POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM REVIEW 2016

The Political Science SAC at PCC is:

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1. **Program/Discipline Overview:**
   
   **A.** What are the educational goals or objectives of this program/discipline? How do these compare with national or professional program/discipline trends or guidelines? Have they changed since the last review, or are they expected to change in the next five years?

   PCC has long supported student empowerment and informed citizenship. Political Science is uniquely able to support our students- especially those from underserved and disempowered communities- in this mission. At PCC we are creating welders and pilots, nurses and historians, but we are also helping mold and support the next generation of citizens, voters and leaders both in Oregon and abroad. The PCC mission statement commits the college to developing “well-rounded citizens” and states that “PCC promotes the success, dignity, and worth of each individual by providing a safe environment where the examination of divergent ideas, experiences and systems of inequality adds depth to the learning experience”.

   Students cannot become well rounded citizens and future leaders without understanding our political system and without understanding their rights and place in that system. Empowerment is giving students the information and skills to stand up for justice and for their own community and for themselves. Understanding how the United States went from the 3/5 Compromise to the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause to today’s battle for LGBTQ (for example) rights is critical to empowerment and citizenship. In this environment of extreme politics, partisanship and major debates about sensitive racial, immigration and other identity issues, our students need to know about their rights and American politics.

   We wish that students came into PCC with a strong understanding of American and world politics, but many do not. In fact, many have almost no grounding in Political Science which (as our survey reveals; see Appendix One) leads to feelings of disempowerment: people who don’t understand political systems are much less likely to vote or engage and are therefore less likely to get support from that system. This is a cycle seen over and over and if we want to break this, we need to foster and support the next generation of leaders. For example in entry surveys of our students in PS 201 American Government 10% of our students said that they knew nothing about the American government and nearly half said that they knew nothing or just a little. Moreover, in the 2010 election 61% of college educated voters voted. However, only 35% of high school or less educated voters turned out. This disparity has been observed in every American election since this type of data has been collected, and it reveals something quite problematic with American democracy: Those who are in need of the most help turn out the least and therefore are the least important to politicians which further perpetuates the cycle of poverty, disempowerment and alienation from the political system.

   But at PCC we can, and are, playing a role in breaking this cycle. After taking PS 201 65% of our students felt that their knowledge of American Government was very good, and 17% thought that their knowledge was excellent. This is a nearly complete turnaround and when we combine this information with the vast and consistent data showing how education can empower citizenship we can make a strong case that the PS program is making a big difference far beyond the classroom. After taking a PS class our students talk about politics more, they pay more attention to politics in the news and they are more likely to vote (see Appendix One) in elections. Considering the relationship between disempowerment, poverty, race and
gender in the United States, it is especially important to empower our students, and to give them the skills to be engaged citizens.

Furthermore, Political Science is among the most internationalized disciplines at PCC. We teach a variety of courses that directly support and expand on PCC’s Internationalization Initiative and have over the years greatly expanded this part of our program. Political Science uniquely prepares students to study topics such as terrorism, global inequality and power structures for example that are so critical to understanding the global system today.

Political Science is a classical discipline: the study of Political Science reaches back to the beginning of human society. Questions about the nature of government, their leaders and publics, what shapes public policies, and international interactions among states have also been essential. Philosophers have addressed these issues, including: Machiavelli, St Thomas Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, John Stuart Mill, Marx, Simone de Beauvoir and others.

Political Science students gain a versatile set of skills applicable to a wide range of careers in federal, state and local government, law, business, international organizations, nonprofit organizations, campaign management and polling, journalism, pre-collegiate education, electoral politics, research and university and college teaching.

In terms of trends, right now we are seeing a significant increase in student interest and connections to the political process due to the election. Our enrollments are showing some recovery and we are hopeful that this excitement will lead to a more visible PS program.

B. Briefly describe changes that were made as a result of SAC recommendations and/or administrative responses from the last program review.

We have made a great deal of changes since our last program review. Chiefly among those changes are new courses: PS 106 Citizenship & Engagement: Problems in U.S. Politics, PS 221 Globalization & International Relations, PS 297 Environmental Politics and Policy, PS 241 Modern India & Its Neighbors, PS 242 Modern China & Its Neighbors. These changes directly came out of SAC members’ interest in internationalization of the curriculum and in order to develop a broader and more inclusive political science program.

The Salem Internship Program was created as a result of a collaborative effort with ASPCC, PCC’s Director of Government Relations and Political Science instructors to introduce students to the legislative process. In order to reach students that may be less prepared for our Political Science courses we developed PS 106 which has lower perquisites and introduces students to the various topics of Political Science. It also has an added benefit of helping new immigrants prepare for their Citizenship test.

2. Outcomes and Assessment: Reflect on learning outcomes and assessment, teaching methodologies, and content in order to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and student success.

A. Course-Level Outcomes: The College has an expectation that course outcomes, as listed in the CCOG, are both assessable and assessed, with the intent that SACs will collaborate to develop a shared vision for course-level learning outcomes.
i. **What is the SAC process for review of course outcomes in your CCOGs to ensure they are assessable?**

All Political Science course outcomes are developed by the SAC to facilitate assessability. Once formalized, course outcomes are regularly reviewed and refined as necessary at quarterly SAC meetings. The SAC review process is based largely on the expertise, experiences, and feedback of individual instructors.

Course outcome review focuses on two assessability criteria: substance and process. Substantively, the SAC employs a consensus-driven approach to determine core content for each course. The goal here is to achieve consistency across sections, based on the SAC’s shared vision of what constitutes essential content. Process review is equally important, and pertains more directly to assessability. Once core content is determined, the SAC works to ensure that desired substantive outcomes are in fact measureable. This stage of the review process relies heavily on instructor feedback, based on what “works” in the classroom or online. Substantive course outcomes are only valuable if they can be measured.

Based on what the SAC collectively determines to be assessable course outcomes, instructors are then free to innovate with instruction to improve students’ attainment of course outcomes (see next section).

ii. **Identify and give examples of changes made in instruction to improve students’ attainment of course outcomes, or outcomes of requisite course sequences (such as are found in in MTH, WR, ESOL, BI, CH, etc.) that were made as a result of assessment of student learning.**

Below is a list of examples of changes made in instruction, based on instructor assessment of student learning, to better achieve students’ attainment of course outcomes. Each example includes 1) the targeted course outcome, 2) the assessment of student learning, and 3) the instructional change.

**PS 202: U.S. Public Policy and Democracy**

**Course outcome:** Analyze the roles of individuals and political institutions as these relate to contemporary controversies regarding a wide range of domestic public policy issues in the U.S.

**Assessment of student learning:** Some students struggled to draw connections between the theoretical roles of societal/institutional actors in the U.S. political system and “real world” public policy conflicts.

**Instructional change:** To help students attain this course outcome, the analytical research paper assignment was revised to require students to propose a “theory of policy development” to help explain public policymaking in an area of their choice. Students would first choose some contemporary public policy conflict (e.g. immigration policy, foreign policy, etc.), and then attempt to “make sense” of the conflict using institutional or group theories of policy development. This instructional change was effective in bridging the gap between abstract political concepts and contemporary public policy problems.
Course outcome: Develop and articulate personal value judgments, respecting different points of view, while practicing ethical and social requirements of responsible citizenship by participating in the shaping of national political priorities and policies.

Assessment of student learning: The goal of cultivating a “non-partisan” learning environment often did not provide students with sufficient opportunity to formulate and express their personal political views and value judgments.

Instructional change: To foster a more normative and interactive discourse in the classroom, students were required to give oral presentations on public policy topics of their choice (e.g. education policy, energy policy, etc.). Students would summarize a specific conflict, explain why the conflict was difficult to resolve, and then offer their personal opinion as to what should be done. Each presentation was followed by a brief class discussion, allowing students to engage with one another on a more normative basis. This instructional change proved effective in allowing students to express their views on important, national public policy conflicts. Equally important, it required that they engage with one another in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

PS 201: U.S. Government

Course outcome #1: Apply an understanding of diversity of human experience and culture in relationship to how we think and interact with others with regards to interest groups, political parties and other political realities in the United States.

Assessment of student learning: Students would often struggle with the abstract nature of the course material in this class, resulting in a disconnect between course concepts and the rich diversity of human experience and many elements of contemporary political culture.

Instructional change: Daily class discussions grounded in current events were introduced at the start of each class meeting. These discussions would be informal and student-driven, with students selecting the topics and providing a brief synopsis. This activity would often result in stimulating exchanges between students, and proved to be a great and fun way to expose students to the realities of politics in the U.S. They also served to create a more relaxed class atmosphere, more conducive to learning and student interaction.

Course outcome #2: Reason quantitatively and qualitatively in both written and oral communication to address national problems within U.S. national political institutions.

Assessment of student learning: Many students seem more adept at quantitative reasoning and analysis. However, the complex nature of political problems often requires students to employ qualitative reasoning and analysis (all that counts can’t be counted). This was identified as a potential deficiency in student learning.

Instructional change: Short-answer exams were employed as a way to encourage qualitative analysis of the course material. Since students were not able to simply choose between provided answers, they had to convey an understanding of the material in their own words. This method of instruction effectively encouraged students to approach and study the material from a different perspective, focused more on understanding and critical thinking and less on memorizing.
PS 203: State and Local Government

Course outcome #1: Employ different methods of inquiry and analytical skills to conceptually organize experiences and discern meaning from ongoing study of state and local government policymaking structures and policy formulation.

Assessment of student learning: State and local government is characterized by tremendous complexity and variation, which can often leave students feeling overwhelmed and lost in the details. This problem is exacerbated by the need to consider both general themes in state and local government along with specific features of state and local government in Portland, Multnomah County, and Oregon.

Instructional change: To aid students with the challenges of conceptual organization inherent to the study of state and local government, customized lecture and discussion outlines were provided to students for every class meeting. These brief (1-2 page) outlines would synthesize course material, highlight important topics, introduce new topics, and raise questions to encourage critical analysis and class discussion. This teaching method has been a very effective learning aid, both inside and outside the classroom. In lending more coherence and structure to the course material, it has allowed students to venture deeper into specific topics without losing sight of the bigger picture.

PS 201: U.S. Government

1. Apply an understanding of diversity of human experience and culture in relationship to how we think and interact with others with regards to interest groups, political parties and other political realities in the United States.
2. Employ different methods of inquiry and analytical skills to conceptually organize experiences and discern meaning from ongoing study of U. S. Constitutional traditions involving national political institutions, including the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of U. S. Government.
3. Analyze the roles of individuals and political institutions as these relate to contemporary problems and issues associated with the Bill of Rights, and equal rights under the law, and other political issues.
4. Reason quantitatively and qualitatively in both written and oral communication to address national problems within US national political institutions.
5. Develop and articulate personal value judgments, respecting different points of view, while practicing ethical and social requirements of responsible citizenship by participating in elections, accessing the various government institutions, and engaging in other opportunities for action in a democratic society.

PS 202: U.S. Public Policy and Democracy

1. Apply an understanding of diversity of human experience and culture in relationship to how we think and interact with others with regards to conflicts associated with formulating national public policy such as taxation and spending policies.
2. Employ different methods of inquiry and analytical skills to conceptually organize experiences and discern meaning from ongoing study of national bureaucratic institutions of U.S. politics as these operate in relation to Legislative, Executive and Judicial mandates.
3. Analyze the roles of individuals and political institutions as these relate to contemporary controversies regarding a wide range of domestic public policy issues in the US.
4. Reason quantitatively and qualitatively to address national problems with public administration within US bureaucratic institutions, including various management styles.
5. Develop and articulate personal value judgments, respecting different points of view, while practicing ethical and social requirements of responsible citizenship by participating in the shaping of national political priorities and policies.

PS 203: State and Local Government

1. Apply an understanding of diversity of human experience and culture in relationship to how we think and interact with others with regards to controversies associated with state and local government policies.
2. Employ different methods of inquiry and analytical skills to conceptually organize experiences and discern meaning from ongoing study of state and local government policymaking structures and policy formulation.
3. Analyze the roles of individuals and political institutions as these relate to contemporary problems and issues ranging from taxation to prisons and education to environmental concerns.
4. Use the ability to reason quantitatively and qualitatively using analytical skills expressed in both written and oral communication to address political problems at the state and local government levels in the U.S.
5. Develop and articulate personal value judgments, respecting points of view, while practicing ethical and social requirements of responsible citizenship by participating in elections, and other opportunities for action at the state and local government levels in the U.S.

PS 204: Comparative Political Systems

1. Explore how culturally based assumptions shape any country’s perceptions, behaviors, and policies in relation to political systems in other countries.
2. Examine historical cases for evolving political practices, including the roles played by political socialization, cultural norms, political institutions, and economic systems.
3. Analyze how policies including issues of privilege and discrimination are impacted by diverse governmental decision-making processes.
4. Formulate and apply personal value judgments regarding social constructs and power relationships embedded in different political institutions and systems.
5. Engage in lifelong learning that includes the ability to conceptually organize information while practicing ethical and social requirements of responsible global citizenship.

B. Addressing College Core Outcomes

iii. Update the Core Outcomes Mapping Matrix.

http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/mapping-index.html

For each course, choose the appropriate Mapping Level Indicator (0-4) to match faculty expectations for the Core Outcomes for students who have successfully completed the course. (You can copy from the website and paste into either a Word or Excel document to do this update, and provide as an Appendix.)

See Appendix Three.

C. For Lower Division Collegiate (Transfer) and Developmental Education Disciplines: Assessment of College Core Outcomes
i. Reflecting on the last five years of assessment, provide a brief summary of one or two of your best assessment projects, highlighting efforts made to improve students’ attainment of the Core Outcomes.

In 2014-15 we decided to assess students’ ability to recognize their own role in sustainability. We wanted to see if, after learning about climate change and the political problems associated with it, students could see themselves as part of the solution and the problem. What we initially found was that this self-reflection was much harder for students than recognizing the overall problem. This led us to reassess with a SAC-wide attempt to help develop this consciousness/awareness among students. It was a really useful project in that it demonstrated a place where we could improve and where our students were interested but not quite linking it all together. As more iterations of PS 297 are taught we will make sure to integrate this into our courses, and we have plans to work with the sustainability programs at PCC to create a new more practice oriented component of our course.

ii. Do you have evidence that the changes made were effective (by having reassessed the same outcome)? If so, please describe briefly.

Yes, our effort did have some successes. We saw higher scores on the self-reflection essay and a much better coordination among SAC members to be on the same page. Our discussions and planning led to a renewed emphasis on developing individual agency (or more properly, an emphasis on developing and recognizing individual agency) and this result was quite satisfying.

iii. Evaluate your SAC’s assessment cycle processes. What have you learned to improve your assessment practices and strategies?

Normally we identify in the Fall term which courses (perhaps all) will be part of the assessment process. We will often sample a set of courses or all courses where the assessment strategy will apply. For example, only a few political science courses could reasonably discuss global warming in-depth, and those classes (chiefly PS 297, Environmental Politics) were to run the assessment questions. However, this topic is also covered in PS 202 Public Policy, so we also use this assessment in these courses. We then agree on specific strategies with a strong attempt to achieve some uniformity.

iv. Are there any Core Outcomes that are particularly challenging for your SAC to assess? If yes, please identify and explain.

Professional competence has been a tough one for us. In fact, we have avoided it altogether due to concerns about fit. In some discussions we’ve had there may be a way to work it into our assessment regime in the future.

3. Other Curricular Issues

A. Which of your courses are offered in a Distance Learning modality (online, hybrid, interactive television, etc.), and what is the proportion of on-campus and online? For courses offered both via DL and on-campus, are there differences in student success? (Contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, either Laura Massey or Rob Vergun, for course-level data). If so, how are you addressing or how will you address these differences? What significant revelations, concerns, or questions arise in the area of DL delivery?
Courses taught in the D2L modality include: PS 201 US Government, PS 202 Public Policy, PS 204 Comparative Political Systems, PS/SOC 211 Peace & Conflict (hybrid)

Three to 4 of these courses per quarter district-wide are online (9 to 10 are F2F)

Statistics from 2014-2015 indicate that pass rates for D2L courses slightly lower or equivalent to F2F college wide rates.

Comparing D2L and F2F: For PS 201 D2L 70% pass: PS 201 F2F 78%

For PS 202 D2L 80%; PS 202 F2F 88% (This indicates higher rate of success for F2F PS 201 and PS 202.

The reason for the lower passing rates for D2L might be that students are more self-directed and more likely to fall behind unless consistently held to task. Faculty have to do a better job of keeping online students engaged and accountable for completion of work and communicate more effectively. Online students often get behind and don’t communicate with the instructor until they are overwhelmed. Students who are self-motivated, disciplined, and familiar with online learning tend to be more successful.

One concern that our faculty have regarding distance learning is that offering too many sections of online courses may have the tendency to cut into the on-campus enrollment. However, the SAC doesn’t have any way of knowing if decreasing online offerings would increase enrollment on campus. There are certainly larger variables involved. The right balance is to offer enough online courses and yet to not take away from valuable classroom based courses.

B. Has the SAC made any curricular changes as a result of exploring/adopting educational initiatives (e.g., Community-Based Learning, Internationalization of the Curriculum, Inquiry-Based Learning, Honors, etc.)? If so, please describe.

Some faculty use Community Based Learning as options for their assignments. This is especially true for PS 211 Peace and Conflict. In some past iterations of this course students have volunteered at community services organizations and then written reports, reflection pieces or presentations.

In the Winter of 2013 a collaborative effort involving ASPCC leaders spearheaded by Rachel Stevens (who was recently hired as a Legislative Aide to House Speaker Tina Kotek and the PCC Director of Government Relations then Rob Wagner, who is now PCC Associate Vice President for College Advancement), and Political Science Instructor Michael Sonnleitner successfully initiated the PCC Salem Internship Program. During the last 3 years, 54 students from all four campuses have earned over 200 credits while interning with at least 20 different members of the Oregon Legislature. In addition to participating in what many of these students describe as a life-altering experience, the dramatically improved visibility this has given to PCC in Salem, the boost in public relations, the overall increases in goodwill, and other positive spinoffs (likely helping to increase legislative allocations to Oregon community colleges by millions of dollars) – have been invaluable. Megan Moyer now continues this work. These internships help students put into practice what they have learned in political science courses. In addition, individual faculty also supervise and work
with students placed into cooperative internship (PS 280A, PS 280B and 280C) related to politics at local city government, Representatives or Senators offices.

Internationalization of the curriculum is an ongoing endeavor in political science. Our courses by their very nature include international materials, PS/SOC/EC 221 Globalization & International Relations, PS 220 US Foreign Policy, PS 204 Comparative Political Systems, PS/SOC 211 Peace and Conflict, PS 205 Global Politics, PS 241 Modern India & Its Neighbors, PS/EC 242 Modern China & Its Neighbors

The SAC has created three new courses that address current global realities: PS 221 Globalization & International Relations was developed in collaboration with Sociology and Economics faculty and is cross listed with those two disciplines. The course covers consequences of global economic realities, social movements, and political change.

PS/EC 242 Modern China and Its Neighbors and PS 241 Modern India & Its Neighbors were developed by Michael Sonnleitner as part of a Title VII U.S. Department of Education Grant administered through the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Both courses are part of requirement for Asian Studies, Chinese Studies and International Studies Focus Awards.

The PS SAC attempts to make every effort to provide students access to the most relevant educational opportunities. Our faculty keep current on international events through conferences, research and travel abroad. One faculty member, Rose Bettencourt, participated in a seminar in Cracow, Poland and Berlin, Germany on the consequences of memory and Identity related to post-communist E. Europe and the experience of the Holocaust. Since our last review we’ve also had faculty travel to Latin America, Spain and India. These travels are not just recreational but are educational and help our faculty to maintain cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Douglas Byrd has put in a study abroad proposal for Japan in summer 2017 to teach PS 211 Peace and Conflict. This is a new program for PCC and will bring visibility to the PS program and will also prove valuable to Dr. Byrd not only in terms of PS 211 but also in other courses.

Regarding Honors: Political Science hasn’t yet created any Honors designated courses. Currently Honors courses are not being approved by the DOIs, so that is on hold. One of our faculty co-leads the Honors Program. She coordinates Honors course offerings district wide, screens application into the program, interviews prospects students, prepares reports for administrators when required, teaches HON 101 Introduction to Scholarly Inquiry, advises students, and helps coordinate the yearly student Honors Symposium.

C. Are there any courses in the program offered as Dual Credit at area High Schools? If so, describe how the SAC develops and maintains relationships with the HS faculty in support of quality instruction.
PS 205 Global Politics and PS 211 are currently offered for dual credit at Westview High School and taught by Sergio Tanasescu. Douglas Byrd has met with him and discussed the course outcomes and is satisfied with the quality of the course and the faculty. Dr. Byrd will continue to communicate with Mr. Tanasescu to assure that SAC requirements are maintained.

D. Please describe the use of Course Evaluations by the SAC. Have you developed SAC-specific questions? Has the information you have received been of use at the course/program/discipline level?

The college Evaluations are administered as required by the College. We have added a general question specific to the SAC: “Things that were especially outstanding about this course would include...” Each instructor has also created their own evaluations that evaluate specific courses. Faculty creates and administers them at their own discretion to help provide feedback for improvement. The SAC has also created and administered surveys that attempt to gauge before and after political knowledge, attitudes, and efficacy of students. These surveys consistently reveal that after taking our political science courses students gained political knowledge, increased political efficacy and engagement. (See Appendix One)

At the course level, evaluation and survey feedback has influenced future selection of textbooks, improvements in assignments, and improvements in student/teacher communications. At the program level, feedback has contributed to SAC efforts to expand curriculum offerings so as to better satisfy the breadth of student interests. At the discipline level, a careful reading of student evaluations and other assessment information has encouraged the SAC to explore making a “civics” requirement mandatory statewide in Oregon. This topic will be covered in recommendation two.

E. Identify and explain any other significant curricular changes that have been made since the last review.

Since our last review in 2011 we have developed and offered the following new courses:

PS 106 Citizenship & Engagement: Problems in U.S. Politics
PS 221 Globalization & International Relations
PS 297 Environmental Politics and Policy
PS 241 Modern India & Its Neighbors
PS 242 Modern China & Its Neighbors

We have also rearranged the structure of PS 201 and PS 202. Previously PS 201 covered the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties and rights, political parties, interest groups, campaigns and elections. PS 202 covered Congress, Presidency, Judiciary and social, economic, environmental, and foreign policy.

We found that many students were fulfilling their requirements by taking only one course, mainly PS 201, therefore not getting the whole picture of how our political system functions. We decided to combine the 3 institutions (Congress, Presidency and Judiciary) into the PS 201 course and search for a new textbook that could provide us with the essentials in all of these areas. We did have to condense the coverage of
these topics but at least the students get introduced to the basic structure and function of the entire political system.

We then created PS 202 U.S. Public Policy and Democracy which exclusively focuses on policy: education, energy, welfare, economy, taxes, criminal, justice, health care, etc.

We are trying to provide options for students to engage with our discipline in ways that fit their curriculum needs. For example, PS 106 Citizenship & Engagement: Problems in U.S. Politics, was designed to allow an introduction to Political Science for students who may not be quite prepared to take PS 201 or PS 202. It has a lower writing requirement. The course is also intended to help those that might want to improve their citizenship literacy. This course introduces problems in U.S. politics including issues relating to citizenship and controversial topics of public policy concern. Promotes respect for diverse perspectives as it provides background information current and prospective U.S. citizens will find helpful to the successful completion of a wide range of future courses in Political Science.

4. Needs of Students and the Community

A. Have there been any notable changes in instruction due to changes in the student populations served?

Over the past 5 years we have increased enrollment of the unemployed, students returning to transition into other careers, and an increase in high schools students. As the economy has improved the enrollments have declined on some campuses. We have also recently seen an increase in veterans, immigrants (refugees), Muslim students, and transgender students. As these students groups feel more empowered to embrace their identity they are willing to be more open in our classes and on campus. So we have to be more sensitive to including their stories, struggles and success into the fabric of our discussions and work in class. Faculty members work very hard to include contributions from various groups in our classes and to enhance understanding of different perspectives. We strive to create a non-threatening environment that is inclusive and nurturing for all students.

PS faculty have been aware of “triggering” specific memories, behaviors, thoughts and situations that may trigger negative memories or flashbacks. This is especially important with more veterans in the classroom but also individuals who have experienced abuse and students who are transitioning. Faculty need to be, and have been, sensitive to the fact that certain visual, PowerPoint, photos, videos, readings or discussion topics may potentially be triggers for individuals in class. Faculty need to prepare students to anticipate these situations, by discussing the content before and after and make referrals to professional councilors on campus and other resources.

The PS SAC has a very diverse group of faculty members, racial, ethnic, gender and wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Several were born overseas and are immigrants. All have traveled extensively abroad and have a deep sense of cultural awareness. We strive to be inclusive and culturally sensitive to our students. We all interact with professionalism, dignity, respect and kindness. Students feel they can share political and other views in our classes and that they will be listened to and valued.
B. What strategies are used within the program/discipline to facilitate success for students with disabilities? What does the SAC see as particularly challenging in serving these students?

Our faculty work closely with the Office of Student’s With Disabilities to accommodate the needs of students. Students who need extended time to complete class exams, deadline flexibility for assignments, redesigning of assignments, texts in different formats, accessibility redesign are all accommodated through the OSD and faculty working together. Faculty are willing to provide alternative assessment strategies like oral exams in cases where that is appropriate. We have at times struggled with online content (such as making videos accessible) but with recent technology and college wide changes, our accessibility for students of all sorts of needs is very high both online and in-class. It’s a quite regular experience in PS courses to have a few students each term who are working with the disability office and have specific accommodation requests and needs. It is our job to work with students and the disability office to make every class and every lecture accessible to all PCC students and we are striving to do so.

One particular challenge is when we deal with students who need help, but have not approached the disability services. This has been particularly an issue with mental illness and learning disabilities. As always, communication is key and we have to take each case on its own basis. The support coming from PCC’s disability services has been excellent and we look forward to continuing our shared effort to make the classroom more inclusive and welcoming to all students.

C. Has feedback from students, community groups, transfer institutions, business, industry or government been used to make curriculum or instructional changes? If so, please describe (if this has not been addressed elsewhere in this document).

We use the College and individual faculty course evaluations to improve our teaching. We also have conducted in class surveys of our students before and after taking our courses to determine how political science classes have impacted their civic education and engagement. (See Appendix One for an example) We also use our assessment of outcomes to gage student learning which were complete every year. The PS SAC received an award from the PCC Learning Assessment Council for Exemplary Assessment of Student Learning for 2014-2015.

Our main feedback is from transfer institutions. Most of our students transfer to PSU. We have frequently met with and discussed our program with other Oregon Political Science programs, especially at PSU. For example, recently we contacted David Kinsella, Chairman of the Political Science Department at PSU for suggestion as to how we can make our curriculum more compatible and how to better prepare our students to be successful at a four-year college, specifically PSU. Several of our courses transfer into the major and minor in Political Science: PS 201, PS 202, PS 204, PS 205, and PS 225. They also transfer to Law and Legal Studies minor: PS 202. The main concern for PSU according to Dr. Kinsella is students with poor writing skills. This is an outcome that all of our courses address. Our entire faculty requires papers (research, short argument, reflection pieces) as well as in class essay exams. In addition many of us require
presentations in class in order to improve our student’s oral skills. PSU is also requiring more community engagement as a requirement for completion of degrees (internships, public service, community-based learning). At PCC, the political Science faculty does use community based learning in PS 211 and in other courses at the discretion of the individual faculty. We also have internships through the legislature in Salem and co-op internships. This is an area that PS could improve upon and merits further discussion in the SAC.

5. Faculty: Reflect on the composition, qualifications and development of the faculty

Provide information on:

A. How the faculty composition reflects the diversity and cultural competency goals of the institution.

Of the current eleven faculty members, four have a PhD in Political Science, two are informally ABD (all but dissertation towards the PhD), and the other five have a master’s degree in either Political Science, Public Policy or Government. Two of the faculty are considered full-time and the other nine are part-time. Five of the faculty have recently presented papers at academic conferences, and three have published in professional academic journals. In addition, three of the faculty have professional experience in government and two have worked on political campaigns.

Political Science has historically been a discipline in which Caucasian males make up the large majority of faculty in the United States. However, at PCC, six of the eleven faculty are women, which makes this department rare in Political Science. Two of the faculty are Latino/Hispanic, one is African American and one is Asian American. One of the faculty is gay/lesbian, and another is a United States military veteran. In addition, a majority of the faculty have travelled overseas, most often in a professional capacity. PCC’s Political Science faculty are truly representative of the student body they serve. The great diversity of both the faculty and their experiences allows a small number of faculty to offer a wide range of courses.

B. Changes the SAC has made to instructor qualifications since the last review and the reason for the changes. (Current Instructor Qualifications at: http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/instructor-qualifications/index.html )

Current requirements are:

Master’s Degree in Political Science   OR   International Relations

With exceptions for teaching  PS 211 Peace and Conflict and PS 280B Community Service and Action Seminar (always cross-listed with SOC 211 and SOC 280B)

Masters in Political Science, Sociology, Conflict Resolution, Peace Studies, or Peace and Conflict Studies.

C. How the professional development activities of the faculty contributed to the strength of the program/discipline? If such activities have resulted in instructional or curricular changes, please describe.

A majority of the Political Science faculty have been engaged in community outreach in recent years. Among their experiences, three faculty have worked on PCC committees that served students including the Internationalization Committee and the Honors Task Force. One member engaged in student educational
outreach in Latin America while another engaged senior citizens educational improvement in the local community. One member has led student activists on the environment, and another served as a local gay/lesbian outreach coordinator for a recent major presidential campaign. One member is currently conducting financial fitness outreach to Latino and African American households to improve home ownership in those communities. Finally, one member attended Holocaust seminars in Europe while another organized Model United Nations programs in the local area.

The experiences of the Political Science faculty have led to a number of changes in the Political Science curriculum and course offerings. Since the last review five years ago, the faculty voted to reorganize the PS 201 and PS 202 offerings. These courses beforehand both covered the U.S. Constitution, in different ways with PS 201 focusing on civil liberties, civil rights, parties, elections and interest groups while PS 202 focused on the three branches of government and public policy of the federal government. The faculty decided to add the three branches of government into PS 201 thus bringing it in line with similar courses offered by most Political Science departments in the United States. PS 202 was improved by making it fully about public policy by the federal government thus allowing it to serve as an excellent introductory course for those students interested in working in government.

Several new courses were also created in the last few years. Political Science 221 (also cross listed with Economics 221 and Sociology 221) is a new course called Globalization and International Relations. The faculty of all three disciplines at PCC came together to create this course in order to reflect both the interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter and the importance of the subject itself today.

Two new comparative politics course have been added to the curriculum. Political Science 241 (India and Its Neighbors) was created to introduce students to the largest democracy on earth. Political Science 242 (China and Its Neighbors) was created to give students an introduction to the most populous nation on earth and currently the world’s second largest economy.

A new course, Political Science 297 (Environmental Politics), was created and offered in order to give students concerned about the environment an opportunity to examine environmental issues and how they (the students) can hope to effect change in the world regarding the environment.

In addition, one special topics course (PS 299) has been offered in the last five years. This course covered elections, campaigns and voting during the fall of the last presidential year (2012). This course is already on track (in a different configuration) to be offered again this fall on two different campuses, in order to give as many students as possible the opportunity to learn more about the electoral process in the United States and Oregon.

6. Facilities and Academic Support

A. Describe how classroom space, classroom technology, laboratory space, and equipment impact student success.

Overall the classroom facilities are satisfactory. More table-style desks are preferable to the small individual desk-chair attachments. These types of desks have next to no space for students to place their books, notebooks or computers. Podiums are functional and allow for PowerPoint, videos and overheads.
Faculty offices are not ideal since there is no privacy for meeting with students, working on sensitive materials on the computer, or providing a distraction free zone for grading and prepping for class. Part-time offices unfortunately are even less functional and often shared between 3 or more faculty.

B. Describe how students are using the library or other outside-the-classroom information resources.

PS students are encouraged to use the Library resources for the various assignments in classes. Faculty use the Library Reserves to put our textbooks and other reading or media materials accessible to students (some of which can’t afford to buy their textbooks). Having books on reserve has the added benefit of bringing students into the library. Once they actually visit the library it opens that world up to them and they are much more likely to visit it again. Our goal is to put every textbook we require on reserve.

Tony Griener (our PS Library liaison) attends most of our SAC in-service meetings to keep us informed of the resources offered by the Library. PS courses could incorporate more formal library instruction into the curriculum.

See Appendix Two for comments from the library.

C. Does the SAC have any insights on students’ use of Advising, Counseling, Disability Services, Veterans Services, and other important supports for students? Please describe as appropriate.

A growing number of students are engaged in PCC support programs beyond the classroom. We see this every day and it makes a difference for many people. As instructors it is hard to really be sure what extent do students make use of them but it is clear that many students do utilize these resources.

The PS SAC would recommend college support for tutors in PS to help our students succeed. PS Faculty do make use of the Writing Center and often recommend students work on their writing assignments with the help of the writing teachers.

7. Recommendations

A. What is the SAC planning to do to improve teaching and learning, student success, and degree or certificate completion?

1. The Political Science SAC will continue to work on refining and utilizing PCC’s core outcome assessment program. Building off of our past success we will move into new areas and will continue to work together to improve our program.
2. We will continue to work on refining our course offerings to increase the success of courses filling and in order to create a vibrant and successful program for students.

3. The SAC will host and create a whole set of events and courses for the 2016 election. Presidential elections are always a good way to get students engaged in Political Science but also a great learning tool for those students already in PS courses. Furthermore, we will continue to find other non-election related events and efforts such as the Salem Internship Program.

B. What support do you need from the administration in order to carry out your planned improvements? For recommendations asking for financial resources, please present them in priority order. Understand that resources are limited and asking is not an assurance of immediate forthcoming support, but making the administration aware of your needs may help them look for outside resources or alternative strategies for support.

1) Restore the full time PS position at Cascade Campus

It is absolutely critical that we restore a full time PS position to Cascade campus. Currently, Political Science has no full time faculty at Cascade or Southeast campuses. With only two full time faculty district-wide, the Political Science program simply cannot function as intended and this situation puts enormous pressure on Rose Bettencourt and Douglas Byrd.

It’s worth noting that since the mid-1980s at least, PCC has had more than 2 full time Political Scientists. It’s been more than 30 years since Cascade campus did not have a full time presence in Political Science even if it was a split presence at times. Certainly Political Science FTE in 1988 was substantially lower than now (even taking into account recent declines). To retreat now from the addition of a 3rd Full-Time slot authorized by the last Program Review – providing only 2.0 Full-Time faculty to anchor the Political Science Program for the entire PCC District- would be extremely disheartening and a severe disservice, especially to students at the Cascade and Southeast Campuses.

When Douglas Byrd was hired at Rock Creek no full time permanent PS presence had ever been on that campus. In the past three years Rock Creek has seen an increase in student enrollment, a massive increase in the diversity of courses offered, and by all measures, a very successful PS program has been established there. With a new full time hire at Cascade we expect similar results. This is especially because we have plenty of proof that this can work; unlike the creation of a new position at Rock Creek, Cascade campus has a lengthy history with a full time presence on campus. Even with the loss of our full time position at Cascade, enrollment there is still reasonable despite the fact that the current faculty teaching there are brand new to that campus and have not had time really establish themselves in a way that a full time instructor could. Right now, we have four courses being offered by part time faculty at Cascade campus and two at Southeast.

For more than three decades, Cascade had a full time PS presence, it is hard to imagine why in 2016 we are not supporting this continuing. Enrollment problems at Cascade are an issue, and the PS SAC is well aware that district wide enrollments are no longer at historic highs. However, considering that PCC committed itself to 3 full time faculty just 5 years ago, and that CA has such a dire need for a full time presence, we desperately need a new hire there. Furthermore, with the new Oregon Promise legislation, we are told to expect a bit higher enrollments moving forward.
Restoring the full time position at Cascade will reinvigorate the program and it will help restore some balance to the workload for the SAC. Douglas Byrd is currently serving on the Internationalization Committee, planning and working with the new Study Abroad Office on a study abroad program in Japan, planning and moderating a Portland mayoral debate that PCC is hosting, last week finished a successful hiring committee in History, is planning for and leading the Program Review and is helping with the yearly assessment work all while teaching 4 classes a term. Finding time to do all of this without taking away from needed personal and family time and keeping a balance between teaching, SAC work, committee work is nearly impossible. Rose Bettencourt is serving as Department Chair at Sylvania, works with for the Honors College and has been leading the PS program’s move toward some distance courses. All of this not only leaves full time faculty overstretched and unable to do other important tasks, but it puts an unfair pressure on part time SAC members. Finally, not only is having no full time presence at Cascade unusual due to the multiples decades of strong support for PS there but it is problematic considering the specific needs of the diverse population served at Cascade campus by the Political Science program.

For the past few years, the full time position at Cascade campus occasionally also taught a course on the Southeast campus. If there are major concerns about filling four classes at Cascade, we would also support a 3-1 split between Cascade and Southeast as has been done in the past. This would have the benefit of have a full time presence (though a limited one) at Southeast. We want to be clear that our goal is a stronger PS program at SE and Cascade campuses. A new faculty member will be able to reinvigorate those programs and we would expect higher enrollments, more events, more engagement with the community and students etc. As it is, we have 6 courses succeeding at these two campuses and we look forward to growth as PCC returns to its traditional commitment to PS at Cascade. There is no doubt that PS enrollment in general has not been what it was a few years ago (though this seems like a District-wide problem) and that Cascade in particular was weaker than we’d like. But as has been demonstrated, we have enough enrollment there even with part time faculty to fill four classes. Losing our full time presence and cutting classes at Cascade could create a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. But we are certain that with your support that the PS programs at Cascade and Southeast will be strong and grow far beyond where they are now. It’s very unclear to us why our retiring member was not replaced in 2015, but no matter the reasons, we strongly feel that there is a need, and more than enough enrollment to justify a restoration of a full time presence at Cascade (perhaps to be split with SE). Our long term hope is to further establish a full time presence at Southeast as well, restoring some balance and further serving the needs of our students across the District.

2) Support from the College for the SAC’s efforts to create a statewide civics requirement and requirements for PCC

Oregon’s High School Graduation Requirements:

Currently, the state of Oregon requires all high school graduates to earn six credits (semesters) in in the social sciences. However, there is no requirement that one of these six cover civics, government, citizenship or even the United States Constitution. Given that politics is often considered a difficult topic by younger people, they often avoid the subject and opt for other courses of study. As a result, all of the Political Science faculty have noticed over the last decade that a large majority of students come into our Political Science courses for the first time lacking even the most basic information regarding government and
politics. For example, a majority of new Political Science students do not know what an “incumbent” is, or what the term “county seat” means. A majority of students do not understand the difference between legislator, legislature and legislation. A majority of students cannot name a single Oregon elected official. These are just a few of the examples that illustrate how woefully behind Oregon is in providing basic civic education to its high school students.

Survey of Other States’ Requirements:

Research was done in the last couple of months to find out what other states did in regards to civics education. Nearby western states were examined as were major states from around the country. There is a common theme among both groups. In Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin, one semester of government is required in order to graduate from high school in these states. California does not require high school graduates to have a course in government or civics; however, it does require its college graduates (both A.A. and B.A./B.S.) to have had a course covering “American institutions and ideals” which is met by taking one semester of government in high school or a college level course in American government. Texas and Utah go even further by requiring all college graduates to have a college course in government.

Proposal 2 A:

While PCC cannot force the Oregon state legislature to make changes to the state’s high school graduation requirements, PCC could set a forward looking example by copying California’s method of ensuring civics competency. Students who wish to earn an A.A. or transfer degree from PCC and have not taken a high school course in government then should be required to take a course covering American history, institutions and ideals. The Political Science faculty believe that either PS 201 (American Government and Politics) or PS 203 (State and Local Government) would suffice. Students could also satisfy this requirement by taking one of the History program’s History of the US courses (201, 202, 203). This requirement would go a long way towards helping the college to ensure that all of its students reach PCC’s stated goal to “prepare students for their roles as citizens in a democratic society.” In discussions with some members of the History SAC there was strong support for this proposal.

Proposal 2 B:

Changing statewide regulations and laws is obviously difficult and will take time. However, considering the importance of civics, knowledge of American history, civil liberties and rights and basic knowledge of American government, we should try to move Oregon to require a civics component to graduate college. Again, we think that this requirement would be met by taking either PS 201, PS 203 or HIST 201, 202 or 203. We would like PCC to endorse this idea and to support PCC’s Government Relations Department, and our fellow SAC member, Meghan Moyer in lobbying the state (and other institutions) to make these changes.

These changes would bring Oregon in-line with what other states are doing and would help produce the next generation of leaders and empowered students. This would be a long-term process and we certainly do not think that any single person can get this done. But a message of support from PCC would help as would utilizing the current lobbying efforts we have to get this done.
Conclusion

In closing, we are one of the smaller programs at PCC. This is unusual when comparing PCC to other Oregon colleges where Political Science is not nearly 1/4 of the size of history or half the size of economics and philosophy for example. In part, our small size is a perpetual self-fulfilling prophecy with our low visibility and the work load put onto our faculty which makes it harder to do things that might grow the program. But what we do have is amazing instructors, a powerful and critical subject and the passion and desire to share this with students. Despite our small size, we are making a difference. Our SAC is excited about the future and our place in PCC. We need your support to succeed in the mission that PCC commits us to and I thank you for your time and your support.

-Douglas Byrd, PhD
APPENDIX ONE

PCC Political Science Subject Area Committee

American Government Student Survey Results April 2016

This survey was conducted in eight different sections of Political Science American government courses taught by five different instructors during the winter of 2016 at Portland Community College, on four different campuses. This survey was designed to examine the core outcomes for students in four areas: professional competence, community responsibility, cultural awareness, and communication. The number of responses in the survey was 150 students out of the eight sections.

![Bar chart showing knowledge of American government before and after the course.]

The first two questions asked the students about their knowledge of American government and politics in order to test for professional competence (1 = nothing, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = very good, 5 = excellent). Question one asked the students their knowledge before taking this course. The average responses from the students on the one to five scale was 2.65 meaning that the average student felt his/her knowledge of American government was somewhere between a little and some. Question two asked the students their knowledge after taking this course. The average response was 3.97 meaning that the average student felt he/she had attained a good amount of knowledge. This is a jump of 1.32 per student, which means that there was significant knowledge improvement for students concerning their professional competence.
Questions three and four asked students about their voting habits in order to test for community responsibility (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = most of the time, 5 = in every general election and primary). Question three asked the students how often they voted before taking this course. The average rating from the students was 2.37 meaning that the average student voted a little more than rarely. Question four asked the students how often they intended to vote after taking this course. The average rating was 4.36, which means that the students indicate they are likely to vote most or all of the time. This result means the students improved by 1.99 on average which indicates that students in general are much more likely to participate in the political system after having had a Political Science course. This shows the students are intending to live up to the ideal of having community responsibility.
Questions five and six asked students about how much attention they paid to political news and events in order to test for cultural awareness (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = every day). Question five asked students how much attention they gave to political news and events before this course and question six asked about it after this course. The average before rating by the students was 2.97 meaning that on average they sometimes paid attention. The average rating for question six was 4.06, which means that the average student went from sometimes paying attention to political news and events to often doing so. This indicates improvement to the average student’s awareness of the world around him or her.

Questions seven and eight asked the students how often they talked about politics with others before and after taking this course in order to test for communication (1 = never, 2 = a little, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = every day). The average student rating before taking this course 2.62 which means most students spoke about politics only a little or sometimes. The students rating after taking this course was 3.37 which means students were more likely to discuss politics after taking this course. Thus students were more likely to communicate with others about politics.

Overall, this survey indicates that taking only one Political Science course indicates that students are not only likely to improve their knowledge of politics and government, as one would expect they would, they are much more likely to participate in politics through voting, paying attention to events and communicating with others about politics and government. Considering that PCC’s stated goal is to “prepare students for their roles as citizens in a democratic society,” it is clear that the Political Science Department at PCC is playing a vital role in that endeavor.

Political Science Questionnaire Raw Results (n = 150)

1) Before taking this course, my knowledge of American politics and government was:

   1 – nothing         9%
   2 – a little        33%
   3 – some           43%
2) After taking this course, my knowledge of American politics and government is:

1 – nothing 0%
2 – a little 1%
3 – some 17%
4 – very good 64%
5 – excellent 18%

3) Before taking this course, I voted:

1 – never 47%
2 – rarely 11%
3 – sometimes 13%
4 – most of the time 15%
5 – in every general election and primary 13%

4) After taking this course, I will vote:

1 – never 4%
2 – rarely 28%
3 – sometimes 15%
4 – most of the time 24%
5 – in every general election and primary 54%

5) Before taking this course, I paid attention to political news and events:

1 – never 15%
2 – rarely 24%
3 – sometimes 27%
4 – often 16%
5 – every day 18%
6) After taking this course, I paid attention to political news and events:

1 – never  1%
2 – rarely  2%
3 – sometimes  22%
4 – often  41%
5 – every day  34%

7) Before taking this course, I talked about politics with others:

1 – never  22%
2 – a little  25%
3 – sometimes  29%
4 – often  15%
5 – every day  8%

8) After taking this course, I think I will talk about politics with others:

1 – never  2%
2 – a little  6%
3 – sometimes  27%
4 – often  47%
5 – every day  17%

APPENDIX TWO

Political Science Program Review: Library Use by Tony Griener PS Library Liaison

This report is a ‘top level’ report on library use. The count and use of books is for the Dewey Decimal Classification 320-329, which is Political Science. Political Science students may also use other parts of the collection (Economics, Current Events, and History) in their study, but there is not a way to see use of these items by political science students only.

Political Science Books and DVDs in the PCC Library (all campuses)

Number of Books: 1,576

Audiobooks: 11

DVDs: 82

Of these, 1,062 have been used at least once since we switched to a new Library Management System,
Jan 2014. (67%).

Total Checkouts since then are 2,399.

In conjunction with our sister libraries in the Orbis/Cascade Alliance (items that are not in our library but readily available to borrow from other institutions) we have 37,531 titles in the field. Streaming Videos Available to students: 2,208 from two major vendors, Kanopy and Films on Demand. Periodicals are almost entirely from Online Databases, where unfortunately we cannot pull out a list of titles and their use for just Political Science. We do have major publications that would be of interest to students, including Foreign Affairs, Economist, American Political Science Review, the American Journal of Political Science, Proceedings of the American Political Science Association, Journal of Politics, Journal of Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, and the Journal of Common Market Studies. We have all of the five Top Publications in Political Science, as ranked by Google Scholar using the h5 index, which shows the most frequently cited journals in the field. For Encyclopedias, we have 41 titles from Credo Reference and 32 in the Gale Virtual Reference Library which are identified as being about Political Science. There is also a Research Guide in Political Science to guide students to the best resources, including selected websites. There was one library instruction session in Political Science since July 1 2015, at the SE Campus.

APPENDIX THREE: Core Mapping

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