitative and qualitative methods. Finally, the paper will argue that many of these findings are generalizable to other institutions.

Literature Review

Quantitative Methods

Social scientists have debated aspects of behavioralism and its attendant quantitative methods for decades. Most political scientists consider the benefits of quantitative research methods self-evident. However, when looking for clear statements of the advantages of quantitative research methods, many scholars portray the advantages of quantitative methods by describing the weaknesses of qualitative methods. Quantitative methods hold the promise of correcting the weaknesses of qualitative methods. Unlike traditional qualitative approaches, which tend to be anecdotal, noncomparative, atheoretical, too legalistic, too descriptive, and not falsifiable; quantitative methods are generalizable, comparable, theory-based, explanatory, and falsifiable. (For example, see Macridis 1992; Popper, 1992; Susser, 1992). Quantitative methods typically supply summaries of many cases utilizing techniques that emphasize validity and reliability. Thus they can be replicated, compared, and generalized. These data are seen as more objective and scientific than qualitative data due to the large number of cases studied and the researcher's lower levels of involvement with the subjects.

Qualitative Methods

While quantitative methods tend to be analogous to the macro lens on a camera, qualitative methods can be compared to using a zoom lens. Qualitative approaches emphasize the importance of looking at issues in their natural setting and collecting detailed data through such techniques as case studies, participant observation, descriptive narratives, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. The researcher seeks an in depth, holistic picture of the subject and context under study. Miles and Huberman argue that qualitative methods allow one to "capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside,' through the process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding ..., and of suspending or 'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion." (1994, 6) It is also asserted that qualitative methods are better at revealing the complexity of social phenomena because it enables study of "latent, underlying, or nonobvious issues...." (10) Perhaps most related to the findings of this study is the assertion that "qualitative data are useful when one needs to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret *quantitative* data gathered from the same setting." (10)

Given the open-ended nature of many of the instruments used, researchers are likely to refine their understanding of the research problem as part of the process. They can then explore the nuances of these enhanced understandings by asking subjects for clarification and elaboration. Miles and Huberman caution the need to resist the development of conclusions during the process and to maintain "openness and skepticism." However, the tendency to form conclusions is a constant issue. Conclusions are initially "vague and inchoate", but increasingly become "explicit and grounded." (Miles & Huberman, 1994;

Glaser & Strauss, 1967) Unlike quantitative research, qualitative methods permit a more inductive and iterative approach.

Qualitative methods rely on analysis to be productive and some of this process such as the organization and summarization of data through coding can strip the data from the very richness that qualitative data provide. On the other hand, the researcher still needs to reduce the data to manageable proportions for analysis and dissemination of findings. Attempts to verify the findings of qualitative research typically are more challenging than quantitative methods. Paradoxically this sometimes begins to look like quantitative analysis as researchers use methods such as the coding, scoring rubrics, quantifying trends, and the demonstration of interrater reliability. Nevertheless, validation of the meanings that emerge are important to convince the skeptics that the findings are more than texts of interesting stories.

Qualitative methods are best employed to seek information that is:

- In-depth
- Holistic
- Offered from the perspective of the subject
- Complex

Qualitative processes are characterized as:

- Inductive
- Iterative and fluid
- Cumulative with respect to developing findings/conclusions
- Supplementary to explain, validate, illuminate, and reinterpret data
- Challenging with respect to data reduction and verification

Advantages and Disadvantages of Interview Methods

There are many criticisms of interview methods. Many of these criticisms were offered decades ago but still provide guidance for those who want to use the interview method. Some of these are:

1. There is a difference between what people say and do. (Deutscher, 1973)
2. The data is not as rich as participant-observation. (Becker & Geer, 1957)
3. The interviewee may not be telling the truth. (Dean and Whyte, 1958)

Additional disadvantages include that this method can be time-consuming, require well-trained interviewers, and results in voluminous quantities of material. The flexibility of the process may also produce unacceptable inconsistencies across interviews and interviewees may distort information through recall error, selective perception, or outright lying as mentioned above.

Face to face interviews offer many advantages though. They allow the interviewer to establish a rapport with the respondent that just does not occur with survey questionnaire methods. The interview also has the potential to see and hear respondents thereby

permitting increased information to contribute to interpretation. This dimension allows the researcher the opportunity to experience the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of responses. Complex issues may be handled more successfully in the interview than in a survey as they permit the researcher to explain questions when necessary, explore topics in depth, and ask follow-up questions to clarify statements. (ERIC/AE Staff, 1991)

In addition the interviews can help elicit explanations and meaningful supplements for data gathered from quantitative methods such as standardized exams and surveys. The quantitative methods yield data that is easy to report to external audiences, but interpreting the data and using it to produce changes in the program can be quite challenging. In addition survey and test data often raise more questions than they answer. Interviews with students can assist faculty in understanding the puzzlements raised by other measures. They also have the advantage of providing students the opportunity to reflect upon and explain their learning experiences and priorities. Truman State University's experience with interviews permits others to observe issues of design, reporting, and use. It also provides a concrete example of blending qualitative and quantitative data that as is advocated by many social science methodologists.

Interviews as Complements to Other Assessment Instruments at Truman

Quantitative methods of assessment have been part of Truman's program of assessment since 1973 when students were offered the opportunity to take a national exam in their major at university expense. Within several years the exams became requirements and campus-wide surveys were instituted. The university also began to systematically track graduates going to graduate and professional school and graduate employment success. Faculty reacted to the over-emphasis on quantitative assessment measures. While faculty could spend virtually no time on assessment and summary results were easy to interpret, faculty demanded that resources be allocated to more qualitative methods. These methods can be less costly monetarily to the university, but very costly in terms of faculty time. Nevertheless, faculty initiatives led to the addition of university-wide writing and liberal arts portfolios and major programs began to use their capstones as opportunities to assess students using locally developed assessments, many of which were qualitative like political science's interviews. These qualitative methods were more difficult to report to external audiences, but were very consistent with the university administration's promise to never make decisions based on a single type of data. (McClain & Krueger, 1985; Krueger & Heisserer, 1987; Magruder, McManis, & Young, McManis, & Young, 1997)

The Structure and Application of the Exit Interview in the Political Science Program at Truman

For approximately twenty years, the Political Science faculty has conducted an exit interview with all students in the discipline's capstone course, Senior Seminar. Faculty members in the mid-1980s were able to get the opportunity to team teach the seminar by presenting a strong case based on assessment data to move from its distributive curriculum to a curriculum with a consciously sequenced rationale. The capstone course was created as the culminating experience in the plan and was offered only in the Spring semester until 1990. The class is required for all political science majors and extends and

reinforces for students many of the most important theories and concepts used in the discipline. Typically, a week is spent focusing on group theory, elite and class-based theories, democratization and other major approaches in the field. A week is also devoted to the evolution of the discipline, and another to the methodologies employed. For the first ten weeks of the course, students read classic articles on each approach and write weekly synthetic papers over them. Each student is also required to write and present orally a fifteen-page, empirically oriented research design. Each student also serves as a discussant of a peer's paper during presentations. Thus students going through the exit interview have spent an entire semester pondering the discipline and how political scientists study politics. To the extent that Senior Seminar refreshes what and how students have been taught in the discipline, issues of the major are fresh in their minds. The intent of the interview is to get feedback from students on the major and their larger learning experience at Truman.

Senior Seminar is a team-taught course and since 1990 one section has been offered in the fall and one in the spring. Enrollment ranges from 10 to 25 students. The number of faculty assigned to the course has varied over the years. Until 1990, all faculty members (3-4) team-taught the course each semester. As the department grew to six and then eight, half of the members of the faculty taught the course each semester. Changes in faculty teaching loads in the late 1990s necessitated that the course be taught by a two-person team, with the result that each faculty member serves on one seminar team one academic year, while having the next year "off." Importantly, all faculty teach the seminar and interview students once each two-year cycle. Two faculty members are present for each student interview.

Each interview lasts for a period of 20-30 minutes. Two faculty members conduct the interview and record student responses during the last two weeks or so of the semester. Students reserve the day and time of the interview several weeks in advance of the first interview. Interviews are conducted in a reserved conference or classroom or in a faculty member's office and are designed to ensure there are no interruptions and that the interview is not overheard.

Faculty have asked more-or-less the same type of questions for over two decades, although these questions and how they have been asked have not been rigidly standardized. Some variation has existed in the content of the questions asked and how they were asked. Variations have been noted, though not systematically recorded for future reference, between seminar teams and sometimes between faculty on the same team.

In general, faculty examine students' attitudes toward three areas: 1) Toward the broader university apart from the political science program; 2) Toward the political science major as offered and taught at Truman; and 3) Toward the Senior Seminar course itself. (See Appendix I). As can be seen in Appendix I, standard questions about the university ask students why they chose to attend the university/major and whether they would do so again. Students are also asked about their best and worst learning or course experiences at the university and in the major and what elements made the experience either positive or

negative. Students are also asked for their summary opinions of the university and major, before being probed specifically for what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of university programs as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the major. Student responses are recorded manually by the attendant faculty.

Lessons Learned—How Exit Interviews Have Helped Shaped the Political Science Program At Truman.

At Truman, exit interviews add an important qualitative method within a systematic assessment system. Political Science has benefited from using multiple quantitative and qualitative approaches. Several of these measures (national exams in the field, percent going on to graduate and professional school, percent employed, and surveys) are implemented by the university. The capstone course, team grading of research designs, and exit interviews are the result of faculty initiatives and implementation.

Quantitative measures like national exams and surveys force students to give standardized responses to uniform questions and produce data that is easily manipulated and compared. Qualitative exit interviews have allowed the faculty to delve deeper into the reasons behind student attitudes and to probe them with a depth and breadth not possible in quantitative surveys. This benefit echoes the literature of qualitative methods discussed earlier. Also, students see the interview as a nice counter to completion of anonymous and impersonal surveys. On an affective level qualitative interviews give students face-to-face contact with faculty who care about their personal well-being and opinions. It is not uncommon for students to generate questions for the faculty, or for both sets of participants to engage in informal exchanges. The power of this human interaction can be strong. Perhaps more importantly faculty members receive feedback face to face from the students themselves. Hearing from your advisee that he felt you did not want to be bothered for advising is a powerful motivator for change in a way that aggregate data on the university survey was not.

Exit interviews have contributed to strengthening Truman's political science program in a number of specific ways.

1. Exit Interviews and Reforms in the Teaching of Political Science Methodology.

For several years in the early 1990s, students in exit interviews consistently cited the teaching of methods as the most important weakness in the political science program. Students typically complained that the methodology class—required of all majors during their sophomore or junior year—did not get students to a level where they felt confident with methodology. They did not consider their skills sufficient to be successful in later courses, especially in the Presidency that requires an empirical research project or in Senior Seminar and its quantitative research design assignment.

Other forms of qualitative assessments supported these criticisms. Faculty perceptions from working with students on research designs caused concern as students struggled

more than faculty thought they should to produce competent and effective designs. Furthermore their final designs often did not measure up to faculty expectations. Also, the university portfolio requires that students submit work demonstrating their abilities in scientific or quantitative reasoning. It was common for political science seniors to submit their papers from the methodology course to satisfy this section. Political science faculty who were part of the university portfolio reading process judged these submissions to lag behind the discipline's expected performance, especially when comparing them to the best submissions submitted by students from other disciplines on campus.

Of some interest though was that students on their Major Field Assessment Test (MFAT) showed they did reasonably well on the methodology subscores for the department. At the time they scored an average of 55.9 percent correct on methodology questions. The national average was 46.1. Nationally, there were 24 (of the 76 institutions using the exam) that had student methodology score averages between 50-60% correct. No schools scored better than 60% correct. If we had not interviewed students we probably would not have noticed the problem.

In the early to mid-1990s, faculty acted to enhance methodology learning by students. In a number of discipline meetings, faculty engaged in lengthy discussions and reviewed evidence concerning the nature of the problems involving students' acquisition of methodological learning and skills. A number of changes were instituted. First, adjustments were made in the faculty who teach the course, and the faculty involved consulted one another to provide greater uniformity regarding the textbooks for the course, required assignments, and other material to which the students would be exposed. Secondly, a research design booklet was written and made available on-line and as an in-class handout to all majors. Thirdly, faculty developed a plan so that students' exposure to methodology would be reinforced systematically as they progressed through the curriculum. The foundation established in the methodology course would be expanded upon through assignments in Comparative Politics, electives, and instruction during Senior Seminar. We have also had more students involved in undergraduate research.

These efforts have significantly improved students' methodological skills as measured in their performance on assignments, their subscores on the MFAT--the Major Field Achievement Test administered to all seniors, and in their portfolios where political science scientific work now ranks favorably with other students at the university. Student performance on the methodology subsection of the MFAT exams between 2000 and 2005 averaged 60.5 percent correct answers. Relative to other schools taking the exam, this score compares with the national average of 33 percent correct and the 95th percentile score of 46 percent correct. Truman has improved its raw score of percent correct, but as the MFAT has gone through several iterations, it is not clear whether the raw score is directly comparable. The difference between the national mean and Truman's average (for percent of questions answered correctly) on the methodology subscore has improved from 9.8 to 27.5.

Today, it is not uncommon for students to cite their acquisition of these skills as one of the program's strong points. Two years ago all faculty members came together to team

read a sample of research designs and found the work to show a marked improvement over the typical work submitted before the reforms were instituted.

2. Exit Interview Results and Course Offerings.

Student comments for a number of years in the late 1990's and early 2000's bemoaned a lack of elective courses offered in the major. Although the ability to meet students' demands are constrained by demands on the faculty to offer courses that satisfy the university's core and to offer enough sections of required courses in the major, student inputs have made the faculty more committed to elective offerings as they plan their yearly schedule. Care is given to offer as many and as wide of a variety of subject material as other pressures allow.

More recently faculty responded to concerns that there are not enough electives at the freshman and sophomore year. This led the political science faculty in 2005 to create a new course, POL 275: Special Topics in Political Science. This course permits faculty to teach a special topics course on an issue of current interest. This now exists along with a previous upper level special topics course. POL 275 not only allows for more flexibility in offering course titles focusing on subject matter of current interest, it is also serving as a "seed bed" to develop and to experiment with new course offerings that may become permanent offerings. Currently, POL 275 Environmental Politics is being taught as a topics course, but it very likely will evolve into a permanent offering. Other lower level classes concerning political communication, national security issues, and the politics of film are also being developed.

3. Exit Interviews and the Reinforcement of Student Accountability.

One common set of responses from some students in the mid-1990's revealed that, in some classes, students regarded assigned readings as optional. This discussion mirrored results from the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement). Students confessed that they ignored reading assignments with no adverse consequences. As a result, several faculty introduced a regimen of pop quizzes or other strategies to hold students accountability, such as following Socratic techniques or incorporating more questions on exams that came predominantly from reading material.

4. Exit Interviews as Positive Feedback and Reinforcement.

Exit interviews also serve an important role in identifying a program's strengths and to validate existing practices that work. Indeed, a number of students at the interviews claim to see no real weaknesses with the program. Political Science majors at Truman will almost uniformly rate the overall program as strong. One might question whether having faculty members serve as interviewers biases these responses? However, the quantitative measures the university uses validate this finding. Furthermore, students will commonly cite the program's rigor and heavy workload, especially its focus on writing and empirical research, as strengths. Results also consistently identify a number of courses that are particularly well done, or cite faculty who have contributed dramatically

to their learning and collegiate experience. Particular assignments or experiences are also cited, along with personal relationships that they have developed with the faculty and with their peers. The basis for future interaction with the students is enhanced as faculty find out about their plans for the coming year and convey our interest in hearing from them in the future

Faculty members also note that the interview process encourages student self-reflection regarding their learning in and out of the classroom. Frequently they identify ways in which they undermined their own learning or a change in themselves that affected their effort and performance positively.

The exit interviews also play an important role in fostering faculty reflection and interaction concerning the strengths and weakness of the program. This type of interaction naturally occurs between the faculty conducting the interviews, and often extends later to discipline-wide discussions for change or support for existing programs.

Proposed Improvements the Exit Interview

1. Focus On the Program.

Again, the department's exit interviews ask questions ranging from students' attitudes concerning the university in general to their satisfaction with Senior Seminar. Furthermore, the interviews take place at the end of a semester when faculty and student time, energy and psychological states are already stressed. Many of the topics asked in the exit interviews fall outside of the ability of the political science faculty to impact directly. Questions concerning the university's overall performance are of limited validity anyway since they deal with such a small subsection of the institution's overall student population of 6000. Secondly, the university already surveys student attitudes on a wide range of subject matter in numerous other instruments, and these results are broken down by student major and made available to the faculty. The course evaluation process can be used to get qualitative feedback on the course. As a result the faculty has recently discussed making the exit interview more focused on the performance of the major itself. This requires that faculty carefully consider if there are aspects of the program meriting consideration that previously have been excluded from the interviews and what the best wording of these questions should be.

2. Reach a Consensus on What to Ask and Stay Focused.

While one advantage of a qualitative, oral interview is that faculty can digress from the prepared script to investigate unanticipated responses more fully or to probe the particular responses of an individual student more deeply, a standard list of base questions would enhance our ability to compare across students and across semesters. In this regard, faculty must reach a consensus going into the sessions of what the common questions will be and how much time to allow for clarifications, elaborations, and digressions. These are important to take full advantage of the qualitative potential of the instrument.

The highest priority for assessment at Truman is to improve student learning. Thus this instrument should be designed to maintain some flexibility – a key advantage of this qualitative technique – to ask questions that would elicit a better understanding of the conditions that enhance and impede learning. Perhaps a compromise is to identify a small core of questions that will be asked of each student by all seminar interviews. This would still permit the asking of several additional follow-up questions. How to remain focused on the most important matters at hand is a challenge as it is easy for these sessions to digress into a host of other side issues, especially after a long day when the interviewers are tired.

3. Consistently Circulate the Results among All Faculty.

While all faculty members of an interview team will know the results of a given semester, current thinking is that these results must be shared with all faculty in the department to enhance their use. It has been unnecessary to do so up to this point because there are so many other assessment measures already on record. At the end of a busy semester, it is also easy to forget such matters once all grades have been submitted, but copies of the interview results should be circulated to all members of the faculty in a timely manner at the end of each semester. Copies of each semester's results should be archived in a central location—such as in the department chair's files—for future reference and study. Recording the results for all members of the faculty also raises the sensitive issue of how to record uncomplimentary comments made in reference to specific faculty members. Currently, some teams record the names in their notes. Others change the language to make the reference less faculty-member specific. The ethics of this reporting will cause interesting discussions at faculty meetings, but need to be resolved if interview notes are to be centrally filed and maintained.

What Does This Case Study tell us About the Claims Made in the Literature?

Findings at Truman suggest that interviews do elicit more in-depth and holistic information than most assessments, at least for the subjects that are covered. The student is able to explain their experience from their point of view. It has been an important feedback method; it is substantive and affectively palpable. The changes made at Truman range from some made at the individual level to a few made at the program level. Individually, faculty members internalize a number of things students say. It may be all it takes for a faculty member to make a change in a course. On the program level, our understandings of how students actually experience the major have increased and over a period of several years, these tentative conclusions become more solidified. These conclusions have supplemented and complemented the university's other considerable assessment data making it possible to "verify" findings. Blending information from several assessment databases is an important strategy and one that the discipline faculty attempt to do when responding to university requests for reporting efforts of continuous improvement.

Interviews are rather time-consuming, but they also provide a type of connection to students that most faculty members in the department value. For the faculty members who conduct the interview, the process is quite profound, and can lead to immediate change at the individual faculty member level. Communicating the richness of the

affective and substantive feedback to faculty members not present at the interview is much more difficult to do. It will require great effort on the part of the recorders and adequate attention on the part of other faculty members who were not present. This weakness in the method is mitigated at Truman by the fact that all faculty members conduct these interviews at least once every two years.

Truman's experience with interviews aligns with virtually all of the claims about qualitative and interview methods presented above.

Generalizeability?

It is important to ask the question whether Truman's experience is generalizable to other universities. While Truman's assess program includes several quantitative and qualitative methods; it appears that interviews would be an excellent strategy for most programs. If there are additional methods of assessment the ability to evaluate the program blending quantitative and qualitative exists. If not, the program would probably need to treat the interview in a more structured way and would probably want to merge its results with the more time effective survey method.

Conclusion

In conclusion qualitative exit interviews are a valuable component of a comprehensive student assessment system. The experience with exit interviews at Truman has shown that they allow for deeper, more expansive investigation into the results provided by quantitative measures. The interviews have allowed faculty to uncover attitudes and self-reported learning levels that surveys and national exams have missed. Results have also triggered a number of reforms in the program. Interviews in following years and other assessment measures permit faculty to evaluate the effectiveness of the reforms. The interactions generated by the interview process between faculty and between faculty and students have also stimulated insightful reflection among the participants, and enhanced the important human interactions and camaraderie that foster a successful program.

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APPENDIX I

Exit Interview

Name:

The University:

1. Where are you from?
2. Why did you decide to come to Truman?
3. If you had it to do over again, would you still come to Truman? Why or Why not?
4. What are the strengths of the university? What does it do particularly well?
5. What are the weaknesses of the university? In what areas does it need to improve?
6. What is the best learning experience or class that you've had at Truman?
7. What made it such a good experience or class?
8. What is the worst learning experience or class that you've had at Truman?
9. What made it such a bad learning experience or class?

The Major:

10. Why did you decide to major in political science?

11. If you had it to do over again, would you still major in political science? Why or why not?

12. What are the strengths of the political science program? What do we do particularly well?

13. What are the weaknesses of the political science program? In what areas do we need to improve?

14. What was the best learning experience or course that you had in the major?

15. What made it a good experience or course?

16. What was the worst learning or course that you had in the major?

17. What were the problems with the course?

Senior Seminar:

18. What is your evaluation of this course? Good, Bad or In-Between?

19. What do you think are the strengths of this course?

20. What are its weaknesses?

21. In closing, is there anything else that you would like tell us?

22. What are your plans for after graduation?

