

PCC Political Science Subject Area Committee

PS 202 Student Survey Results April 2012

This survey was conducted in 7 course sections of Political Science 202 (U.S. Government) taught by five faculty during the Winter of 2012 at Portland Community College, on four different campuses. **The survey was designed to indicate whether or not those enrolled had 1) engaged in self-reflection and were 2) encouraged to be become more community involved as active citizens.** The number of responses in the survey was 116 students (81% of those enrolled in these course sections).

Part 1

The first ten questions in the first part of this survey concerned the knowledge and self-reflections of the students. Questions one and two asked the students how much they knew about the functions of the U.S. government before and after taking PS 202. The responses for the before question indicate that only 16.379% agreed and .862% strongly agreed (about 17% total) that they knew a lot of about the functions of the U.S. government. The responses given after indicate that students had gained to the extent that 56.879% agreed and 22.414% strongly agreed (about 79% total) that they knew a lot about how the U.S. government functions.

Questions three and four asked the students their opinions of governmental policies. In responding, about 29% agreed that they had strong opinions both before and after taking the course, but those who strongly agreed that they had strong opinions more than doubled from about 13% to 29% with those claiming to have no strong opinions declining by a factor of 4 from over 10% to 2.5%.

Questions five and six asked about the knowledge the students gained in writing a research paper about a governmental policy. Only about 22% said that they knew a lot about the particular policy each worked on before the assignment. However, about 89% said they knew a lot about that policy afterwards.

Questions seven and eight asked the students to reflect on whether they considered why others may disagree with them on their political opinions. Beforehand, about 44% said they considered why others disagreed with them, whereas over 65% considered why others may disagree with the afterwards.

Questions nine and ten asked the students whether they believed that communicating with governmental policymakers makes a difference in the policymaking process. Only 34% of the students thought it made a difference before taking PS 202. However, over 64% agreed or strongly agreed that it made a difference after taking the course.

Overall, the before and after responses in section one indicate strong gains by the students in their overall knowledge and ability to self-reflect on politics and government. What is also striking about questions one, three, five, seven, and nine, is that they all have a bell shaped-curve response from the students, indicating that a truly average type of group was surveyed. Thus, the overall gains made in the “after” questions should be considered to be accurate and statistically relevant.

Part 2

The second section of the survey asked the students several questions in regards to community involvement and how politically active and politically efficacious they feel. Questions twelve and thirteen asked the students whether they had ever communicated with governmental policymakers in the past, and whether they intended to do so in the future. Only 28% had communicated with policymakers beforehand, but over 70% indicated they were likely to do it in the future.

Question eleven asked the students if they had actually sent the letter they had written as an assignment to the intended public official. A small portion, 25.862%, of the students indicated that they had done so.

In regards to voting, question fourteen asked the students if they expected to vote regularly and if they would encourage others to do the same. An overwhelming 89.655% of the students said that they would vote and encourage others to do so.

Questions fifteen and sixteen inquired as to whether the students felt more empowered to become politically active and were more likely to engage more often in community involvement. A strong 81.897% felt they were more empowered after taking PS 202, and 76.724% indicated that they would become engaged in their community more often.

Overall, the responses in section two show that after taking PS 202, the students were much more likely to engage in politics and community involvement, as well as to feel as though they could be involved.

Summary and Conclusions

This survey indicates that the students who have taken PS 202 are likely to make large gains in political knowledge, self-reflection, and political involvement. These results are important when considering that part of PCC’s educational goal is to improve our students’ ability to understand how the world works around them as well as to be able to understand how and why others may have views different from themselves. While much more can be gleaned from this data, this summary is sufficient to indicate how worthwhile taking courses in Political Science can be for a liberal arts education.

PS 202 Student Survey Results 2012

(Sonn1): Michael Sonnleitner: (CA 6-9:50pm Th) CRN# 16176; n= 16 (of 17 students = 95%).

(Sonn2): Michael Sonnleitner: (CA 9-10:50am MW) CRN# 12024; n= 15 (of 20 students = 75%).

(Cole): George Cole: (SE Center 10-11:50am TR) CRN# 12668; n= 22 (of 28 students = 79%).

(Miller): Jack Miller: (SY 11-12:50 TR) CRN# 16114; n= 26 (out of 31 students = 84%).

(Vicki): Vicki Jeffries-Bilton: (RC 9-10:50am MW) CRN# 16112 ; n= 9 (of 14 students = 64%).

(Paine): Nicholas Paine: (RC 10MW/2TR) CRN# 13552&16030; n= 28 (of 39 students = 72%).

TOTAL PARTICIPATING: 5 faculty teaching 7 sections on 4 campuses. **116 Students** (out of 144 enrolled in these courses = 81%)

PART I: For each of the statements below, choose the word that best describes your level of agreement or disagreement *Before* and *After* this class:

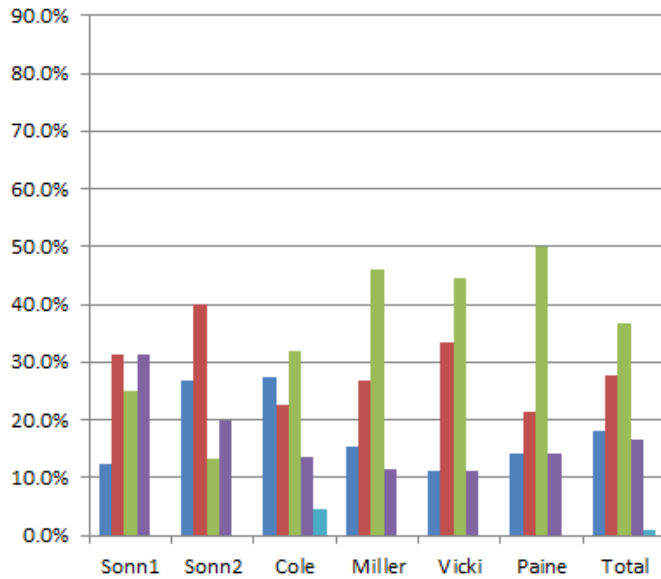
Question 1: Before taking this class: “I know a lot about how the U.S. government functions.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	6 (27%)	4 (15%)	1 (11%)	4 (14%)	21 (18.103%)
Disagree:	5 (31%)	6 (40%)	5 (23%)	7 (27%)	3 (33%)	6 (21%)	32 (27.586%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	4 (25%)	2 (13%)	7 (32%)	12 (46%)	4 (44%)	14 (50%)	43 (37.069%)
Agree:	5 (31%)	3 (20%)	3 (14%)	3 (12%)	1 (11%)	4 (14%)	19 (16.379%)
Strongly Agree:	0	0	1	0	0	0	1 (.862%)

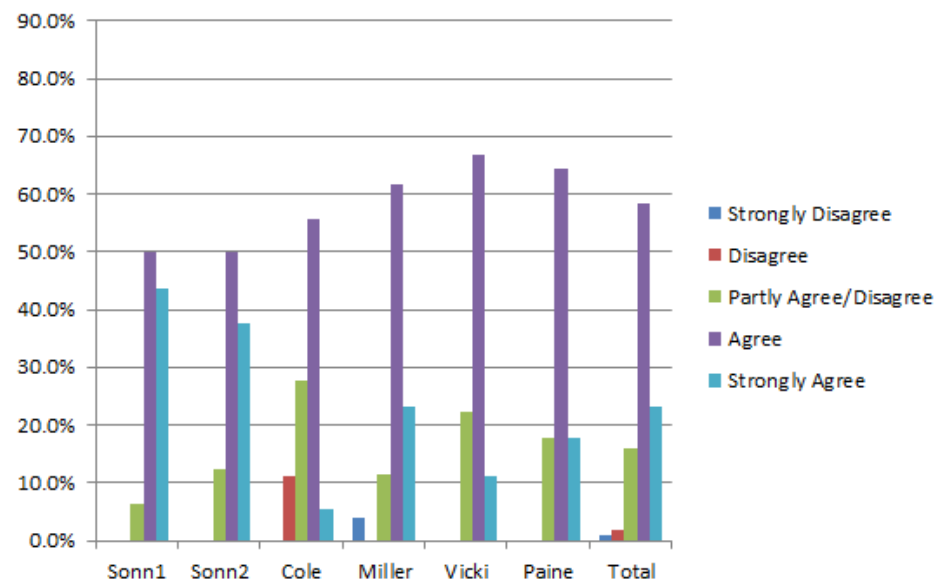
Question 2: After taking this class: “I know a lot about how the U.S. Government functions.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strong Disagree:	0	0	0	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (.862%)
Disagree:	0	0	2 (9%)	0	0	0	2 (1.724%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	5 (23%)	3 (12%)	2 (22%)	5 (18%)	18 (15.517%)
Agree:	8 (50%)	8 (53%)	10 (45%)	16 (61%)	6 (67%)	18 (64%)	66 (56.897%)
Strongly Agree:	7 (44%)	6 (40%)	1 (5%)	6 (23%)	1 (11%)	5 (18%)	26 (22.414%)

BEFORE



AFTER



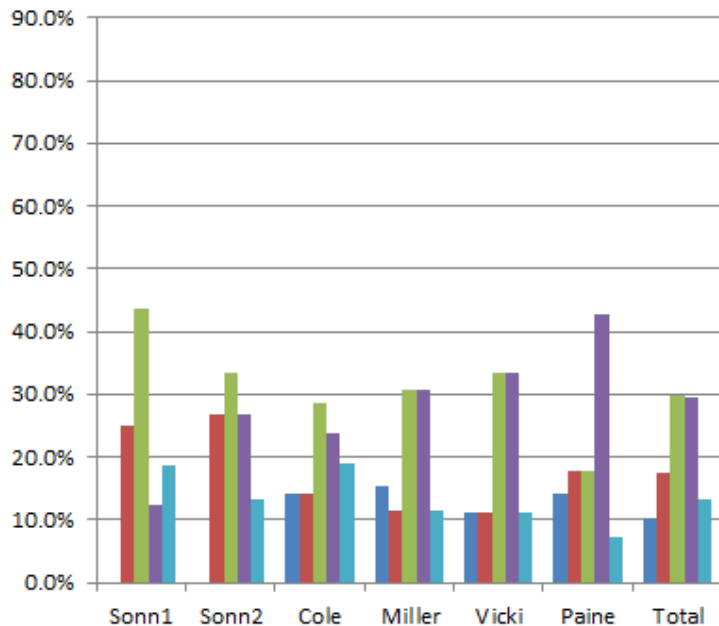
Question 3: Before taking this class: “I gave strong opinions about what policies the government should pursue.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	0	0	3 (14%)	4 (15%)	1 (11%)	4 (14%)	12 (10.345%)
Disagree:	4 (25%)	4 (27%)	3 (14%)	3 (12%)	1 (11%)	5 (18%)	20 (17.241%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	7 (44%)	5 (33%)	6 (27%)	8 (31%)	3 (33%)	5 (14%)	34 (29.310%)
Agree:	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	5 (23%)	8 (31%)	3 (33%)	12 (43%)	34 (29.310%)
Strongly Agree:	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	4 (18%)	3 (12%)	1 (11%)	2 (7%)	15 (12.931%)

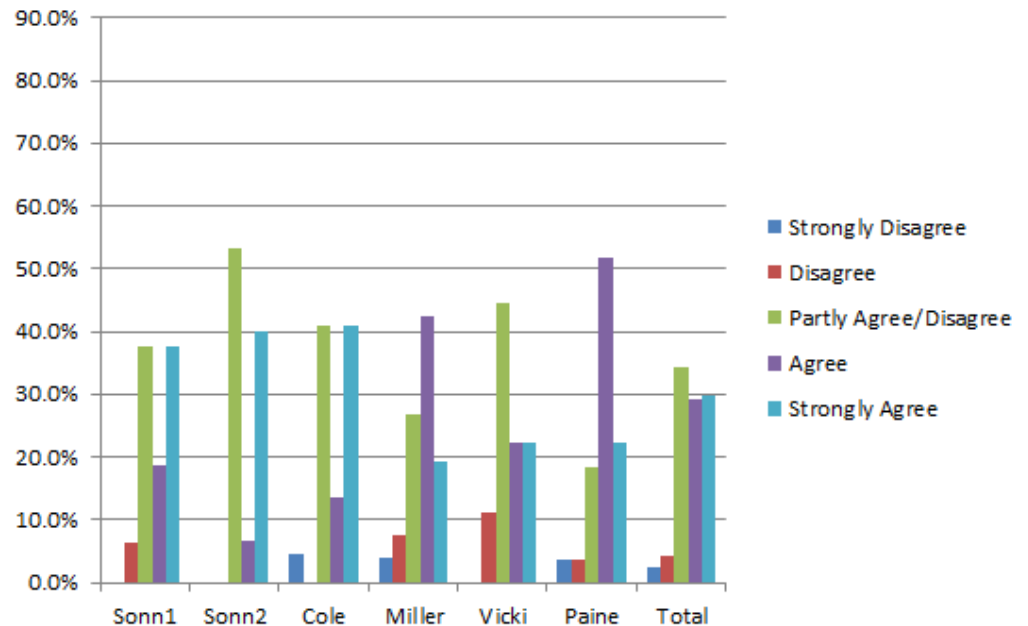
Question 4: After taking this class “I have strong opinions about what policies the government should pursue

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	0	0	1 (5%)	1 (4%)	0	1 (4%)	3 (2.586%)
Disagree:	1 (6%)	0	0	2 (8%)	1 (11%)	1 (4%)	5 (4.310%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	6 (38%)	8 (53%)	9 (41%)	7 (27%)	4 (44%)	5 (14%)	39 (33.621%)
Agree:	3 (18%)	1 (7%)	3 (13%)	11 (41%)	2 (22%)	14 (50%)	34 (29.310%)
Strongly Agree:	6 (38%)	6 (40%)	9 (41%)	5 (20%)	2 (22%)	6 (21%)	34 (29.310%)

BEFORE



AFTER



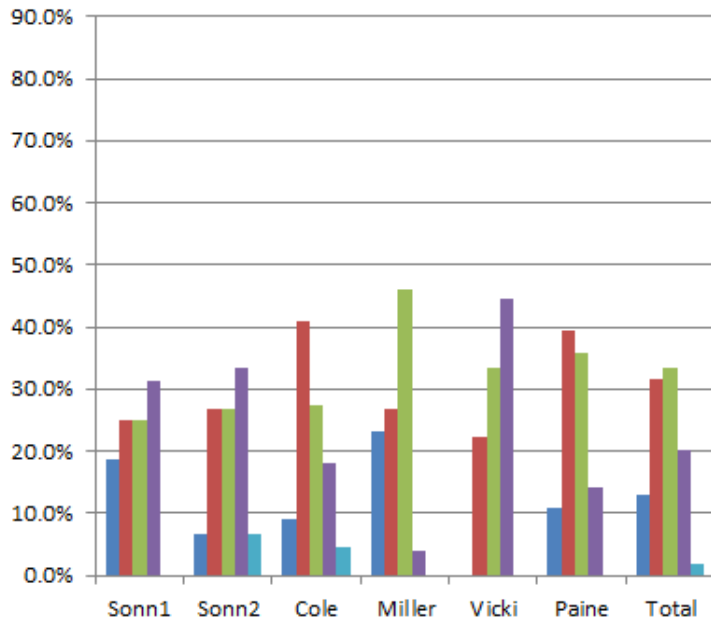
Question 5: Before taking this class: “I know a lot about the issue I wrote about for my final paper.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	3 (18%)	1 (7%)	2 (9%)	6 (23%)	0	3 (11%)	15 (12.931%)
Disagree:	4 (25%)	4 (27%)	9 (41%)	7 (27%)	2 (22%)	11 (39%)	35 (30.172%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	4 (25%)	4 (27%)	6 (27%)	12 (46%)	3 (33%)	10 (36%)	39 (33.621%)
Agree:	5 (31%)	5 (33%)	4 (18%)	1 (4%)	4 (44%)	4 (14%)	23 (19.828%)
Strongly Agree:	0	1 (7%)	1 (5%)	0	0	0	2 (1.724%)

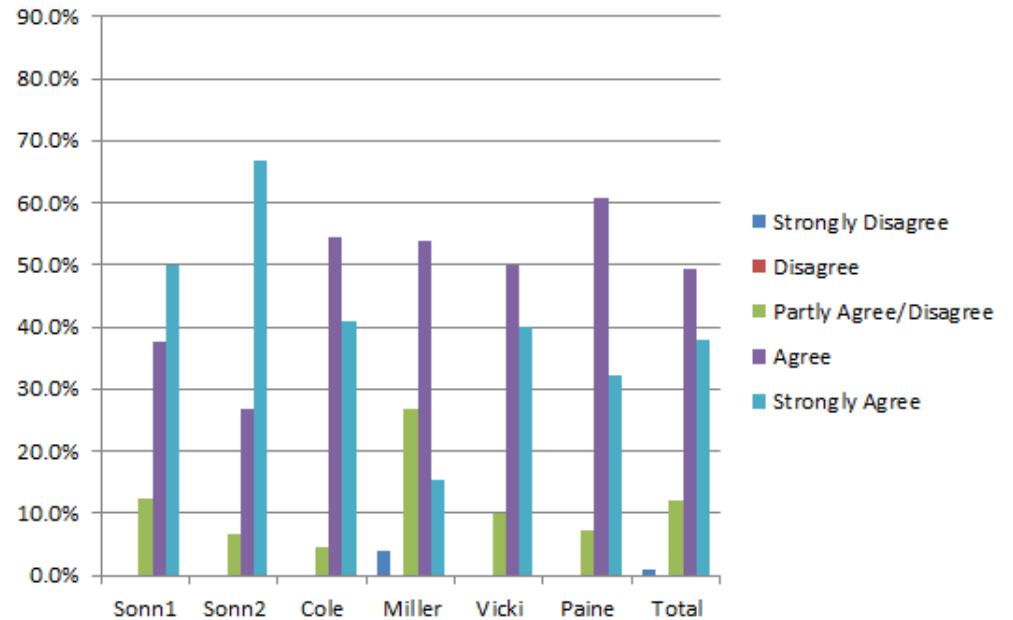
Question 6: After taking this class: “I know a lot about the issue I wrote about for my final paper.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	0	0	0	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (.860%)
Disagree:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (.000%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	1 (5%)	7 (27%)	1 (11%)	2 (7%)	14 (12.069%)
Agree:	6 (38%)	4 (27%)	12 (55%)	14 (54%)	5 (55%)	17 (61%)	58 (50.000%)
Strongly Agree:	8 (50%)	10 (67%)	9 (41%)	4 (15%)	4 (44%)	9 (32%)	44 (37.931%)

BEFORE



AFTER



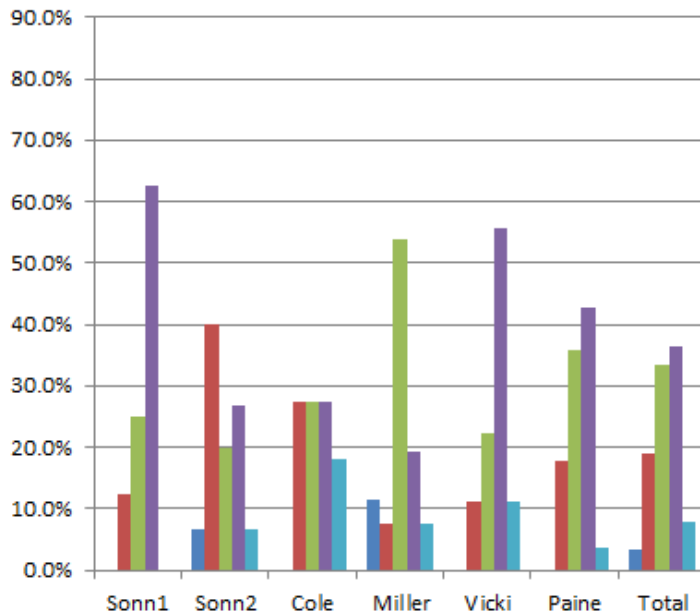
Question 7: Before taking this class: “I frequently think about why people disagree with my opinions.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	0	1 (7%)	0	3 (12%)	0	0	4 (3.448%)
Disagree:	2 (13%)	6 (40%)	6 (27%)	2 (8%)	1 (11%)	5 (18%)	22 (18.966%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	4 (25%)	3 (20%)	6 (27%)	14 (54%)	2 (22%)	10 (36%)	39 (33.621%)
Agree:	10 (63%)	4 (27%)	6 (27%)	5 (20%)	5 (55%)	12 (43%)	42 (36.207%)
Strongly Agree:	0	1 (7%)	4 (18%)	2 (8%)	1 (11%)	1 (4%)	9 (7.759%)

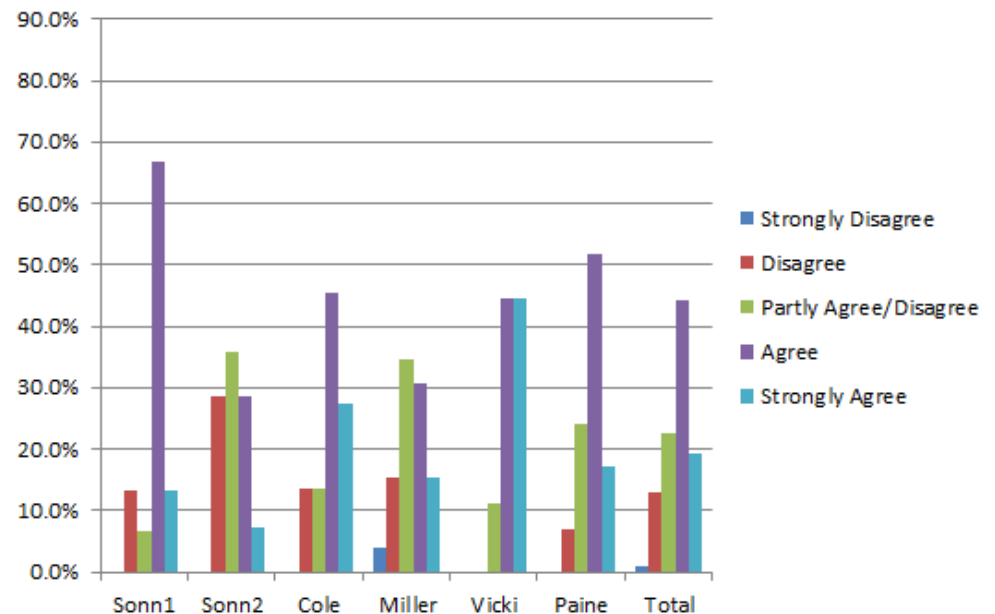
Question 8: After taking this class: “I frequently think about why people disagree with my opinions.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	0	0	0	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (.862%)
Disagree:	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	3 (14%)	4 (15%)	0	2 (7%)	13 (11.207%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	1 (6%)	4 (27%)	3 (14%)	9 (35%)	1 (11%)	7 (25%)	25 (21.552%)
Agree:	10 (63%)	5 (33%)	10 (45%)	8 (31%)	4 (44%)	15 (54%)	52 (44.828%)
Strongly Agree:	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	6 (27%)	4 (15%)	4 (44%)	5 (18%)	25 (21.552%)

BEFORE



AFTER



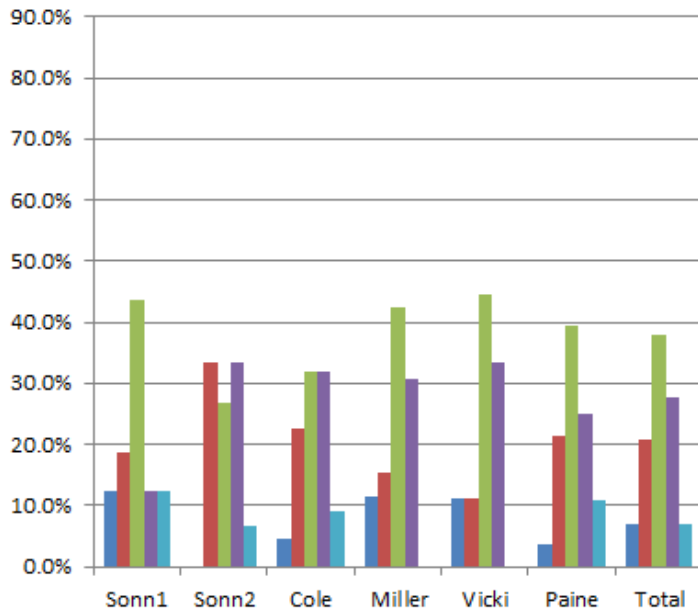
Question 9: Before taking this class: “Communicating with policymakers makes a difference in the policymaking process.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	2 (13%)	0	1 (5%)	3 (12%)	1 (11%)	1 (4%)	8 (6.897%)
Disagree:	3 (18%)	5 (33%)	5 (23%)	4 (15%)	1 (11%)	6 (21%)	24 (20.700%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	7 (44%)	4 (27%)	7 (32%)	11 (42%)	4 (44%)	11 (39%)	44 (37.931%)
Agree:	2 (13%)	5 (33%)	7 (32%)	8 (31%)	3 (33%)	7 (25%)	32 (27.586%)
Strongly Agree:	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	2 (9%)	0	0	3 (11%)	8 (6.897%)

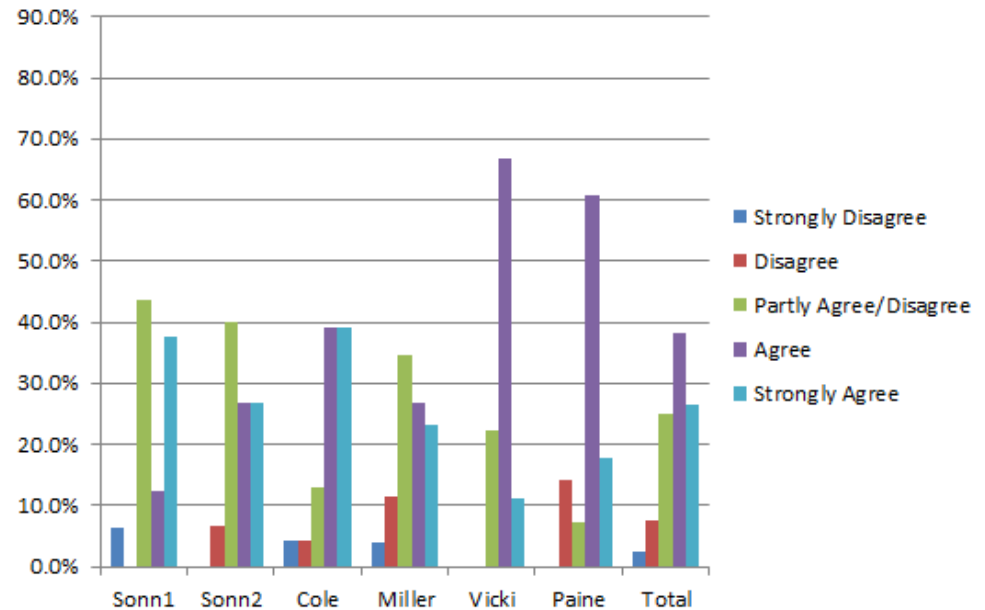
Question 10: After taking this class: “Communicating with policymakers makes a difference in the policymaking process.”

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Strongly Disagree:	1 (6%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (4%)	0	0	3 (2.586%)
Disagree:	0	1 (7%)	1 (5%)	3 (12%)	0	4 (14%)	9 (7.759%)
Partly Agree/Disagree:	7 (44%)	6 (40%)	3 (14%)	9 (35%)	2 (22%)	2 (7%)	29 (25.000%)
Agree:	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	9 (41%)	7 (27%)	6 (67%)	17 (61%)	44 (37.931%)
Strongly Agree:	6 (38%)	4 (27%)	9 (41%)	6 (23%)	1 (11%)	5 (18%)	31 (26.724%)

BEFORE



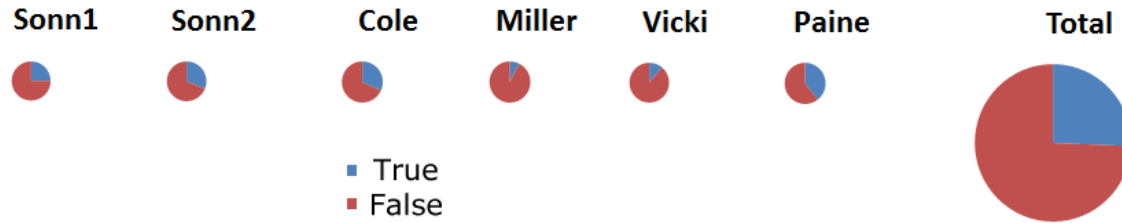
AFTER



PART II: For each of the statements below, choose the word that shows your view at this time.

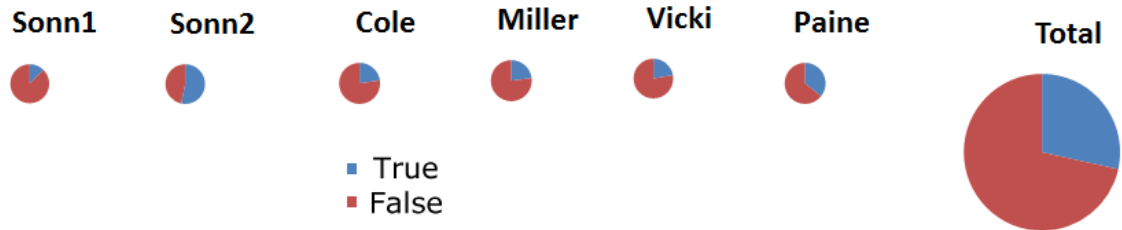
Question 11: I sent the letter I wrote for this assignment to a public official.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	4 (25%)	5 (27%)	7 (32%)	2 (8%)	1 (11%)	11 (39%)	30 (25.862%)
False:	12 (75%)	11 (73%)	15 (68%)	24 (92%)	8 (89%)	17 (61%)	86 (74.138%)



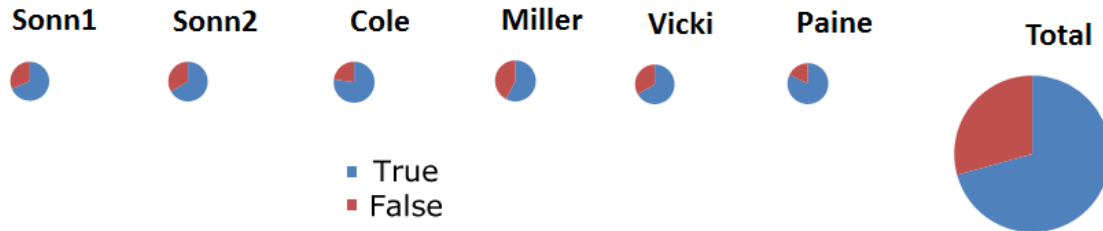
Question 12: I have attempted to communicate with policymakers in the past.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	2 (13%)	8 (53%)	5 (23%)	6 (23%)	2 (22%)	10 (36%)	33 (28.448%)
False:	14 (87%)	7 (47%)	17 (77%)	20 (77%)	7 (78%)	18 (64%)	83 (71.552%)



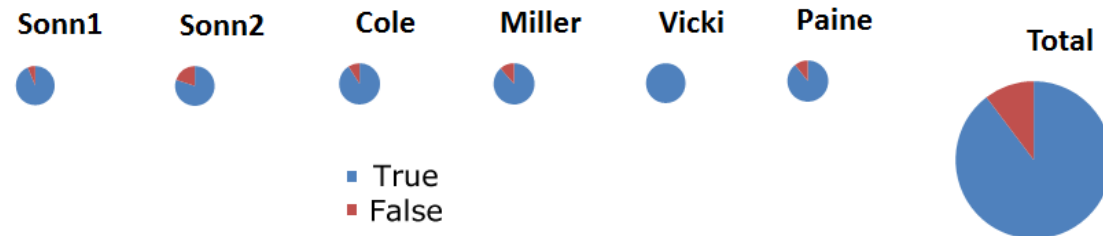
Question 13: I intend to communicate with policymakers in the future.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	11 (69%)	10 (67%)	17 (77%)	15 (58%)	6 (67%)	23 (82%)	82 (70.700%)
False:	5 (31%)	5 (33%)	5 (23%)	11 (42%)	3 (33%)	5 (18%)	34 (29.300%)



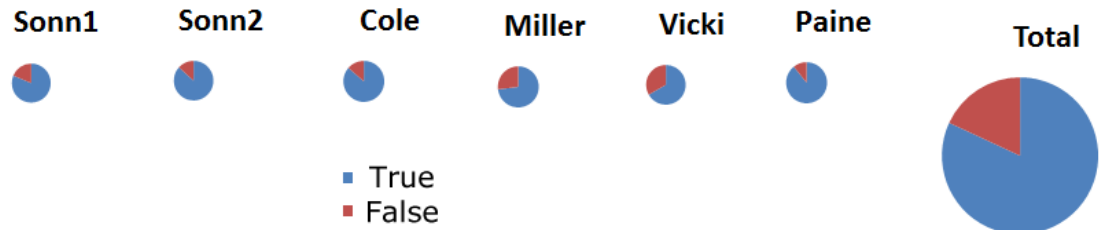
Question 14: I expect to vote regularly and will encourage others to do so as well.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	15 (94%)	12 (80%)	20 (91%)	23 (88%)	9 (100%)	25 (89%)	104 (89.655%)
False:	1 (6%)	3 (20%)	2 (9%)	3 (12%)	0	3 (11%)	12 (10.345%)



Question 15: I feel more empowered to become more politically active in my community.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	13 (81%)	13 (87%)	19 (86%)	19 (73%)	6 (67%)	25 (89%)	95 (81.897%)
False:	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	3 (14%)	7 (27%)	3 (33%)	3 (11%)	21 (18.103%)



Question 16: I expect my community involvement to increase as a result of this course.

	<u>Sonn1:</u>	<u>Sonn2:</u>	<u>Cole:</u>	<u>Miller:</u>	<u>Vicki:</u>	<u>Paine:</u>	<u>Total Responses:</u>
True:	13 (81%)	13 (87%)	14 (64%)	19 (73%)	7 (78%)	23 (82%)	89 (76.724%)
False:	3 (19%)	2 (13%)	8 (36%)	7 (27%)	2 (22%)	5 (18%)	27 (23.276%)

