

WILKES UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL FACULTY EVALUATION FOR 2021-22
Dr. Benjamin Toll

1. Teaching Effectiveness (40-50%)

This year was Dr. Toll's third year at Wilkes University. This past year, Dr. Toll underwent his 3rd –Year Review. His faculty colleagues praised his high quality teaching, dedication to scholarship, his engagement with students, and his commitment to serving the department, Division, and University.

Semester	Program Prefix	Course Number	Section	Number Enrolled	Number of Responses	Q. 19	Q. 20
Summer 2021							
	PS	111	A	7	2	5.00	5.00
Fall 2021							
	PS/SOC	298/201	A	29	10	5.00	5.00
	PS	111	A	43	18	4.72	4.72
	PS	111	B	18	6	5.00	5.00
	PS	312	A	13	9	5.00	5.00
	PS	380	A	1	1	5.00	5.00
Spring 2022							
	PS	111	A	33	12	4.92	4.91
	PS	111	B	33	16	4.75	4.88
	PS/SOC	212/263	A	20	10	5.00	5.00
	PS	221	A	25	12	5.00	4.67
	PS	311	A	20	9	5.00	4.95
Total				242 ¹	105	4.91	4.88

Fall: In the fall semester, Dr. Toll taught two sections of PS111: *Introduction to American Government*, PS298/SOC201: *Introduction to Criminal Justice*, and PS312: *The U.S. Congress*. PS111: *Introduction to American Government* is an essential course for the Political Science and General Education (Area III) curriculum. This course “is a broad survey of the institutions of American Government as well as the different tangential parts of the political world” (Dr. Toll 2020-21 SER, p. 2). As you can see from the SRS data, Dr. Toll did an excellent job with this course. For Question 19, Dr. Toll earned 4.72, 5.00, 4.92, and 4.75. For Question 20, Dr. Toll earned 4.72, 5.00, 4.91, and 4.88. Having Dr. Toll teach PS111 is extremely important because his popularity often produces students who change their major to Political Science. Dr. Toll cares about his students deeply and gives them numerous opportunities to succeed. A sample of student comments from PS 111 is below.

- “Actually cared about students and how they were doing in class.”
- “The class made learning feel like fun.”
- “Organization was good. Classes were very informative and I looked forward to each class every day. Tests were difficult but we had plenty of time and resources to study, so they were not too bad. Class was relaxed and entertaining, but still very factual and informative.”
- “Toll was easy to approach and easy to joke around with, but he was always able to stay on topic. He was honest and unbiased with everything he said, always providing facts while being a fun person.”

¹ Last year, Dr. Toll taught 191 students; this year, 242, accounting for a 27% increase. Dr. Toll taught more students this year than last year and managed to earn even higher SRS scores.

In light of Dr. Toll's new joint appointment with Criminology, he taught PS298/SOC201: *Introduction to Criminal Justice* in the fall. This was one of Dr. Toll's new preparations. Dr. Toll broke the course down into four components: an introduction, policing, courts, and corrections. Dr. Toll used four (4) exams and two (2) papers in which students connected course content to popular culture content they consume. By all indications, this course was a success. Dr. Toll earned a perfect 5.0 for questions 19 and 20 for this course and students *raved* about his teaching. One student noted that "Dr. Toll is the best professor I've had here at Wilkes" and that he has "opted to take his classes time and time again simply because he was the professor." Another student commented that the best thing about Dr. Toll is his "weekly emails expressing our plans for the week."

In the fall, Dr. Toll also taught PS312: *The U.S. Congress*. This was the second time that Dr. Toll taught this course in his three (3) years at Wilkes. By all indications and measures, this class was a success! Dr. Toll earned a perfect 5.0 for questions 19 and 20. In addition to lectures, Dr. Toll implemented a simulation as part of this course and students thoroughly enjoyed this part, with one student noting that the "Senate simulation really helped me to understand the process." By doing something, students learned the Senate process so much better. In his SER, Dr. Toll includes a nice summary of student comments, all of which were positive.

Spring: In the spring semester, Dr. Toll taught two (2) sections of PS111, PS212/SOC 263: *Urban Government/The Urban Environment*, and PS221: *Introduction to Public Administration*. The spring semester was hard and everyone was tired but Dr. Toll continued with his excellent teaching. In PS111, Dr. Toll earned a 4.92 and 4.75 for Question 19. For Question 20, Dr. Toll earned and 4.91 and 4.88. Students continued with their praise of Dr. Toll, just like they had in the fall semester.

Dr. Toll's new preparation was PS212/SOC263: *Urban Environment/The Urban Environment*. Once again, to increase student interest, Dr. Toll implemented an active learning approach by having his students pick three cities from around the country and follow them throughout the semester with a series of assignments. This allowed students to make connections between class/textbook material and the "real world." Students enjoyed that part of the course and he earned a 5.0 for questions 19 and 20.

Dr. Toll taught PS221: *Introduction to Public Administration*. This was also a new preparation for Dr. Toll. Students were required to conduct a case study of a policy area and a group project on another policy area. Like always, students loved this class and gave Dr. Toll extremely high scores on the SRS (5.0 for question 19; 4.67 for question 20).

Finally, in early-January, we asked Dr. Toll to teach an overload by taking on one of the most difficult courses in the curriculum – PS265/SOC370: *Quantitative Reasoning*. This was also a new preparation and, again, it was put on his plate two (2) weeks before the semester started. Dr. Toll did a *fabulous* job with the students and with this course! Students commented that Dr. Toll graded very fairly and was always "polite and effective" in his communication and interaction with the students. Teaching this course is *extremely hard* since many of our students are math-phobic but students consistently commented that Dr. Toll's singular focus was on ensuring that his students succeeded in understanding the concepts and the *why* behind what they were doing.

Dr. Toll had an outstanding year in this area.

2. Scholarship and Other Professional Activities (20-30%)

Even with his heavy teaching load (overloads too!), Dr. Toll managed to continue his successes with scholarship. His activities included:

- "What Does it Mean to be 'One of Us?': The Impact of Place and Belonging on Campaigns in Northeastern Pennsylvania." This chapter is part of a book under contract with *Temple University Press*.
- Paper that is under review after a R&R with the *Journal of Social Science Education*.
- Paper to be submitted to a journal in June, 2022 on popular opinion related to the Electoral College. (co-authored with a student)

- Finishing another paper on split-ticket voting in Luzerne County, PA. It will be submitted to the *Commonwealth* journal.
- Received a Mentoring Task Force grant to hire a summer intern (Nick Antolick). They will be researching the political statements made by a leading Evangelical magazine in the U.S.
- Presented two papers at the Southern Political Science Association conference (online).
- Presented two papers at the Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting (Chicago).
- Served on a roundtable at the Pennsylvania Political Science Association annual meeting in April.
- Served as Chair and Discussant at the Southern Political Science Association annual meeting.
- Reviewed papers for four (4) journals/books this year: *Politics and Religion*, *Politics and Policy*, and *Penn State Press*.
- Completed numerous interviews with local journalists.
- Created four (4) new courses.
- Served as a reader for the AP US Government Exam online.

Dr. Toll had an outstanding year in this area.

3. Advising/Participation in Student Organization (10-20%)

Last year, Dr. Toll had his first year advising students. This year, he built on that and took on additional advising responsibilities, including working one-on-one with students who were struggling with mental health issues. Dr. Toll served as the Co-advisor for *Sigma Pi* and the Political Society. He also wrote letters of recommendation for more than ten (10) students who were seeking admission to graduate school, professional school, or employment. This summer, Dr. Toll will do first-year orientation (early July dates).

Dr. Toll had a good year in this area.

4. University Service (10-20%)

Please see Dr. Toll's SER for a complete run-down of activities but Dr. Toll was extremely active in this area of employment. Dr. Toll's primary University service was with the Academic Standards Committee. In addition to that, Dr. Toll did work with the Faculty Search Manual Committee, put together an Accepted Students Day presentation (April) and served on the Barre Scholars Program Advisory Board. Moving forward, Dr. Toll will serve as Chair of ASC and will be on the Honors Advisory Council and Strategic Planning Committee.

In short, Dr. Toll is doing A LOT!! I support Dr. Toll in his commitment to making the University better but my only concern is that he might be doing too much. We are not there yet but I want to do a better job of protecting his time. As that old adage goes, "saying 'yes' to something means saying 'no' to something else."

Dr. Toll had an outstanding year in this area.

5. Community Service (10-20%)

Where do I even start?? Dr. Toll goes way beyond what is expected of a faculty member when it comes to community service. Dr. Toll and his wife are licensed foster parents and have had the same child in their home since June, 2021. Dr. Toll is also a DMC co-advisor with the juvenile probation office and a local pastor. In this role, the group attempts to bring law enforcement into conversation with minority teens to help bridge the gap between traditionally distrustful communities.

Dr. Toll has also served as a Northeast PA representative to the Citizens Review Panel for the Office of Children, Youth, and Families. This group meets with state leaders about welfare policy and write reports.

Dr. Toll has also served as youth softball, soccer, and baseball coach this past year.

Dr. Toll had an outstanding year in this area.

6. Conclusion

Dr. Toll had an outstanding third year. Dr. Toll earns some of the highest SRS scores in the Division, has remained super engaged in scholarship and research, and continues his strong commitment to the department, Division, and University. Dr. Toll's official 3rd-Year Review was a success and his faculty colleagues had *zero* reservations or concerns about his work. Looking forward, to help Dr. Toll with his research, we have requested that Dr. Toll be given a one-course reduction in the 2022-23 academic year so he has a little more time focus on his work. It is our hope that Dr. Toll stays at Wilkes University for a long time. His productivity, popularity, and commitment to this institution and the students are what make him a wonderful colleague.

Dr. Toll's Goals 2022-23

The 2021-2022 school year was successful, and stressful. I hit all of my goals with the exception of having a third paper under review. This is partly because my teaching load increased and partly because some of the papers have taken more time than I expected to write. But, I feel I have hit all of the goals with the exception of that stretch goal on research. I am pleased with my third-year review and am looking forward to a lighter teaching load in the 2022-2023 school year.

- Continue strong teaching evaluations and gain mastery of the courses I am teaching for the second time.
- Get an article accepted for publication, and have at least one article under review.
- Continue to grow my service to the broader discipline through conference participation and working with the Pennsylvania Political Science Association.
- Continue being a successful advisor of students and go through the graduation audit process with students.
- Continue university service at a high level and chair a committee.
- Continue being active in the community in ways that look good for Wilkes and are in areas that I have expertise in.

Wilkes University
Annual Faculty Evaluation

1. Name: Dr. Ben Toll

2. Faculty member signature indicating receipt of chair's evaluation:

Signature: Benjamin Toll Date: 05/23/2022

3. Chair's rating and signature:

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Signature: Paul Zoller Date: May 23, 2022

4. Dean's rating and signature:

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Signature: PTTiger Date: 6/9/22

5. Provost's signature:

Signature: Deane Wood Date: 7/29/22

6. Faculty member's signature following meeting with chair:

Signature: Benjamin Toll Date: 8/29/22

7. Chair's signature following meeting with faculty member:

Signature: Paul Zoller Date: 8-29-22

