



To: Jennifer Summit, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
APRC

From: Andrew Harris, Dean of the College of Liberal & Creative Arts

Date: December 9, 2019

Re: Political Science Seventh Cycle Dean's Response

The external Seventh Cycle reviewers conclude that the Political Science Program is vibrant, with expanding undergraduate enrollment, faculty who are highly engaged in their disciplines and successful in their pedagogy, and a curriculum that offers both breadth and specialized strengths in several areas. They commend the program for targeting the specialties of new hires towards areas of demonstrated curricular need, such as quantitative methods, and for the overall scholarly impact of its faculty. Most importantly, they commend the program for students' experience of the program's emphasis on advising, career and academic roadmaps, and blending writing and critical thinking skills with knowledge acquisition. Moot Court stands out for its early and robust success in this realm.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- A tenure-track line in American politics, with a focus on race/ethnicity
- More support for PLSI 200 sections, in the form of funding for graduate assistants, graduate teaching assistants, supplemental instruction, and/or increased workload for high-enrollment sections
- Assigned time and administrative support for Moot Court's expanding scope
- Continuation of assigned time for the department advising coordinator
- Clarifying expectations and support for developing and teaching quality online courses
- College/university support for better understanding department DFW rates
- Increased support for faculty housing
- Increased attention to improving yield and enrollment in the MA program

Dean's Recommendation

I commend Political Science for a well-written and comprehensive self-study that encapsulates their strengths and challenges. This growing department, the fourth largest in the college, represents formidable strengths in undergraduate student interest, student successes in Moot Court and research, faculty scholarly accomplishments and a robust GE presence. Its growing enrollment, relatively high tenure density, and the quality of its curriculum make the best argument for increased tenure-track hiring, and the department has a strong history of hiring talented new faculty. The college is willing to consider supporting increased GA funding for large courses, and the department can hire as many

graduate teaching associates as it needs, since this is not a funding issue but rather relates to the availability and training of graduate students in the program. Workload for high-enrollment courses is currently granted as needed according to university guidelines, college pedagogical discretion and funding availability, so it is not clear what problem this recommendation seeks to address. The college is willing to consider an incremental addition of assigned time for Moot Court oversight, given its resounding success and the work that such success requires; administrative support will be more complicated given that staff support comes in larger and more expensive increments, but we are discussing how to support student travel in the college office currently precisely because of this issue. Regarding the college's support for the department advising coordinator, we will review the success of this pilot initiative in the spring semester for potential continuance, which we hope but cannot guarantee that it merits. We are in agreement about the need to clarify expectations and support for online teaching, and are currently in consultation with Faculty Affairs about this so that we work within the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Senate policy, which together may need revision and/or higher-level interpretation in order to provide such support. It is the department's responsibility to evaluate its DFW rates in the first instance, and we ask that the department frame the questions it wants to ask so that the college and university can provide the appropriate support in this critical area—an area in which we could be doing more. We are in agreement that housing is a critical issue—for faculty, staff and students—and the university's efforts to increase campus housing provide some level of medium-term relief. Finally, we commend the department for taking seriously enrollment in its MA program, and for considering alternative delivery modes that could include a low-residency hybrid MA, and the college is willing to support exploration of this further with summer stipend.

In conclusion, this is a strong program across a variety of indicators that earns and receives ongoing investment from the college.