

Political Science - Bachelor of Arts - Full Review & SLOA

Current Compliance Year: 2022-2023

Full review

Recent Recommendations

Feedback will include recommendations from the last Expedited Review or from your most recent review by your school or college. You may not see any feedback or recommendations until you have completed your first full or mid-cycle review.

Response to Previous Recommendations (if any):

Not applicable is acceptable according to [REDACTED]

Student Learning Outcomes

The previous Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has been submitted as its own report. Going forward you will use the following prompts to discuss the success of your most recent SLOA plan and address your assessment activities since your last SLOA report (typically the past two years or since your last program review).

Learning outcomes feedback from last review:

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

Discuss your SLOA findings, changes you are making and what you hope to see as a result:

The department routinely meets to discuss our program, courses, and students - in particular internship reports and exit survey responses. We have several modes of direct and iterative contact with our students throughout an academic term, and over the summer. Both capstone opportunities engage students directly with a faculty member who is able to assess knowledge of the discipline, problem solving, ethical knowledge and communication skills. The grades issued for an internship or thesis are the indicators of a student's success. Each capstone produces textual evidence the department reviews as a group every two years. In our last four years, despite budgetary gutting and a global pandemic our majors have been successful in their capstone courses. Students arrive at the capstone after having taken a suite of classes designed to produce development for each of these Student Outcomes just listed. Our GERs are designed and required in ways that provide all students exposure to the discipline of studying politics and government so that they gain knowledge of the discipline and understand problem solving in governance. We require for majors a methods course that provides more precision. At the junior level the ethics class, very popular across the majors, addresses moral dilemmas and teaches students ethics for life. In all our classes but coming into clear focus across our 400 level coursework students must develop and defend written and oral arguments related to disciplinary material. We offer a wide range of subjects given our faculty's interdisciplinary expertise and ongoing research projects.

Discuss the curricular changes made based on assessing your SLO. If you haven't made any curricular changes, please explain why not and address what you did notice in the review, including strengths of your curriculum through the assessment of your outcomes:

The last SLOA was produced after curricular changes made to account for not having enough faculty and having to share an administrative assistant and her half time help with 6 other departments. Operating with few resources and yet being committed to offering a quality program has been our goal. In our changes we have made more courses available online - our major can now be completed entirely online and was approved as such by UAF. This addressed students' need for flexibility. Other curricular changes have been related to ensuring popular courses are taught more frequently, such as offering our capstone courses over summer; offering GER courses each semester and in the summer; and offering both online and in person options. Student enrollment remains steady for us via the university. However, student enrollment has spiked in terms of offering PS101 to specialized groups - Middle College and the [REDACTED] students via SSS. In sum, there have not been major curricular changes outside of providing more flexibility to our students due to being short on faculty (with, until this Autumn 2022 three of the five faculty having joint appointments) and the upheavals related to the pandemic. Student enrollment and preferences have been shaken up. We have been keenly listening to our students and actively asking them in classes and other opportunities (e.g., exit surveys, employment, lectures, clubs, outreach to recent grads) how they perceive navigating through UAF given these trying times. This will inform our next SLOA.

Are communication outcomes embedded in the SLOA Plan?

As of 2017 all Baccalaureate programs were required to embed the communication outcomes within their SLOA Plans, this is optional for non-Baccalaureate programs.

Embedded

Student Success

To access the Student Success Dashboard please sign into a UA computer with VPN connection (if not on campus). You will need your UA credentials and it is best accessed with the most updated version of Chrome, Edge, Firefox or Safari browsers; Internet Explorer is not supported. You will need to filter the data to see your programs. If you need assistance in finding the data for your programs, please contact your data liaison or [Julia Manfredini](#) in the PAIR office.

Data Liaisons

Each school or college has a team of Data Liaisons to help you analyze the data provided in the portal and may be able to help you see your data in multiple contexts. You can find a list of data liaisons on the resources page for Program Review.

The college or school level committee will also have access to this data with the goal that by providing these visualizations data availability will be increased.

Data supplied within the dashboard linked below is intended for Academic Program Review and not for any other purpose.

[Student Success Data Dashboard](#)

Previous Feedback

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

Student Success Data Trends:

If equity gaps were found in any of your disaggregated student success data, please explain how you plan to address those gaps. Please contact your data liaison or make an appointment with [Julia Manfredini](#) to learn more about analyzing your data.

We do not find any problematic equity gaps in our majors given the nature of the last four years and based on the population UAF serves. Our majors over the last four years have been roughly equal in terms of gender (with some not reporting gender at all) with [REDACTED] over the four years taking the lead in majors. The bulk of our majors, as it is across UA, are [REDACTED] however, we also have representation from [REDACTED] as our second most populous category. In addition we have had/have [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] students represented in our majors over the last four years; along with a declining number of folks refusing to note their race. In terms of age, all categories are represented in our majors. We have grown our [REDACTED] population in the last four years. In addition we have increased the number of [REDACTED] majors. Those who are [REDACTED] were at a high in 2018 at 42% but in 2022 this remains a good portion of our majors at 39%.

Optional Data Explanation

Feel free to share more of your thoughts on the data provided.

THIS IS THE LIST FROM ABOVE CONTINUED AS IT WAS OVER 250 WORDS:

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences - When these were present at UAF about 15 years or so ago we offered one. In fact, IMHO a first year experience should be brought back to UAF. But, for our students generally their first year experience is tied to PS101 which is why we take care to have faculty experts (in content and teaching) offer this class.
- Writing-Intensive Courses - Comparatively we know our courses to be writing intensive. Of course we had W and O courses. But, among other things, when courses are asynchronous online (as required by ECampus to count as an online course for an online major) there must be a good deal of writing. Each of the four of us left require a good bit of writing and we break longer writing assignments down into pieces to teach our students good writing habits. We never assume students come to us already able to write. In addition, those students seeking careers with writing intensive needs take our thesis. All of us use the same rubric of planning and setting expectations and grading for the thesis PS499. This lets us compare our student outcomes. Same for the Internship PS475, the report that the student writes is comparable to those from other students.

High Impact Practices

According to the AAC&U, High-Impact Educational Practices "have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial to college students from many backgrounds." UAF is particularly interested in Undergraduate Research and/or Scholarly Activity because it is one of our mission fulfillment indicators, but all of these researched High-Impact Educational Practices should be reflected in your program's student learning outcomes and curriculum.

Previous Feedback

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

High-Impact Practices Used in this Program

Please use the following fields to discuss how your program is using the high-impact practices, successes and known issues and solutions, or ways you are considering incorporating them in the future. If you are not using any of the high-impact practices listed, please use the "Other or None of These," filed to share what your program is doing to help students be successful.

High Impact Practices that currently apply to your program:

Collaborative Assignments & Projects

Undergraduate Research

Diversity/Global Learning

ePortfolios

First Year-Seminars & Experiences

Writing-Intensive Courses

Service-Learning and/or Community-based Learning

Internships

Capstone Courses & Projects

Other or None of these (explain)

Program Profile and Financial Data

The program review elements in this section usually stay consistent for departments. Any responses you provide will be saved for your next visit. So, when it's time for the next program submission, your previous narrative profile answers will be here, ready for editing. You can then decide if any updates are necessary, based on your needs for the next program review cycle.

Financial Data Resources

The Board of Regents shapes program review, through BOR Policy 10.06, to support budget increase advocacy in the state legislature. The standardized financial data template should be analyzed with your data liaison to assess your program's capacity and resource status.

To keep integrity and remain standard across all of UAF it is very important that you do not provide any additional or alternative data.

Financial Template

Your data liaison may have uploaded your template to the Google folder for this program, or you may do so now.

Previous Feedback

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

Cost Effectiveness

How does your department/program approach being cost effective?

We are cost effective because until this Autumn 2022 three of our five faculty would receive their salary in part from joint appointments. Dr. [REDACTED] is also the Director of Arctic and Northern Studies (ACNS), Dr. [REDACTED] was Director of the Honors house but also UNAC faculty housed in our department, and Dr. [REDACTED] is jointly appointed in the International Arctic Research Center as the Director of the Center for Arctic Policy Studies. This is why even though there were (until this semester) five faculty members but a lower FTE. The workload units for our department should be closer to 75% teaching, but we are stretched too thin and still need to ensure our research and service commitments.. That said, our department's highly functional dynamic and solid service and research outputs are imperative for other programs. PS not only serves the ACNS graduate students with graduate classes - but other programs in other colleges rely on our courses for their undergraduate and graduate students. In sum, the answer to the question "How does your department/program approach being cost effective?" is that we continue to work more than our workloads show. We do significant service from local to global scales, we take on teaching overloads and guest lectures, and we are fully competent researchers who are also routinely externally funded. Workload percentages don't capture the excellence of the Political Science faculty. In this way we offer UAF more than we are compensated.

Program's Value to Mission

The Political Science program is tightly tied to the UAF Mission. Our coursework, service, and research expertise interfaces the terrestrial and marine aspects of Alaska. We promote in all three of these required fields (for most faculty) the international and domestic study of governance and politics. We inherently promote the university and the state as well. Every faculty member has published research and or performed service work and or taught in relation to "the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples". We each integrate our own research and service into our classrooms, modeling for students the lessons of lifelong learning, the methods of developing a sharp mind, and the civility needed in our current political context. Each faculty member in our department strives for excellence in his or her work and as a functional unit we provide excellent experiences for our students and majors. What sort of place would our state be if UA didn't offer our residents the political expertise of faculty steeped in the study of governments, governance, and strategic foresight? Our mission is essential to the future of Alaska.

Duplicative Programs

There is one other Political Science program at UAA. At UAS there is no Political Science major, only a BA in Social Sciences. Last academic year FY22 Dr. [REDACTED], with Drs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], was awarded a Faculty Initiative Fund (FIF) to spend part of his sabbatical here in Fairbanks. We designed new ways to share courses and expertise between UAF and UAS. We are currently working on formalizing a relationship between UAF and UAS. We have not been able to duplicate this cross-university relationship with UAA. That program operates with a somewhat different focus given its location in the largest city. The two programs differ in their approach towards Arctic and Northern studies. UAF, as the northern university location teaches courses specifically related to the circumpolar north. We also have our major offered entirely online, which UAA does not offer. There is some course overlap, but only in key subfields of the discipline. We often have UAA students in our online PS classes. In sum, we are not duplicative of either UAA or UAS, though we share a few course titles with the former. At UAF we have an Arctic focus and are directly engaged in related service and research commitments. We welcome greater collaboration with UAA as we have developed with UAS. In fact, in past years we have tried for greater connectivity but were told not to pursue this. The FIF grant success was a reversal in UAF rhetoric.

Community or Other Partnerships

Our program has significant ties with the International Arctic Research Center (IARC). At this point each of the four remaining faculty have all been funded to produce circumpolar related research. We have a relationship with the University of Michigan Ann Arbor where host Arctic Interns during the summer. Our research projects have created community partnerships though we do not maintain any formal agreements with any particular community or individual. Our internships draw on the decades of goodwill our department has created with different government agencies in the state and at the national level. So, we don't have a formal partnership, for example with the District Attorney, but his office is delighted to have our interns when students choose to be placed there; similarly our students have had internships in AK Native Corporations.

Value of Service Courses (Optional)

Our department provides several GER courses that are always well-enrolled and often overenrolled. We also have taken a recent pivot towards the needs of the developing Middle College and the First Gen program. As the numbers reported indicate, we are an anchor for teaching to a large percentage of students who are not our majors but find our classes compelling and pertinent for their interests and their other majors. Over the years of reports in the past we would add up the number of students taught in our courses which are required (or elective) for other graduate and undergraduate programs. There isn't a place for that in this report but that number is still significant. Not mentioned but worth pointing out is that our faculty serve on many MA and PhD committees - even though the PS program has no graduate program. Our faculty expertise is sought routinely within UAF/UA/ and internationally.

Post-Graduate Success

Yes. I just finished evaluating the projected job trends in AK. While local, state, and federal jobs will remain - and these always need folks who have an understanding of how tribal and local, state, and national governments work - the fastest growing sector of the economy will be related to health care and social services. This is a field where public policy and choices of governments (and of course their constituents) matters. The hydrocarbon industry (oil and gas) will begin to grow at a less faster rate meaning even more our state may have the opportunity to diversify its economy further. Our students' knowledge of political economy will be vital in private and public sectors as the state transitions - slowly mind you - away from extraction-dominated jobs. Each faculty member is deeply committed to helping students prepare their applications for jobs and further schooling. We do not maintain our own "job center" but our low faculty to student ratio and capstone courses ensure that we are in communication with our rising seniors. We write letters of reference/support; we call our contacts in research and private business; we provide mentoring sessions and work to expand our near-graduates' understanding of how to capitalize on a UAF degree. Upon graduation our students are accepted and funded at exceptional law schools; they go on to manage and advise electoral campaigns. Others go to graduate school. We follow the influential pathways of our students by reaching out to them after they have left.

Submission

Submitter & Collaborator Names

A.L. Lovecraft, current Chair, who consulted with the other faculty members Jeremy Speight, Brandon Boylan, and Chanda Meek.

Submitter Email

allovecraft@alaska.edu

College or School Review Committee

The college or school committees set the tone for helping each program feel seen during this process. We have provided you with strength-based feedback tags to attach to this program review. Please select as many as applicable.

Overall Recommendations

Increase enrollment, Increase graduates, Increase retention/persistence

Explanation of Recommendations

The department's curriculum appears valuable to the university system and the State of Alaska. Students in Political Science learn practical academic skills, and they're encouraged to participate in applied learning through internships and community engagement. Importantly, the department offers the state system's only fully online degree program in Political Science. (While UAA offers an undergraduate program, it's not fully online.) Because the online program is fairly young, its impact on enrollment and graduation outcomes likely won't be evident until the next review cycle. Additionally, the department operates very effectively within its budget. At the time of departmental reporting, three of the five faculty held joint appointments, which lowers the program's cost of operation while also enriching its offerings. (After meeting with a department representative, that has shifted to four faculty, two of whom hold joint appointments. Also, the department plans two new faculty hires for Fall 2023.) However, the department's budget analysis suggests that faculty are stretched beyond their workload requirements. According to the statement on cost effectiveness, "The workload units for our department should be closer to 75% teaching, but we are stretched too thin and still need to ensure our research and service commitments." That said, the department appears to be exceedingly functional and productive.
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Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (tags)

Strong alignment with SLOA plan, "Clear, concise presentation of findings"
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Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (narrative)

The Political Science Department appears to engage strongly with their declared learning objectives. Based on the department's self-assessment, students learn the skills of research, citizenship, and written and oral communication. Of particular note is the focus on the study of ethics. Majors are required to complete a capstone project (thesis or internship), which provides an opportunity for faculty mentorship and close assessment of student success. Further, the department reaches students beyond the major with their GER courses—notably, PS F101X: Introduction to American Government and Politics and PS F201X: Comparative Politics. Additionally, they have adapted to modern student needs well by offering a major that can be completed fully online. The Political Science faculty appear to have a good sense of inter-departmental communication. The SLOA and SLOA Discussion suggest that faculty do well to assess student success on a regular basis. However, the department has only five faculty members, three of whom have joint appointments. It will be difficult for faculty to meet the increasing demand for Middle College and First Generation course options (not to mention the additional requirements for offering a fully online degree program). In addition, the department shares its administrative support worker with six other departments. That situation will likely limit the department's growth and its ability to meet student needs. The committee has expressed concern regarding the pertinence and effectiveness of the CLA portal data in contributing to our assessment due to outlying factors and extreme circumstances from the covid pandemic.

Profile Feedback

Program is mission-centric to UAF or college/school, Collaborative with other UA programs, Program is unique in the state, Strong post-graduation success for students, "Strong service teaching component (GER, other disciplines, etc)"

Financial Feedback

Operates at Low Cost, Productive Faculty

Student Success & Equity Feedback

Over the past five years, the number of Political Science majors has decreased slightly, from 48 to 41. The annual number of degrees awarded has ranged from two to ten; however, due to the small size of the program, that variance seems inconclusive. The department's graduation persistence rate has ranged from 65% to 80% in the past five years. It's hard to know whether that data is significant, especially given the enrollment impacts of the pandemic. (These statistics were accessed through UAF "Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research" portal.)

In regard to equity and diversity, the department reports no significant gaps based on the UAF student population profile. There appears to be a good balance among gender, race, and age. Most Political Science majors are [REDACTED], while others are [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. As pertains to income diversity, the department serves [REDACTED] students and a high percentage of [REDACTED] students.

High-Impact Practices Feedback

The Department of Political Science appears to engage in satisfactory high-impact teaching practices. Most notably, they encourage students to participate in internships and community-based learning opportunities. For instance, students in the department have been selected for the Alaska Ted Stevens Legislative Internship. As another example, students have interned with the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Public Defender's office. Although service learning is not a requirement for majoring in Political Science, the discipline naturally encourages it, and faculty urge their students in that direction. In fact, the low faculty-to-student ratio in Political Science seems to encourage mentorship.

The department also boasts a strong record of global engagement. Its courses address matters of geopolitical concern. Students often study abroad, and the department assists and encourages them in this process. Based on the department's self-assessment, students in two upper-level courses (PS 435 & 436) engage in collaborative projects. Majors in the program also compete for URSA awards and participate in research opportunities across campus. Finally, the department offers the popular first-year course PS 101: Introduction to American Government and Politics, and, as a discipline in the Humanities, they facilitate courses and assignments that encourage strong written communication.

Dean's Review Feedback

I appreciate the excellent reporting and review of CLA's Political Science BA degree. With a relatively small faculty - comprising Joint Appointment FTE's the Political Science department has taken strategic actions to meet student and workforce demands such as the following: Establishing a FIF partnership with UAS' Political Science department; and offering service courses (GERs, SSS, NSC). I support ideas/recommendations to explore SLOA data collection to include ePortfolios. The Dean's office will continue to work with the Political Science Department to assess and advocate for increased resources required to administrate, grow, and evaluate their very important program - while assessing faculty compensation for their efforts.

Political Science, B.A.

College of Liberal Arts

2018-2019, 2019-2020 & 2020-2021

Submitted by: Jeremy Speight, Department Chair

Contact Information: jspeight@alaska.edu

Date: 05.06.2021

1. Assessment information collected in accordance with your SLOA plan

This report presents data on learning outcomes for political science students in the period 2018-2021. The report focuses on graduating seniors, of which there were seventeen. The analysis does not include data on individual academic courses, each of which specifies expected student learning outcomes (assessed by instructors based on measurements of student progress toward specified course goals). The three data sources are: 1) the department's senior survey, administered to seniors graduating in each academic term, 2) senior theses, and 3) student internships. We discuss each in turn.

Senior Surveys

Seven students completed exit surveys, two for 2018-2019, three for 2019-2020 and two for 2020-2021. The survey is available to students electronically through google forms. Students have the option of responding anonymously or including their name. Survey results inform us of student perceptions of the curriculum, including skills acquired, the faculty, and program strengths and weaknesses.

Curriculum

Most students (four of seven) thought there were sufficient courses in their subfield, but the majority (six of seven) wanted to have had additional courses offered across the subfields. Students expressed an interest in taking classes that focusing on a number political science themes including: Russia/Eastern European politics and other regional politics classes, political satire, social justice and the politics of race. Others mentioned that some classes currently offered by the department were not offered enough, such as U.S. Foreign Policy and classes in the Political Theory subfield in general.

Comparing upper-division PS courses to those in other disciplines, all of the respondents (seven) felt that PS courses were "about right in rigor". Students noted that some of the difficult classes were: International Politics, Politics and the Judicial Process, the two Constitutional Law classes and Political Science Research Methods. Introduction to American Government and Politics, Ethics and Society, Research Methods and Political Economy were cited as examples of less difficult classes offered by the Department.

The majority of PS students viewed political sciences classes as being invaluable (scoring a one or two out a five for each question) in terms of developing their capacity for critical thinking (five of seven), helping them analyze and propose solutions to real world problems

(five of seven), developing practical knowledge of real world power relationships (six of seven), and exposing them to different ideas and cultures (six of seven).

Skills acquisition

Six of seven respondents believed the department's emphasis on the improvement of writing skills was "appropriate." Many of the comments received about how political science improves student writing skills were enthusiastic. One student wrote "YES, I have become more succinct and pragmatic in my writing, something that I understood but did not practice before my time in Political Science." And another wrote, "Yes, they taught me to be clear, concise and thorough."

Six of the seven students thought that the emphasis of PS courses on oral communication skills through reports, debates and discussion was appropriate. Four of the seven students believed their practice of oral communication skills in classes had "modestly" or "greatly" improved their skills; one checked the option "If nothing else, it gave me the opportunity to sharpen them daily with my classmates." One student felt that PS classes had "no impact."

Four of the students took either PS475 Internship in Public Affairs or participated in the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship in Juneau. In terms of PS relevant extracurricular activities, one student participated in Pi Sigma Alpha (the PS undergraduate honors society). One student participated in the Model Arctic Council and one other participated in the Model United Nations Club.

Interactions with faculty

In general, students were complimentary regarding their interactions with faculty. None reported problems meeting faculty when necessary. They received sufficient advice on ways to improve their course work, course scheduling and degree issues and career guidance. Five of the six students who offered responses to this section described their interactions as "Extremely positive." Of the respondents, four sought out faculty "often," one "sometimes", and one other student indicated "rarely."

Weaknesses and strengths of the program

Five of the seven students made suggestions where they thought improvements could be made, quoted verbatim:

- Needs a M.A. Program
- I wish I had learned more about statistics and how to utilize them in real world situations.
- Availability of instructors. I believe almost every professor in PS is also serving in another official capacity and that does stretch their schedule thin.
- More cross between PS and other programs. I have seen ACNS and NRM well represented in PS courses but it would be nice to see some cross between psychology, justice, and anthropology.
- There is a need for a greater emphasis on presentation/speeches. Additionally, while the Ted Stevens Program is no doubt great and most convenient, it felt like there was few widely publicized internship opportunities beyond that. I'm frankly not sure what else there is in Alaska, but more emphasis on other opportunities could have been useful to some.

Student also commented on the strengths of the program, quoted verbatim:

- Good number of course offerings
- The greatest strength of the political science major is the faculty. The PS professors at UAF are passionate about what they teach, which engages students, encouraging them to learn the subjects. Further, the faculty support their students and are willing to help their students succeed.
- Closes knit. Since the department is relatively small, I was able to take courses from each professor and in some cases multiple courses over my time and it was always easy to engage with and talk with them whenever I got the chance.
- The unwavering support and dedication of all the professors.
- I obviously love the poli sci department in general so I'll point out some specifics. Good sense of community, reasonably diverse class listing most seminars, and I always felt that EVERY political science professor was easily reachable and approachable if I needed help with coursework or scheduling.
- The department faculty are super engaging and willing to support students making the degree worthy of academic pursuit.

Students were even-handed in their analysis of the department's weaknesses and strengths. Nearly all had suggestions about ways to attract more PS majors and minors too. They acknowledged that as a liberal arts degree, there might not appear to be many employment opportunities. They suggested that:

- A degree in Public Policy should be offered
- I would say just make required classes feel like they are a good use of the student's time. In some of the core classes required for my PS major, I felt that the professor did not care about the class and was just going through the motions.
- More guest speakers, career partnerships/opportunities available for graduating students, maybe trips to government organizations, capitol.
- Understanding that the PS faculty is very busy, I think there should be more interactions with the students outside of class to build morale. I am not saying that morale is low, but it could be a good confidence booster for the students, to have a monthly or bimonthly departmental gathering or something like that.
- Main one would be to look to expand internship opportunities.
- Continue to encourage students to practice their political science skills in and out of the classroom through a variety of program opportunities, coursework material, and events.

These exit survey results are similar to those of recent years. They make several constructive criticisms of departmental programs that may be of value as faculty alter the curriculum in the future. In general, they reveal a high degree of satisfaction in the existing curriculum, faculty and programs.

Capstones: Senior Theses and Internships

Theses: When department faculty eliminated the mandatory capstone seminar more than 10 years ago, they gave students three choices. The senior thesis, taken under the course number PS 499, is one means to satisfy departmental requirements. During the course of a semester, the student writes an essay of 30 or more pages, under the direction of a faculty member whom the student selects. Department faculty have developed a common rubric for the evaluation of the research paper. In this reporting period four majors completed a Senior thesis. Four of the five PS faculty reviewed one thesis each not supervised by themselves. The evaluation grades ranged from B- to A.

It is important to note that students select the faculty member they wish to work with, and faculty do not meet collectively to discuss their goals and objectives in PS 499. However, the scoring rubric for evaluating senior theses was developed and implemented by the faculty as a whole. Senior theses advisors share the rubric with students. When the department meets to discuss the capstone experience of PS students, it may wish to recommend more collective work in this area, to ensure that the department's emphasis on critical thought and analysis is reflected in student writing.

Internships: The second means for students to satisfy graduation requirements is to enroll in PS 475 and spend a semester at a government or nonprofit agency or office, working at least 15-hours a week under the guidance of an agency supervisor. Initially no written work was required of student interns, but when the capstone senior seminar was eliminated and more students elected this option than the senior thesis, PS 475 required that students read the equivalent of a book and write a 10-page paper. The objective of the paper was for students to summarize the internship experience and relate it to the professional literature of political science. It was the responsibility of the instructor-of-record to identify appropriate readings for the intern.

In the three-year review period, 11 graduating students have taken PS 475 and 9 participated in the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship in Juneau. This evaluation is completed by the department Chair.

In each case, the Chair made contact with the agency supervisors, monitored the interns' progress through the semester, and at the end of the semester had evaluation meetings concerning the students' work. Supervisors commented on students' punctuality, reliability, performance of general and specific tasks, attire, interactions with supervisor, staff, the public and other issues.

For these interns, supervisors were uniformly positive, believing students merited high grades for work in the agency. In the future, the department may wish to formalize the supervisors' evaluations of interns through administration of a short questionnaire, as a means of improving the job-readiness of PS graduates.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

2. Conclusions about student learning outcomes drawn from the information summarized above

Using the exit survey, senior theses, and internships, we have assessed learning outcomes for most of the seniors who have graduated from the UAF political science department in the last two years. The most comprehensive instrument is the senior exit survey, and now that it is electronically available, we had a reasonably high number of students responding to the survey (seven), especially given two of the three years under review have been disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic. However, the survey needs to be reviewed and the department will need to find incentives to motivate students to finish the survey. Evaluation of senior theses through use of rubrics has identified areas of strength and deficiencies, which can be pursued.

3. What curricular changes or program discussions are happening as a result of the conclusions drawn above?

We have four main areas where program curricular changes are warranted from our assessment process: (1) consider reform to the curriculum, recruiting adjunct instructors, and collaboration with other departments at UAF and across the UA system to increase the number of course offerings, (2) develop more extracurricular activities for PS students to develop community and social ties between students and between faculty and students, (3) create a more formal approach to the internships of PS475, identify and advertise internship options and the service learning option more generally, (4) think more carefully about our approach to cultural knowledge and how we teach it.

4. How do your proposed curricular changes or program discussions result from an inclusive, collaborative process?

The faculty in the department will meet regularly in the future to discuss the potential changes described above. We will continue to incorporate student input from exit surveys and informal discussions to guide these changes. As noted above, we will also be reaching out to other departments at UAF and the UA system.

Fiscal Report for Political Science Department (CLA)

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	Definitions for the compiling staff	Definitions for the programs and reviewing committees
Total Student Credit Hours (SCH)	1134	831	1053	Provided in SCH tab in the student success data provided by PAIR. Sum rows labeled as "In unit, outside department, Service" and "Outside unit, Service" in the SCH table of the data provided by PAIR.	Total Student Credit Hours delivered in courses/subject codes attributable to the program/department. Comes from the data dashboard. Sum of rows labeled as "In unit, outside department, Service" and "Outside unit, Service" in the SCH table of the data provided by PAIR
Service SCH	1134	831	1053		
Department FTEs	2.88	3.02	3.26	FTE = Full-time equivalent employee. Use the worksheet below to calculate for each employee type, and then use the total from row 31 here.	FTE = Full-time equivalent employee. Fiscal staff have used the worksheet below to calculate for each employee type in this program/department's staffing. Total SCH divided by employee FTE for the year. May give insight into departmental productivity scaled to the size of the department. Service SCH divided by employee FTE for the year. May give insight into departmental productivity scaled to the size of the department.
Total SCH per Department FTE	393.75	274.94	323.50		
Service SCH per Department FTE	393.75	274.94	323.50		
Majors in Programs	41	46	41	Provided in the Majors table in the student success data provided by PAIR.	Total majors in the program (or all programs in the department), in the Majors table of the data provided by PAIR.
Department FTEs	2.88	3.02	3.26	From row 32 below or row 5 above	FTE = Full-time equivalent employee. Fiscal staff have used the worksheet below to calculate for each employee type in this program/department's staffing. Total majors divided by employee FTE for the year. May give insight into departmental productivity scaled to the size of the department.
Majors per Department FTE	14.24	15.22	12.60		

Total Unrestricted Expenditures				Total Expenditures made from budgets with an F1 (and/or F7) fund type designation, from provided cycle report data filtered by Data Liasion	
Total Restricted Expenditures				Total Expenditures made from budgets with revenue of the F2 or S2 fund type designation, from provided cycle report data filtered by Data Liasion	
Total Unit/Central Support Allocated to Program(s)				Expenses incurred for direct support of instruction within orgs identified as central support; should NOT include Academic Services expenditures	Costs reported on central support that support instruction within the department/program that are not charged directly to the accounting level that directly represents the program; note that these costs are still coded as instructional costs, and they do not represent Academic Service (AS) expenditures, as that activity is separately accounted for in the UA accounting system.
*Maximum Possible Tuition Revenue to Unit				*Maximum possible distributed receipts to college from tuition: calculated based on total SCHs generated by the department/program and applicable AY credit hour rates, prior to any discounts. Unit distribution is based on the current 80/20 percent tuition distribution model where generating units receive 80% of earned tuition. PLEASE USE PAIR REPORTED SCH TO REPLACE ZEROES IN CELL CALCULATIONS.	Maximum possible distributed receipts to college from tuition: calculated based on total SCHs generated by the department/program and the applicable AY credit hour rates, prior to any discounts, and UAF's active tuition distribution model, which determines how much the unit receives of their generated tuition (80%), and how much the campus keeps, in addition to any out-of-state surcharges, to support central offices/other UAF functions (20%).
State Appropriation Revenue				Appropriations for current funds operation of the university from the general fund of the State of Alaska through the annual budget cycle. This category also includes TVEP and State Mental Health Trust funds, if allocated to the department. (F1)	Appropriations for current funds operation of the university from the general fund of the State of Alaska through the annual budget cycle.
Restricted/Sponsored Project Revenue			0	Revenue from external sponsors; includes grants, contracts, sponsored projects & restricted (grant) accounts funded by UA Foundation funds (F2/S2)	Revenue from external sponsors; includes grants, contracts, sponsored projects & restricted (grant) accounts funded by UA Foundation funds
Fees				g. Course Fees (9159), Non-Credit Special Course fees (9151), Tuition Surcharges (9164)	
Other UA Receipts/Revenue				Other Revenue: e.g. Performance and Sales Receipts, Space Rental Revenue, Indirect Cost Recovery (F1/F7); NOTE: COURSE FEES (e.g. 9151, 9159, 9164) REPORTED ABOVE	
Workload allocation: Teaching Units	61.3	57.0	63.0	Department faculty's workload units assigned to teaching	
Workload allocation: Service Units	32.8	26.4	25.7	Department faculty's workload units assigned to service	
Workload allocation: Research Units	19.1	20.1	23.9	Department faculty's workload units assigned to research	

Full-time Equivalent Worksheet**	*FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	
Faculty FTEs	2.66	2.80	2.96	Base assumption: 12-month full-time = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE. Split appointments are multiplied by the % of effort assigned to this department. Part-time are multiplied by the % of effort assigned. F9 faculty on sabbatical count as 67% of one 9-month 0.75 FTE (or 0.50 FTE).
Adjunct FTEs	0.08	0.08	0.15	Base assumption: 40 units/credits = 1.0 FTE. Total # of credits taught by adjuncts in a year divided by 40 = the FTE of adjuncts in that year.
Staff FTEs	0.15	0.15	0.15	Base assumption: 12-month full-time = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE. Split appointments are multiplied by the % of effort assigned to this department. Part-time are multiplied by the % of effort.
Graduate TA/RA FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	Base assumption: 40 hours/week for 12 months = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE.
Total Departmental FTEs	2.88	3.02	3.26	Sum of all employee FTEs

**Note: FTE definitions and calculations for the purpose of Academic Program Review are different than for other institutional reporting processes (e.g. OMB or IPEDS reporting)

* Summer 2019 Summer 2020 Summer 2021
Fall 2019 Fall 2020 Fall 2021
Spring 2020 Spring 2021 Spring 2022

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
Political Science B.A.
 College of Liberal Arts
 11 May 2018

Political Science Mission Statement: The Department of Political Science provides a rigorous quality education that prepares students for professional success meeting the diverse challenges of citizenship and public policy in a changing state, nation, and world.

Political Science Visionary Goal Statement: The Department of Political Science will have its students recognized as significant contributors to society through their service to community, professional skills in the workplace, participation in political processes and policy development, and knowledge of governance. The Department itself will be recognized as providing high quality programs, diverse participatory opportunities, and relevant coursework delivered by dedicated faculty who themselves are identified as accomplished experts in their fields.

Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation (what, when, who)
Knowledge of the discipline 1. Knowledge of core concepts and theories of the main political science sub-fields of American Government and Politics, Public and Constitutional Law, Comparative Politics, Political Theory and International Relations. 2. Exposure to different ways of thinking about government and politics associated with diverse historical and cultural contexts, ideologies, economic systems and governing structures. 3. Awareness of theories and practices related to contemporary studies of political science. Familiarity with a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods used to produce, understand and analyze the data used in governance, policy-making and political science scholarship.	1. Students are required to take at least one course from four of the five subfields to graduate. 2. Students' breadth as noted in #1 is complimented by the PS GER options that are survey courses designed to expose students to diverse contexts. We are currently revising the GER requirements for our majors to reinforce this. 3. All students are required to take and pass PS222 Political Science Research Methods that teaches both theoretical and practical information related to these different aspects of politics and policy processes. 1-3 Are evaluated through three mechanisms in addition to the requirements of the major. (A) An exit survey provided to graduating seniors asks both about the student's experience with the depth of the discipline as well as their understandings of theory and practice; (B) The Internship option PS475 provides students with exposure to different ways organizations and individuals think about government and politics; (C) the Thesis option PS499 specifically requires students to use more than one subfield in their	1. This is implemented by a student's enrollment in the major. 2. Enrollment in the major secures breadth as noted in #1. As noted, we are currently working to reshape the major requirements to work with the new GERs as well as the Alaska Native requirement under development. 3. PS222 was only offered every other Autumn for many years but is now available to students each Autumn. We offer it both online and live. 1-3 (A) The exit survey has been designed by faculty but is administered by our administrative assistant to preserve anonymity. (B) PS475 is available for students Autumn, Spring, and Summer. It is the responsibility of the Chair to manage these internships (C) PS499 is available also Autumn, Spring, and Summer. Students select a faculty member to work with individually. Every two years all student thesis produced are reviewed by the Department Chair and faculty for consistency and quality.

Submitted by: Amy Lauren Lovcraft, Dept. Chair

	problem definition, research question and design.	
Problem solving 1. Students should be able to recognize assumptions, evaluate arguments and draw conclusions. This includes an awareness of how politics and policy shape problem definition and solution sets.	1. Students must pass classes. In addition, students complete either PS499 or PS475 as a capstone and both directly evaluate a student's capacity to recognize and evaluate social, political, and policy problems. As optional opportunities the Political Science Department hosts and encourages several clubs: Pi Sigma Alpha – the Political Science Honor Society; Model United Nations; Model Arctic Council; research opportunities with faculty on grants.	1. Each course taught focuses, in its subfield, on recognizing, defining, and evaluating problems. These are scaled of course to 100, 200, 300, 400 levels and tied to their content. For example, PS669 Arctic Politics and Governance deconstructs the Arctic as a space, place, and location of people in order to make students aware of how different people define and act in the North. Public Policy PS403/603 specifically addresses problem development and solutions for public programs. Both the PS499 and PS475 focus students in their capstone on problem solving. The former through extensive writing about a political subject, the latter through experiential learning that includes a final report.
Ethical knowledge 1. Students should be able to identify moral dilemmas and distinguish between legal, illegal, ethical, and unethical behavior.	1. Students are required to take and pass PS300X for their GER ethics requirement. In addition, students learn about ethics from their other PS courses, such as campaign finance from American Government 101 or democratic practices and conundrums related to equity from PS202 Democracy and Global Society.	1. PS300X Ethics and Society has been taught Autumn, Spring, and Summer as well as in Maymesters and Wintermesters both live and online in order to ensure all our students have an opportunity to take the course and succeed in it.
Communication 1. Written – Students should be able to develop a paper using cogent arguments and opinions supported by evidence on topics pertaining to their field of study. 2. Oral – Students should be able to deliver professional presentation and answer questions related to it with confidence.	1. PS still is teaching W, writing intensive classes, these classes are spread out through the subfields so students who take and pass them will be able to satisfy the communication goal for written work. PS314, PS401, PS411, PS412, PS435, PS436, PS460, PS464, PS467, PS468. The two capstone experiences also provide assessment of writing. PS499 Senior thesis option would be the stronger of the two, although students for PS475 Internship in Public Affairs still need to have good written communication. 2. PS is still teaching O courses, these	We review senior theses every two years for consistency. The Department Chair evaluates each internship completed. As noted above Exit surveys are managed by the Chair through the administrative assistant. For 1 and 2 these classes are offered by different faculty throughout the academic year. We recognize that now that the new GER process does not have W and O courses that we need to change our major requirements to ensure oral and written communication skills. We have started that process and are currently evaluating different options for our

	classes are spread out through the subfields so students who take and pass them will be able to satisfy the communication goal for oral communication. PS322, PS403, PS411, PS455, PS456 The two capstone experiences also provide assessment of oral communication. Successful completion of PS475 Internship in Public Affairs indicates strong professional oral communication skills. For 1 and 2 the Exit Survey asks about both the written and oral preparation the students received; so we receive direct student feedback upon completion of the major beyond our own in-class assessments.	students. As optional opportunities to develop communication skills the Political Science Department hosts and encourages several clubs annually: Pi Sigma Alpha – the Political Science Honor Society; Model United Nations; Model Arctic Council; research opportunities with faculty on grants or pursuant to students' interests via URSA. It should also be noted that since PS is a part of the Arctic and Northern Studies (ACNS) backbone we have many courses that are 400/600 level stacked. In each case faculty design two separate syllabi, but the experience for undergrads to witness the excitement and rigor of the graduate students also elevates their communication. These stacked classes are offered each semester but not generally during Summer.
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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK 2018
POLITICAL SCIENCE BA

	YES	NO
Was the report submitted by the deadline (or was an extension given)?	X	
Is the plan current?	X	
Does the plan include assessment of communication? (for Bachelor's degrees)	X	
Does the plan summarize and analyze two years of data?	X	
Does the report address the outcomes detailed in the plan?	X	

COMMENTS:

- Passing a comprehensive exam or thesis defense is generally not a measure of a specific learning outcome. There should be multiple learning outcomes incorporated into a comp or defense: for example, disciplinary knowledge, oral communication, and technical competence, and each should be assessed separately (generally on a rubric). If a student does not pass their exam or defense, how do you know what outcome they have failed to achieve? How do you improve?
- Grades in a course, or mere enrollment in a course, have the same limitations as those listed above.
- Your outcomes are appropriate, and comps, theses, and coursework can certainly be used as tool, but each outcome should be assessed separately, probably using a rubric. You seem to be using a rubric to assess theses, but it is mentioned only in passing.
- You are clearly getting useful information from the student survey, and putting it to use. Think about some more direct measures of student learning (like your rubric-based assessment of the thesis) to complement the indirect assessment.