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The Political Science and Public Administration degree programs are housed within the Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice, one of the most complex academic structures in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition to the Political Science B.A. and M.A. programs and the B.A. program in Public Administration, the Division includes a nationally accredited M.P.A in Public Administration, a B.A. in Criminal Justice, and 6 minor degree programs. The complex structure of the Division creates challenges for shared governance and decision making with regard to curriculum development, faculty support and retention, tenure, and promotion, assessment, advising, and other areas of academic life. The 2016-17 Program Performance Review for the Public Administration B.A. and Political Science B.A. and M.A. programs highlighted areas of high achievement, as well as areas in need of improvement or remediation for both the degree programs under review and for the Division as a whole.

Areas of Achievement

The Political Science and Public Administration programs, along with the Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice as a whole, are to be particularly commended for their commitment to student engagement and student success.

Political Science and Public Administration faculty have demonstrated their commitment to High Impact Practices and engaged teaching through their sustained leadership of multiple experiential learning programs (Cal State DC, Study Abroad and Study Away, Moot Court, and Model UN), as well as through curricular innovations such as the Town Hall sections of POSC 100. Through these programs, the Political Science and Public Administration programs provide not only their majors, but a broad cross section of CSUF students with an opportunity to learn by doing and to have an intensive interaction with faculty. As the external review team noted, one challenge moving forward will be the ability of the Division to sustain these efforts for the long term in light of the increasing uncertainty of funding through the Instructionally Related Activities program. Reduced IRA funding has resulted in higher demand for division and College resources and greater competition for internal resources to support HIPs. An effort is needed at the campus level to identify sustainable sources of funding for curricular innovations, rather than just “startup” funds to introduce new HIPs.

Political Science and Public Administration faculty are deeply engaged in efforts to promote student success and increase graduation and retention rates. Their efforts predate the current Graduation Initiative 2025 and reflect a deep commitment to the academic and professional success of all students. For example, the efforts by Dr. Sarah Hill to identify students just shy of completing graduation requirements in order to assist them in completing their degrees represent one of the most focused and sustained efforts in the College to utilize data analysis tools (“the dashboard”) to proactively support degree completion. This work provides a foundation from which the Division should be able to build to become a leader in supporting student success and increasing retention and graduation rates. In addition, the Self Study demonstrates that Political Science and Public Administration have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses



of the current major advising model and have already implemented changes to strengthen academic advising.

Further progress toward these goals, including increasing the percentage of students who meet with major advisors, is easily within reach and will be supported by the College and the campus as part of Graduation Initiative 2025. The Programs will build on the admirable work already done in the Division by continuing to invest in advisor training, collaborating with the HSS Success Team to develop tools to track advising efforts, and developing a plan for student outreach that will improve participation in major advising on a sustainable schedule.

Opportunities for Development

The Political Science and Public Administration programs have a strong curricular, pedagogical, and scholarly foundation that provides them with opportunities to further enhance the success of students and faculty. In light of the external review as well as the questions raised in the self study, the HSS Dean's Office encourages the Political Science and Public Administration faculty to pursue the following:

1. Given the need to simplify and streamline the curriculum and better align it with the learning goals established for the degree programs, establish a process and structure—perhaps in the context of an existing committee—to review the current curriculum and create a proposal for program consideration. The proposal should take into consideration:
 - a. students' ease of understanding degree requirements
 - b. disciplinary and intellectual goals
 - c. academic rigor and preparation for advanced level courses
 - d. determining the “right” number of existing and new courses to provide without overwhelming students and overcomplicating the process of scheduling
 - e. align degree student learning goals and the content of the underlying curriculum
 - f. develop a capstone requirement that meets the needs of the degree program. For example, the Division might capitalize on strong student participation in High Impact Practices and design a capstone internship experience.
2. Reevaluate the role, purpose, and scope of graduate program in Political Science. Conduct necessary research to determine how best to position the M.A. relative to other local graduate programs and to changes in the discipline. Collaborate with the HSS Dean's Office to develop a marketing, recruitment, and admissions plan for the Political Science graduate degree.
3. Reconsider the role of “super sections” of POSC 100 in the ability of the Political Science and Public Administration programs to support student success and attract majors and minors. Although the Division has come to depend on these very large sections to maintain its current faculty 3-3 teaching load, it is not clear that Political Science and Public Administration are being well served by this strategy. Although there has been an increase in the number of incoming



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4. POSC majors for Fall 2017, this is likely in response to external political events. However, these events provide Political Science and Public Administration with an opportunity to demonstrate to undergraduate students the social and civic value of a major or minor in these disciplines. POSC 100 is ideally positioned for this task; it is an unparalleled recruiting opportunity for majors, double majors, and minors. However, very large sections are inherently impersonal and are unlikely to generate significant opportunities for faculty-student engagement. The Division should consider whether alternative structures for this course (e.g., smaller sections at more optimal times, with greater opportunity for high quality interaction with faculty) might improve the ability of Political Science, in particular, to prove attractive to students as a first or second major.
5. Develop a new marketing narrative that highlights for current and prospective students the strengths of the division—such as High Impact Practices—and the professional possibilities of its degrees. Revise the webpages for the Division and its component departments to reflect what they most value. Work collaboratively with the HSS Marketing Specialist and Graphic Designer to accomplish these goals.

Area in Need of Remediation

The faculty in Political Science and Public Administration, along with their colleagues in Criminal Justice, are a group of well-respected researchers and teachers with a respected and long-standing presence in campus collegial governance. However, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that in order for the recommendations listed above to be accomplished, the members of the Division must work together to establish a collegial, safe, and supportive work environment.

The external review team identified problems surrounding climate, community, and shared governance that will most certainly impede Divisions success in the future and is creating challenges for faculty now. I recommend that the Division identify priorities as they relate to supporting student success and conducting division administrative tasks and establish a process by which to determine the faculty work that supports these priorities and the appropriate distribution of committee assignments and/or assigned time to support this work that ensure equitable workloads and accountability.

To facilitate this process and, more generally, to improve communication among all faculty and assist the Division in developing additional processes for shared governance and decision making, the College is seeking to hire organizational facilitation professionals to work with the Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice.