



# Program Review Self Study

Program Reviewed: Political Science  
Degree(s): Bachelor of Arts  
Program Chair or Director: Professor David Fott  
Dean: Professor Jennifer Keene  
Date of Report: January 2024

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete the program review self-study using this template.

If this review is covering several degree levels, please be sure to address each level in your responses to the questions.

Send completed self-study electronically to: [programreview@unlv.edu](mailto:programreview@unlv.edu)

The Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs is committed to engaging programs in a clear and useful program review process. To facilitate continuous improvement, we welcome feedback from programs and departments, external or internal reviewers and any other constituents of the process.

## I. Program Description

### College/Program

- College or School: College of Liberal Arts
- Unit: Department of Political Science
- Web Address: <https://www.unlv.edu/politicalscience>
- Program(s) being reviewed: Political Science
- Degrees and their abbreviations: Bachelor of Arts (BA)

### Primary Individual Completing This Worksheet

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- Fax number: 702-895-1065
- Date of self-study: January 2024

### **Other Faculty Involved In Writing This Report:**

Names: Much help came from Professor Michelle Kuenzi, our undergraduate coordinator, and Melanie Young, instructor. Other faculty involved were Professors Jeremy Bowling, Rebecca Gill, Tiffiany Howard, Christian Jensen, Nerses Kopalyan, Dan Lee, Andrew Lugg, Mark Lutz, Elizabeth Maltby, Kenneth Miller, Jared Oestman, Martha Phelps, Mehran Tamadonfar, Rachel Torres, and Austin Wang. Contributions also came from Melissa Rodriguez and Gabriela Wells, administrative assistants; Cheryl Tillotson, director, Wilson Advising Center; and Mary Rose Stark, student recruitment specialist, College of Liberal Arts.

## **II. Catalog**

### **1. Please insert the current catalog description for the academic program.**

#### **Political Science Major- Bachelor of Arts (BA)**

The department seeks to instill in its students a variety of skills and levels of knowledge that will serve them regardless of the profession they ultimately choose. Students seeking the B.A. degree take courses in several different subfields, including American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, Public Law, and Public Policy. The department also provides majors with opportunities for internships, for credit, in the legal profession, political campaigns, legislative offices, and in public administration.

Please see the web page of the Department of Political Science for information about programs, faculty, and facilities. Degree worksheets and 4/5 year plan for the major are available at <https://www.unlv.edu/degree/ba-political-science>.

Please see advising information at the UNLV Wilson Advising Center at [www.unlv.edu/liberalarts/wac](http://www.unlv.edu/liberalarts/wac).

#### **Accreditation**

Institution - Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities <https://nwccu.org/>

#### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Use critical reasoning skills for problem solving.
2. Write persuasively so as to articulate, support, and defend an argument.
3. Apply the research process in the social sciences so as to differentiate between normative and empirical perspectives, comprehend the difference between deterministic and probabilistic outcomes, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the major analytical approaches used in applied research (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, formal).

4. Consume and understand sophisticated information communicated through the media and scholarly writing.
5. Fulfill the obligations and expectations of citizenship in a democratic society.
6. Explain how political outcomes are shaped by the of the interplay between preferences and institutions.
7. Describe the multiple motivations and constraints that underlie and shape political behavior.
8. Explain how outcomes in the political and social world are affected by the multiple causal factors.
9. Describe how multiculturalism shapes international political exchanges and outcomes.

**Degree Requirements - Total: 120 Credits**  
**(See Note 1 below)**

General Education Requirements - Subtotal: 35-46 Credits

- First-Year Seminar - Credits: 3
- English Composition - Credits: 6
  - ENG 101 - Composition I
  - ENG 102 - Composition II
- Second-Year Seminar - Credits: 3
- Constitutions - Credits: 3-6
- Mathematics - Credits: 3
- Distribution Requirement: Credits 19-20
 

Please see [Distribution Requirements](#) for more information.

  - Humanities and Fine Arts: 9 Credits
    - Two courses 3 credits each from two different humanities areas - 6 credits
    - One course in fine arts- 3 credits
  - Social Science
 

Automatically satisfied by Major requirements
  - Life and Physical Sciences and Analytical Thinking: 10-11 credits
    - Two courses from life and physical sciences category; at least one must have a lab
    - Analytical Thinking 3 credit course
- Multicultural and International: Credits: 0-6
  - Multicultural, one 3 credit course required
  - International, one 3 credit course required

These courses may overlap with general education and major requirements. A single course may not meet the multicultural and international requirements simultaneously. For the list of approved multicultural and international courses, go to: <http://facultysenate.unlv.edu/students>

<http://facultysenate.unlv.edu/students>

Major Requirements - BA in Political Science - Subtotal: 61 Credits

- COLA Gen Ed: 18 credits. Must be unique from those satisfied in the general education area.
  - Social Science - Credits: 9
  - Fine Arts - Credits: 3
  - Foreign Languages/Foreign Culture - Credits: 6
- Political Science Major Requirements - Credits: 16
  - PSC 101 - Introduction to American Politics
  - PSC 200 - Survey of Political Theory
  - PSC 211 - Introduction to Comparative Politics
  - PSC 231 - Introduction to International Relations
  - PSC 302 - Research Methods in Political Science
- Special Area of Interest - Credits: 24  
Students select one course in each of the six areas and two additional courses in any area:
  - American Politics:
    - PSC 304 - The Legislative Process
    - PSC 305 - The American Presidency
    - PSC 312 - Political Parties and Interest Groups
    - PSC 314 - Religion and the Political Process
    - PSC 401A - Urban Politics
    - PSC 401B - Mass Media and American Politics
    - PSC 401C - Money in U.S. Politics
    - PSC 401D - State Politics
    - PSC 401F - Public Opinion and Political Behavior
    - PSC 401G - Political Campaigns and Elections
    - PSC 401I - Ethnic and Minority Politics
    - PSC 401J - Women in Politics
    - PSC 401O - U.S. Elections and Governance
    - PSC 401R - Polarization in American Politics
    - PSC 401Z - Special Topics in American Politics
  - Public Policy:
    - PSC 320 - Policy Analysis
    - PSC 321 - Analyzing Policy Issues
    - PSC 403A - Natural Resource Policy
    - PSC 403B - Energy Politics and Policy
    - PSC 403C - Environmental Policy
    - PSC 403I - National Security Policy
    - PSC 403J - Political Ethics and Political Corruption
    - PSC 403L - Morality Policy
    - PSC 403N - Public Policy Around the World
    - PSC 403Z - Special Topics in Public Policy
  - Public Law:
    - PSC 330 - Constitutional Law: Governmental Powers

- PSC 332 - Judicial Process
- PSC 411A - Constitutional Law: The First Amendment
- PSC 411B - Constitutional Law: Civil Rights
- PSC 411C - Legal Theory
- PSC 411D - Constitutional Rights of Women
- PSC 411E - Constitutional Rights of the Accused
- PSC 411H - Comparative Law
- PSC 411I - Supreme Court and Capitalism
- PSC 411Z - Special Topics in Public Law
- International Relations:
  - PSC 405B - International Law and Organizations
  - PSC 405D - U.S. Foreign Policy
  - PSC 405E - Foreign Policy of the Major Powers
  - PSC 405J - The European Union
  - PSC 405K - International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa
  - PSC 405L - East Asia in World Politics
  - PSC 405M - The Pacific Rim and World Politics
  - PSC 405N - Regional and International Relations of Latin America and the Caribbean
  - PSC 405P - Global Political Economy
  - PSC 405Q - Global Ecopolitics
  - PSC 405R - Africa in World Politics
  - PSC 405S - U.S. Strategic Intelligence
  - PSC 405T - International Environmental Politics
  - PSC 405U - International Security
  - PSC 405V - International & U.S. Immigration Policy
  - PSC 405W - New Issues in Foreign Policy
  - PSC 405Y - Global Economic Governance
  - PSC 405Z - Special Topics in International Relations and Foreign Policy
  - PSC 406B - Politics of Globalization
- Comparative Politics:
  - PSC 407A - Politics of European Democracies
  - PSC 407B - Political Systems of East Asia
  - PSC 407C - Political Systems of Russia and Post-Soviet Countries
  - PSC 407D - Political Systems of the Middle East and North Africa
  - PSC 407E - Politics in Latin America
  - PSC 407I - Politics and Problems in Developing Areas
  - PSC 407K - Comparative Religion and Politics
  - HIST 471 - Revolution and Reaction in Contemporary Latin America
  - HIST 476 - The Mexican Revolution
  - PSC 407O - Islamic Politics
  - PSC 407Q - Political Violence and Terrorism

- PSC 407T - The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
- PSC 407U - Democratization
- PSC 407Z - Special Topics in Comparative Politics
- Political Theory:
  - PSC 371 - Ancient Political Theory
  - PSC 373 - Early Modern Political Theory
  - PSC 374 - Late Modern Political Theory
  - PSC 375 - Recent Political Theory
  - PSC 409C - American Political Thought
  - PSC 409E - Political Theory and Political Education
  - PSC 409F - Political Theory in Literature
  - PSC 409H - The Problem of Socrates
  - PSC 409J - Feminist Political Theory
  - PSC 409L - Medieval Political Theory
  - PSC 409Z - Special Topics in Political Theory
- Political Science Culminating Experience - Credits: 3  
PSC 499 - Senior Seminar, **or** HON 499 - Honors Thesis/Project II

General Electives - Credits: 13-24

At least 12 of which must be in upper-division courses.

1. Notes: All political science courses must be completed with a grade of C- or higher to be counted towards the degree program in Political Science.
2. PSC 200 and PSC 302 must be taken to satisfy the Milestone Experience Requirement.
3. PSC 200 , PSC 302 , PSC 499 , HON 499 are milestone courses for Political Science B.A.

**2. Has the catalog description/program undergone substantial change(s) since the last program review? If yes, please describe the substantive changes.**

The following changes since 2007-8 are significant:

- a. The degree now requires 120 credits, not 124.
- b. The major now requires 43 credits, not 46.
- c. Students have more choice among subfields in upper-division courses:  
Previously, students were required to take two courses in three areas and at least one course in the other three areas. Now they must take one course in each of six areas and the remaining two courses in any area(s). The subfields are:
  - i. American Politics
  - ii. Comparative Politics
  - iii. International Relations
  - iv. Political Theory
  - v. Public Law

- vi. Public Policy
- d. A culminating experience is now required in the form of a senior seminar (or an alternative in the form of an honors thesis or Liberal Arts internship).
- e. Students must complete all political science courses with a grade of C- or higher in order for the course to count toward their degree. Before this change, the minimum grade was a D- in program courses.

### **III. Relationships**

#### **3. What relationship does this program have to other programs or institutions in the NSHE system (e.g. articulation, transfers, partnerships)?**

Articulation takes the form of common course numbering with other NSHE institutions. A transfer agreement exists with the College of Southern Nevada. Moreover, a student who enters UNLV with an associate degree receives a waiver of general education requirements. One part-time instructor in the department is a professor at the College of Southern Nevada. In fall 2023, the department had the services of four high school teachers in concurrent enrollment: UNLV courses taken by high school students for university credit.

Since 2019, the political science program averaged approximately 29 transfers in each fall semester. The number of transfers was highest in fall 2021 (39) and lowest in 2023 (20). This level of transfer activity is similar to other programs in the College of Liberal Arts, such as Sociology (26) and English (29). Of the 144 fall transfer students, approximately 42% are from the College of Southern Nevada and eighteen transfers, 13% are from University of Nevada Reno. These proportions show a strong pattern of connection to other state institutions, which allows students to progress through their education across multiple state institutions.

#### **4. Describe the relationship between this program and other UNLV programs. How does this program serve or interact with other areas of the institution (e.g. collaborations, partnerships, affiliated faculty, general education)?**

- The department participates in, and provides the coordinator for, the interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Social Science Research Methods.
- Our faculty serve in the following positions:
  - Executive director of Brookings Mountain West and the Lincy Institute
  - Executive associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts
  - Director of the Center for Migration, Demography, and Population Studies
  - Coordinator of the interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Social Science Research Methods
  - Assistant in Honors College with nationally competitive awards.

- One course (Introduction to American Politics) meets the requirements for both the US and Nevada Constitutions; three others (The Legislative Process; Constitutional Law—Governmental Powers; American Political Thought) meet the requirement for the US Constitution; and two others (Nevada Constitution; State Politics) meet the requirement for the Nevada Constitution. Eighteen courses meet the requirement for an international course. Two courses meet the requirement for a multicultural course.

## IV. Faculty Information and Productivity

### 5. Evaluate trends in the following areas

#### a. Composition of full-time faculty

##### i. Number of Faculty

The number of faculty in the department has been fairly stable throughout the past few years. The department currently has 19 faculty members—a slight decrease from the 20 faculty members affiliated with the department in fall 2022. This number includes John Tuman, a tenured faculty member in political science, who is also the executive associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts.

##### ii. Rank

The department has 5 professors, 5 associate professors, 6 assistant professors, and 3 faculty-in-residence. There were 6 full professors in the fall of 2022, but one professor passed away. One assistant professor departed UNLV during this period, and the department was able to replace this position by hiring a new assistant professor.

##### iii. Percent of faculty with terminal degree

The PhD is held by 100% of faculty. This proportion has been consistent in the last few years.

#### b. Scholarship

##### i. Publications/Creative Activities

The quality and quantity of publications have significantly increased since the last review of this program. Faculty now in this department have written or edited at least 20 books, published in such prestigious outlets



as Cambridge University Press and Cornell University Press. They have written approximately 149 articles and 45 book chapters, published in such prestigious outlets as *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Research and Politics*, and *Political Science Research and Methods*. Some of those publications are by faculty-in-residence, who are, of course, not required to publish scholarship. Examples are as follows:

Chen, Fang-Yu, **Austin Horng-En Wang**, et al. "The Multiverse of Taiwan's Future: Reconsidering the Independence-Unification (*Tondu*) Attitudes." *Political Studies Review* (2023).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299231193572>

**Damore, David F.**, Robert E. Lang, and Karen A. Danielsen. *Blue Metros, Red States: The Shifting Urban-Rural Divide in America's Swing States*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2021.

Eldemerdash, Nadia, **Christian B. Jensen**, and Steven T. Landis. "Environmental Stress, Majoritarianism, and Social Unrest in Europe." *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 31, no. 2 (2023): 385-408.

**Fott, David**. "Philosophy, Politics, and Rhetoric in Cicero's *On the Orator*." *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 49 (Spring 2023): 353-73.

**Gill, Rebecca D.**, and Christopher Zorn. "Overcoming the Barriers to Comparative Judicial Behavior Research." In *High Courts in Global Perspective: Evidence, Methodologies, and Findings*, ed. Nuno Garoupa, Rebecca D. Gill, and Lydia B. Tiede. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021.

Green, John C., David B. Cohen, and **Kenneth M. Miller**, eds. *The State of the Parties, 2022: The Changing Role of Contemporary Political Parties*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022.

**Howard, Tiffiany**, Brach Poston, and April Lopez. "Extremist Radicalization in the Virtual Era: Analyzing the Neurocognitive Process of Online Radicalization." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2022).  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.2016558>.

**Jensen, Christian B.**, **Michelle Kuenzi**, and Jonathan-Georges Mehanna. "Changing the Rules: Institutions, Party Systems, and the

Frequency of Constitutional Amendments in Africa.” *Africa Spectrum* 57, no. 2 (2022): 134-54.

King, Jeffrey, and **Andrew Lugg**. “Politicizing Pandemics: Evidence from US Media Coverage of the World Health Organisation.” *Global Policy* 14 (2023): 247-59.

**Kuenzi, Michelle**, and **David F. Damore**. “Executive Turnovers in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *International Area Studies Review* 22 (March 2019): 21-40.

**Kuenzi, Michelle T.**, and Gina M. S. Lambright. “Decentralization, Executive Selection, and Citizen Views on the Quality of Local Governance in African Countries.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 49, no. 2 (Spring 2019): 221-49.

**Lee, Daniel J.**, and Sean M. Goff. “A Sum of Its Parts: Party Fit and Party Change in the U.S. House.” *American Politics Research* 49, no. 5 (2021): 464-77.

**Lutz, Mark J.** “Living the Theologico-Political Problem: Leo Strauss on the Common Ground of Philosophy and Theology.” *The European Legacy* 24, no. 2 (2019): 123-45.

**Maltby, Elizabeth**, and Rebecca J. Kreitzer. “How Racialized Policy Contact Shapes Social Constructions of Policy Targets.” *Policy Studies Journal* 51, no. 1 (2023): 145-62.

**Miller, Kenneth M.** “The Divided Labor of Attack Advertising in Congressional Campaigns.” *Journal of Politics* 81, no. 3 (2019): 805-19.

Morin, Jason L., **Rachel Torres**, and Loren Collingwood. “Cosponsoring and Cashing In: US House Members’ Support for Punitive Immigration Policy and Financial Payoffs from the Private Prison Industry.” *Business and Politics* 23, no. 4 (December 2021): 492-509.

**Oestman, Jared**. “Burden Sharing in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Who Deploys to Violent Locations?” *International Interactions* 49, no. 4 (2023): 1-28.

**Tamadonfar, Mehran**, and Roman Lewis. *Kurds and Their Struggle for Autonomy: Enduring Identity and Clientelism*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022.

**Tuman, John P., Tiffiany O. Howard, David F. Damore, and Nerses Kopalyan.** *Latinos in Nevada: A Political, Economic, and Social Profile*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2021.

**Wang, Austin Horng-En.** "Who Are the Non-Separable Voters? *Electoral Studies* 85 (October 2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2023.102660>.

ii. Grant Applications/Grant Funding Awarded

Seven faculty are, or have recently been, involved with grants. The largest one was for \$1,000,794 from the National Science Foundation in 2019 to study ways to eliminate sexual harassment in political science. Other grants awarded to that faculty member total about \$530,000. Grants awarded to three other faculty members total about \$300,000 (one of which was to study civic engagement of Latinos in Nevada), \$250,000, and \$150,000 (to promote the study of great works of political theory at UNLV).

iii. Other

The number of papers given by faculty at conferences is too great to count. Faculty have also published policy reports and editorials. Individual faculty members have accomplished the following:

- (a) Won three awards for best papers given at conferences: Best Paper in Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, American Political Science Association, 2015; Best Paper on Blacks and Politics, Western Political Science Association, 2016, 2023.
- (b) Won an award for research (Carrie Chapman Catt Prize for Research on Women and Politics, 2019) and given invited talks.
- (c) Received six fellowships: Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2013-14; UNLV Black Mountain Institute—College of Liberal Arts Humanities Faculty Research Fellowship, 2014-15; Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Small Business and Entrepreneurship Senior Research Fellowship, 2018-19; Council on Foreign Relations—International Affairs Fellowship, 2019-20; Asser Institute (International Criminal Court at The Hague) Visiting Research Fellowship, 2020; Geneva Centre for Security Policy (United Nations)—Associate Fellowship, 2020.
- (d) Written reports for the World Bank: "Lesotho Smallholder Development Project, Implementation Support Mission Report," 2012; "Lebanon Sustainable Agricultural Livelihoods in Marginal Areas Project, Identification Mission Report," 2012; "Armenia Community

Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness Project,  
Final Implementation Support Mission Report,” 2016.

c. Teaching/Service

i. Innovative teaching practices

When the goals are still the fundamental ones of teaching students to read, think, and write well, innovation is not always needed. It can be helpful, however, as our faculty know. Two faculty report using games and simulations to teach lessons. Another practice has been to have advanced undergraduates write policy memos. One faculty member created a template for the capstone course that may be used across sections. A graduate coordinator created a BA/MA program to encourage the department’s best undergraduates to earn both degrees in five years. A previous departmental chair increased flexibility in courses for political science majors and created a teaching and mentoring program for graduate students as well as in-class observations of faculty-in-residence.

ii. Teaching or Service Awards

- (a) Recognition by US Senate for helping refugees in Nevada
- (b) Donald Schmiedel Lifetime Service Award, College of Liberal Arts
- (c) UNLV Alumni Association Outstanding Political Science Professor (twice)
- (d) Outstanding Department Chair
- (e) UNLV student government Teaching Excellence and Service Award
- (f) UNLV student government Faculty Achievement Award
- (g) UNLV student government Outstanding Faculty in Liberal Arts
- (h) UNLV Disability Resource Center Faculty Appreciation Award

iii. Faculty/Student Collaborations

Many of the collaborations between faculty and students fall under the heading of scholarship: publication of a book, articles, and book chapters. On a related note, faculty and students work together to publish a journal featuring outstanding articles by undergraduate majors. Graduate students have worked with faculty to organize workshops, a debate, and open houses. They have also collaborated to contribute to the question bank for a textbook. Examples include:

Gill, Rebecca D., and Kate Eugenis. “Do Voters Prefer Women Judges? Deconstructing the Competitive Advantage in State Supreme Court Elections.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2019): 399-427.

Hiko, Aly, and Austin Horng-En Wang. "Out-of-Control COVID-19 Pandemic Hampers the Nationalism." *Political Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2020): 294-301.

Miller, Kenneth M., and Tanner Bates. "PACs & January 6<sup>th</sup>: Campaign Finance and Objections to the Electoral College Vote Count." *Research & Politics* 10, no. 3 (2023): 1-7.

Tuman, John P., and Hafthor Erlingsson. "Autocratic Union Organization and Foreign Direct Investment in the Mexican Automotive Parts Sector, 2004-2018." *Journal of Labor and Society* 26, no. 2 (May 2023): 156-84.

iv. Community Engagement Activities

- (a) Consultant to US Department of State and Human Rights Watch
- (b) Briefings to embassies of Australia, China, Germany, and Japan
- (c) Member of Presidential Debate Campus Engagement Committee
- (d) Invited talk to Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- (e) Talks to Nevada Legislature
- (f) Talks of Junior Leagues of Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas
- (g) Talks on US politics
- (h) Talks on international politics
- (i) Panel on careers with a political science degree
- (j) Concurrent enrollment liaison
- (k) Countless interviews with the media

## V. Student Success

### 6. Reflect on student success metrics provided.

- a. Which metrics are points of strength for the program?
  - (1) Today, when there are more women undergraduates than men, 46% of political science majors are male—higher than the Liberal Arts rate of 30% and the UNLV rate of 43%.
  - (2) During 2019-23, in-person political courses had a higher ratio of seats filled to seats available than in-person courses in other Liberal Arts departments.
  - (3) Political science major retention at UNLV is higher than the aggregate cohort retention in Liberal Arts and at UNLV.

- (4) Minority students in political science retain at higher rates in the department and at UNLV than non-minority students.
- (5) There is no gap in retention between Pell students in political science and non-Pell students in political science. Political science Pell students retain in their starting college at 67.2% and non-Pell political science students retain at 68.4%. In the total cohort, Pell recipients retain in their starting college at 62.8% and non-Pell students retain at 65.1%. Thus, starting college retention for students in the total cohort remains slightly lower than their peers in political science, regardless of Pell status.
- (6) With regard to six-year graduation rate, students who start in political science graduate at higher rates than students in the total cohort. Students who began their studies in political science graduated from UNLV at a rate of 52%, which is higher than the total cohort figure of 45.3%. Furthermore, political science students graduated in their starting college at a rate of 40%, whereas total cohort students graduated in their starting college at a rate of 26.8%.
- (7) The number of bachelor's degrees in political science increased 48% between 2017 and 2022—a much higher rate of increase than Liberal Arts (19%) or UNLV as a whole (13%). The number of bachelor's degrees in political science for minority students increased 102% during that time—much faster growth than Liberal Arts (34%).
- (8) In the last four years, UNLV political science majors achieved notable success in national competitive awards. Their accomplishments include:
  - (a) A Rhodes Scholar finalist this year (2023)
  - (b) A Truman Scholar awarded in 2023. The political science program also had a finalist for this prestigious award in both 2021 and 2022.
  - (c) A political science student was designated as a Udall Scholar in 2023
  - (d) A Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow in 2019
  - (e) Two students attended the Rangel Summer Enrichment Program, sponsored by the US Department of State in 2020 and 2019
- (9) A recent program graduate was recruited by Deloitte and Touche to participate in its post-graduate training program. Another graduate took a high-paying job with a small company in Wisconsin.
- (10) A political science graduate was accepted to the PhD program in political science at Washington University in St. Louis.
- (11) In the last ten years, approximately 11% of political science bachelor's degree earners moved on to attend law school at UNLV (n=106).
- (12) Post-graduation data from Lightcast shows that UNLV political science graduates pursue a variety of employment opportunities. Although the Lightcast data is not complete, it reveals a snapshot of post-graduation outcomes. The largest number of political science graduates show-up in law professions which includes lawyers, paralegals and legal assistants, and law clerks. Graduates also pursue careers in social and human services, public

relations and fund raising, sales and product management, as well as research and teaching.

- (13) In the undergraduate student exit survey, political science students report that they spend more time preparing for class than their graduating peers.

b. Are there areas of concern for the program?

- (1) Enrollment in political science declined 10% during 2018-22, while enrollment in Liberal Arts increased 5%.
- (2) Minority enrollment in political science increased 7%, less than the 12% increase for UNLV as a whole. Non-minority enrollment in political science decreased 37.8%, more than the 21.8% decrease for UNLV as a whole.
- (3) Enrollment in political science by Pell recipients decreased 10%, while enrollment at UNLV by Pell recipients increased 15%.
- (4) During 2019-23, most courses with fewer than 15 students were in-person. The ratio of seats filled to seats available was lower in in-person courses than online courses.
- (5) The number of in-person sections of courses during 2019-23 declined 18%, while the number of online sections increased 106%. Of course, the pandemic is largely responsible for that increase.
- (6) Four courses had marked differences in student success between in-person and online sections: PSC 211, 231, 302, and 405Z.
- (7) Ten courses saw more than 20% of students with low achievement or withdrawal: PSC 101, 200, 211, 231, 302, 401I, 403A, 403B, 409C, and 411A. PSC 101 and PSC 231 appeared on the DFWIC- list four times and a DFWIC- rate of approximately 20%, which is consistent across multiple modalities; however, the DFWIC- rate for the online version of PSC 231 in spring 2023 was markedly higher than previous trends, 34.9%. In contrast, the DFWIC- rate for the in-person PSC 231 in spring of 2023 was only 16.5%. This pattern will need further monitoring to ensure that the higher DFWIC- rate for the online course does not signal a divergence in achievement between course modalities.
- (8) Political science students are more dissatisfied with the availability of courses than their peers. The program conducted a survey of juniors and seniors for this review, and students reported that they were less satisfied with their online courses than their in-person courses; however, students also suggested that they want more online courses because it suits their need for flexible scheduling.
- (9) The senior exit survey revealed that political science students had lower levels of agreement than their peers on whether they acquired knowledge and skills for their career (36% strongly agree vs. 50% strongly agree UNLV total).

- c. Describe changes or improvements would you like to see in student success metrics.

The current metrics seem adequate.

## **VI. Assessment**

### **7. The program has an assessment index score of 11. Identify areas to improve/enhance the assessment score (if applicable).**

As discussed below, the assessment process has helped the Department of Political Science continually improve the BA program and enhance educational opportunities for students. Nonetheless, several measures could be taken that will facilitate improvement to the assessment score. First, the assessment plan will be revised so that every aspect is clearly laid out. In particular, the curriculum map will be fully visible. The assessment reports will also provide a clearer description of the application of rubrics to evaluate student achievement in the capstone course. More clarity and consistency with regard to rubrics will be useful in identifying specific issues for improvement. The assessment reports will also more clearly explain how the results of the assessments are shared with all the members of the department. As noted below, the assessment process has already led to many collaborative efforts among faculty members to enhance student learning. Nevertheless, the assessment process can be enhanced to reinforce the cycle of continuous improvement.

### **8. Describe how assessment findings have been used to identify gaps or weaknesses in student learning. What changes were made to address these issues?**

The assessment process has played an important role in helping the members of the Department of Political Science provide excellent courses and respond to students' needs. One of the insights gleaned from the 2021 assessment was that the department needed to modify one of the courses meant to prepare students for the capstone course, PSC 499 (Senior Seminar). In this course, students must write their own research paper. The skills needed to conduct statistical analysis are normally acquired in one of the milestone courses, PSC 302 (Research Methods in Political Science). It seemed that more standardization of PSC 302 would put all students on an equal footing in PSC 499.

To address that issue, all those who teach PSC 302 regularly collaborated to create a document detailing the minimum content for it. This collaborative process also led the members of the different subfields to meet and create documents with the suggested



guidelines for the minimum content for nearly all introductory courses. These guidelines have been made available to all instructors through a shared folder.

The 2022 assessment showed that some students did not feel confident in their ability to conduct an independent research project. This finding was shared and discussed in faculty meetings as well as through informal discussions within the department. The faculty reached a consensus that instructors should allocate additional focus to concepts and materials that are foundational to the research process so that students have a greater facility with these ideas as they move into PSC 499. In response, instructors have started to incorporate more material that prepares students for independent research into their courses and have started to give assignments that can even serve as springboards for students' PSC 499 research projects. For example, one faculty member created a research design assignment for his upper-division courses, and other faculty members are implementing this model in similar upper-division courses.

This iterative process also informed the curriculum changes that introduced more flexibility into the subfield requirements. Student feedback suggested that the program curriculum governing subfield course requirements was too rigid to allow students to focus on their specific areas of interest. The BA curriculum was altered so that students take at least one course in each of the six subfields, and two courses in any area(s). Previously, students were required to take two courses in three areas and one course within the remaining three areas. This change created a program wherein students can, to a greater extent, tailor their coursework to match their interests.

## **VII. Curriculum**

**9. (Undergraduate only) Does your program have a course to meet the culminating experience requirement? Which course? Describe how the course meets the culminating experience requirement.**

PSC 499 (Senior Seminar) facilitates students' creation of original projects that address questions in political science. Each student designs and carries out a project, in keeping with the culminating requirement. An alternative in the form of an honors thesis or Liberal Arts internship may be accepted.

**10. (Undergraduate only) Does your program have a course that meets the milestone experience requirement? Which course is the milestone course, and how does it meet the requirements?**

The combination of PSC 200 (Survey of Political Theory) and PSC 302 (Research Methods in Political Science) satisfies the milestone requirement. These courses require inquiry, critical thinking, and (especially written) communication.

**11. Are all required courses offered on a regular schedule? Please identify required courses and describe the teaching schedule. Does the mix of course sections, days, times, modalities meet student needs?**

The required courses are PSC 101 (Introduction to American Politics), PSC 200 (Survey of Political Theory), PSC 211 (Introduction to Comparative Politics), PSC 231 (Introduction to International Relations), PSC 302 (Research Methods in Political Science), and PSC 499 (Senior Seminar). Each course is offered in multiple sections each fall and spring semester. Additionally, all courses except PSC 499 are offered every summer. The mix of days, times, and modalities seems to meet students' needs.

**12. How many courses are low yield? Are these low yield courses necessary for degree paths or electives? How much faculty resources are required to maintain these courses? Is there a way to increase yield for these courses?**

Eight courses had a low yield between fall 2021 and fall 2022. (PSC 490B should not count because it is an internship.) All the courses are electives in five of the six subfields required for the major. It requires no faculty resources to maintain the courses. The enrollment for PSC 401J (Women in Politics) may have suffered in spring 2022 because it had just been offered in fall 2021; however, the enrollment was also low for that term. PSC 403Z and 407Z were special topics courses, and such courses do not always draw well. As the pandemic recedes, the department will carefully monitor enrollment in face-to-face courses to identify areas of concern.

**13. Is the program planning curriculum changes in the next few years? If yes, please describe these changes.**

No changes are planned beyond the possible creation of new courses, especially conversion of special topics courses to regular courses.

## **VIII. Post-Graduation Outcomes**

### **14. What does the data documenting student outcomes suggest about the current structure of the program in preparing students to enter the workforce or pursue additional education opportunities?**

The data suggest that students who earn a BA in political science are well prepared to enter the workforce or pursue additional educational opportunities. From 2016 to 2021, approximately 70% of graduates became employed in Nevada. Since 2013, 11.5% of political science graduates have entered the Boyd School of Law, while another 13.3% have enrolled in other graduate or professional programs at UNLV.

### **15. Identify the skills students acquire through their program of study. How do these skills map onto workforce needs?**

Students in the political science BA program acquire numerous skills that prepare them for many different jobs in various industries. Nurturing both oral and written communication skills is a major objective in the department. The program also emphasizes development of critical thinking needed to engage in analytical assessment of information and theories. The program requires students to become knowledgeable in six subfields: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory, public law, and public policy. The skills developed provide students with a strong foundation to pursue careers in many different fields, including public policy analysis, public service, teaching, research, and the legal profession.

The department takes an active role in preparing students to enter the workforce by providing opportunities to participate in internships in both the public and private sectors: administrative, legislative, campaign, legal, and media. The department's internship program is one of the largest in the College of Liberal Arts. Seven students had an internship in 2023, most of them with the Nevada Legislature during its biennial session. They monitored the status of bills, did research on proposed laws, helped legislators keep track of their schedules, monitored media coverage of legislation, and helped in meetings with constituents and interest groups. Finally, students have opportunities to work with faculty on research projects that enhance their abilities and increase their appeal to prospective employers.

**16. What is the demand trajectory and employment opportunities in this area over the next 3-5 years? Identify the most important local employers for program graduates.**

“Employment of political scientists is projected to grow 7 percent from 2022 to 2032, faster than the average for all occupations,” according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook for Political Scientists. The result, according to SeedScientific.com, will be the creation of about 93,000 new jobs. Opportunities exist for the jobs of paralegal, law clerk, legislative assistant, policy analyst, intelligence analyst, public relations specialist, fundraising manager, research assistant, product and marketing specialist, high school teacher, social and human resources specialist, secretary and executive assistant, executive secretary and executive assistant, political consultant, political campaign staff, non-profit program coordinator, social media manager, campaign manager, news producer, urban planner, research analyst, and regulatory affairs manager. The most important local employers include law firms, the federal government, the Clark County School District, MGM Resorts International, candidates for office, non-profits, and UNLV.

**17. Are there skills/areas of study that can be added or enhanced to meet evolving workforce needs?**

The program is comprehensive in fostering the skills to meet evolving needs in the workforce. Nevertheless, it would be useful to provide students with additional opportunities to meet with faculty to discuss the career opportunities available to political science graduates. One possibility is for the department to offer two meetings each semester for students interested in learning more about various fields and jobs.

## **IX. Budget and Resources**

**18. What are the primary funding sources for this program?**

- University operating budget from Nevada state legislature
- Self-supporting budget from sources such as summer teaching, online education, and start-up funds

**19. Describe how revenue is allocated to support program activities.**

The main activities are courses, ultimately funded by the university operating budget.

**20. Is the current revenue allocation sufficient to support the program? If additional resources are necessary, please describe the changes that are necessary.**

Yes, at the current number of students.

**21. Discuss strengths or concerns in the following areas:**

a. Library resources

Electronic access to journals and books continues to improve. The new university-wide subscription to the *Wall Street Journal* is a welcome addition. But the frequent turnover in the liaison librarian for the social sciences has hurt the program, and no one has the experience with statistical research to be able to help with it. Thus, the library cannot support the program's required course in research methods, the capstone course, or graduate programs.

b. Equipment

It would be better if students were not required to pay for STATA, software that is used in the program's required research methods course. UNLV should have a license for the entire university, as it does for SPSS.

c. Space

The program needs more classrooms, especially rooms in which seminars may be held with tables and chairs arranged facing one another.

d. Other nonacademic sources

It would be good to be able to host guest speakers for the community.

## **X. Summative Evaluation**

**22. Summarize the areas of excellence and/or strengths of this program.**

- The political science BA program has a robust internship program that prepares students for employment.

- The faculty use a variety of methods in studying politics. There is also diverse representation in subfields and specialties, which allows students to expand their studies under the tutelage of area experts.
- Program faculty are devoted to both teaching and research.
- The department is an important purveyor of service courses with regard to general education requirements.

**23. Identify opportunities to improve this program.**

- In the survey, a student suggested that the department should recognize academic excellence for students who are excelling. Program faculty will consider new approaches to student recognition. These ideas include establishing a new award plan for outstanding major and best undergraduate paper.
- The program needs to recruit more undergraduate students.
- The program should continue to improve the quality of teaching by graduate assistants, both in their own courses and in helping faculty to whom they have been assigned.

**24. Based on this analysis, what are the top three priorities/needs for this program in the future?**

- The program needs tenure-track faculty in comparative politics, international relations, and public law to bolster offerings to undergraduates.
- Recent data showed declining enrollment suggesting that the program needs to engage in additional outreach to communicate the value of a political science degree to incoming students and high school students. A more substantial outreach program would ensure that students understand the marketable skills and variety of career paths that are possible for political science graduates.
- The program should foster deeper ties between faculty and students. These connections should facilitate student success and professionalization.