



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Box 353770 G-1 Communications Seattle, WA 98195-3770

Telephone: 206-543-5900 Fax: 206-685-3234 Web: <http://grad.washington.edu>

July 20, 2016

To: Robert C. Stacey
Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning

Re: Department of Political Science 2015-2016 Review

This memorandum outlines the recommendations from the review of the Department of Political Science Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Master of Arts (M.A.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree programs. Detailed comments can be found in the documents that were a part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (November 9, 2015)
- Department's self-study (February 1, 2016)
- Site visit (March 3-4, 2016)
- Review committee report (April 4, 2016)
- GPSS Report (March 2, 2016)
- Department response to the review committee report (May 4, 2016)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (June 2, 2016)

The review committee was comprised of the following faculty:

Stewart Tolnay, Professor, UW Department of Sociology, (Committee Chair)
Stevan Harrell, Professor, UW Department of Anthropology
Rogers Smith, Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Political Science,
Department of Political Science; Associate Dean of Social Sciences,
College of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania
Rose McDermott, David and Marianna Fisher University Professor of International
Relations, Department of Political Science, Brown University

A member of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on June 2, 2016. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the department and its undergraduate and graduate degree programs include the following.

Department Strengths

The Department of Political Science has a long and distinguished history of educating and serving a large numbers of students in a robust intellectual environment. The faculty has a record of scholarship, both in terms of books and journal articles. The department benefits from its five research centers and also from its longstanding ties and research interaction with the Jackson School of International Studies, the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences, and the Law, Societies and Justice Program.

The Department of Political Science has robust student enrollment with both a large graduate and an even larger undergraduate program. While the undergraduate enrollment has decreased over the last several years, it remains one of the larger departments on campus with respect to enrollment. Virtually all graduate students are engaged in teaching undergraduates and receive significant mentoring with respect to both teaching and scholarship. The former is a double-edged sword in that performing as a TA is essentially a necessary funding tool upon enrollment in the graduate program. Many graduate students benefit from advanced training in quantitative methods available through the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences. Ph.D. students consistently attain placement in faculty positions upon graduation.

The department has a complex governance structure inherited from the past but has benefitted from excellent Chairs over the last several years. Notably, there is superb mentorship of junior faculty members, particularly those in the pre-tenure phase of their academic careers; there is less mentoring of faculty as the post-tenure associate professor level. However, this complex governance structure creates overlap and confusion among the programs and centers that is counterproductive and a challenge for the department.

Challenges and Risks

The Department of Political Science faces a series of challenges. First, there has been a significant decline in undergraduate students majoring in Political Science from 1300 in 2005 to 700-900 currently. This decline is at least partially due to right-sizing, in that the 2005 enrollment level was likely unsustainable. However, the decline in undergraduates decreases the number of TA positions and funding available to the graduate students. The review committee also found the undergraduate program to be unnecessarily complex and suggested restructuring the academic program to focus more upon the important themes in local, national and international politics.

Second, there has been an exodus of faculty, particularly in the area of Racial and Ethnic Politics; the faculty lost 7 of its 30 faculty members over the last few years, four of which were pivotal faculty members in Racial and Ethnic Politics. While recruitment of replacement faculty is underway, it is unlikely that Central Administration will be able to fully fund and replace the lost faculty. The concentration of faculty loss in Racial and Ethnic Politics is unlikely to be fully corrected in the foreseeable future. There are also no female full professors. This presents difficulty for both undergraduate and graduate students, and undermines diversity goals of the University and the department. There is also the lack of a formal Diversity Committee.

Third, the governance of the department is unnecessarily complex, which is reflected by the number of standing committees and use of smaller committees to address comprehensive issues that might be better addressed by the faculty as a whole. Often, important issues are stalled as the smaller committees cannot come to conclusion on issues in a timely fashion. Full faculty

meetings need to be more frequent, at least monthly. The change would assist in addressing issues such as the restructuring of the undergraduate curriculum, hiring priorities, and more equitable parsing of mentoring and service obligations.

Areas of Concurrence

There was general concurrence with respect to all of the strengths and challenges. The Chair noted that the difficult financial environment resulting from decreased undergraduate enrollment and the institution of ABB budgeting presents a major barrier, especially in terms of hiring and replacement of lost faculty. However, both the Chair and the Divisional Dean concurred in the need to replace senior female faculty and Race and Ethnic Politics faculty. The Chair committed to formalizing an inclusive Diversity Committee.

There was concurrence on the need to streamline the governance of the department and to institute more frequent full faculty meetings. Similarly, the chair concurred with the need to increase mentoring capacity for the associate professor ranks. There was general agreement upon the need to consider revamping the undergraduate program structure.

Graduate School Recommendations

The Graduate School Council agreed with the Review Committee recommendation to reaffirm continuing status for the Department of Political Science B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degree programs, with the next review in ten years, specifically in the 2025-2026 academic year.

cc: George Lovell, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science
Judith Howard, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs,
Office of the Provost
Jason Johnson, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Graduate School Council
Political Science Review Committee
Joaquin Herranz, Associate Professor, Evans School of Public Policy and Governance,
Graduate School Council Representative
Patricia Kuszler, Professor, School of Law, Graduate School Council Representative
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, Academic Affairs and
Planning, The Graduate School