



Dean Response to Political Science Program Review

June 22, 2022

General Evaluation

I have read the “Site Visit and Evaluation Report” and the “rubric matrix” for the Political Science program review, plus the “Faculty Response”. I would first like to thank the review committee members Dr. Anne Hildreth and Dr. Adam Johnston for assisting us with this review. I am also grateful for the Political Science self-study team members and the Chair (Dr. Thom Kuehls) for the time and effort in providing a thorough review of the program. I strongly concur with the external review committee who stated that the strengths of the program are:

1. Highly engaged, academically active, and collegial faculty members who contribute to their discipline, the university, college and department.
2. Supportive faculty that helped colleagues and students through the challenges of COVID when all were adapting to monumental shifts in how we were conducting classes.
3. Strong, supportive leadership in the chair of the department. The advising contribution by the chair has also been invaluable to students.
4. Diversity of rich and robust courses with the core offerings being taught by full-time faculty.
5. Reorganization of major requirements brought depth and scope to the discipline.
6. Walker Institute Academic Director is a member of the Political Science faculty and has built strong connections between students, the department, and the community.
7. Students that were interviewed reported satisfaction with classes and engagement opportunities.

Program Challenges and Opportunities

There will be a leadership change to the department beginning AY 2022/23 as the long serving chair steps down. Organizational change creates new opportunities but can also bring challenges as faculty adapt to new leadership styles. The dean’s office is here to support the new chair, Dr. Willard, and political science program director, Dr. Stramer-Smith, in their roles and will provide mentoring and other avenues of support. New leadership brings a fresh perspective and is an opportune time to reassess the department mission and strategic priorities. The external reviewers recommended a “pause” to “establish new patterns of communal decision-making”. My recommendation is to also “communicate” and “collaborate”. Use this time to explore new ideas on how to engage students and grow enrollment. This is also a good time to review the curriculum and determine if there are any obstacles students face in progressing through their Philosophy or Political Science degree in a timely manner. The endowment from Dr. Reddy is a

benefit to your program and the only one of its kind in our college. If there are any questions about how to effectively disperse funding to your faculty, please do not hesitate to contact the dean's office.

Recommendations

I agree with the recommendations for improvement as outlined by the external review committee and note the faculty response. My comments are summarized as follows:

1. Ensure that the division of labor among faculty for program coordination and other delegated duties is completed in a timely manner.
2. Determine what teaching modalities are effective for the students and the times courses are offered. The office of institutional effectiveness (OIE) and other campus entities can help provide data to assist your decision making.
3. Institute regular faculty meetings. This will help rebuild a sense of community and support for colleagues. Extend this to getting students involved in clubs and organizations so the student community can be revitalized.
4. Review and revise the program mission statement.
5. Review and revise program learning outcomes and tie them to the new program mission statement and learning outcomes. Determine ways to effectively measure these outcomes.
6. Hold yearly "Career and Graduate School" events or "Open Houses" to inform students about graduate school, writing a resume, careers, etc.

Finally, I would highly encourage the new chair, the program director for Political Science, and the department faculty to meet and determine a timeline for the recommended program improvements in August or September. I would like to meet with the chair and program director to discuss how they plan to intentionally move forward on these recommendations.

Thank you for your contribution of time and energy toward the review. This is a necessary process in order to strengthen and improve the course offerings and programs we offer our students.

Best regards,



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