UNLV

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Program Review Self-Study

Program Reviewed: Political Science

Degrees: Ph.D.

Program Chair or Director: Dr. David Damore

Dean: Dr. Jennifer Keene

Date of Report: Fall 2018

I. Program Description

A. College/Department/Program
1. College or School: College of Liberal Arts
2. Unit: Web Address: Department of Political Science, https://www.unlv.edu/politicalscience
3. Program being reviewed:
   a) Degrees and their abbreviations: Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D.

B. Primary individual completing this worksheet
1. Name: David Damore
2. Title: Professor and Chair
3. Date of self-study: Fall 2018
4. Campus phone number: 55258
5. Mail stop: 455029
6. E-mail: david.damore@unlv.edu
7. Fax number: 702-895-1065

C. Other faculty involved in writing this report: Michael Bowers, Christian Jensen, and Jonathan Strand

D. Catalog Description
Please insert the most recent catalog description(s) of the program(s). Due to display complications, the description must be typed into this form and not pasted from the catalog.

The Department of Political Science offers a general Ph.D. degree with concentrations in American politics (including public policy and public law), comparative politics, international relations, and political theory.

The Ph.D. program is intended to prepare its graduates for careers in academic institutions, government (at all levels), and business and industry.

1. Is this description correct? If not, what needs to be changed? The description is correct.

II. Centrality to Mission

A. Department/Program Mission
What is the program's mission statement (or the department's if the program does not have one)?

Through its teaching, service, and research, the Department of Political Science promotes civic engagement and public service, instills evidence-based decision making and critical reasoning to understand and improve the communities it serves, and prepares students for graduate studies and for careers in public service, the private sector, and academia.

B. Department/Program Mission Alignment

Briefly describe how this program is aligned to the mission of the University as described in the most recent mission statement, UNLV Mission https://www.unlv.edu/toptier/vision, and how it supports achievement of the institution's mission:

UNLV's mission is to be recognized as a Top Tier public university in research, education, and community impact. The Department of Political Science's Ph.D. program aligns with many of the measures underlying this mission including increasing doctoral degrees (a necessary condition to ascend to the top ranks of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity)), developing and publishing impactful research, placing our program graduates into preferred employment opportunities, and encouraging diversity in all its form among our students and faculty

C. Core Themes

Briefly describe how this program supports UNLV's Core Themes (the core themes can be found at: https://www.unlv.edu/provost/nwccu/core-themes):

The Department of Political Science's mission aligns most closely with Core Themes 1 (Advance Student Achievement) and 2 (Promote Research, Scholarship, Creative Activity). Outcomes that are consistent with these themes include the completion and placement of a number of our Ph.D. graduates in academic, government, and private sectors positions, the extensive research collaborations between faculty members and graduate students.

D. Excellence

List and briefly describe five highlights or areas of excellence of the program:

1. Placement of our doctoral graduates in academic, government, and private sector positions.
2. Research collaborations between faculty members and graduate students.
3. Obtainment of internal and external grants to fund additional graduate assistants.
4. Extensive teaching opportunities for Ph.D. students.
5. Development of the College of Liberal Arts Social Science Methods Certificate.

III.   External Demand for Program

A. Stakeholders

1. Who are the main local and regional stakeholders of your educational programs, i.e., employers and entities benefiting from these programs, hiring the graduates, or admitting them to graduate and/or professional programs?

The main local and regional stakeholders benefiting from the Department of Political Science Ph.D. program are colleges and universities in need of instructors and faculty members for teaching positions and private and public sector employers seeking research analysts.

2. What are specific stakeholder needs for graduates?

The specific stakeholder needs for graduates of the Department of Political Science Ph.D. program are the ability to teach a variety of courses and to conduct and present sophisticated analysis of quantitative data.

B. Needs for Graduates and Future Plans

1. What are the anticipated needs for program graduates over the next 3-5 years? Please cite sources of information.

The anticipated needs for program graduates over the next 3-5 years will be knowledge and experience related to teaching diverse student bodies, effectively utilizing technology in the classroom, and balancing knowledge and use of increasingly rigorous methods with accessibility and communicability.

2. What changes to the program will those require?

The Department does not anticipate making major changes to the program in the coming years. Rather, these needs can be met by bolstering the Department's teaching and mentoring efforts and other mechanisms of professional socialization and by adding courses in research methods to augment the College of Liberal Arts Social Science Methods Certificate program.

C. Success of Graduates
1. What steps does the department take to facilitate the success of graduates (e.g., internships, career fairs, employment talks, etc.)?

The Department's Ph.D. program emphasizes collaborative research opportunities, rigorous methods training, and hands-on teaching experience.

To facilitate student success in developing their research agendas faculty members are encouraged to include research projects requiring the development of an original theory and the collection and analysis of data in their courses. To help students develop their presentation skills, the Department sponsors a colloquia series for students to present work under development and provides funding for graduate students to attend and present their research at professional conferences. In addition, faculty members frequently co-author with graduate students. Section 8.3 provides a summary of graduate student research productivity.

The Ph.D. program requires that students complete a two-course sequence in research methods. To encourage students to further develop their research skills, the Department added additional elective courses in quantitative and qualitative methods. Department faculty members also established the College of Liberal Arts Social Science Methods Certificate, which requires students to complete 15 graduate credits in research methods. For students needing specialized methods training to assist with the completion of their dissertations, the Department supports graduate student participation in programs and workshops such as the ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research at the University of Michigan.

The Department's contributions to the general education curriculum, particularly PSC 101, requires significant staffing with graduate students teaching many of these sections. To prepare students to teach and to ensure the delivery of quality instruction across sections, graduate assistants typically first work as teaching assistants. Once they begin teaching their own sections they do so using a common course shell and common course text. The Department also developed a handbook detailing policies and procedures and more recently created a committee to oversee graduate student teaching and mentoring. With Department support graduate students participated in the American Political Science Association's "Teaching and Learning Conference" and are encouraged to utilize the teaching resources, such as the Teaching Certificate Program, offered by the Graduate College. Once students achieve ABD status they have the opportunity to teach other parts of the lower division curriculum such as the introductory courses in Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. On occasion, graduate students have the opportunity to teach upper division courses depending upon Department need.

The program's emphasis on developing graduate student teaching provides our graduates with a competitive advantage on the academic job market. By the time our students who are pursuing academic careers complete their degrees they may have taught four different courses and have been the instructor of record for six to eight semesters.

2. Discuss the placements of recent graduates:

Since its inception ten years ago, 12 students have completed their dissertations and are employed in a variety of capacities. Three graduates are working in tenure track academic positions, one at the College of Southern Nevada, one at Troy University (initial placement at the University of Indianapolis), and one at Central Texas College. Other program graduates are employed as a Faculty in Residence at UNLV, as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Allegheny College, as lecturers (one at UNLV and one at CSN), and as part-time instructors (one at UNLV and one at Oregon State University starting in winter, 2019). Other graduates have pursued careers in public service working for the U.S. State Department and as research analysts working in the public sector. Among students who are expected to defend their dissertations in fall 2018, one is working as an Instructor in the Department of Political at Oregon State University and the other is working as a research analyst for Southwest Airlines.

3. If the department or program does not have placement information on graduates, what is the plan to implement gathering that information?

4. Do placements match stakeholder needs as identified above in A of this section?

Yes.

5. If not, please explain:

6. Does the program assess whether the graduates are meeting employer's needs?

Assessment of whether graduates are meeting employer's needs primarily is determined by students' dissertation advisors and committee members and the Graduate Coordinator.

7. If not, what will the program do to place this NSHE-required assessment in place and by what date?

8. Additional comments:

IV.   Program Resources
A. Faculty Time
1. Faculty and GA Resources

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Number of Full Time Faculty	15	15	15	14	15	14
Number of State-Supported GA lines	9	8	9	9	10	10
Number of PTIs	7	7	9	10	10	7
Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty	1/1	1/1	2/0	2/0	1/2	1/2

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Percent of Classes Taught by Full Time Faculty	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of State-Supported GA lines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of PTIs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Student Credit Hours Taught by Full Time Faculty	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of State-Supported GA lines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of PTIs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2. For other non-major courses – e .g., upper division for the college or university, estimate the unit's resources allocated to them:

N/A

B. Budget
1. Please fill in the table with three years of financial expenditures to be used to respond to questions 2 and 3 below.

Budget category	FY 15–16	FY 16–17	FY 17–18
State Operating (2101)	$33,369	$33,369	$33,369
Student Fees	$0	$0	$0
Indirect Cost Recovery	$	$	$
Self-supporting	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000
Total Allocations	$58,369	$58,369	$58,369
Number of Graduate Assistantships (including GAs on grants)	13	11	10

2. Are these resources sufficient to meet the degree program's instructional and scholarship needs?
Yes

3. If not, approximately what line items and amounts would be needed?

C. General Education
1. If your program or unit offers General Education courses, please estimate what portion of the unit's resources are allocated to this area:

N/A

2. Does the combined load from A and B above affect your unit's ability to offer courses for its major? If so, please describe:

N/A

D. Other Funding and Resources
1. Is funding from other sources sufficient to assist the program in achieving its outcomes? Other sources to be considered include: differential tuition, grants and contracts, endowment income, and one-time gifts for student scholarships, other one-time gifts.

The Department has obtained funding from a variety of other sources including internal (Faculty Opportunity Awards and Strategic Plan Awards) and external (National Science Foundation) grants, endowment income, and donations for scholarship awards. These funding sources have been valuable in helping to fund graduate students and to assist with faculty research. However, the grant awards have been episodic.

2. If not, which funding streams could most reasonably be increased to help the program attain its outcomes?

Internal grants such as Faculty Opportunity Awards and scholarship donations to support graduate student travel and summer research.

3. Has any new donor revenue been generated since the last program review?

Yes, the Department received funding to support a scholarship that is available to undergraduate and graduate students.

4. Has the unit engaged in fundraising activities to support the program over the last 5 years? If no, please explain why not:

The Department has not engaged in systematic fundraising activity but has worked episodically with the College of Liberal Arts to assist with grant submissions and other opportunities as they arise.

5. What has been the result of these fundraising activities?

As noted in 1 above, the Department has received financial assistance from outside sources but with the exception of the recent endowment of the Gary Gray Scholarship and some endowment income the success of these efforts has been episodic.

6. Review the space data for your department and comment on its amount and quality. These data will need to be accessed by an individual with Archibus® access.

Yes.

7. Is the quality and quantity of available consumable materials and supplies (e.g., office supplies or lab supplies) adequate and if not, explain why not:

Yes.

8. Is the quality and quantity of available technology resources, such as computers adequate and if not, explain why not:

Yes.

9. Is the quality and quantity of available equipment (other than computing) adequate and if not, explain why not:

Yes.

10. Is the quality and quantity of available library and information resources adequate and if not, explain why not:

Yes.

11. Staffing
   a) Are available department staff resources sufficient to attain the program's outcomes?

   Yes

   b) If not, what additional staff resources are needed and how would they be funded?

   N/A

12. Additional comments:

V. Size of Program

1. Below are headcount, course enrollment, and degrees conferred data from Decision Support.

Academic Level Key	
Undergraduate (UGRD):	Graduate (GRAD):
10 – Freshman	GR - Graduate
20 – Sophomore	PHD – PhD
30 – Junior	
40 – Senior	
50 – Post Bacc Undergrad	

Headcount:
Headcount declared majors in Political Science PHD

Plan code 'POSPHD'

Term	Ph.D.
Fall 2010	12
Spring 2011	11
Fall 2011	10
Spring 2012	8
Fall 2012	11
Spring 2013	11
Fall 2013	17
Spring 2014	15
Fall 2014	25
Spring 2015	25
Fall 2015	25
Spring 2016	23
Fall 2016	28
Spring 2017	27
Fall 2017	26
Spring 2018	22

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_STDNT_CR
            PS_LV_CNR_STDNT_CP
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

Course Enrollments:
Department of Political Science enrollments by course subject

Enrollments in **PSC** lecture courses by course level

Term	Level - 700
Fall 2010	60
Spring 2011	53
Fall 2011	58
Spring 2012	49
Fall 2012	65
Spring 2013	56

Enrollments in **PSC** lecture courses by course level

Term	Level - 700
Fall 2013	68
Spring 2014	68
Fall 2014	79
Spring 2015	69
Fall 2015	66
Spring 2016	63
Fall 2016	69
Spring 2017	49
Fall 2017	48
Spring 2018	42

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_ENRL
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

Enrollments in **EPS** lecture courses by course level

Term	Level - 700
Fall 2010	6
Spring 2011	4
Spring 2013	1

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_ENRL
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

Degrees Conferred:
Degrees Conferred by Academic Year (July to June)

Plan code 'POSPHD'

Academic Year	Degree Count
2012-13	1
2013-14	1
2014-15	3
2015-16	1

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_DEGREES
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

2. Discuss the headcounts from the last five years, i.e., are the trends in line with projections in your unit's strategic plan?

During the last five years the headcount increased from 17 to 28 before declining by a few students during the last few years.

3. If not, why not?

In recent years the program's emphasis has been on allocating its resources to facilitate doctoral completions and to improve progression. Because the budget is fixed this has resulted in fewer resources available for recruiting new enrollees. As a consequence, enrollment of new Ph.D. students decreased slightly particularly in fall 2016 and fall 2017.

4. Does your program's enrollment trend differ from national trends?

Like many graduate programs, enrollment in the Department's Ph.D. program ebbs and flows with the macro economy with enrollments increasing when the economy is weaker and declining when the broader job market improves.

5. If yes, please discuss the reasons why:

See response to 3 and 4

6. Additional comments:

VI. Retention, Progression, Completion
A. Major Course Offerings
1. Are enough courses offered to meet enrollment demands?

The program's size, as well as enrollment variation, can limit the Department's ability to offer advanced graduate seminars. In a typical academic year, 10 graduate courses are offered, but six of these courses fulfill core program requirements (the four pro-seminars and the two research methods courses).

2. How many major courses have been added or eliminated in the last 5 years?
    __1___ Added   __8___ Eliminated

3. Why were the actions taken?

The actions were taken to align the course catalog with the teaching interests of the current faculty. The courses that were eliminated were rarely if ever taught and were created by faculty members who are no longer part of the Department.

4. After reviewing the program, what additional actions should be taken to improve retention, progression and completion?

Increasing the size of the Department faculty and stabilizing the number of students in the program to allow for more advanced seminars to be offered each semester.

5. Are there any courses that students routinely have difficulty getting enrolled in, that slow progression and/or graduation? If so, please identify them:

As noted in response to 4, the major obstacle is the ability of the Department to offer additional advanced seminars, while also meeting undergraduate course demands and consistently offering the required pro-seminars and methods courses.

6. If last question was answered yes, what steps can be taken to reduce "bottle-necks" in these courses. Please indicate *both* financially-based and non-financially-based solutions.

As noted in response to 4, increasing the number of tenure track lines to reflect the Department's undergraduate and graduate teaching demands would reduce bottle-necks as would ensuring that students take the courses they need when they are offered to reduce demands for independent studies to replace required courses.

7. Can any changes in sequencing of courses be made to facilitate graduations?

Best practices suggest that students complete the methods courses and the pro-seminars before moving to advanced seminars and this approach informs how the schedule is built.

B. Curriculum
1. Is the program's curriculum aligned with current developments in the field?

Yes.

2. If not, what needs to be done to make the curriculum current?

C. Graduation Rates
Program graduation numbers and rates are summarized below.

Graduation Rates:
Graduation rates for Fall Cohorts
New Graduate Student Cohorts declaring Political Science PHD and graduating within 8 years

Plan code 'POSPHD'

Fall	Size	Yr 2 rate (%)	Yr 3 rate (%)	Yr 4 rate (%)	Yr 5 rate (%)	Yr 6 rate (%)	Yr 7 rate (%)	Yr 8 rate (%)
2010	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	75.0	75.0
2011	3	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	NA
2012	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	NA	NA
2013	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	NA	NA	NA
2014	9	0.0	0.0	0.0	NA	NA	NA	NA
2015	3	0.0	0.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2016	7	0.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

New Graduate Student Cohorts declaring Political Science PHD and graduating within 8 years

Plan code 'POSPHD'

Fall	Size	Yr 2 rate (%)	Yr 3 rate (%)	Yr 4 rate (%)	Yr 5 rate (%)	Yr 6 rate (%)	Yr 7 rate (%)	Yr 8 rate (%)
2017	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_DEGREES
PS_LV_CNR_CP
PS_LV_CNR_CR
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

Using the data in the tables above, please answer the following questions:

1. Are trends in 6-year cohort graduation close to the University's goals (UNLV's undergrad goal is 50%)?

The newness of the program and its relatively small sample sizes makes it difficult to assess trends in graduation rates. In recent years, the number of doctoral completions has increased (2015-16 = 1, 2016-17 = 2, 2017-18 = 4, and 2018-2019 = 1 with two more likely in the fall and three more likely in the spring).

2. If not, what is being done to reach the goal?

As noted above, in recent years resources were directed towards increasing doctoral completions. With many students now completing their degrees, more resources are available to assist with recruitment and progression.

3. Discuss how and why the graduation rate is changing.

Although not included in the table, between the fall of 2017 and the completion of the self-study, five students defended their dissertations with two more students likely to complete their dissertations during the fall 2018 semester. Moving forward, the Department expects to average between two or three annual dissertation completions.

4. Additional comments:

None.

VII. Relationship to Other Programs

1. What relationship does your program have to other programs (e.g. articulation, transfers, collaborations, partnerships) in the NSHE system?

The Department has no formal relationships with other programs in the NSHE system.

2. What the relationship does this program have to other programs at UNLV (e.g., collaborations, partnerships, affiliated faculty, General Education requirements, etc.)?

Offered courses, particularly courses in research methods, are frequently taken by students from other programs. Students also have the opportunity to participate in events sponsored by The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West.

3. Additional comments:

None.

VIII. Impact

1. What impact has this program had or will have in the following areas:

a) University: The program supports the University's goal of increasing doctoral completions and students in the program are invaluable for helping fulfill the University's general education requirements. Specifically, PSC 101 fulfills the Constitutions Requirements required by state law (NRS 396.500).

b) Community: The program provides a pool of potential employees for private and public sectors organizations.

c) Field: By presenting their research at professional conferences and by submitting research manuscripts for publication, students in the program add to the discipline's cumulative knowledge. The program's emphasis on teaching also helps to ensure that there is a pipeline of qualified and motivated instructors who can adapt to the teaching demands of full-time positions.

2. What are the benefits to the institution of offering this program?

The benefits to the University in offering this program are at least fourfold. First, the program helps the University to increase the number of doctoral completions necessary to obtain Top Tier status. Second, the program provides a pool of instructors to assist with the provision of the University's general education curriculum. Third, the program's courses in research methods often draw graduate students form other programs and thus, the program directly helps other programs train and advance their students. Fourth, the research produced by students either working with faculty members or on their own projects improves the University's cumulative research outputs.

3. Provide examples of the integration of teaching, research, and service (e.g., faculty mentoring leading to student presentations at conferences, service learning classes, community service activities involving students, or other student activities and/or achievements that you think are noteworthy).

The primary mechanisms for integrating graduate students into teaching are the Department's graduate assistantship and part-time-instructor programs. Graduate students who receive graduate assistantships typically work as teaching assistants in upper division courses where they may have the opportunity to deliver lectures or as instructors of record in their own courses. Graduate students who work as part-time-instructors typically teach their own sections of PSC 101. Over the years, the Department has developed a set of resources and processes to support graduate student teaching. Please see Section 3.C.1 for additional information.

The Department strongly encourages graduate students to begin developing their research agendas early in their careers and as noted above, supports graduate student research through travel support and the research colloquia series. Graduate students also may have opportunities to collaborate with faculty members and some of our graduate assistant gain valuable research experience working as research

assistants for faculty members. A bibliography of graduate student research is maintained on the Department website, as well as on the program recruitment page. Between 2012 and 2017, graduate students in our program presented more than 70 papers at academic conferences, including eight that were co-authored with faculty members. Graduate students have published seven papers that were either solo authored or co-authored with current or former graduate students and graduate students have co-authored published paper with faculty members on 12 occasions.

Although graduate students are not expected to engage in service, many of our graduate students do so through various programs offered by the Graduate College including the Graduate Rebel Ambassadors. More recently, the Department has begun sponsoring workshops focusing on professional development (e.g., conference presentations, CV writing) and teaching skills.

4. Additional comments:

Efforts to integrate graduate students into the Department's teaching, research, and service missions are robust and are central to the Ph.D. program's R2PC goals.

IX. Productivity
1. Please provide an indication of faculty productivity appropriate for your unit (lists of publications by type, grants by type, performances by type, installations by type, etc.):

The list below covers the ten years since the inception of the Ph.D. program and is based upon data self-reported by 16 of the 17 full-time faculty members (15 tenure track and two FIRs) who were members of the Department at the start of the fall 2018 semester (data are unadjusted for co-authorship among faculty members).

   a. Referred Journal Articles = 87
   b. Books = 15
   c. Book chapters = 52
   d. Policy briefs/reports to sponsors = 31
   e. Internal grant applications = 40
   f. Internal grants funded = 29
   g. Internal grant awards = $323,789
   h. External grant applications = 51
   i. External grants funded = 24
   j. External grant awards = $425,590
   k. Conference papers = 186

2. Additional comments:

Collectively, Department faculty members have a robust record of research productivity. In addition to substantial number of publications, faculty members have pursued and obtained internal and external grants. All of this research activity improves the Department's profile and is consistent with the University's Top Tier aspirations.

X. Quality
A. Admission and graduation requirements
1. Please insert program admission requirements from the current UNLV catalog. Due to display complications, this description must be typed into this form and **not** pasted from the Catalog.

1. The following department application materials must be uploaded into the online application:
   a. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores
   b. Three letters of recommendation by recommendation providers (academic references preferred)
   c. A personal statement explaining why you want to enter the doctoral program
   d. A writing sample
2. Applicants must submit satisfactory Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores. The recommended score is a total of 160 on the verbal and 148 on the quantitative sections. We also pay attention to the analytical score. The applicant's undergraduate record is examined in conjunction with the GRE scores. The former is weighed more heavily than the latter: an outstanding undergraduate record may well allow the admission of an applicant with GRE scores somewhat below the recommended level.
3. Applicants must possess a B.A. or equivalent from a regionally accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.30, or M.A. or equivalent from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.50. Under special circumstances the department may consider applicants with lower GPAs.
4. Applicants must have completed 12 credits of Political Science course work at the upper-division or graduate level combined. At the discretion of the department, students who lack such course work may be admitted on the condition that they remedy that deficiency.
5. All domestic and international applicants must review and follow the Graduate College Admission and Registration Requirements.

2. Are there any updates that need to be made to the catalog and if so, what are they?

No.

3. How many full-time advisors are available at the college level?

The Graduate Coordinator approves all program course enrollments.

B. Outcomes and Assessment

1. Student Learning Outcomes and Program Assessment Plans and Reports by program concentration are listed at http://provost.unlv.edu/Assessment/plans.html. Please attach the most recent assessment report in the Appendix.

2. Describe specific program changes made based on the program's evaluation of its assessment reports:

As is detailed in 3 below, substantial changes to the program were made to improve student progression and to align the program with available resources.

3. Has the program revised its curriculum such as changing prerequisites, adding or eliminating required or elective courses, or co-curricular experiences for the degree(s) in the last 5 years?

Yes

    a) If yes, what changes were made and why?

    The original focus on the program was on global studies and students were required to have a major field of either Comparative Politics or International Relations and two minor fields (either

Comparative Politics or International Relations, whichever was not selected for the major field, and either Political Theory or American Politics). Students were also required to take a mix of Area Studies and Topics courses. The program's focus was changed to a general Ph.D. degree in Political Science, the topics and areas studies requirements for Comparative Politics and International Relations were eliminated, the number of fields was reduced to two, and major fields of study were expanded to include Political Theory and American Politics. The changes were implemented to improve student progression, to ensure that faculty members, regardless of field, were engaged in the program, and to ease progression bottle-necks.

4. Has the program revised course content or instructional approaches (pedagogy, technology) in the last 5 years?
       a) If yes, what changes were made and why?

The Department purchased a number of laptops that are housed in the Department conference room and that students may use to assist with their courses, particularly the required courses in research methods. This change was made because the Department does not have a computer lab and most of the computer labs on campus do not have the statistical software that is used in the research methods courses.

5. Describe any other changes made in the last 5 years (for example, advising) based on assessment reports:

To improve the onboarding of new students, the Graduate Coordinator requires new students to attend a program orientation prior to the start of the fall semester. The program also created internal processes (i.e., end of semester student evaluations) to assess students' progress and all enrollment requests are vetted and approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

6. List and describe two specific improvements in student learning outcomes and why they represent forward movement.

Increases in the number of doctoral completions and decreases in the average time to degree completion. Both of these outcomes align with the University's Top Tier goals and the Graduate Colleges RPC plan.

7. Additional comments:

XI. Conclusions, Self-Assessment
A. Faculty Review of self-study
1. On what date did the program and/or department faculty review this self-study?

The department faculty reviewed the self-study during a faculty meeting on September 28, 2018.

2. What were the results of the faculty review?

The consensus among the faulty members was that the self-study accurately captured the program's development and the program's strengths and weaknesses.

3. What are the top 3 priorities and/or needs for the future development of the program?

The primary need identified by the faculty is additional tenure-track faculty lines to increase the diversity of course offerings, to facilitate a more equitable distribution of the workload associated with the program (e.g., service on field exam committees, chairing dissertation committees, etc.), and to accommodate

program growth. When the program was proposed and approved in 2007, the department had 17 tenure or tenure track faculty members and was authorized to search for a replacement position in Asian Politics. The program proposal also requested one additional faculty line in the program's third year. Thus, the total number of expected tenure and tenure-track faculty lines when the program began was 19. At the start of the fall 2018 semester, the department had 15 tenure or tenure-track faculty lines and was authorized to search for a replacement in American Politics for a faculty member who passed away the previous fall. Subsequent to the start of the fall 2018 semester, a department faculty member took an administrative position in the College of Liberal Arts Dean's office. Presuming that the current search in American Politics is successful, the department will have 15 tenured or tenure-track faculty members in the fall of 2019. This is two fewer positions compared to when the program was proposed and four fewer positions than was originally envisioned when the program was approved by the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. As a consequence, the department particularly is constrained in International Relations (there are three current faculty members who cover the entirety of that subfield).

A second need identified by the faculty is an expansion of the department's graduate assistantship budget. In addition to a faculty line, the original 2007 program proposal requested funding for three additional graduate assistantship positions in the program's first five year. However, it was not until the fall of 2017 that the department was allocated funding for one additional graduate assistantship. The department's current graduate assistantship budget is now $150,000, which funds the equivalent of ten Ph.D. graduate assistantships at the Graduate College's minimum level. The department's limited budget to support graduate assistantships hinders program recruitment, as well as student progress and completion. Coupled with the fact that most of the department's graduate assistants are assigned to teach their own courses, the resources that are available to assist faculty members with their teaching and research is quite limited and is predominately allocated to faculty during their probationary period.

The final need identified by the faculty is improving program recruitment processes to ensure consistent enrollment. The Graduate Studies Committee currently is investigating a variety of options to address this concern.

4. What are the strengths of the program?

The faculty identified the program's strengths as the research productivity of students in the program, both in terms of collaborations with department faculty members and the development of autonomous research agendas, the number of students in the program seeking additional training in research methods either through the College of Liberal Arts Social Science Methods Certificate program or participating in programs such as the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research at the University of Michigan, and the opportunities that graduate students have to teach their own courses. The faculty agreed that these aspects of the program were essential to the job placement of recent program graduates.

5. What are the challenges facing the program?

The primary challenges facing the program that the faculty identified are limitations on the variety of courses that the department is able to offer because of competing curricular demands and the inconsistency in program recruitment.

6. What recent additions, corrections, or other changes have been made to the program that reflect changes or developments in the field?

In addition to the aforementioned curricular changes that were made to the program, in the last two years, three tenure-track faculty members joined the department, with two of these hires replacing faculty

members who retired. Collectively, these faculty members extend the department's subject matter and methodological expertise. In the coming years it is expected that they will develop original graduate courses and in so doing, help to diversify and update program content.

B. Other comments
1. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the program?

No.