



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Program(s):	Political Science, B.A. (Hons.): Specialist, Major, Minor Public Policy, B.A. (Hons.): Major, Major (Co-op)
Division/Unit:	(Review of programs only; offered by the UTSC Department of Political Science)
Commissioning Officer:	Dean and Vice-Principal (Academic), UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Kathryn Harrison, Professor of Political Science, Chair, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia 2. Dr. R. Kent Weaver, Professor of Public Policy, Comparative Government Field Chair, McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University
Date of review visit:	November 14 and 15, 2013
Date reported to AP&P:	April 1, 2014

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- High-quality pedagogy and faculty commitment to teaching
- Appeal of new Public Policy Major (co-op and non-co-op) to motivated students
- Faculty's exemplary research record

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Conducting a curricular review with a view to strengthening course content and sequencing
- Re-examining learning outcomes relative to disciplinary currency and students' future careers
- Evaluating the potential for enhanced involvement in UTSC graduate education
- Better preparing students for their future careers
- Reviewing the staffing structure to identify efficiencies and reduce workload

4 Implementation Plan

The Dean undertook in consultation with the Department to support the following changes:

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Conducting a curricular review
 - The Department will begin discussion of its curriculum by focusing on learning objectives.
 - The Department will continue to look carefully at the four-year curriculum structure and strive to provide greater clarity to degree level expectations.
 - The Department is examining initiatives to expand research opportunities for high-achieving undergraduate students.
 - The Department is considering ways of institutionalizing innovative projects for strengthening student writing skills.
 - Re-examining learning outcomes
 - The Department has identified faculty in other UTSC units (Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Management) who can develop and teach courses tailored to the needs of political scientists.
 - The Department will guide students in developing analytical and critical thinking skills, thereby fostering transferrable skills that will be of value in their careers.
 - Evaluating the potential for enhanced involvement in UTSC graduate education
 - The Department is exploring the feasibility of academic activities that would allow for an increased presence of Political Science graduate students at UTSC.
 - Facilitating greater student engagement
 - The Department is working with colleagues on campus to expand opportunities for student experiential learning.
 - The Departmental undergraduate program advisor plans to enhance outreach efforts through group advising sessions and the use of technology.
 - Reviewing the staffing structure
 - The Social Science units have recently hired a financial assistant, reducing the demand on the Business Officer.
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - Evaluating the potential for enhanced involvement in UTSC graduate education
 - The Vice-Dean, Graduate Program Development will work closely with the Department in implementing creative graduate initiatives.

- Better preparing students for their future careers
 - The Department will involve faculty in student advising to a greater degree in the future.
- Reviewing the staffing structure to identify workload efficiencies
 - The Dean is exploring the option of hiring a second Business Officer and will engage the Social Sciences units in a discussion of available resources and future priorities.

The Dean's Office will follow up annually with the unit to assess progress.

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as visible faculty commitment to teaching; high-quality pedagogy; exemplary faculty research records; and the appealing, new Public Policy Majors. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: strengthening course content and sequencing by undertaking a curriculum review; re-examining learning outcomes; exploring involvement in graduate education; better preparing students for their future careers; and reviewing the staffing structure to identify efficiencies and reduce workload. The Department will begin discussion of its curriculum, focusing on learning objectives, providing greater clarity to degree level expectations, and expanding research opportunities for high-achieving undergraduate students. In re-examining learning outcomes relative to students' future careers, the Department will guide students in fostering transferrable skills. As a means of enhanced involvement in UTSC graduate education, the Department is considering academic activities that would facilitate the increased presence of Political Science graduate students at UTSC. The Department has identified a number of strategies for better preparing students for their future careers, including group advising sessions with the program advisor and expanding opportunities for student experiential learning. To address workload concerns, the Dean's Office has hired a financial assistant to support the Social Sciences units and is exploring the option of hiring a second Business Officer. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.