Program Review – Annual Program/Discipline Update Administrative Response and Follow Up
2020-2021

Program/Discipline: Political Science

SAC Chair(s): Doug Byrd

SAC Administrative Liaison: Laura Sanders (SE)

Other Division Dean(s): Dana Fuller (SY), Chris Rose (CA), and Cheryl Scott (RC)

Department Chair(s):

Terri Barnes (RC), Rhonda Collier (SY), Justin Elardo (CA), and Teela Foxworth (SE)

Date: April 20, 2021

First and foremost, we deans for Political Science would like to acknowledge the time and effort that went into preparing this Annual Discipline Update (ADU) for PCC. This year is still a pilot year, and we all are learning the process together. Your approach to the data has uncovered potential directions for future work in Political Science as we as a district move forward with the one-college model and our YESS goals for reducing and eliminating disparate outcomes among student groups.

1. **Strengths and successes of the program as evidenced by the data, analysis and reflection:**

The Annual Discipline Update provides a concise overview and helpful analysis of Political Science offerings across the district, as well as a detailed review of success rates in different courses disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender identity.

The Political Science Subject Area Committee observes that the more specialized the subject matter, the higher the success rate and has started conversations about adjusting the curriculum of PS 203 to address better student expectations and interests as well as close the "enthusiasm gap" among students

Further, the SAC has identified opportunity gaps in PS 201 and PS 202, particularly for students who identify as Black, Latino, Native American, and Multiracial. On page 7, the Political

Science Subject Area Committee reaffirms its commitment to "fighting for a more fair and responsive college that is welcoming and responsive to all students."

2. Areas of challenge or concern, if any:

In future reports, we encourage the SAC to explore opportunity gaps more fully, so that PS contributions to reducing disparities in student outcomes and meeting district YESS Goals can be recognized more broadly at the institution.

For example, on page 8, Political Science noted that while 83 percent of students who were not offered Pell Grants passed PS 201, only 75 percent of students who were offered Pell Grants passed the same course.

For PS 202, the trend reverses, so that only 77 percent of students who were not offered Pell Grants passed and 83 percent of the students who were offered Pell Grants passed this course. In the commentary, the SAC notes that the data "do not indicate any meaningful pattern based on Pell offering."

There seems to be a missed opportunity here to examine these 8- and 6-point gaps between these two populations. Why do students from these two groups perform differently? How might the SAC address these gaps with changes in curricula, pedagogy, or other practices?

Further, on page 7, Political Science notes that International, Asian, White, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students have success rates of 80 percent or higher. Then the SAC notes that Black, Latino, Native American, and Multi-Racial students have success rates below 80 percent.

While the report states, "It is possible that more systemic, interdisciplinary strategies are required to address these inequities," there is no clear description of what the SAC is doing right now to determine which broader strategies should be implemented. Although the report explains that individual instructors will continue to work to identify challenges with individual students, there is no systemic plan described in terms of professional development or new practices to assist in these efforts.

Further, the SAC does not include reducing or eliminating disparities in student outcomes as a goal or a measurement of future success in Section 5.

3. Reflection on goals and resources:

GOALS

The three goals that Political Science has listed are

- Implementing General Education Signature Assignments
- Improving Online Instruction
- Engaging in Guided Pathways Implementation with the College Reorganization

Progress measures include positive reviews from LAC assessments, student evaluations, integration of PS faculty on committees and sociology courses in curriculum maps, and higher faculty satisfaction and comfort with the online model of learning.

DEAN RESPONSE

The deans applaud SAC plans to engage in these three areas and believe these goals will serve the discipline and the college well.

Further, we encourage Political Science to consider "reducing or eliminating opportunity gaps" as part of future SAC goals and use disaggregated data related to student success rates as ways to measure progress and demonstrate the role the SAC plays in helping the institution achieve our YESS goals.

What changes might PS faculty implement to address the disparities in passing rates among students from different racial/ethnic groups?

What resources (professional development, training, software) might PS faculty need to address these gaps?

RESOURCES

The three resources requested by Political Science follow.

- FT Sylvania faculty member (to replace Rose Bettencourt permanently)
- FT Cascade faculty member
- FT Temp faculty member (to replace Rose Bettencourt for 2021-2022)

DEAN RESPONSE

The deans recognize that it can be especially difficult for smaller SACs to see the complex dynamics (budgets, classroom locations, campus priorities) that impact course schedules on each campus. We believe that the institutional reorganization from a campus-based approach to a pathways approach will increase consistency, transparency, and innovation in how courses are scheduled and staffed throughout the district.

As described in the PCC Reorganization Chart, Political Science will soon be in the Pathways with Public Services, Education, and Social Sciences Academic Pathway, so there may be more opportunities for interdisciplinary partnerships with Sociology and other SACs within the same Pathway.
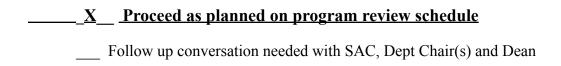
Effective in Fall 2021, Political Science will be located in the Social Science and Ethnic Studies along with

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Ethnics Studies
- Geographic Information Systems
- Geography
- Health Education

- History,
- International Studies
- Native American Studies
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Women's and Gender Studies

The current Political Science division deans encourage Political Science faculty to remain in conversations with the incoming Program and Pathway Deans who will oversee the discipline to advocate for FT hires as a way to close opportunity gaps among first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color.

Recommended next steps:

_____ X__ Proceed as planned on program review schedule

___ Follow up conversation needed with SAC, Dept Chair(s) and Dean

Additional comments/questions:

Potential Opportunity To Recruit and Serve Students from the ESOL Program

The SE division dean (Laura Sanders) would like to share an anecdote that might provide an opportunity for Political Science in terms of future interdisciplinary partnerships and classroom support.

Last year, LINKS advisers at SE approached the division dean for assistance in providing additional support for marginalized students in Gateway to College and Yes to College who need specific social sciences (political science, history, perhaps other classes) to complete their HS diploma.

In many cases, these students (especially those in ESOL classes) needed a Political Science class for graduation requirements but lacked an understanding of cultural concepts (three branches of government, veto) and discipline-specific vocabulary (gerrymandering, lame duck, parliamentarian). These students often struggled in class, and some failed.

To assist students who might find large portions of Political Science or History content completely new, advisers worked with instructors who teach Adult Basic Ed/GED Social Studies Classes.

Advisers and instructors worked to identify and promote courses that could provide students from a range of linguistic backgrounds and experience living under various government models with the foundational knowledge they would need to be successful in transfer-level classes in Political Science and History.

Because the ABE/GED Social Studies classes were originally designed and paced for students with lower English literacy skills, students who are still learning English themselves may find the vocabulary and concepts more accessible and a form of valuable preparation for

transfer-level classes in the same disciplines. This model might be useful for other student populations who struggle to be successful in PS 101 and PS 102.

Summary

We want to thank the Political Science SAC for all your hard work in support of PCC students. We know this past year has not been easy. We applaud the work you have done to pivot to a remote environment. We believe that once the reorganization is complete, your new Program Dean and Academic and Career Pathways Dean will work together to provide you continued support.