LDC Program Review – Annual Discipline Update for 2021-2022
PART A

SECTION 1: BASIC PROGRAM/DISCIPLINE INFORMATION

SAC Name: **Political Science**

Disciplines included in this SAC: Political Science. PS 211 and PS 221 are cross-listed

with Sociology (SOC 211, 221), Economics (ECON 221).

SAC Chair(s): Douglas Byrd

Faculty Department Chairs: Rhonda Collier (SY), Justin Elardo (CA), Terri Barnes (RC),

Teela Foxworth (SE)

Program Dean/SAC Administrative Liaison: Dana Fuller

Pathway Dean: Daniel Wenger

Classes/Services offered at: CA / RC / SE / SY / For program staffing information

(completed by division deans and administrative assistants), see the Appendix to

Section 1.

Please highlight where your classes are offered.

Classes/Services offered at: CA / RC / SE / SY / NB / HC / WCC / Metro / CLIMB   Other:

SECTION 2: REFLECTING ON DATA

All data cited below can be found here:
https://www.pcc.edu/institutional-effectiveness/program-profiles/

2A.Enrollment (SFTE) per year; Location (where course is taught); Modality

SEE Student FTE Tab

2A1. Does this data suggest any questions that the SAC would like to pursue?

Political Science (PS) is heavily focused on PS 201, American Government. This is in-line with other PS programs elsewhere as American Government often meets many requirements and serves as an introduction to the discipline. 61.9/118.8 of our Student Enrollment by FTE is in PS 201 both online and in person. Of that, 43.3 were in person with 24.5 online only.

PS has seen a decline in enrollment over the past few years. From 139.6 FTE in 17-18 to 118.8 in 20-21, but it saw an uptick in the last year from 114.3 in 19-20. This overall decline over the last four years has been across all campuses, with the largest decline at Sylvania (57.9 to 40.1, a decline of 17.8) and Rock Creek (53.5 to 37.6, a decline of 15.9).

If we were to go back further, Cascade campus had seen the largest decline as we lost our FT faculty position there and CA is scheduling far fewer PS classes. However, in the last year Cascade has increased to 36.1 from 21.3 from 19-20 in part because more classes were allowed to be scheduled and the students expressed their interest by enrolling in them. RC campus has also seen a reduction in classes offered from 5 in person to 4 (all taught by Dr Byrd). In addition, this upward trend from 19-20 to 20-21 was striking given that most of the College as well as social sciences in general were experiencing large declines.

On the Southeast Campus, our numbers are quite low. SE has an FTE of only 4.9 because only seldomly have PS courses been allowed to be scheduled there because the previous dean on that campus seemed opposed to running Political Science courses at all. In fact, before the previous dean, Political Science had successfully run 2 courses per term at the Southeast campus which shows the potential for enrollment. The PS SAC is unaware as to why the previous dean at Southeast Campus was

unwilling to let Political Science courses to be run on that campus, but this was a definite roadblock to improving our overall enrollment.

PS 202 is our second highest enrolled class at 15.6 FTE in 20-21. Of this enrollment, 9.7 is online. Our next three strongest classes in enrollment are PS 204, 203, and 221.

While all courses were online in some format over the last year, we noticed a trend that those courses offered with Zoom times performed better on average in the Spring term of 2021 than those that were strictly online/D2L. Even before the last academic year, PS as a discipline had aggressively committed to offering courses online regularly, and we have seen some success in terms of enrollment due to this.

2A2. Do the data suggest adjustments be made in your discipline, such as schedule or course offerings, with regards to enrollment? If yes, what ideas/strategies do you have that you would like to implement or have help with in the upcoming academic year?

In general, a lot of the decline in PS over the past years has been due to our loss of FT positions at CA and SY and the overall lack of PS classes being offered. For example, it is impossible to have any students at SE campus when not a single PS course is offered, this despite the fact that our courses seem to fill quite well at SE (we currently have one course scheduled for Winter 2022). Equally, we've seen good numbers in the courses offered at Cascade campus but fewer courses being offered. During the Spring of 2021, CA campus offered 3 PS courses and all had strong enrollment. This data suggests that CA campus can sustain 5-6 PS courses as it did when we had a full time position there along with some part time instructor led courses being offered. Furthermore, we want PS to expand more course offerings across all four main campuses. When PS 201 is the only course available, students cannot continue to take PS classes. Our goal would be to offer PS 204, 205, 201, 202 and one other course each year at each campus.

2A3. Are there other data reports that you would find informative/useful with regards to enrollment? How would this information support decision-making for the SAC/discipline?

PS enrollment numbers are in-line with other social sciences at PCC. It would certainly be helpful for us to know exactly where PS courses fit into other programs, and the requirements that they have.

2A4. Is your program aware of any external influences that strongly affect recent enrollment? For example, state requirements, transferability challenges, other university policies, etc. Please explain.

It seems that Political Science does get an enrollment bump during presidential election years. However, we have not been allowed to parlay this bump into more course offerings afterwards because the faculty department chairs only allow us to schedule roughly the same number of courses as we did the year before. If, going into the next presidential election year, we could be allowed to anticipate this bump we believe we could ride this additional wave of enrollment further and make the bump last longer and become more permanent.

2B. Course Success Rates
Data Definition: Success rate represents the percentage of students who successfully complete a course.

% Passing By Course and Modality SEE APPENDIX B, DATA TABLES B-1, B-2

2B1a. Are there any courses with lower or higher pass rates than others (over time, over many sections, or a notably higher or lower rate)? If so, which ones?

As noted in Section 2A1 above, our department (and Political Science generally) is focused heavily on PS 201. This is reflected in enrollment numbers. PS 202 is our second highest enrolled offering. We offer both of these classes online. The success rates were remarkably similar (and strong) at 79.3% for PS 201 and 72.8% for PS 202 during 20-21. Our "second tier" classes, enrollment-wise, are PS 203, PS 204, and PS 205. Here we observed more variation in success rates across courses and years. Success rates were 73.3% for PS 203, 79.3% for PS 204 and 93.3% for PS 205. It should be noted that usually only students who intend to major or minor in Political Science and/or other social sciences tend to take PS 204 or PS 205. Therefore, it is likely that stronger and better prepared college students take those courses as they are rarely taken just for general education purposes.

2B1b. Are there any modalities with lower or higher pass rates than others (over time, over many sections, or a notably higher or lower rate)? If so, which ones?

Success rates across modalities - we observed some variation in success rates across modalities, though not always in the same direction. Success rates for online sections of PS 201 were almost the same in 20-21 with the online courses being only slightly higher than remote courses, while our online sections for PS 202 had consistently higher success rates.

2B2. Strategy Insights

What strategies have you used to maintain high success rates? What can be learned that might be applied to courses with lower success rates? What are possible actions to be taken to understand/address lower success rates? Please clearly explain how your discipline intends to explore content/curriculum, pedagogy/teaching, course material selection, etc. using culturally responsive teaching approaches throughout the next year. Try to identify a realistic one year goal.

There are a variety of strategies that are used to maintain high success rates. Having regular Zoom sessions and enlivening Zoom sessions with creative discussions, providing amusing and entertaining background stories to political events being covered, allowing late work with only a minimal reduction in the grade, encouraging one on one phone conversations with the professor, and maintaining a relatively quick turn-around time for grades with written feedback are among the reasons that help to keep up a higher success rate.

One possible reason for the lower success rate for students in PS 202 and 203 may have to do with the fact that a significant fraction of the students enrolled in those courses are part of the Criminal Justice Program at PCC. Political Science faculty teaching these two courses have noticed that some students from the CJ program struggle in writing academic research papers that they may not be fully prepared to do. As the CJ Program is more of an applied program than a traditionally academic one, students entering that program may not have the necessary skills and/or may not be as interested in traditional academic work. We are aware that the Sociology Department used to offer a course that was linked with the CJ Program but discontinued doing so a few years ago because of these similar problems. However, Political Science is committed to continue offering these courses and to try to enable CJ students to be more successful in the future. One possible solution to improve success rates in these courses (once the campuses are fully open again) is to spend a couple of course periods in the library with the students to help them work on their research skills so that research becomes easier and more normal for them.

Political Science as a discipline in the 21st century has structured within its courses and textbooks the coverage and exploration of the effects of race/ethnicity/gender/sexual orientation/religion and overall identity. This is seen in the widespread inclusion of various political movements and their effects on elections and public policy through the variety of courses that Political Science offers. For example, in PS 204, the topic of the Chiapas indigenous movement is covered within the chapter on Mexican Politics. In PS 202, legal changes to civil rights laws and policy applications are covered in regards to women, African Americans and Native Americans. In PS 203, the recent success and policy effects of African American and Latina candidates to the Portland City Commission is examined. Thus, in any one Political Science course, a strong effort has been made to ensure inclusion of various identities and their relationships to politics, government and policy. In addition, Political Science instructors engage students in a way that allows them to see there can be various perspectives on any given issue, and that the number of perspectives is likely not limited to just two but may actually have three or five or ten different points of view.

Enrollment and % Passing By Course and Student Demographics

SEE Gender, Race, and Pell Tabs

2B3. The data may indicate a pattern of inequities (in gender, race, or Pell eligibility) in student enrollment or success. Please clearly explain how your program intends to explore content/curriculum, pedagogy/teaching, course material selection, etc. using culturally responsive teaching approaches throughout the next year. Try to identify a realistic one year goal.

For the 2020-2021 academic year there were disparities in success rates among various racial groups. The success rates for all students in Political Science courses was 77.5%. Overall success rates for the following groups are in order of success rate: Asian students (85.9%), Native American students (83.3%), White students (79.1%), multi-racial students (75.3%), Latino students (72.5%), and Black students (63.8%). A similar pattern emerged when looking at PS 201 success rates: Asian students (91.7%), White students (80%), multi-racial students (79.2%), Latino students (74.6%), and Black students (67.7%). The data was not available for Native American students.

These rates are lower overall in comparison to the 2018-2019 academic year which was the last year in which PCC was fully on campus. The overall rate of success in that year was 80.8% for all students. A mostly similar pattern among various racial groups' success emerged: Asian students (88.4%), White students (82.3%), Latino students (77.1%), multi-racial students (75.2%), Black students (67.2%), and Native American students (50%). However, the number of students identified as Native American is so

small (8 in 2018-2019 and 6 in 2020-2021) that the data is not instructive in helping to understand any pattern that may be developing.

The disparities among different genders were relatively minimal and mixed during 2020-2021. The overall success rate was 75.9% for females, 79% for males, and 75.6% for nonbinary students. When looking specifically at PS 201, the success rates were 79.1% for female students, 78.5% for male students and 84.6% for nonbinary students. Thus, males were more successful overall, but nonbinary and female students were more successful in PS 201. In 2018-2019 the overall success rate was 79.6% for female students, 82.5% for male students and 73% for the unknown category (only 3 Political Science students identified themselves as nonbinary in that year).

There is a small disparity in the success rate of students that were offered Pell grants and those that were not. Overall, those not offered Pell grants were successful 78.8% of the time, whereas those offered Pell grants were only successful 74.8% of the time. However, the disparity widens when only looking at PS 201. Those students offered Pell grants succeeded 74.8% of the time (the exact same as overall), and those not offered Pell grants improved to 81.3%. The overall success rate in 2018-2019 for those offered Pell grants was 79.3% while it was 81.5% for those not offered it.

The Political Science faculty very much believe that there is a high level of correlation between family income and student success. As it is well documented in American social science literature that there is a sizable income disparity between various racial groups in the U.S. with Asian families having the highest incomes, followed by White families, then Latino families and Black families. This income disparity cannot help but negatively affect those students whose households have lower levels, especially during these times of crisis. Thus, African American and Latino students are more likely to have to work more in order to pay rent because they often are paid less, on average. They also are more likely to be homes that are at-risk due to lack of income. In addition, lower income students have been less likely to have reliable internet access and at-home computers to complete their assignments. This fact helps to explain both the overall decline in the success rates of Political Science students as well as the decline in the success rates of various racial minority groups. One strategy to help with lack of regular internet access has been to email written lectures to the students on a weekly basis so that they may read the lectures on their phones through their email accounts while at home or wherever instead of having to be on a computer to access D2L.

Finally, most students do not even show themselves during Zoom class which means our faculty likely have no idea of the racial identities of most of their students. When we are on campus we can go out of our way to ensure that the lessons are getting across to our students by reading facial expressions and body language. That simply is not

possible right now. Furthermore, because we don't know who of our students are of a racial minority group which makes it impossible to do any kind of outreach.

2B4. What support does your SAC need to fully explore inequities in enrollment or student success? For example, are there any other data reports you would find useful to have related to student success?

Yes, being able to do cross tabs with race, gender and family income would be enormously helpful. It would allow us to know for sure as to what effect family income has on success rates.

SECTION 3: REFLECTION ON ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

3A. Assessment Reports

Please note: The following questions link directly to your Annual Learning Assessment Reports for the Learning Assessment Council. Feel free to cut and paste between this document and your other assessment documentation.

3A1. Which student learning outcomes from your SAC's available courses will you assess this year and will you use direct assessment strategies?
(These can be larger, program-level outcomes or course-level outcomes from your CCOGs).

Method of inquiry was the primary student learning outcomes assessed this year. However, using the college-wide rubric, all four outcomes (social context, method of inquiry, information literacy, and diversity) were included in the analysis and assessed by analyzing the completed signature assignments that were part of the requirements of Political Science courses.

3A2. Which courses do you plan to assess this year; how and why will your SAC choose the sections?

Four sections from PS 201 and PS 202 were assessed. The faculty who contributed their students' research papers did so voluntarily. The paper assignment was a direct assessment. The assignment constituted 15-20% of the student's grade in the course. Overall seventy-seven students were assessed. Part of the difficulty in doing this assessment was in getting printed copies of the assignments from the faculty whose students had contributed to the faculty who were doing the assessments. As many people do not have home printers anymore, and the campus offices were closed to faculty, we had to rely on the few faculty who could print copies and mail them to the other faculty.

3A3. In general terms, describe the assessment project for the year from implementation to data collection. What steps will you take in carrying out the project?

This is a signature assignment that has been approved by the GEARS committee for assessing the General Education Outcome: Social Inquiry and Analysis. The paper seeks to expose students to different political ideologies which they then investigate by

using sources (journal, magazines, newspaper articles, texts and websites) to understand how elected officials, institutions, journalists and citizens express these political ideologies and translate them into policy or actions. We hope that students can better understand different political ideologies and thereby develop a better understanding of their own political views. We will use the rubric for Social Inquiry and Analysis from the General Education Outcome guide. Several faculty will read and score the papers using the Social Inquiry and Analysis rubric. Then two other faculty will randomly select a sample from those papers and score them using the rubric and then compare for any glaring differences in assessment.

We hope that students meet and surpass the benchmark of the Social Inquiry and Analysis of the rubric dimensions of Social Context, Methods of Inquiry, Information Literacy and Diversity. PCC's benchmark in 2-Developing. In the past, the majority of the students that submitted the assignment did better than the benchmark. We want our students to:

1- Demonstrate their ability to assess how a political issue and political institutions affects them, their communities and the beyond.

2- Apply social science methods of research using primary and secondary sources to analyze current political events

3- Use research effectively to write and document sources to respond to the prompts in the paper assignment

4- Understand the diverse ideological perspectives and use them to assess how policies/actions are influenced by those differences

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Political Science Department at Portland Community College completed an assessment of the writing and research capabilities of seventy-seven of our students. The students were asked to write a four- page research paper in which they researched and analyzed six articles on the same topic taken from a list of suggested news and political sources. The students were directed to find three articles from a liberal perspective and three articles from a conservative perspective.

Results from the 20-21 study completed in June 2021:

On the social context criteria, just over half of the students (fifty-two percent) were evaluated as meeting the developing standard and thus demonstrated that they were able to see the bigger picture and effectively analyze the interconnections between

individuals and institutions. Thirty-five percent were able to exceed this standard and were rated in either the advanced or proficient category while fourteen percent were rated to be in the emerging category.

In regards to the methods of inquiry, fifty-five percent of the seventy-seven students were rated at the developing level in which their ability to conduct social science methods and research were judged. One-third of students were rated to have exceeded this standard and achieved either the proficient or advanced level. Twelve percent of students were unable to achieve the developing standard and thus rated unable to conduct social science research at the necessary level for introductory Political Science courses.

On information literacy, almost half (forty-nine percent) of the students were able to use the information they had gathered effectively and be rated at the developing level. Thirty-five percent of students were able to exceed that standard and be rated at either the proficient or advanced level. Meanwhile, sixteen percent of students were unable to achieve the developing standard. They may have had plenty of information in their research papers but were unable to use it effectively. Or, they may have had trouble gathering enough information.

Finally, on the issue of diversity, fifty-six percent of students were able to accurately discuss and analyze liberal and conservative perspectives at least at the developing standard. But, only one quarter were able to exceed this standard and be rated at the proficient or advanced levels while eighteen percent were unable to meet the developing standard. The diversity criteria was the most difficult for the students to meet of the four criteria. One reason for this may have to do with the difficulty some students may have in understanding the differences between liberal and conservative in the American political context. Because the state of Oregon does not require any government coursework of students in order to graduate high school, many of our students enter our introductory courses having had no prior study in government or politics. Thus, these words, even as the students make their way through their courses, may still be quite confusing to them. Both words have multiple meanings in both political and non-political contexts and thus a small fraction of students may still be having difficulty understanding the differences in the two words even as they approach this assignment.

Of the four criteria, the students had their best achievements on the methods of inquiry. This may have resulted from the straight-forward nature of the assignment. It may have been easier in general for students to understand how to go about doing it. In addition, because this type of research is relatively common among social science courses in both high school and colleges, the students in general have likely had multiple opportunities to practice doing this sort of assignment in which they research some articles and analyze them.

Overall, more than eighty percent of students were able to achieve the developing standard in each of the four criteria which indicates that the students are prepared to be successful in two-hundred level college Political Science. However, a not insignificant

number of students (about fifteen percent on average per criteria) were unable to achieve the developing standard in writing their assignments. This indicates that these students will likely have a much greater level of difficulty in attempting to graduate with an associate's degree. It also may indicate that this fraction of students (almost one-sixth) were not fully prepared to be successful in two-hundred level collegiate social science in the first place.

3B. Response to LAC Assessment Question

Please respond to the question below, which relates to your SAC's 2020-2021 Learning Assessment Report to the Learning Assessment Council (LAC).

Commendations: The Political Science SAC has submitted a quality report with detailed data and appropriate analysis during this difficult year and this effort is greatly acknowledged and appreciated!

Suggestions: The peer reviewers would suggest that the SAC reach out to their LAC coach for help with training on appropriate norming methods.Consider what you would like to know about your students' learning. Is there a particular CCOG that stands out for focus? Since we want to close the loop, that means making changes and while this report is excellent at detailing current achievement, there is not much about the opportunity for change. Since you discuss the mechanics of writing being a concern, you may wish to speak to that and either come up with pedagogical changes and a reassessment for next year, or move to a new outcome for the next assessment cycle.

Question: The levels of achievement in terms of meeting the benchmark on this signature assignment are great, however if you wish to continue to use this can you look at curricular ideas to close the 15-20% achievement gap so that assessment leads to improvement? Alternatively, is it time to move on to assessing a new outcome?

SAC Response:

The Political Science SAC is in discussion to assess a different outcome this year, but as of yet, no final decision has been made. We are encouraged by the high success rate and so are considering switching to a different outcome. We believe that more in-person library instruction would be helpful to the success rate of students writing research papers. However, as noted earlier in this report, because the libraries and the campuses are open only to very limited use, this is not possible at this time.

SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES or OPPORTUNITIES

4A. Is there anything further you would like to share about your program's achievements at this time?

Despite the small number of Political Science faculty at PCC and only one full-time instructor, the Political Science faculty continue to offer a wide and diverse course offering that includes a strong array of American politics courses (201, 202, 203, 280, 297, and 299), international courses (204, 205, 211, 221 and 242) as well as one theory course (225). In fact, Doug Byrd and Nick Paine consistently offer and teach at least five different courses in nearly every academic year. It's even more amazing that these instructors managed to convert all of their courses they teach into the online environment in the last year. In addition, Doug Byrd, Nick Paine, Vicki Jeffries-Bilton, Marcos Miranda, Tom Scales and George Cole are now approved to teach online only/D2L courses.

4B. Are there any challenges not described above that you would like to note here?

As full-time instructor Rose Bettencourt retired in June of 2021, Political Science is now down to only one full-time instructor. This has affected Political Science representation on the campuses, its scheduling and thus its enrollment overall.

In the Fall of 2021, course offerings were limited to only 11 sections taught by Political Scientists (not including a 211 cross-listed course taught by a Sociologist). This was fewer than the number of courses offered in the Fall of 2020 when 15 Political Science courses successfully ran. Indeed, Political Science actually gained students in the 2020-2021 year over the previous academic year and yet our course offerings for the 2021 Fall term were cut with no explanation. In fact, the Faculty Department chairs when asked were unable to say who had designed the Fall 2021 schedule in the first place - only that they had no choice in the matter. Furthermore, it was required that several PS 201 sections which were originally scheduled to be remote with Zoom had to be switched to online only/D2L even though our experience from the Spring of 2021 showed us that more students preferred having some Zoom time in order to have a direct connection to their instructor. This switch ultimately caused one PS 201 online section to be cancelled as there was not enough demand for online only/D2L courses. Meanwhile the three PS 201 with scheduled Zoom times were completely full with students indicating there was plenty of demand to have offered more sections in that manner.

4C. Do you see any opportunities in the near or long term that you would like to share?

Several of our faculty are very interested in returning to campus in the Spring term, and we believe that a majority of students are interested as well. If we are allowed to offer a majority of our courses on campus in the Spring term we think that we will see a boost in enrollment.

We are also aware that PCC is going forward with a search to hire a full-time Political Scientist, and we hope that the College and the hiring committee will focus on those candidates that are student centered with strong teaching abilities as well as having the ability to teach a wide variety of courses (both American and international) in various modalities that we need in order to keep up the large diversity of courses that we offer in addition to helping our program invite and encourage more students to be interested in our discipline.

It is absolutely critical that we regain one of the two positions that we have lost. We appreciate the opportunity to replace our retired colleagues and to inject some new energy into the program at Sylvania. Long term, we would like to restore our FT position CA campus (perhaps split with SE). In the past, we thrived with three full time faculty members, and that type of support from PCC to PS would be welcome.

We'd also like to note that working with Dana Fuller is a great opportunity, and having one dean to work with is also welcome. We have always appreciated Dana's openness, honesty and hard work. We look forward to a bright future for political science at PCC.

Finally, we know that PCC has discussed the possibility of SACs operating more like one-college Departments, and SAC Chairs having a role more in-line with Department Chairs, and we would like to express interest in furthering the responsibilities and roles of SAC Chair.