



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH
VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

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Department of Political Science,

College of Liberal Arts

October 2021

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the consensus reached by the Department of Political Science, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review (Self-study in February 2021, external review site visit in February 2021, and UPRC report in September 2021). It describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Department offers a BA degree in Political Science with 3 concentrations: Law, Politics and Policy; Global Politics; Political Theory. They also offer a Minor in Political Science and a MA in Political Science. The program reported significant improvements since the last MOU in 2014, including: Coordinating their multi-section Intro to American Government (POSC 100); Developing quality online courses in summer and winter sessions; Creating new courses to meet student demand; Developing new advising resources; Fostering transfer student integration; Strengthening alumni connections; Facilitating student transitions to post-graduate careers; Improving departmental governance; Assessing the curriculum; Engaging in undergraduate program revisions; Developing a departmental social media presence; and fostering a greater sense of community as a department. In addition, they report that they have added new courses that address important areas of student interest and societal importance: Queer Law (POSC 317; cross-listed with Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies) and Environmental Law (POSC 314).

A number of strengths were identified in the reports.

- The program is commended for its continuous and successful efforts to assess and improve its programs. The department used earlier assessments to prioritize their strategic plans. In response to earlier reviews, the department has improved the coordination of their multi-section Intro to American Government (POSC 100) and the quality of their online courses in summer and winter sessions. They have also created new courses to meet students' demands.
- The student learning outcomes for the BA and MA in POSC are listed on the department's website. They are clearly articulated, aligned with the institution learning outcomes, and are accessible. The Program's mission aligns with State of California employment and civic needs and addresses changes in the discipline.
- The program supports general education goals of campus extensively. The department offers three 100-level courses that satisfy GE Foundation requirements. The department also offers two courses that fulfill the university's Writing Intensive General Education

requirement. In order to increase the quality of their general education courses the department assigns their best instructors to these courses and instructors for these courses have participated in a semester-long training to transform the courses into a writing intensive class.

Areas of Concern and Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports.

- The Political Science department has clearly articulated its mission and goals, but they are difficult to find on the department website. There is an opportunity to clarify and update the mission, and place it in a more prominent place on the website.
- The MA program should be highly commended for reformulating its admissions policy to lower the admissions rates for graduate students. This clearly resulted in lower enrollments (with 2014 marking the end of the larger cohorts). As a consequence of this decision, the quality of the program remains high. However, the number of applications and enrollments has decreased since 2018 (though admissions have remained stable, as has headcounts), and the UPRC recommends continuing to monitor this graduate data moving forward.
- The 2-year graduation rates of graduate students have been low (about 33%), though the three-year rates are better than the college, sitting at about 83%. The department noted that most of its students graduate within 2.5 years, and students make a conscious decision to take a longer track, spreading their courses evenly over 5 semesters. The department is encouraged to continue to monitor its two-year rates, and to clearly communicate with students in marketing materials and the website that this program may take 2-2.5 years to complete.
- While it looks that the number of faculty has increased in recent years, considering the department's self-report, the department is anticipating multiple confirmed and potential retirements over the next few years. Therefore, there is a concern if there will be sufficient faculty to teach the numerous courses offered by this relatively large department. As reported in self-study, one of the priorities in tenure-line hiring is the diversification of its faculty and hiring faculty, whose teaching and research interests focus on cutting-edge disciplinary trends.
- It is suggested that the department seek approaches (such as using the S4 software) to establish and manage sustainable and meaningful local internship opportunities for the students. Additionally, the external reviewers suggested exploring curricular changes that may allow the department to be more outward facing and include additional service learning courses."

It is therefore agreed that the Department will:

1. provide an annual assessment report (due June 1) including progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the CLA Dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinator of Program Review and Assessment. The review cycle will be from 2021-2028. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2028 for 2028-2029 Academic Year program review process.
2. Monitor the two- and three-year graduate student graduation rates to determine patterns for student pathways and make any necessary changes.

3. Engage in strategic planning of future hires as resources allow to incorporate a wider array of diversity and inclusion of courses related to race, ethnicity, gender, immigration and identity in both the U.S. and global settings.
4. Explore opportunities to establish and manage sustainable and meaningful local internship opportunities for the students and outward facing service-learning courses.
5. Update and maintain the department website, focusing on clarity of mission, vision, resources, and outcomes, as well as highlighting accomplishments of faculty and students.
6. Work with the College, as resources permit, to provide support the Department's strategic planning of future hires to incorporate a wider array of diversity and inclusion courses.
7. Work with the College to provide support and resources as possible for the department to establish and manage sustainable and meaningful local internship opportunities for the students and outward facing service-learning courses.