

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
WSU Political Science Program  
Self-Study Document, Fall 2016

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The following is a summary of the self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full, self-study document itself.

**Standard A. Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Political Science program, in keeping with the missions of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and of Weber State University, is to provide excellent educational experiences for students through classroom instruction, research, public service and community-engaged learning opportunities. Pursuant to that mission, the program is designed:

- To provide a solid liberal arts curriculum that informs our students of the issues, authors, and content, of the principal subfields defining the discipline of political science: American Institutions and Politics, American National Government, Constitutional Law, International and Comparative Politics, Political Theory, and Public Administration.
- To examine the history and evolution of governance, the relationship of the state to society as a whole as well as to the individual, and the fundamental ethical questions arising from relationship of power and politics;
- To educate life-long informed and engaged citizens who demonstrate the finest ideals of citizenship through participating in civic discourse and sustaining a vibrant democracy;
- To cultivate the reasoning and analytic abilities as well as the oral and written communication skills which provide the hallmarks of a liberal arts education;
- To contribute to a deeper understanding of politics through offering students a range of extra- and co-curricular opportunities including internships, community engaged learning projects, individual research and with faculty, and participation on academic teams like the Model United Nations or Moot Court teams.
- To offer an excellent undergraduate education in political science so that Political Science graduates are well prepared to start careers in government, business, non-profits, international non-governmental organizations, journalism, politics, education, or to continue their post-graduation education in professional or graduate school.

**Standard B. Curriculum:**

The political science program offers a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, a Bachelor of Science in Political Science, and a minor in political science. The program offers 40 courses in political science (and allows 3 courses from other programs to count toward a major or minor). Of those 40 courses, one is an American Institutions course (a University requirement), 6 are Social Science general education courses, and one is a diversity course. The program revised its requirements for both majors and the minor, effective 2016-17.

### **Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:**

The program operates with five basic learning outcomes that are assessed on a rotating basis. Outcome 1 is assessed every other year, and the other four outcomes are assessed in pairs in the alternative years. So over the past four years, Outcome 1 has been assessed twice, and the other four outcomes have each been assessed once.

Because the program offers an American Institutions course and six Social Science general education courses, regular assessment is also conducted of those specific courses.

### **Standard D. Academic Advising:**

Any student who wishes to major or minor in political science must first meet with Thom Kuehls, the program academic advisor. Thom encourages students to meet with him annually in order to monitor their progress towards tenure. Advisor notes of each meeting are entered into the students' Cattracks pages. Before students can graduate they do need Thom to "check" the graduation clearance box in Cattracks.

### **Standard E. Faculty:**

There are six full-time faculty in the political science program, each specializing in a specific subfield of the discipline. Of these six, four are tenured, full professors, and the other two are assistant professors. In addition, the program employs a varying number of adjunct instructors each semester. The faculty are a definite strength of the program and a primary reason that the political science program is alone in the college in experiencing an increase in student credit hours across the past five years.

### **Standard F. Program Support:**

The program receives excellent support from the College's Dean's office, including an annual travel budget of roughly \$950 per faculty member, technology support for both our offices and classrooms, and academic advising covering University-wide requirements for all of our majors and minors. The Department of Political Science underwent a change in personnel at the administrative specialist position in the summer of 2016. Ms. Debra Strait, who had been with the department for over seven years and had served the department quite well, retired in June, 2016. Ms. Nicole Gabor was hired to replace her and is proving her worth in the position.

### **Standard G. Relations with External Community:**

Our faculty are involved with a number of external groups at the local, state, national, and international levels.

## **Standard H. Previous Program Review**

The program has responded, in one way or another, to all nine of the recommendations from the previous self-study, five-year review. Two we disagreed with completely and so took no action, the other seven we agreed with either in full or in part. Of those seven, four have been addressed completely and three are still “in progress” (mostly due to the on-going nature of the recommendation).

### **Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:**

Name	Position	Affiliation
Dr. Adam Johnston	Professor of Physics	Weber State University
Dr. Anne Hildreth	Associate Professor of Political Science and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education for the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy	University at Albany, SUNY