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January 8, 2020

<u>**Memorandum**</u>

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Brodd, Chair
              Academic Program Review Oversight Committee

SUBJECT: Program Review of the Department of Political Science

The Academic Program Review Oversight Committee has reviewed the Academic Program Review report of the Department of Political Science prepared by Review Team chair Sue Escobar and agrees that it is ready for final approval. The Committee thanks and commends all of those involved in the review for their collegial and effective approach to the process.

The Review is ready for action by the Faculty Senate.

cc: James Cox, Chair, Department of Political Science
        Dianne Hyson, Dean, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies
        Kitty Kelly, Chair, Curriculum Policies Committee
        Amy Wallace, Associate Vice President, Academic Excellence

Academic Program Review Report

Department of Political Science:

BA in Political Science

Concentration in Political Science-International Relations

BA in Political Science-Journalism

Minor in Political Science

MA in Political Science

College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies

California State University, Sacramento

Review Team Chair

Sue C. Escobar, J.D., Ph.D., Division of Criminal Justice

External Consultants

Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, Departments of Political Science and Global Studies, CSU, San Marcos

Dr. Amy Skonieczny, Department of International Relations, San Francisco State University

Fall 2019

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The degree programs in the Department of Political Science underwent program review during the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters, having submitted a Self-Study Proposal on November 28, 2017. The Program submitted its Self-Study on September 4, 2018. Per the instructions contained in the Sacramento State Academic Program Review Manual, the Self-Study consists of three main sections:

> 1. General information about the department and its degree programs (e.g., data on students, faculty, staff, facilities, etc. (most of which is supplied by Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning);

> 2. A statement of intended student learning outcomes at the degree program level; methods for assessing them, including the use of direct measures; assessment results to date; and documentation of the use of assessment results in efforts to achieve degree program improvement (assistance with the preparation of which is available from the University Assessment Coordinator); and

> 3. The results of a focused inquiry addressing issues of particular interest/concern to the department itself, in the context of what is currently important to the college and university.

For their focused inquiry, the Department of Political Science elected to focus on student civic engagement, which was discussed at length in pages 37-48 of the Self-Study. Briefly, as stated in the Self-Study, the department "examine[d] the civic learning and engagement of our students. Specifically, we will look at what opportunities we provide for students to learn outside the classroom and how we connect our students to the larger community" (p. 37). The Internal and External Reviewers found the Political Science Department to be very impressive. As a destination major for students at Sacramento State, the department and its degree programs have grown in terms of majors and faculty over the past several years and currently serves over 600 undergraduate majors as well as a sizeable number non-majors through their GE and American Institutions offerings. The department also serves a small but significant number of graduate students in their MA program.

Overall, the reviewers concluded that the department has responded carefully and strategically to the changing student demographics; student learning assessments were also utilized in order to update and improve their degree programs. Throughout the consultative process with the Department during this review process, the dedication of the department's faculty to serving students through excellent teaching, mentoring, engagement and connecting students to the many community opportunities provided by their unique location in California's state capital shined through immediately. The department serves a critical need at the University and has managed to adapt and improve despite a woeful lack of facilities and financial resources.

The Review Team consisted of Sue C. Escobar (Program Review Team Chair) and two external consultants, Dr. Elizabeth Matthews and Dr. Amy Skonieczny. The program review visit occurred during a two-day period, February 7-8, 2019, where the three members of the Review Team met with faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

REPORT STRUCTURE AND PERSONS AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

The structure of this report is based primarily on the three-section format of the Self-study. Introductory material is followed by 1) general information about the department and its degree programs, 2) learning outcomes and assessment, and 3) analysis of the focused inquiry findings. A final recommendation is made to the Faculty Senate. Commendations and recommendations are directed to the Department of Political Science; the Dean of the College; and the University Provost. A final recommendation is made to the Faculty Senate

This program review is based on consideration of various documents and websites and on consultation with various individuals and groups:

Persons Consulted

> Dr. Ted Lascher, Interim Dean of the College of Health and Human Services
>
> Dr. James Cox, Chair, Department of Political Science

Directors and Coordinators of Programs

> Nancy Lapp, Odyssey Mentor
>
> Maria Sampanis, Internship Coordinator
>
> Janice Shiu, Model UN

Faculty – Separate meetings with members of the following faculty groups:

- Full-time faculty: Tenured/Tenure Track junior faculty
- Full-time faculty: All
- Part-time faculty

Students – Undergraduate and Graduate

> Invited undergraduate students
>
> Undergraduate students in POLS 100
>
> Graduate students in Dr. Stan Oden's class (downtown campus location)

Staff – Department of Political Science

> Julie Cahill and Michelle Tarter

Documents Consulted

Department of Political Science Self-Study proposal (November 28, 2017)

Department of Political Science Program Review Self-Study (September 4, 2018)

College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies website: https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/

Department of Political Science website: https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/

California State University, Sacramento: 2017-2018 Catalog, BS and MS degrees in Political Science: http://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/health-human-services/criminal-justice/

Assessment Documents:

Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning: https://www.csus.edu/president/institutional-research-effectiveness-planning/data-center.html

Fact Book Fall 2017: Department of Political Science: https://www.csus.edu/president/institutional-research-effectiveness-planning/factbooks/government17.pdf

The University Fact Book: Fall 2016: https://www.csus.edu/president/institutional-research-effectiveness-planning/factbooks/university-factbook-2016.pdf

External Consultant's Report:

Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, Departments of Political Science and Global Studies, CSU, San Marcos

Dr. Amy Skonieczny, Department of International Relations, San Francisco State University

Program Review (Office of Academic Affairs): Prior website: http://www.csus.edu/acaf/programreview/

Academic Program Review Manual (REV May, 2016): http://www.csus.edu/acaf/programreview/programreviewmanual2016.pdf

Office of Academic Program Assessment: https://www.csus.edu/president/institutional-research-effectiveness-planning/assessment/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

Department Commendation 1: The Department of Political Science does a good job of delivering a relevant curriculum to their undergraduate and graduate students.

Department Commendation 2: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for its rigorous assessment strategy and prcess that has led to subsequent adjustments to the curriculum and other programmatic changes.

Department Commendation 3: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for the Sacramento Semester Program, the Model UN, and other internships, which are important and significant programs provided by the department.

Department Commendation 4: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for Project Odyssey, a wonderful, successful mentoring program that is helping students make progress toward degree completion.

Department Commendation 5: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for carrying out a well-designed focus inquiry that reflects the priorities of the department and their alignment to the department's mission, values and goals.

Recommendations to the Department

Department Recommendation 1: For the Political Science-Journalism BA degree program, the advisors from the Departments of Political Science and Communication Studies, respectively, need to collaborate on creating learning outcomes that correspond with the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs) as well as an assessment plan.

Department Recommendation 2: The Department of Political Science needs to develop useful and measurable learning outcomes for the Political Science-Journalism BA and incorporate them into the current departmental assessment plan.

Department Recommendation 3: The Department of Political Science should use the next review cycle to continue its on-going assessment process by transitioning learning goals for its degree programs into useful and measureable learning outcomes and to record what changes have been made with respect to how the department is closing the loop with respect to any issues that have been uncovered in the assessment process.

Department Recommendation 4: The Department of Political Science needs to assess all the learning goals and outcomes for all of its degree programs within the 6-year program review cycle.

Department Recommendation 5: The Department of Political Science should continue assessing their undergraduate advising model but also explore other advising options that allow the students to have greater accessibility to advisors and enjoy greater flexibility among advisor availability, such as having more drop-in hours.

Department Recommendation 6: The Department of Political Science should consider the scheduling of core courses to diversify the times they are offered.

Department Recommendation 7: The Department of Political Science should review both the College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies' assessment guidelines and the University's Graduate Program Learning Goals Policy regarding regular, consistent assessment in the graduate program.

Department Recommendation 8: With the MA Program, the Department of Political Science should also consider a connection to the Public Policy and Administration program, both of which frequently draw on the same pool of students.

Department Recommendation 9: With the MA Program, the Department of Political Science should work with the Office of Graduate Studies on recruitment efforts.

Department Recommendation 10: For the MA program, the Department of Political Science should consider advising at different hours of the day, having open advising and office hours at the downtown campus at lunch hour or in the evening.

Department Recommendation 11: To grow the MA program, the Department of Political Science needs to explore additional means of publicity, update the content and overall presentation of information on the webpage for the MA program.

Department Recommendation 12: To recruit more graduate students to its MA program, the Department of Political Science should consider auto enrollment and a 4+1 model (i.e., a Bachelors-to-Master's Degree path).

Department Recommendation 13: The Department of Political Science should continue to work with the College and University to secure stable funding for the Model UN Program, which is an important program within the department, the college, and at the university.

Department Recommendation 14: Considering that the Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and univeristy, the Department of Political Science needs to provide financial and administrative support, including proper compensation for the faculty running it; a percentage of administrative staff support; and an office for the program, perhaps at the downtown campus location.

Department Recommendation 15: The Review Team recommends that tenure-track faculty members should take on both MUN and the Sacramento Semester Program, and, as the Department of Political Science considers its next hiring request, they should seriously consider including as part of the job duties either MUN or the Sacramento Semester Program.

Department Recommendation 16: The Review Team recommends that the lecturer faculty who are currently doing great work for both the Model UN and Sacramento Semester Programs be compensated adequately by the Department of Political Science; additional percentage of time assigned to these classes and summer compensation should be considered.

Department Recommendation 17: The Review Team recommends that the non-tenured/tenure-track faculty pool be expanded to address the additional work to be done in the department with respect to diversity.

Department Recommendation 18: To assist in the progress of new tenure-track faculty, the Department of Political Science should review and consider revising the Department ARTP document, with particular attention paid to transparency, clarity, and enough specificity regarding benchmarks for tenure and promotion.

Department Recommendation 19: To improve communication between the faculty and staff and clarify important deadlines and procedures, the Department of Political Science should consider having staff members come to faculty meetings and explain the process and the importance of the request.

Department Recommendation 20: The Review Team recommends that the Department of Political Science consider using other communication tools, such as social media and listservs, to get the word out about these opportunities for students.

Recommendations to the Dean, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies

College Recommendation 1: The Review Team encourages the College to engage in greater buy-in of the MA program, provide on-going financial support for the Graduate Coordinator, in particular, and the faculty who agree to supervise Culminating Experiences, and foster deeper connections between the Political Science MA Program and the Public Policy and Administration MA Program considering that both degree programs frequently draw on the same pool of students.

College Recommendation 2: To ease the burden of the 120 student-per-full-time faculty rule, the College needs to consider counting students more than 1.25 students, which will encourage more faculty to teach graduate classes and ease the scheduling burden for the department chair.

College Recommendation 3: The Review Team encourages the College to see the value of the Model UN Program and help provide administrative staff support for the program as well as release time, or a percentage of time for the program advisor and professor of the Model UN class.

College Recommendation 4: Given that the Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and univeristy, the Review Team recommends that the College investigate the financial health and stability of the program, particularly with respect to administrative and faculty as well as availability of space to house the program.

College Recommendation 5: The Review Team encourages the College to support curricular innovation and improvement through faculty development support.

College Recommendation 6: The Review Team recommends that College prioritize new tenure-track lines to the department to continue to meet the growing demands of the major.

College Dean Recommendation 7: The Review Team recommends that the College work with the department chair and university provost on securing adequate classroom space.

Recommendations to the University and Provost

University Provost Recommendation 1: The Review Team encourages the University to engage in greater buy-in of the MA program and provide on-going financial support for the Graduate Coordinator, in particular, and the faculty who agree to supervise Culminating Experiences.

University Provost Recommendation 2: The Review Team encourages the University to see the value of the Model UN Program and help provide administrative staff support for the program as well as release time or a % of time for the program advisor and professor of the MUN class.

University Provost Recommendation 3: The Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and university and is in need of substantial financial and administrative support, including proper compensation for the faculty running it; a percentage of administrative staff support; and an office for the program, perhaps at the downtown campus location.

University Provost Recommendation 4: The Review Team recommends that the Provost prioritize new tenure-track lines to the department to continue to meet the growing demands of the major.

University Provost Recommendation 5: The Review Team recommends that the University work with the college Dean and department chair on securing adequate classroom space.

Recommendation to the Faculty Senate

Based on this program review, the Self-Study report prepared by the Department of Political Science, and the External Reviewers' Report, the Review Team recommends that the degree programs in the Department of Political Science be approved for six years or until the next scheduled program review.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE – GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Political Science is one of fifteen departments within the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies. According to the Fall 2017 Factbook, Political Science's BA degree graduated a total of 640 undergraduates during the 5 year period provided (2012-2017), an average of approximately 128 undergraduate students per year. Additionally, the department awarded 44 Master of Arts (MA) degrees during this 5 year period, averaging to 9 students per year. The Self-Study notes on page 8 that the Fall 2017 Factbook does not reflect the recent hires over the past two years. Currently, the department has a total of 19 tenured and tenure track faculty, which reflects the same level as 2009. The department has had to rely on a large number of temporary faculty to teach its extensive curricula in GE. In fact, as the Self-Study indicates, "[t]he number of temporary faculty has more than doubled over the past eight years" (p. 8).

On its website above the 'Academic Programs' link, the department states that:

> *Political Science is devoted to the study of theory and practice across several fields of study, including Political Theory, American Politics, Comparative Politics, Public Law and Policy, and International Relations.*

Furthermore, the department website provides descriptions of both its undergraduate and graduate degree programs:

Undergraduate Degree Program

Students with a Political Science major enter careers in government at the local, state or federal level, urban planning, political campaigns, or policy-related fields of all kinds.

Some of our students work in the political process, including the burgeoning campaign field, public or private interest groups, or for lobbying organizations. Others go into teaching at all levels, journalism, business, and of course Government is a popular major for students interested in pursuing legal careers.

Graduate Degree Program

The primary aim of our program is to foster an understanding of government and politics in general and also to promote the development of analytic and other scholarly skills.

Our view of the discipline is broad and, in some respects traditional. We encourage students first to acquire a good foundation in basic course work and the tradition of political discourse along with some exposure to the many subfields of political science before pursuing more specialized interests. Those interested in more specialized programs should consult the Master's in Public Policy and Administration, the Master's in Business Administration.

Several key co-curricular programs in the department support both student success and faculty scholarship. These programs include the Sacramento Semester Program, Model UN Program, the Odyssey Mentors Program, and Pi Sigma Alpha (National Political Science Honors Program). These programs bring a lot of recognition and clout to the department, college, and university; however, the Review Team found funding to be insufficient.

Department Commendation 1: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for delivering a relevant curriculum to their undergraduate and graduate students.

In terms of most significant changes since the 2010 program review, the Review Team found that the department engaged in a thoughtful, reflective process with respect to issues identified in that review. Specifically, as the External Reviewers' Report states on page 3:

The key areas of improvement were: 1) Branding and Recognition through a Name Change; 2) Hiring more diverse full- time tenure-track faculty with an emphasis on identity politics; and 3) Using assessment and data to track and scaffold curriculum and course offerings. The Political Science Department focused on these three areas since the last review and has done an excellent job in addressing all of the recommendations of the previous review. Since then, the department has changed the name of the department from Government to Political Science to reflect current trends and name-recognition in the field and in employment. They have hired new tenure-track faculty to address diversity shortfalls and under- representation in key areas of the discipline such as identity politics and California politics. Finally, they have increased the number of GE sections to meet demand, built in restrictions to the major for POLS 100 so more majors can access the course, and examined when the majors take the required courses in terms of scaffolding to make sure that the course sequencing aligned with availability and student access to required courses. In addition to improvements in the three areas highlighted here, the department undertook a focused inquiry into civic learning and student engagement with the community (p. 3).

On the whole, the Review Team commends the department for its efforts and for the significant changes that it has made since that last program review cycle.

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The department serves five main constituencies of students:

- Undergraduates who major in Political Science (BA in Political Science)

- Undergraduates who major in Political Science and have a concentration in International Relations (BA in Political Science (International Relations))

- Undergraduates who major in Political Science-Journalism (BA in Political Science-Journalism)

- Graduates who major in Political Science (MA in Political Science)

- Undergraduates who minor in Political Science

- The department also serves the General Education program with 12 general education courses in Areas C (1 course) and D (11 courses).

BA in Political Science

University Catalog

Courses: https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/pols/

Academic Program: https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/ba-political-science/

The BA in Political Science requires a minimum of 39 units. The University Catalog provides the following description of the degree program:

The Political Science major complements a student's liberal arts education with an emphasis on understanding the theoretical and practical aspects of government and politics. The department offers a BA in Political Science, two concentrations, and the minor in Government. The Government major is structured to provide students with a background in the basic fields of political science, as well as to permit them a range of choice in completing the program. The Political Science Department offers several courses integral to interdisciplinary programs such as California Studies, Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, and Women's Studies.

The department emphasizes its expectation that students seek faculty advice when planning their program. Students may ask any faculty member's assistance initially. As specific interests are developed, students may wish to seek the advice of faculty sharing their interests.

> *Note: Although it is not a requirement of the major, the department strongly recommends that students take an introductory statistics course as part of their undergraduate work. A course in statistics may be used to satisfy the GE requirement in mathematics.*

As stated in the Self-Study, "the regular Political Science major has six required courses and seven electives for a total of 39 units …." with "… plans … to require POLS 140 for Political Science majors and increase our unit total to 42 units" (p. 4). To complete the degree requirements, students must take the following courses:

Required Lower Division

POLS 1: Essentials of Government

Required Upper Division

POLS 100: Research Methods

POLS 110 or 111: Ancient or Modern Political Theory

POLS 120A or 120B: Constitutional Law or Civil Rights & Liberties

POLS 130: International Relations

POLS 170: Public Policy Development

Elective Courses

21 Units

39 Units Total

BA in Political Science (International Relations [concentration])

University Catalog

> Courses: https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/pols/
>
> Academic Program: https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/ba-political-science-international-relations/

According to the Self-Study, "[t]he regular Government-International Relations concentration has six required courses and eight electives for a total of 42 units. Student can take up to 12 units of electives outside the Department" (p. 5). Over the past several years, the department has been thinking about and reflecting upon the IR concentration; the department concluded that its offerings in the subfield of International Relations were stronger than those in comparative politics thus comparative politics was one of our priorities in our latest hires. As indicated in the Self-Study, the department's plan, as part of EO 1071, is to petition to have the IR concentration elevated to a degree program and will be reviewing the concentration's curriculum in the context of a major. The list of requirements for the concentration are listed below.

Required Lower Division

POLS 1: Essentials of Government

Required Upper Division

POLS 100: Research Methods

POLS 111 or 112: Modern or Contemp. Political Theory

POLS 130: International Relations

POLS 136: International Political Economy

POLS 140: Comparative Politics

Elective Courses

24 Units

42 Units Total

BA in Political Science-Journalism

University Catalog

> Courses: https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/pols/ and https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/jour/

> Academic Program: https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/arts-letters/communication-studies/journalism/ba-political-science-journalism/

According to the Self-Study, "[t]he Government-Journalism Major is a joint major between Political Science and the Department of Communication Studies. This has the fewest student of any of our undergraduate programs and it also has the highest number of units. Although a relatively small major, this unique interdisciplinary program is particularly useful for students interested in political communication and reporting on state and local governments, which are career opportunities prevalent in the state capitol region" (p. 5).

In addition, one of the newer faculty members in the department has stepped up and has become the advisor. The faculty member coordinates with the advisor in the Department of Communication Studies Department, for this particular major, on advising and developing outreach. With respect to curriculum updates, the department also made some adjustments to the choices of electives in the American Politics Courses category in AY 2015-2016.

Lower Division

POLS 1: Essential of Government

JOUR 30: News Writing

JOUR 55 or JOUR 50 Media Communication and Society or
Mass Media and Critical Thinking

Upper Division Core Government

POLS 170: Public Policy Development

POLS 180: California Government

American Politics Course: Choose from Several

POLS 120A or POLS 120B: Constitutional Law or Civil Rights & Liberties

International Relations Course: Choose from three

Upper Division Core Journalism

JOUR 130A: News Reporting 1

JOUR 130A: News Reporting 2

JOUR 134: War, Peace and Mass Media

JOUR 135: Public Affairs Reporting

JOUR 153: Mass Media Law and Regulation

Internship

Electives

9 Units

Total 51 Units

Minor in Political Science

University Catalog

Courses: https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/pols/

Academic Program: https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/minor-political-science/

Select 2 of the following:

POLS 110: Political Thought

POLS 111: Political Thought II

POLS 120A: Constitutional Law

POLS 120B: Civil Rights & Liberties

POLS 130: International Relations

POLS 170: Public Policy Development

Select 15 Units of Government courses

21 Units Total

Master's of Political Science

<u>University Catalog</u>

Courses: https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/pols/

Academic Programs:

https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/ma-political-science-california-political-environment/

https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/ma-political-science-international-relationscomparative-government/

https://catalog.csus.edu/colleges/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/political-science/ma-political-science-political-theory/

As stated in the Self-Study, "[t]he Government Master's Program has three areas of concentration: California and its Environment, International Relations, and Political Theory. Each student must take one course in each area and at least three courses in their area of concentration" (p. 6).

<u>Core Courses</u>

POLS 200 Research Methods

Seminar in California and its Environment

Seminar in IR/Comparative Politics

Seminar in Political Theory

Two Additional Course in one subfield

<u>Elective Courses</u>

9 units

<u>Culminating Experience</u>

3 units

30 units Total

General Education Courses in Political Science

As the Self-Study indicates, the Department of Political Science offers a number General Education (GE) courses; they comprise a significant part of the department's total student load.   More specifically, "[i]n Spring 2018, [the Department] had a total of 777.3 FTES and of that 483.4 came from GE courses. POLS 1, POLS 113, and POLS 150 meet the American Institutions requirement. All of the courses below meet the Area D requirement except POLS 10, which meets Area C" (p. 7). A total of 62.18% of FTES come from GE Courses.

POLS 1 – Essentials of Government

POLS 10 – Meaning of Government

POLS 113 – American Political Thought

POLS 134 – War, Peace, and Mass Media

POLS 143 – Causes of War, Causes of Peace

POLS 144 – European Politics

POLS 147 – Latin American Government and Politics

POLS 148 – Government and Politics of the Middle East

POLS 150 – American Governments

POLS 163 – Introduction to Black Politics

POLS 165 – Politics of the Underrepresented

POLS 180 – California State and Local Government

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Student Enrollment by Degree Program & Concentration

	Entering in Fall				
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Undergraduate Students					
Government					
Government	261	286	301	297	332
Government (Int'l Relations)	119	144	140	146	155
Government/Journalism	18	20	15	18	
Sub-Total	*398*	*450*	*456*	*461*	*499*
Graduate Students - 2nd BA					
Government					
Government	1	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Graduate Students - Masters					
Government					
Government	28	27	34	27	26
Sub-Total	*28*	*27*	*34*	*27*	*26*
International Affairs					
International Affairs	1	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Departmental Total	***428***	***477***	***490***	***488***	***525***

Note: Some degree programs/concentrations are not listed if there were no students majored in those degree programs in the past five years.

As presented above, undergraduate student enrollment in the Political Science BA has been steadily increasing since 2012 (Fall 2017 Factbook, p. 5).

Number of Majors and Non-Majors

The Department of Political Science has seen an increase in the number of majors in the last several years, although between 2007 and 2012, the Political Science major major saw a decline in the overall number of majors while the number of majors in Political Science-International Relations remained steady. However, most recently, the Political Science major has experienced steady growth. As the Self-Study shows:

> *the number of enrolled majors in spring 2018 was 25 in Government-Journalism, 154 in Government-IR, and 346 in regular Government. This gives a total of 525 majors. During the period between 2007 and 2012, Government majors fell as a percentage to the total majors in SSIS. However, in recent years we have returned to around 9-10% of the majors in the college. Over the past ten years, the number of graduate students has fluctuated very little* (Self-Study, p. 10).

Number of Majors in the Political Science Department over Time

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
POLS/Journalism	19	27	24	23	25	18	20	15	18	12
Political Science	294	260	282	259	231	261	301	301	297	332
Political Science-IR	115	112	139	121	116	119	144	140	146	155
Total Undergraduate	428	399	445	403	372	398	450	456	461	499
Graduate	35	33	21	23	29	28	27	34	27	26

The department's majors make up only part of their overall teaching responsibility. Over the past ten years, only about 34% of the students taught in their classes were majors. For lower-division courses, it was only 5%. Our FTES made up 14.4% of FTES in the college. POLS 1 comprises the largest enrollment course and makes up over 30% of the department's enrollment. The enrollment in the department's lower division GE courses is more diverse than that of their upper division major courses.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Student demographics within the Department of Political Science has changed over the past ten years. Extracted from the Self-Study, the table below provides for the demographic characteristics of majors for 2007 and 2011-2016. The last column shows the growth for that area from 2007 to 2016. During that time period, the major as a whole grew by 16.6%.

The diversity of the department's majors has increased over time, with the most significant changes being the increased numbers of Latinos and multi-racial students in the department's classrooms. In terms of gender, the number of female majors increased slightly faster than male majors. According to the 2017 Factbook, 37.3% of the department's students were categorized as minority. This was lower than SSIS at 54.8% or the University as a whole at 56.8%. The percentage of female majors also differs from the college and university. In 2016, 52.3% of our majors were female, but the college percentage was 68.5% and the University was 55.9%. Over the past ten years, the department's majors have become more diverse, reflecting the level of diversity within the college and at the university. The number of majors between the ages of 18-24 has increased faster than students over the age of 25.

In the sum, the Review Team notes, in concurrence with the Self-Study, that the department's majors are quite diverse with respect to demographics, although this diversity could be increased. The Review Team supports the department's efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate students from all backgrounds and life experiences as it continues to improve its degree programs on the whole, particularly with respect to the name change, a recent spate of hires, and curricular updates.

Demographic Profile of Major in the Department of Political Science Over Time (from *Self-Study*, p. 11)

	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Growth 2007-2016
African American	27	21	30	32	29	29	37	37.0%
American Indian	4	2	3	1	1		1	-75.0%
Asian	47	32	45	51	43	42	59	25.5%
Latino	75	81	103	125	132	150	142	89.3%
Pacific Islander	4	0	1		1	5	6	50.0%
Multi-racial		15	20	20	28	39	46	206.7%
White	190	173	151	160	165	159	174	-8.4%
Other/Unreported	77	43	38	46	38	27	19	-75.3%
Female	220	169	176	206	219	239	261	18.6%
Male	208	203	222	244	237	222	238	14.4%
under 18	5	4	3	7	4	4	3	-40.0%
18-24	316	263	289	336	343	359	393	24.4%
25 and over	107	105	106	107	109	98	103	-3.7%
Total Majors	428	372	398	450	456	461	499	16.6%

GRADUATION AND RETENTION

The number of BA degrees conferred has also been consistent in the last five years as shown below.

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
112	132	138	120	138

Graduation rate trends for both first-time freshmen and transfer students have been improving, as the median time to degree has declined from a consistent 4.8 years from 2012-2015 to 4.3 years beginning in AY2015-2016.

Percentage Graduation Rates for First-Time Freshmen (Entering in Fall)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
4-year	19	11	20	16	24
5-year	50	39	40	44	--
6-year	58	54	52	--	--

Percentage Graduation Rates for Undergraduate Transfers (Entering in Fall)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2-year	35	27	36	42	26
3-year	73	71	67	65	--
4-year	76	78	75	--	--

The average student course load trend for the BA is also stable with a ten-year mean of 12.7 units. During the last academic year reported, 2016-17, the student's academic load increased to 13.1 and 12.6, respectively. A possible reason for the change in student course load may be due to the increase in the number of faculty hires over the last ten years, which may have resulted in additional seats offered in this and all degree programs.

In the External Reviewers' Report, Mathews and Skonieczny write:

> *They have hired new tenure-track faculty to address diversity shortfalls and under-representation in key areas of the discipline such as identity politics and California politics. Finally, they have increased the number of GE sections to meet demand, built in restrictions to the major for POLS 100 so more majors can access the course, and examined when the majors take the required courses in terms of scaffolding to make sure that the course sequencing aligned with availability and student access to required courses.*

> *To cover these programs, the Department has 18 full-time tenure-line faculty members and one member in the Faculty Early Retirement Program. In addition, the Department has approximately 20 temporary faculty in any given semester, many with long-term and passionate commitment to the Department. The Dpartment has conducted significant hiring of faculty over the past 10 years, with five new TT faculty and a doubling of their temporary faculty* (p. 3).

In the 2017 University Factbook of the Department of Political Science, the trends in first-time freshmen and undergraduate transfers shows the department meeting and/or exceeding the retention rates across the College and University in most years within the 2011-2015 time frame.

Retention Rates* - First-Time Freshmen (Entering in Fall)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
After 1-year	81	85	84	87	91
After 2-years	72	76	80	78	--
After 3-years	69	73	75	--	--

Retention Rates* - Undergraduate Transfers (Entering in Fall)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
After 1-year	88	86	83	94	83
After 2-years	78	83	77	85	--

* Retention rate is the sum of continuation and graduation divided by orginal entering student numbers (Factbook, Fall 2017).

The Review Team concluded that the department provides a solid number of course offerings each semester, allowing students to graduate in a timely fashion. During the External Reviewers' visit, the Review Team met with several groups of students, including students enrolled in POLS 100. As stated in the External Reviewers' report,

> *[t]he students we spoke with are highly satisfied with their experience in Political Science, singing the praises of their faculty and indicating they have little trouble getting the courses they need to graduate when they need them* (p. 4)

The data in the University Factbook (2017) support these comments from the students.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT – UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The department is continuing to make adjustments to improve the diversity of their student population, including curriculum changes and the recent name change from Government to Political Science. As addressed in both the Self-Study and the External Reviewers' Report, new tenure-track hires have provided additional expertise in the area of identity politics, which, according to Matthews and Skonieczny, is "an essential element of any 21st Century Political Science Program. The department is also adding a core course in Comparative Politics to the Political Science degree (it is already in the IR degree), completing the offerings of the major subfields of Political Science.

With respect to Program Learning Goals (PLGs), the External Reviewers' Report provides excellent insights, which are presented below:

> *The student learning outcomes for the Political Science major and the International Relations major are the same except for PLO 4 for each. PLO 1, 2, 3, and 5 focus on skills - communication, information literacy, critical thinking, and quantitative knowledge. PLO 4 focuses on the core knowledge of the major. This is certainly an acceptable way to construct learning outcomes and are in complete alignment with the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs). Other Political Science programs may have more content-focused learning outcomes, but the skills-focused outcomes here cannot be assessed without using knowledge from politics and government (as demonstrated in PLO 1 and 2). Because the PLOs are mainly skill-based, they can be assessed in numerous classes, thus matching with the curriculum in the majors. From our conversations with faculty and students, it is clear that assignments in most classes include extensive writing and critical thinking. Thus, PLO 1, 2, 3, and 5 can be assessed across the curriculum. PLO4 can be (and has been) assessed across the curriculum using a multiple choice test* (pp. 4-5).

The Review Team notes that the Political Science – Journalism major has no learning outcomes. A joint effort between the Political Science Department and the Department of Communication Studies, it has the fewest number of students of the three major degree programs in Political Science. Nonetheless, it is evidently a very important and valuable degree program in the department. The students with whom the Review Team met, who are currently enrolled in this major, were very enthusiastic about it, and they explained to the Review Team how the degree program perfectly fits their career goals. As this is an important option for students, the Review Team recommends that the advisors in both departments need to come together and create learning outcomes that correspond with the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs) and develop an assessment plan. This would be a positive and necessary step for ensuring the future success of this degree program.

Department Recommendation 1: For the Political Science-Journalism BA degree program, the advisors from the Departments of Political Science and Communication Studies, respectively, need to collaborate on creating learning outcomes that correspond with the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs) as well as an assessment plan.

Department Recommendation 2: The Department of Political Science needs to develop useful and measurable learning outcomes for the Political Science-Journalism BA and incorporate them into the current departmental assessment plan.

With respect to assessment, the Review Team found that the department has undertaken a rigorous and responsive assessment strategy and process. Once again, the External Reviewers' Report provides good insight here:

> *The Department has assessed the PLOs in the Political Science and International Relations majors, and the Master's Degree program. As stated above, no assessment has been conducted for the Political Science-Journalism major. The Department has engaged in a thoughtful assessment using either written papers in a single class in a given year (PLOs 1, 2,3, and 5) or a multiple choice test across multiple classes in a given year (PLO 4).*
>
> *Beginning in 2012-2013, PLOs 2-5 have been assessed for the Political Science and International Relations degree programs. Each PLO contains subsets of criteria and the Department has wisely chosen to break them apart and assess each one. This means that not all subset criteria have been assessed in the last five years, but the Department has assessed an important element of their learning outcomes each year and has learned from the assessment and closed the loop on what they learned. For example, in response to their 2012-2013 assessment, the Department adopted a common citation format to address the fact that students did not perform as well as hoped in using evidence and citing sources. When this was reassessed in 2016, they found an improvement in student performance. This is exactly how assessment activities should be conducted – you find a problem, implement a solution, and then test to see if your solution worked. Hopefully, in future assessment efforts, the Department will see similar positive results for PLO 5 (result interpretation) and PLO 4 (basic knowledge).*

The Review Team notes that the department has responded to the results of previous assessment activities. For example, the department developed roadmaps to guide students towards appropriate course sequencing. As is common in many departments, students tend to take courses when and where they can fit them into their schedule and not necessarily where they make the most sense, pedagogically speaking. The department's efforts towards guided course sequencing have paid off; more students now are taking POLS 100 at junior status, which was the department's goal. Looking long-term, the department's objective is to utilize the roadmaps to assist students in more pedagogically supported course sequencing pattern that is more conducive to learning. Furthermore, a variety of assessment activities show that the department faculty have undertaken efforts to improve student writing and writing assignments across their classes. We commend the department for this ongoing activity.

Department Commendation 2: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for its rigorous assessment strategy and process that has led to subsequent adjustments to the curriculum and other programmatic changes.

Department Recommendation 3: The Department of Political Science should use the next review cycle to continue its on-going assessment process by transitioning learning goals for its degree

programs into useful and measureable learning outcomes and to record what changes have been made with respect to how the Department is closing the loop with respect to any issues that have been uncovered in the assessment process.

Department Recommendation 4: The Department of Political Science needs to assess all the learning goals and outcomes for all of its degree programs within the 6-year program review cycle.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT: ADVISING AND TEACHING – UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The Department of Political Science has been working hard to improve undergraduate advising in order to assist students on their path to graduation. In addition, they are working to improve advising to help students through to graduation. Research shows that students are more likely to stay and complete college if they have a connection with faculty.[1] As Matthews and Skonieczny write:

> *Working to improve their advising system is one notable way the Department is endeavoring to increase retention and graduation. In addition, the Odyssey Program has been highly successful in improving student retention – freshmen retention is an amazing 90%. The Department is investigating ways to improve the program for transfer students and to target struggling students. We commend the Department for this program and it success.*

However, students with whom the Review Team spoke expressed a couple of concerns, particularly related to the availability of core courses, which the students would like to see offered more often during evening hours. Students also wanted to have a wider variety of faculty teaching the core courses so as to have a better chance of finding a faculty member whose teaching style matched the student's learning style and, therefore, staying on track with their progress to degree.   To a limited extent, the Review Team acknowledges the reality that incongruencies do exist at times between faculty teaching styles and student learning styles, and that students may have limited options in terms of choice of faculty when it comes to required courses. Nonetheless, the Review Team recognizes the significance of subject matter expertise, and that the department has done a good job of staffing its courses with faculty trained in those areas.

The Review Team noted that students appreciated the flexibility with which they could complete the core courses since there is no specific prescribed course sequence within the core since a majority of these courses do not have specific, required pre-requisites.   Although this structure maximizes curricular and scheduling flexibility, it generates problems with respect to "student learning outcome (SLO) scaffolding. As the External Reviewers' Report points out, and with which the Review Team agreed as a whole,

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[1] Covino, G. (n.d.). Academic advising is key to student retention and success.
https://www.studentconnections.com/blog/academic-advising-key-student-retention-success/

courses are not necessarily building on one another and more advanced students may be taking entry level courses and vice versa.… [T]he Department has opted to focus on student advising and recommending roadmaps towards graduation rather than requiring pre-requisites for courses (p. 4).

With respect to faculty advising, the graduation rates indicate that it is fairly effective. During the course of the campus visit, the Review Team members asked students about their experiences with advising and, as the External Reviewers' Report indicates, most students felt that they did have access to advising and got what they needed from that "despite the fact that at least half of the 35 students we spoke with raised their hands to indicate that they had not had any advising in more than a year" (p. 6). That said, some of the students stated that the path to graduation was clear to them since they have access the roadmaps and lists of courses in the schedule from the Sac State website. Moreover, the students with whom the Review Team spoke indicated that they feel comfortable selecting courses on their own but that if the department offered more drop-in advising sessions, they would be more likely to seek out advising services.

In the Self-Study, the department discussed the results of a survey they conducted in 2016 to assess the quality of advising, to which 164 majors responded. The results of the survey revealed some important insights to which the department is responding. For example, the department learned that nearly "45% of students did not seek out advising before they began taking upper division courses," which is something that the department wishes to change (Self-Study, p. 14). Additionally, the department found that "57% of our majors strongly or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied with advising they received from the Political Science Department. This compares to 81% who strongly or somewhat agreed they were satisfied with the quality of the instruction" (Self-Study, p. 14). The Review Team found the department's efforts to respond to the advising survey's results to be notable. In particular, having drop-in advising days prior to students' registration day marks one strategy that has been shown to be at least somewhat effective in increasing the number of students who see an advisor.

The department's Self-Study indicates a desire to seek out advice from other department chairs in terms of how their advising is organized or structured. One model the department expressed interest in pursuing is assigning students to a committee of faculty advisors so that students would not be limited to a single faculty member's office hours (Self-Study, p. 15).

The Review Team noted that there is no mandatory advising required on the part of the students, which essentially means that students seek advising whenever they feel they need it, which may or may not be a on a regular, consistent basis. The lack of mandatory advising may provide for more opportunities for students to slip through the cracks, so to speak, and miss out on an opportunity to connect with faculty and receive other information, such as internship opportunities, that go far beyond course and degree-progress advising. The Review Team recommends that the faculty continue to offer drop-in advising hours and to promote advising in the classroom and other access points. We encourage the department to convey to students that advising is about more than selecting courses especially given the wide-range of opportunities for students at Sac State including internships, Model UN and other opportunities.

On the whole, the department's Self-Study and campus visit made it very apparent to the entire Review Team that all faculty are deeply engaged with their students and dedicated to teaching excellence. The conversations with the students also reflected the support from the faculty and the department as a whole. As shared by Matthews and Skonieczny in their report:

> *[W]e heard repeatedly that the reason that students felt the Political Science major was great was because of excellent teachers and mentorship from faculty. Students reflected that they were connected with multiple types of activities that supported learning outside of the classroom because of faculty such as internships, volunteer opportunities, public speaking events and connections to alumni and other networking opportunities at the capital. In our conversations with faculty, we heard repeatedly how important teaching is to the Department and that connections with students was strong.*

Department Recommendation 5: The Department of Political Science should continue assessing their undergraduate advising model but also explore other advising options that allow the students to have greater accessibility to advisors and enjoy greater flexibility among advisor availability, such as having more drop-in hours.

Department Recommendation 6: The Department of Political Science should consider the scheduling of core courses to diversify the times they are offered.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT – GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM

Compared to the undergraduate degree programs, the Review Team found that graduate program assessment appears to occur less frequently and is not as robustly developed as the undergraduate programs. The Self-Study indicates that the department assessed the degree program in 2016-2017. During the last assessment, 2 out of 3 Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) were achieved using the comprehensive exam as a benchmark. Assessment results showed that SLO 4 almost met the criteria of 75% of students meeting this objective (71.4). Nonetheless, from the Review Team's perspective, it is unclear how regularly the graduate program should be assessed but we recommend following the College guidelines regarding regular assessment of the graduate program.

Department Recommendation 7: The Department of Political Science should review both the College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies' assessment guidelines and the University's Graduate Program Learning Goals Policy regarding regular, consistent assessment of the graduate program.

Recruitment and Sustainability – Graduate Program

The Department offers a small but impactful graduate program that currently serves approximately 30 students. As Matthews and Skonieczny stated in their report:

> *Given the proximity of the program to the CA state capital, it is evident that it serves a niche group of students looking either to become connected to the capital or currently working in the capital and seeking a Master's Degree for personal career enhancement. Through our conversations with the Graduate Coordinator, Department Chair and graduate students, it is clear to us that the graduate program serves an important role in the Dpartment and despite its size, the Department is committed to keeping and growing the program* (pp. 6-7).

The Review Team identified some drawbacks to the graduate degree program that stem from competition with another graduate degree program within the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, the Public Policy and Administration (PPA) Master of Arts (MA) program. This degree program is much more robust, well-known and better-resourced compared to the lesser know Political Science MA program. Conversations with the Department, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean's Office revealed a common theme, which is that the two graduate degree programs were in direct competition for students and that, although PPA students were allowed to enroll in POLS courses, the course sharing by PPA was not reciprocated. The External Reviewers' report provides a thoughtful and insightful discussion here:

> *Moreover, it was clear from our visit that the PPA Master's Program is spotlighted and marketed much more successfully by the University and given more resources thus perpetuating a more robust and competitive program. Since the PPA MA program is a stand-alone program without undergraduates, the emphasis is on total commitment to a successful graduate program without the constraints faced by the Political Science MA such as FTEs,*

faculty WTUs and course development. It is our view that the two programs complement one another rather than compete in terms of course offerings and specialties, and it would be beneficial for the two Departments to work together.

Department Recommendation 8: With the MA program, the Department of Political Science should also consider a connection to the Public Policy and Administration program, both of which frequently draw on the same pool of students.

Department Recommendation 9: With the MA Program, the Departent of Political Science should work with the Office of Graduate Studies on recruitment efforts.

The Review Team's recommendation is primarily aimed at the PPA program to consider a greater level of collaboration with the Political Science graduate program. The Review Team felt that this collaboration would be beneficial to both degree programs particularly with respect to curriculm and the opportunity for the respective groups of students to have a complementary and interdisciplinary learning experience. Additionally, given the move to the downtown campus for both graduate programs, the potential for future collaboration seems even greater given the unique location near the State Capitol, a connection to which both departments have.

The Review Team identified recruitment as another challenge for the Political Science graduate program. To that end, several ideas and recommendations were discussed. One suggestion is for the department to consider implementing a blended degree program with the Political Science BA (or a 4+1). It was apparent to the Review Team that the graduate program could recruit more students who would benefit from a five year degree program that culminated in then awarding of both BA and MA degrees. Although this potential solution may partially address the recruitment problem, it still does not provide for a robust pool of students from which the degree program could draw in order to remain stable and viable.

Both the department and the Review Team agree that more needs to be done to help promote graduate programs at Sac State, broadly speaking, with a particular focus on working professionals at the state capital. Another idea is for the department to consider adding and online component to the graduate program or consider offering online classes. The downtown campus was intended to be a more convenient location for working professionals; yet, based on conversations with the department and graduate students, the location is not ideal and did not resolve the issue of graduate program accessibility for people who worked downtown.

Department Recommendation 10: For the MA program, the Department of Political Science should consider advising at different hours of the day, having open advising and office hours at the downtown campus at lunch hour or in the evening.

Despite some of the challenges we encountered with the graduate program, overall, the Review Team concluded that the graduate program benefited from a dedicated, albeit select, group of faculty members who support a niche group of students who were enthusiastic and complementary about the degree program. The comments from the External Reviewers' Report are insightful:

> *During our visit, we met with a class of graduate students who were happy with the program, the faculty and the opportunity to participate in a small program with a cohesive cohort of students. The main issue seemed to be course offerings and the inability for students – particularly IR students—in having a choice of classes each semester. Due to the 120 FTE arrangement,[2] the Political Science Department faces tough choices about how many graduate classes it can offer due to the fact that any small class needs to be compensated for by a much larger undergraduate class. Our discussions showed movement on this issue as a few tenured/tenure-track faculty were planning on offering a large section of POLS 1 which would off-set some of the graduate courses* (pp. 7-8).

The decision of the department to shift from a thesis requirement to a comprehensive exam was another issue that arose during conversations with the graduate students. This decision reflects the pragmatic reality of workload limitations with respect to faculty members supervising a MA thesis within the context of the typical student demographic in the degree program (i.e. working professional not destined for a Ph.D. program). A few students stated they would like the option to write a thesis instead of taking an exam. Although the Review Team understands and supports the department's decision to move to a comprehensive exam; however, pedagogically, the Review Team points out that there is an expectation that a MA degree includes some in-depth cumulative experience either in research or in the field.

In all, the Political Science graduate program faces difficulties and challenges that are similar to those with most other graduate programs in the CSU right now. The Review Team recommends that the department continue to work on recruitment, consider a 4+1, or blended, degree program, and to increase pressure on the College for help and collaboration with the PPA MA program. From the Review Team's perspective, the benefits of having a MA program in the department currently outweighs the cost.

Department Recommendation 11: To grow the MA program, the Department of Political Science needs to explore additional means of publicity, update the content and overall presentation of information on the webpage for the MA program.

Department Recommendation 12: To recruit more graduate students to its MA program, the Department of Political Science should consider auto enrollment and a 4+1 model (i.e., a Bachelors-to-Master's Degree path).

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[2] The understanding of the Review Team is that, in order to uphold the workload requirements of teaching a 3/3 courseload, each faculty member in the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies is required to teach an average of 120 students per semester.

College Recommendation 1: The Review Team encourages the College to engage in greater buy-in of the MA program, provide on-going financial support for the Graduate Coordinator, in particular, and the faculty who agree to supervise Culminating Experiences, and foster deeper connections between the Political Science MA Program and the Public Policy and Administration MA Program considering that both degree programs frequently draw on the same pool of students.

College Recommendation 2: To ease the burden of the 120 student-per-full-time faculty rule, the College needs to consider counting students more than 1.25 students, which will encourage more faculty to teach graduate classes and ease the scheduling burden for the department chair.

University Provost Recommendation 1: The Review Team encourages the University to engage in greater buy-in of the MA program and provide on-going financial support for the Graduate Coordinator, in particular, and the faculty who agree to supervise Culminating Experiences.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Political Science hosts several meaningful co-curricular programs and activities for undergraduate students that add significant value to their education at Sacramento State, including the Sacramento Semester Program, Model UN, and the Odyssey Mentoring Program.

The Sacramento Semester Program

The Sacramento Semester Program, created in 1976 by Jean Torcum, provides opportunities for students throughout the CSU system to participate in internships at the capitol (Self-Study, p. 15). To complete the program, student participants take two three-unit seminar courses (POLS 182A and 182B) and are placed in an internship earning six units of credit (POLS 195B). Currently, Professor Maria Sampanis is the Coordinator of the program, taking over in Fall 2018. Professor Sampanis also oversees internships for other students in the Political Science Department, in which students enroll in an internship course (195A) for one to six units during the fall, spring, or summer semesters. The Sacramento Semester Program is a highly regarded program at the state capitol and has been very successful with regard to providing effective experiential learning and employment opportunities for the student participants.

Model UN

The department's Model UN Program is held in high regard by the students who enroll in the course as well as the faculty and University as a whole. Started in 1977 by Professor Ron Fox, the program has continued to enjoy success despite some challenges with respect to funding and resources. Currently, Professor Janice Shiu, a part-time faculty member, runs the program. According to the Self-Study:

> *Students are recruited by the coordinator and enroll in GOVT 138 in both the fall and spring semester. In the fall, students learn about the UN and prepare papers that they will use in the spring semester. In the spring semester, the students take part in the Model UN in New York*

City (NMUN). Students from around the world participate in the NMUN. The program has been incredibly successful and students consistently win many awards, including the Outstanding Delegation Award in 2011, 2012 and 2016. The Sacramento State team also has won Outstanding Position Paper awards from 2008-2017 as well as many other awards. This past year the team won four Outstanding Position Paper awards, four Best Delegate in Committee Awards (voted by peers), and a Distinguished Delegation Award. Fifteen students went to New York this year (p. 18).

Despite rave reviews from students over the years, funding has remained a challenge. The program's success hinges on students being able to attend the signature conference in New York that held annually; expenses include airfare, hotel, food, and ground transportation. Not all students would have the opporuntity to participate if they were forced to pay full fare. Each year, the Coordinator has had to request IRA funds which, up to this point, have covered the airfare, hotel, and conference registration, and the program also received a small grant from the Retirees' Association in 2016 and 2017 ($500 each year). The Review Team commends the department for continuing to maintain and support this program; however, we also recommend that the College and University provide additional support and resources as well, given the level of recognition this program brings to the University.

Department Commendation 3: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for the Sacramento Semester Program, the Model UN, and other internships, which are important and significant programs provided by the department.

Department Recommendation 13: The Department of Political Science should continue to work with the College and University to secure stable funding for the Model UN Program, which is an important program within the department, the college, and at the university.

Department Recommendation 14: Considering that the Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and univeristy, the Department of Political Science needs to provide financial and administrative support, including proper compensation for the faculty running it; a percentage of administrative staff support; and an office for the program, perhaps at the downtown campus location.

Department Recommendation 15: The Review Team recommends that tenure-track faculty members should take on both MUN and the Sacramento Semester Program, and, as the Department of Political Science considers its next hiring request, they should seriously consider including as part of the job duties either MUN or the Sacramento Semester Program.

Department Recommendation 16: The Review Team recommends that the lecturer faculty who are currently doing great work for both the Model UN and Sacramento Semester Programs be compensated adequately by the Department of Political Science; additional percentage of time assigned to these classes and summer compensation should be considered.

College Recommendation 3: The Review Team encourages the College to see the value of the Model UN Program and help provide administrative staff support for the program as well as release time, or a percentage of time for the program advisor and professor of the Model UN class.

College Recommendation 4: Given that the Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and univeristy, the Review Team recommends that the College investigate the financial health and stability of the program, particularly with respect to administrative and faculty as well as availability of space to house the program.

College Recommendation 5: The Review Team encourages the College to support curricular innovation and improvement through faculty development support.

University Provost Recommendation 2: The Review Team encourages the University to see the value of the Model UN Program and help provide administrative staff support for the program as well as release time or a % of time for the program advisor and professor of the MUN class.

University Provost Recommendation 3: The Sacramento Semester Program is a flagship program of the department, college, and university and is in need of substantial financial and administrative support, including proper compensation for the faculty running it; a percentage of administrative staff support; and an office for the program, perhaps at the downtown campus location.

The Odyssey Mentoring Program

According to the Self-Study, the Odyssey Mentoring Program "is a student-run program that pairs continuing Government majors with new majors …. This is a close-knit support system and social network of students within the government major with the goal of creating stronger rates of retention within the Government major and higher levels of student morale. Our peer-advising program began serving the needs of students in fall 2008 and is still going strong" (Self-Study, p. 16).

New majors are paired on-on-one with Political Science majors who are in good academic standing and have already taken several upper division courses in the major. Each student receives one credit (CR/NC), which counts towards the 120 unit total towards the degree. The program itself is run by a student coordinator and a Political Science Advisor, who, at this time, is Nancy Lapp. According to the Self-Study, "the Odyssey Program is funded and physically housed by the Peer and Academic Resource Center (PARC), and the PARC office also provides funding, training and expertise to the student advisor. The student coordinator position is a paid, 20-hour-per week position, though part of that time is spent working at PARC as a peer tutor" (p. 17).

The Odyssey Program has been successful from an advising perspective as well as with regards to the students' professional development. The department has seen growth over time in the number of students who participate. According to the Self-Study:

> *The original goal of the program was to increase retention of our students, in addition to assisting students experiencing difficulties. We have seen freshman retention increase from around 80% to 90%. The retention rate for transfers has not seen a similar increase. The Department has used orientation to heavily recruit for mentees among the incoming first year students; we have been less systematic about contacting students in academic difficulty about participating in the program, and in the future we hope to better target students who are struggling. However, there have been cases where mentors have identified students in distress, and intervention followed. New transfer students appear less willing to sign up for Odyssey because they are not as convinced it will be of help* (p. 17).

The Review Team found the Odyssey Program to be of immense value to the department, as it is a potential way in which to mitigate some of the challenges with respect to advising and meeting the needs of the students.

Department Commendation 4: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for Project Odyssey, a wonderful, successful mentoring program that is helping students make progress toward degree completion.

FACULTY, STAFF, RESOURCES, AND FACILITIES

Political Science Faculty

As of AY2017-18, there are 16 full-time faculty and one faculty member in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP). Starting in Fall 2018, the department gained two new full-time faculty members, which brings the total number of full-time faculty to 19.

With respect to hiring, over the past five years, the department has hired hired five new faculty members. The table below, taken from the Self-Study, shows the number and distribution of faculty members in the Political Science Department between 2009 and 2016. These numbers from the 2017 Factbook do not reflect the tenure-track hires made in the past two years.

Due to a high number of GE courses offered by the department, they have to rely on a number of temporary faculty to teach the courses. The number of temporary faculty has more than doubled over the past eight years, making up over half of the current faculty totals. Although the part-time faculty pool fulfills a very important role within the department, the Review Team encourages the College to prioritize new tenure-track lines to the department to continue to meet the growing demands of the major. In particular, as noted in the External Reviewers' report, the department would do well if it would "hire permanent faculty in the area of California politics and consider someone who could direct the Sacramento Semester program, and an international relations line with an eye towards international institutions or law who would direct the Model United Nations program. The number of majors has increased since the recent hires and continued tenure-track faculty lines are critical to the growing success of the program" (p. 9). In addition, considering that there is still more work to be done in the department with respect to diversity, the Review Team recommends that the part-time faculty pool be expanded as well.

Number Tenure, Tenure-track, and Temporary Faculty in Political Science from 2009-2016.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Tenure	14	10	10	9	12	15	14	14
Tenure-track	5	5	5	5	3	1	1	1
Subtotal	19	15	15	14	15	16	15	15
Temporary Faculty	10	9	9	13	15	15	14	23

The Review Team notes that, in the 2010 program review, the department discussed the lack of diversity in our faculty and discussed how it needed to address this issue in future hiring. Since the 2010 Self-Study, the department has hired five new full-time faculty members. These five hires have increased the diversity of our full-time faculty.

Department Recommendation 17: The Review Team recommends that the non-tenured/tenure-track faculty pool be expanded to address the additional work to be done in the department with respect to diversity.

College Recommendation 6: The Review Team recommends that College prioritize new tenure-track lines to the department to continue to meet the growing demands of the major.

University Provost Recommendation 4: The Review Team recommends that the Provost prioritize new tenure-track lines to the department to continue to meet the growing demands of the major.

During the course of its visit with the department the Review Team had the opportunity to talk with the junior faculty about their experiences. Overall, the feedback the Review Team received was positive. One area of improvement concerns the RTP process and the department's ARTP document. Junior faculty shared that the standards seemed vague, which concerned some of the newer faculty who were unsure as to how many articles and books, for example, are needed in order to receive a positive recommendation for tenure and promotion. Although the Review Team recognizes that it is up to the department to determine whether it wants to quantify the requirements for RTP, the Review Team asks the department to consider setting standards with enough specificity to create a sense that faculty know what they need to do in order to receive tenure and be promoted.

Department Recommendation 18: To assist in the progress of new tenure-track faculty, the Department of Political Science should review and consider revising the department ARTP document, with particular attention paid to transparency, clarity, and enough specificity regarding benchmarks for tenure and promotion.

Political Science Staff

The department also has two office staff to help carry out the administrative duties of the department. Julie Cahill who is an Administrative Support Coordinator II and Michelle Tarter is an Administrative Support Assistant II. Michelle Tarter works on a ten-month schedule. For a time during the recession, the department lost its Administrative Support Assistant II, and then they were given a half-time person. This put a heavy burden on the department to run all of its programs; the department is now back to full staffing.

During the External Reviewers' visit, the staff shared that communication between the department chair and the faculty could be improved with respect to the various processes and tasks for which the

staff are responsible. Faculty are not often aware of these tasks, and some tasks have fallen through the cracks. Furthermore, the staff have found that getting information from faculty that they may need has been challenging at times. The Review Team recommends that the lines of communication between the chair, faculty, and staff be improved.

Another suggestion made by the staff is for new full-time and part-time faculty to pair up with a senior faculty mentor who can assist with getting the new faculty member(s) settled in during the adjustment period. Additionally, the staff commented that the changes to the drop-in advising has improved things in the department for the students. The drop-in advising sessions in the days prior to registration proved to be successful.

Department Recommendation 19: To improve communication between the faculty and staff and clarify important deadlines and procedures, the Department of Political Science should consider having staff members come to faculty meetings and explain the process and the importance of the request.

Facilities and Technology

The Review Team's visit, internal and external reviewers alike, confirmed a resource issue common on many CSU campuses—the physical lack of space and the deterioration of campus buildings. The External Reviewers' report provides a lot of insight here with respect to these concerns:

> *Similar to other CSU campuses, the physical infrastructure of the classrooms, offices and conference room space is inadequate for the needs of the Department. The classroom space is insufficient, particularly as the Department moves towards larger class sizes for its intro courses. Several of the classrooms we saw could only hold 30 students and the class size restrictions place an undue burden on the Department as it attempts to schedule classes in line with its 120 FTE commitment to the College. In addition, while most of classrooms have been updated to smart classrooms, the classrooms themselves felt very outdated some without windows or moveable furniture that is needed for active learning environments.*

> *Several of the adjunct faculty told us that they often were assigned to the worst classrooms and this compounded their feelings of unequal treatment between the tenure/tenure-track faculty and the temporary faculty. In terms of office space, the 20 or so adjunct faculty were sharing just one office. This proved a challenge for faculty teaching 4-5 classes a semester and attempting to schedule office hours to meet with students. The Department is in dire need of more office spaces, improved access to better equipped and bigger classrooms and a refresh of their dedicated conference room.*

> *A Department of this size should be afforded more physical space on campus. During our visit, some suggestions on how to better utilize the space were discussed including more evening courses, weekend courses and the possibility of offering some of the GE courses online. The Department currently offers a few sections of POLS 1 on Saturdays and under-utilizes the potential of online course technology. However, the overall issue of facilities is one that needs University-wide attention* (External Reviewers' Report, pp. 9-10).

As a result, the Review Team recommends that the department work with the College Dean and University Provost on securing adequate classroom space.

College Dean Recommendation 7: The Review Team recommends that the College work with the department chair and university provost on securing adequate classroom space.

University Provost Recommendation 5: The Review Team recommends that the University work with the College Dean and department chair on securing adequate classroom space.

FOCUSED INQUIRY

For their focused inquiry, the Department of Political Science elected to focus on civic learning and engagement of their students. Specifically, the department looked at what opportunities they provide for students to learn outside the classroom and how we connect our students to the larger community. This question was examined because civic engagement is critical to the department's mission as a Political Science major, which focuses on student learning around politics and democratic institutions, domestically and internationally, as well as having students put this knowledge to use in a practical manner by engaging with their local community. Secondly, a large number of our students plan on working in public service. In the department's 2016 survey, about two-thirds of its majors planned on a career in politics or government related fields. Providing experience and networking opportunities in these areas will be important to them.

The department's focused inquiry looked at student engagement broadly; however, it placed a specific emphasis on the California capitol and political community. The inquiry unfolded in four parts: a faculty survey about what they are doing to engage their students and an inventory of the opportunities that exist in the our department. Second, the department investigated how much information their students have about these opportunities and how many students are taking advantage of them. This was done by developing a survey for our students and alumni. Finally, the department assessed what it is doing well and ways to improve civic learning and engagement.

The results of the department's focused inquiry showed that both faculty and students think civic engagement is very important. The alumni survey and survey of majors show that many of the department's students are engaged in activities both on and off-campus. The surveys also show that our current majors are actively involved in politics and their community. Alumni and majors also believe that their choice of major has made them more likely to participate in political and other civic activities.

Although the findings are encouraging, there is definitely room for improvement, as the Self-Study indicates.

> *Almost 40% of our students did not participate in any of the activities listed on the survey. Also, only 8% of our students said they participated in all the events that they wanted to. Students listed several areas where they would like to see more opportunities for engagement. Some of these are career oriented. For example, 58.3% wanted more connections with downtown, 50.5% wanted career or job fairs, and 33.5% wanted connections with alumni. Students also*

wanted more social contact with faculty and other students with 52.4% saying they wanted more social events. Students expressed interest in academic activities like speakers on campus (47.6%) and research presentations (25.7%) (Self-Study, p. 47).

The primary barriers to getting students more involved with these activities are time and information about the opportunities. As is common on many, if not all, CSU campuses, many students have work obligations that prevent them from getting involved in any kind of extracurricular activities. The time of day as to when these opportunites were offered also prohibited many students from participating. The students also experience a lot of pressure to graduate more quickly as a result of recent campus graduation initiatives, "Finish in Four" and "Through in Two." Another issue that has arisen centers on a lack of communication with the students with regards to these opportunities. Students said the main ways they found out about opportunities was through Professors, emails from the Chair, and other students.

These outcomes have provided the department with potential solutions. The department has worked on increasing engagement with their students by having more social events, departmental open houses, encouraging students to engage in study abroad and internships, working with department organizations, and communicating with students via forums as part of the Odyssey Mentoring Program, for example. Overall, the Review Team finds that the department is doing a good job providing opportunities for civic engagement to their students. The department has evidence now that their students become more civic minded during their academic career.

Department Commendation 5: The Department of Political Science is to be commended for carrying out a well-designed focus inquiry that reflects the priorities of the department and their alignment to the department's mission, values and goals.

Department Recommendation 20: The Review Team recommends that the Department of Political Science consider using other communication tools, such as social media and listservs, to get the word out about these opportunities for students.

CONCLUSIONS

The Department of Political Science has shown that it is a leader in its efforts to continuously reflect upon and improve its degree programs. The College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies recognizes the department's well-established degree programs that are in strong demand and engagement with the community. The Review Team recognizes the dedication of the Chair, faculty and staff to the success of the department and its degree programs. The Review Team was also impressed with the significant changes the department has made since the last program review in 2010 with respect to its name change, increasing faculty diversity through faculty hires, and providing solid educational and experiential learning opportunities for students via the Sacramento Semester Program, Model UN, and the mentoring opportunities with the Odyssey Mentoring Program. The Review Team commends the department for all of its strategic efforts over the past several years and since the last program review.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE FACULTY SENATE

Based on this program review, the Self-Study report prepared by the Department of Political Science, and the External Reviewers' Report, the Review Team recommends that the degree programs in the Department of Political Science be approved for six years or until the next scheduled program review.