

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-007-201

Program Review for BA, Political Science

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 04/21/2020

Executive Committee  
Received and Forwarded

Date: 10/13/2021

Academic Senate

Date: 10/20/2021  
First Reading  
11/10/2021  
Second Reading

**BACKGROUND:**

As part of the University's five-year planning cycle for all programs, a self-study was prepared by the Department of Political Science. An external review team, consisting of John Medearis (Department of Political Science, UCR) and Teresa Wright (Department of Political Science, CSULB), visited the department virtually (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) on November 12, 2020. After their visit, a report was prepared and submitted by the external reviewers, after which both the Department and Dean prepared responses. The AP Committee has reviewed these responses.

**RESOURCES CONSULTED:**

Dr. Mario Guerrero, Chair, Department of Political Science

Dr. Sara Garver, Interim Dean, College of Letter Arts and Social Science

**DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:**

The external reviewers were very positive in their appraisal of the department. Of especial note was the department's commitment to experiential learning and high-impact practices such as study abroad, Model United Nations, Mock Trial, prison outreach, and travel to the Iowa presidential caucus. They also praised the department's significant work on updating key courses (e.g. PLS 1011-Introduction to Political Science, PLS 2051-Introduction to Research Methods, and PLS 3051-Advanced Research Methods), and their collegiality and work on advising. The reviewers interacted with undergraduate students and came away favorably impressed with engagement between students and faculty, including (but not limited to) the substantial work that faculty put into supervising student capstone projects.

The challenges noted by the reviewers were not shortcomings of the department's work, but rather resource issues facing many departments on campus. First and foremost was a shortage of tenure-track faculty. This staffing shortfall, when combined with high teaching loads, makes it more challenging to continue to support experiential learning and high-quality capstone projects. The reviewers also urged continued attention to assessment in the department's key GE course, PLS 2010. The AP Committee notes that devoting significant effort to this important issue will require more faculty time, and hence more tenure-track hiring.

The Department and Dean's office were in broad agreement with the reviewers' comments and suggestions. The department and college are committed to finding more ways to support faculty work, increase staff support, and continue to support the success of students in both the major and the key GE course. However, the AP Committee notes that without more tenure-track faculty hiring (a matter beyond the control of the Dean) it will be challenging to make major progress in many of these areas.

The Academic Programs Committee commends the Department of Political Science on their good work, both in the operation of their BA program and in the preparation of a thorough and thoughtful review that highlights issues of critical importance to both their department and the campus as a whole.