

Wilkes University
Annual Faculty Evaluation
Academic Year 2022-23

Name: Dr. Ben Toll

Dept/Div: Political Science (Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences)

Section I: Teaching Effectiveness (40-50%):

Dr. Toll continued his masterful teaching this year. As things change, Dr. Toll's excellent SRS scores and positive student comments continue. In the summer of 2022, Dr. Toll taught a section of PS111 and did very well. In the fall, Dr. Toll did not teach PS111 (I did!) but he taught PS213: *Parties and Elections*, PS311: *The American Presidency*, and PS265/SOC370: *Quantitative Reasoning*. In the spring semester, Dr. Toll returned to PS111: *American Government*, PS298: *American Democracy and Polarization*, PS265/SOC370: *Quantitative Reasoning*, and PS/HST298: *Northern Ireland: Past, Present, and Future*. In all of his classes, Dr. Toll earned a 5.00 (or something very close) for Questions 19 and 20. His averages for this academic year were 4.97 (Question 19) and 4.95 (Question 20).

Dr. Toll's SER is abundantly reflective and goes into adequate detail regarding what worked, what didn't work, and what he would like to change. In the fall, I helped "judge" the students' fantasy draft reports for PS311: *American Presidency*. When I sat in that class to help judge, I could tell that students looked up to Dr. Toll and respected his expertise and judgment. The Presidential Fantasy Draft was a *perfect* exercise for this class because students had to *apply* what they learned in class and *explain why* they picked their presidents. The exercise was very analytical and required collaboration and partnership among the students. Our students will collaborate and partner with co-workers once they leave Wilkes so the exercise was useful in many key respects.

It's hard to explain or quantify Dr. Toll's value to the Political Science Department or the Division but I would strongly encourage anyone who ever has to evaluate Dr. Toll to take a hard look at his contributions in the *Quantitative Reasoning* course he teaches for us each semester. *Quantitative Reasoning* is one of the hardest courses in our curriculum and students generally do not want to take it (Math!!!) but Dr. Toll does a spectacular job with it! Below, I list some themes that come out in the student comments.

1. **Participation:** Dr. Toll is extremely skillful in getting students to participate! Why is this especially important? In this course, students are extremely reticent to participate because they are afraid they will be wrong. Dr. Toll understands this and works extra hard at finding connection points with students so that they will participate in class. This boosts their self-esteem, their confidence, and their performance in class.
2. **Communication:** Dr. Toll's students consistently comment that Dr. Toll communicated with them on a regular basis and the students *always* know what is going on in the class.
3. **Grading:** While the students might not like the math in the *Quantitative Reasoning* class, they comment that Dr. Toll always provided good, fair feedback.
4. **Human Dignity:** Dr. Toll is great at understanding the human component of our jobs and understanding that our students have lives, which are often very messy and complicated. One student noted that Dr. Toll "treats us like humans with lives, rather than simply students" and that "he truly cares about us as people, not just as students."

I cannot stress enough the importance of PS265/SOC370: *Quantitative Reasoning*. At a time when Chief Justice Roberts refers to political science as "sociological gobbledygook" (oral arguments, *Gill v. Whitford*, October 3, 2017) and Justice Thomas placing "political scientists" into quotation marks (see *FEC v.*

Colorado Republic Federal Campaign Committee dissenting opinion, 2001), it is important for our students to appreciate that political science is a *science*. Dr. Toll does a magnificent job doing just that.

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Section II: Scholarship and Other Professional Activities (20-30%):

As he is approaching tenure, Dr. Toll has continued with a stellar performance with his scholarship.

1. A book chapter on the 8th congressional district (2020 elections) was published in December.
 - a. Toll, B.T. (2022). Campaigns in the Eighth Congressional District. *Are All Politics Nationalized?: Evidence from the 2020 Campaigns in Pennsylvania*. 109-134.
2. October, 2022 publication in a teaching journal.
 - a. Toll, B.T. (2022). Using TV to teach?: Teaching Civics and Democratic Ideals Through the West Wing and House of Cards. *JSSE-Journal of Social Science Education*, 21(3). <https://doi.org/10.11576/jsse-4493>
3. Revise and resubmit at *American Politics Research* for an article entitled, "Partisan Self-Interest and Views on the Electoral College: How Electoral Inversions Activate Differences in Support for the System." The R&R is back at the publisher.
4. Book chapter for an edited volume on the role that religion plays in American politics. Dr. Toll is writing the chapter on Religion and Congress. The first draft was due May 1, which Dr. Toll submitted. Revisions appear to be unlikely for that chapter (based on feedback from publisher).
5. Working on a paper that examines the effects of split-ticket voting in the 2020 election in Luzerne County. That paper will be submitted for review this summer. Most likely *Commonwealth* journal.
6. Wrote and received a summer mentorship grant with Nick Antolick (PS undergraduate student).
7. Attended and presented with Dr. Maierian at the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference.
8. Presented a paper at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting with Nick Antolick.
9. Will be presented a paper at APSA in September.
10. Reviewed papers for three (3) journals this year.
11. Created two (2) new courses.
12. Served as a reader for the AP US Government Exam online.

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Section III: Student Advising and Mentoring (10-20%):

This year was Dr. Toll's third year advising PS and Criminology students. He advised 26 students. He was co-advisor to the Sigma Pi and Political Society groups (clubs) and he coordinated the annual trip to Harrisburg for the AICUP Day on the Hill. Dr. Toll also wrote numerous letters of recommendation and advised four (4) students through capstone or independent studies. Dr. Toll also took seven (7) students to Ireland over spring break with Dr. Kuiken. Finally, Dr. Toll gave a presentation for LGBTQ+ Legislation Day with GSA.

Dr. Toll always accepts when asked to take on a new advisee. We get new PS and Criminology majors throughout the year and Dr. Toll always graciously accepts when needed. He does a wonderful job advising students and he takes on many weighty struggles with his students. He is to be commended for his care and concern for his students.

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Section IV: University Service (10-20%):

Dr. Toll is extremely active in his University Service. Dr. Toll chaired the Academic Standards Committee, which is a lot of work. Dr. Toll participated in open houses and the Accepted Students Day (April, 2023). He also hosted a group of 15 students and 3 teachers from surrounding schools. He gave multiple interviews with the press as well. Please review his SER for a very detailed list of everything he has accomplished in this area of work life. It is very clear that Dr. Toll does a lot for this University and wants it to be as successful as possible.

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Section V: Community Service (10-20%):

My comments will not do justice to all that Dr. Toll does for his community but his primary contribution is the role that he and his wife play in the foster system. The Tolls are licensed foster parents. This past January, the Tolls adopted a child out of the foster care system (she had been placed with the family back in 2021). In addition to that adoption, two other children were placed with the Tolls on a temporary basis.

Dr. Toll also serves on the Care Portal Advisory Board (Care Portal provides resources for families that face losing custody of their children when the problem is need and not other factors.).

Dr. Toll also serves as youth softball coach and youth baseball coach for his children. In addition, Dr. Toll spoke at Career Day at Lehman-Jackson Elementary and spoke with a 6th grade class on the Bill of Rights.

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

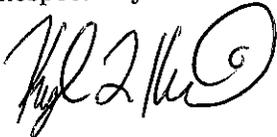
Summary:

Seriously, where do I begin? Hiring Dr. Toll in 2019 was one of the best things that has happened in our Division in the past decade. Dr. Toll is an extremely effective instructor and is *loved* and *respected* by his students. He sets the bar for quality teaching in our Division and he is extremely productive in his scholarship and public-facing service (you often see him on TV or in the newspapers). When I walk past his office, I often see him meeting with students, listening to their concerns.

In the fall, Dr. Toll will be standing for tenure. He is richly deserving of tenure for all the things that he *has* done but also for all the things he *will* do for his department, Division, and University into the future.

Dr. Toll had an **outstanding** year!

Respectfully submitted,



Kyle L. Kreider, Chair, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Annual Faculty Evaluation

Signature and Rating Page

1. Name: **Dr. Ben Toll**

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. Chair's rating and signature:

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Signature: *Ben Toll* Date: 5/16/23

4. Dean's rating and signature:

Outstanding Good Satisfactory Needs Improvement Unsatisfactory

Signature: _____ Date: _____

5. Provost's signature:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

6. Chair's signature confirming transmittal of completed evaluation:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

7. Faculty member's signature confirming receipt of completed evaluation:

Signature: _____ Date: _____