

Instructional Program Review

Program Name: **Political Science**

Program Contact: **Miller, Lee Ryan**

Academic Year: **2016-2017**

Status: **Submitted for review**

Updated on: **10/28/2016 10:24 AM**

1. Description of Program

Provide a brief description of the program and how it supports the college's [College Mission and Diversity Statements](#), [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#), and other [Institutional Program Planning](#) as appropriate. What is the program's vision for sustaining and improving student learning and success over the next three years?

The political science program offers a variety of courses, which are taken primarily by students who are transferring and/or seeking an AA/AS degree. Consistent with the CSM Mission Statement, the program “provides an exceptional educational opportunity to residents of San Mateo County and the Greater Bay Area Region.” Political science is a student-centered program that, consistent with the CSM Mission Statement, “serves the diverse educational, economic, social, and cultural needs of its students and the community” and “fosters a culture of excellence and success that engages and challenges students” with the goal of preparing students “to be informed and engaged citizens in an increasingly global community.” The political science program actively collaborates with the Learning Center's Peer Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction programs, with the aim of enhancing student success. The political science program supports the values described in the CSM Diversity Statement, “a dynamic learning ... environment that encourages multiple perspectives and the free exchange of ideas.” The political science program curriculum is designed around these values, and teaches students about the “the principle of equal opportunity for all without regard to gender, color, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, economic background, sexual orientation, and physical, learning, and psychological differences,” as articulated in the CSM Diversity Statement. The 2015-2016 CSM course catalogue lists eight courses offered by the program. Five of those seven courses have been offered during the past three years. Program SLOs are aligned with GE SLOs. Course SLOs for three of the seven courses are aligned with program SLOs. Course outline updates for the remaining courses, aligning course SLOs with program SLOs, have been submitted to COI for approval. An AA-T degree in political science has also been submitted to COI for approval.

Consistent with the institutional goal of promoting academic excellence, the political science program is in the process of developing an AA-T degree, which will give students the opportunity to complete at CSM many of the CSU requirements for B.A. in political science. In support of the institutional commitment to diversity, the political science program offers one course online and is in the process of developing additional online course offerings to serve the diverse needs of our students.

The program helps prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens by regularly bringing in local, state and federal elected officials as guest speakers. In addition, various assignments are designed to encourage civic engagement/political participation activities such as attending city council meetings; volunteering for political organizations, elected officials, and election campaigns; writing letters to elected representatives; registering to vote; and voting.

In furtherance of the goal of sustaining and improving student learning and success over the next 3 years, the program is piloting an American politics simulation, The Civic Mirror, in which students directly experience the roles of citizens, litigants, and public officials operating in complex political, legal and economic systems modeled after those of the US.

2. Student Learning and Program Data

A. Discuss Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Reflect on recent SLO assessment results for courses and degrees and certificates offered by the program. Specify how SLO assessment informs curriculum development and changes to curriculum.

SLOs have been assessed for 5 of the 7 courses offered by the department. One additional course has not been assessed because it has not been offered in recent years. The other course has been offered for the first time in fall 2016 and is scheduled to be assessed before the next program review.

Success rates are as follows:

PLSC 100

- SLO 1 93%
- SLO 2 90%
- SLO 3 90%
- SLO 4 86%
- SLO 5 90%
- SLO 6 90%
- SLO 7 89%

PLSC 110

- SLO 1 93%
- SLO 2 90%
- SLO 3 93%

PLSC 130

- SLO 1 96%
- SLO 2 90%
- SLO 3 87%
- SLO 4 87%

PLSC 210

- SLO 1 74%
- SLO 2 81%
- SLO 3 93%
- SLO 4 76%
- SLO 5 77%

PLSC 215

- SLO 1 100%
- SLO 2 88%
- SLO 3 85%
- SLO 4 92%

Success rates continue to climb in PLSC 210, with the introduction of new online (WebAccess) instructional modalities learned in STOT training and with the introduction of Supplemental Instruction provided by the Learning Center.

Prior assessment success rates in PLSC 210:

- SLO 1 62%
- SLO 2 59%
- SLO 3 59%
- SLO 4 62%
- SLO 5 62%

2. Comment on the success rates in the program SLOs that are aligned with specific course SLOs. What do the program SLO and course data reveal about students completing the program? Identify trends and discuss areas in need of improvement. Is the alignment between course and program SLOs appropriate and informative? Describe any additional methods used to assess program SLOs and reflect on the results of those assessments. See [course-to-program SLO alignment mapping](#).

Due to course outline updates, all courses will be aligned with program SLOs, starting in fall 2017.

There is no degree in political science, and therefore no data on program completion. However, an AA-T degree in political science has been submitted to COI for approval.

3. For any courses in the program that satisfy a GE requirement, which GE SLOs are supported or reinforced by the course SLOs? What do assessment results for the course SLOs (and for the GE SLOs, if available) reveal about student attainment of the GE SLOs? See [GE SLO Alignment Summary Report](#) or [All Courses GE SLO Alignment Data](#).

With the anticipated approval of the most recent batch of course outline updates, 5 of the 7 political science courses will be aligned with all 4 political science program SLOs. Program SLOs are aligned with 4 of the 5 CSM GE SLOs (effective communication, critical thinking, social awareness and diversity, ethical responsibilities/effective citizenship). Therefore, success rates on course SLOs should reasonably be expected to align with success rates for program and GE SLOs.

Political Science Program Student Learning Outcomes:(alignment with GE SLOs in parentheses)

Upon completion of degree requirements, the student will be able to:

1. Effectively communicate the impact of state and non-state actors on the development and implementation of policy. (Effective Communication)
2. Critically analyze political theories and ideologies. (Critical Thinking)
3. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy. (Social Awareness and Diversity)
4. Evaluate ethical issues and conflicts inherent to political issues. (Ethical Responsibility/Effective Citizenship)

PLSC 200 (the program's core course) SLOs: (alignment with GE SLOs in parentheses)

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Effectively communicate understanding of the roles played by state actors (such as the 3 branches of government) and non-state actors (such as interest groups, political parties and the news media) on the development and implementation of policy. (Effective Communication)
2. Critically analyze theories on the impact of federalism, the separation of powers and economic inequality on the development and implementation of policy. (Critical Thinking)
3. Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy. (Social Awareness and Diversity)
4. Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to contemporary political issues. (Ethical Responsibility)
5. Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system. (Effective Citizenship)

B. Student Success Indicators

1. Review [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) and discuss any differences in student success indicators across demographic variables. Also refer to the [College Index](#) and other relevant sections of the [Educational Master Plan: Update, 2012](#), e.g., Student Outcomes and Student Outcomes: Transfer. Basic Skills programs should also refer to [ARCC](#) data.

Student success rates have been rising for several years, from 54.9% in 2010-11 to 68.5% in spring 2016, the most recent semester for which data are available.

There has been a convergence between white, black and Asian success rates. All three are within a couple of percentage points of 70% success. This is a remarkable achievement, given that the black student success rate was only 43.9% as recently as 2012-2013. The most likely explanation is collaboration between program faculty and football coaches to make sure that football players (disproportionately black) receive tutoring and/or supplemental instruction (SI) provided by the Learning Center. Studies by John Sewart have demonstrated that participation in SI has led to dramatic improvements in student performance on political science course assignments.

Unfortunately, Filipino, Hispanic and Pacific Islander success rates have continued to lag, all in the 52% to 59% range in 2015-2016. (Native Americans have a 100% success rate, but with a sample size of 1, the results are not robust.) Greater efforts should be made to increase participation in SI by Filipino, Hispanic and Pacific Islander students.

Male and female success rates have converged. For several years, males had out-performed females by a couple of percentage points. In 2015-2016, females outperformed males by 1.6 percentage points.

2. Discuss any differences in student success indicators across modes of delivery (on-campus versus distance education). Refer to [Delivery Mode Course Comparison](#).

On-campus classes have long had higher success rates than distance education classes, but that gap has narrowed in recent years, due to rising success rates in distance education classes. In 2009-2011, student success rates in on-campus classes exceeded success rates in distance education classes by more than 21 percentage points. In 2013-2015, that gap had narrowed to 6.5 percentage points. Investment in STOT training for program faculty seems to have paid off.

It's not possible to make any meaningful observations about student success rates differentiated by ethnicity in distance education classes because the sample size is too low. In recent years, the program has offered only 1 section of distance education per semester.

C. Program Efficiency Indicators. Do we deliver programs efficiently given our resources?

Summarize trends in program efficiency as indicated in the [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) (LOAD, Full-time and Part-time FTEF, etc.)

The program has not been immune to the declining enrollment at CSM. WSCH declined from 2307 (in 2013-2014) to 2010 (in 2014-2015). At the same time, FTEF increased from 1.8 to 2.0. As a result, LOAD decreased from 549.3 to 456.8. (Adjunct FTEF remained stable at 2.4.)

Enrollment in Distance Education remains high. Given the trend toward declining enrollments in on-campus classes and increasing enrollment in distance education classes, it may be advisable to consider increasing the number of distance education sections offered by the program. Currently, only 1 distance education section is being offered each semester. By way of comparison, Cañada College, De Anza College and City College of San Francisco each offer 3 online sections of political science per semester; Foothill College offers 5 online sections per semester.

3. Additional Factors

Discuss additional factors as applicable that impact the program, including changes in student populations, state-wide initiatives, transfer requirements, advisory committee recommendations, legal mandates, workforce development and employment opportunities, community needs. See [Institutional Research](#) as needed.

The program is suffering from declining enrollment in on-campus classes. However, enrollment remains high in distance education classes. It may be advisable to consider increasing the number of distance education sections offered. See above.

The program also seems to be suffering from economic changes in the region. Anecdotal evidence indicates that students are facing greater time constraints as they work longer hours at their off-campus jobs in order to earn enough money to pay their rent. Rents in San Mateo have nearly doubled over the past 5 years. The average one-bedroom apartment in San Mateo now rents for \$2642. As a result, students have increased the number of hours they work, leaving them less time for their studies. Increasingly, students complain that they do not have sufficient time available to spend the standard 9 hours per week (3 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours completing reading and assignments outside of class) normally expected in a college-level political science class. Program faculty are facing increasing pressure to reduce the amount of reading and assignments (and concomitantly, academic standards). Enrollment would probably increase if faculty were to succumb to this pressure, but students would then likely find themselves ill-prepared for the rigors of political science programs after transferring to 4-year universities.

Along the same lines, the program suffers from the reality that a political science degree does not present a direct career path for most students. In an era characterized by severe economic pressure on students, when increasing numbers of students see education as primarily a stepping-stone to a career, students tend to gravitate toward more career-oriented programs. While it is true that one can pursue a variety of careers with a political science degree, it is also true that a political science degree does not prepare a student directly for any particular career. In other words, it's much more obvious to a student how coursework in math or science or business can further the student's career ambitions.

The development of a new AA-T degree represents an opportunity to attract more students to the program. However, the headwinds described above are likely to overwhelm any increase in enrollment that might result from this development.

4. Planning

A. Results of Program Plans and Actions

Describe results, including measurable outcomes, from plans and actions in recent program reviews.

AA-T DEGREE

Since 2012, the program has been pursuing the establishment of an AA-T degree. The various challenges described in prior years' program reviews seem to have been overcome and the program hopes to finally gain approval of an AA-T degree during the current academic year.

ARTICULATION

In the 2012-2013 academic year, the political science program began the process of articulation of all of its courses with 13 comparable courses at our 6 primary transfer institutions: San Francisco State, San Jose State, CSU East Bay, Sonoma State, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, and UC Davis. This goal has been accomplished.

SLO ASSESSMENT

The 2014 program review listed the goal of assessing the SLOs for one course each year. This continuing goal has been accomplished; PLSC 100 was assessed in spring 2014, PLSC 110 in fall 2014, PLSC 130 and PLSC 210 in spring 2016. The implementation automated SLO assessment via WebAccess, which started in spring 2016, should facilitate SLO assessment.

STOT TRAINING

The 2014 program reviews listed STOT training for faculty as a goal. Student success rates in political science distance education courses have lagged those in traditional courses. This goal has been accomplished. Two program faculty members have completed both STOT I and STOT II. Student success rates in on-campus and distance education courses have converged significantly.

IMPROVE PLSC 210 STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON SLOs

The 2015 program review listed a goal of improving PLSC 210 student performance on SLOs. Less than 2/3 of students in PLSC

210 accomplished student learning outcomes, according to the prior assessment. Program faculty implemented online quizzes and discussion forums in WebAccess as a final exam study aid to improve student performance on SLOs. In addition, program faculty intensified cooperation with the football program and implemented Supplemental Instruction (SI) in conjunction with the Learning Center. A new assessment of PLSC 210 SLOs indicates that more than 3/4 of students have achieved their student learning outcomes.

IMPROVE AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT SUCCESS RATES

Success rates in political science courses for African American students have traditionally lagged behind those of students from other demographic groups. This is no longer the case. Black student success rate in the political science program is now comparable to that of white and Asian students.

B. Future Program Plans and Actions

Prioritize the plans to be carried out to sustain and improve student success. Briefly describe each plan and how it supports the [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#). For each plan, list actions and measurable outcomes. Plans may extend beyond a single year. Describe the professional activities and institutional collaborations that would be most effective in carrying out the program's vision to improve student learning and success.

The political science program is committed to improving student success (Institutional Priority #1), promoting academic excellence (Institutional Priority #2), and being a relevant, high-quality program (Institutional Priority #3). The curriculum in all political science courses emphasizes the values stated in the Diversity Statement: "a policy of inclusiveness that recognizes, values and reflects the diversity of the community we serve." Political Science strives to "foster a dynamic learning and working environment that encourages multiple perspectives and the free exchange of ideas. We abide by the principle of equal opportunity for all without regard to gender, color, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, economic background, sexual orientation, and physical, learning, and psychological differences." These are core values in the instruction provided by the Department of Political Science. We will continue to follow these goals and promote these values over the next 3 years.

Plans for next academic year:

1. Collaborating with the Puente program and the Mana program to encourage greater student participation in Supplemental Instruction (which has a demonstrated track record at increasing student success rates for African Americans enrolled in PLSC 210).
2. Transition from WebAccess to Canvas and the implementation in several sections of PLSC 210.
3. The Civic Mirror.

This simulation gives students the sort of personal experience in American politics that solely textbook-based study is unable to provide and is therefore expected to improve outcomes on the PLSC 210 SLOs.

The Civic Mirror is an American politics simulation, a combination of online and face-to-face interaction. Students play the roles of citizens in a country whose constitution is modeled after that of the United States.

Citizens in the simulation, like in the real world, begin with different endowments of wealth and different economic, political and ideological agendas. They interact in the economic, political and legal spheres: attempting to feed and house their families, electing a government, passing laws, buying and selling economic assets, engaging in lawsuits and criminal trials, etc.

The citizens gain an appreciation for the trade-offs people face in the real world of politics and public policy, grappling with conflicting interests concerning the role of government in the economy, how big a social safety net the society should have, where the burden of taxation should fall, economic development vs. environmental protection, and the relationship between the ethnic/cultural majority and minorities in society.

5. Program Maintenance

A. Course Outline Updates

Review the [course outline update record](#). List the courses that will be updated in the next academic year. For each course that will be updated, provide a faculty contact and the planned submission month. See the [Committee on Instruction](#) website for [course submission instructions](#). Contact your division's [COI representatives](#) if you have questions about submission deadlines. **Career and Technical Education courses must be updated every two years.**

Courses to be updated	Faculty contact	Submission month
PLSC 100	Lee Miller	10/2016
PLSC 110	Lee Miller	10/2016
PLSC 130	Lee Miller	10/2016
PLSC 150	Lee Miller	10/2016
PLSC 200	Lee Miller	10/2018
PLSC 210	Lee Miller	10/2018
PLSC 215	Lee Miller	10/2017
PLSC 310	Lee Miller	10/2017

B. Website Review

Review the program's website(s) annually and update as needed.

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Lee Miller	10/2017

C. SLO Assessment Contacts

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Lee Miller	10/2017

6. Dominant Themes Summary for IPC

Briefly summarize the dominant, most important themes or trends contained in this program review, for division deans to collect and forward to the Institutional Planning Committee. What are the key program issues that matter most? (Brief paragraph or bullet points acceptable).

Declining enrollment in on-campus sections but strong enrollment in distance education sections may justify increasing the number of distance education sections.

Increasing economic pressure on students (rents doubled in the past 5 years) means that students are working more and have less time for their studies. Faculty are under increasing pressure to reduce student academic workload & course rigor, but this would leave students ill-prepared for coursework at baccalaureate transfer institutions.