

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

Programs Reviewed:	Political Science, B.A., Hons. (specialist, major, minor) Political Science, M.A., Ph.D
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Political Science
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Professor Matthew Evangelista, Ph.D., Department of Government, Cornell University2. Professor Virginia Sapiro, Ph.D., former Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Department of Political Science, Boston University3. Professor Arlene Saxonhouse, Ph.D., Caroline Robbins Collegiate Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan
Date of Review Visit:	February 22 – 23, 2016
Date Reported to AP&P:	November 1, 2016

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Well-designed undergraduate curriculum with links between the study of politics and hands-on policy skills

- Many research options for undergraduates, including independent study courses with faculty, research participation courses, International Course Modules, and the senior thesis course
- Considerable experiential learning opportunities for graduate students, including research assistantships, field research, summer programs, and participation in interdisciplinary centres
- Extremely satisfied, highly-employable graduate students who contribute to the profession; a Toronto PhD in Political Science is recognized as a strong indicator of the quality of the applicant
- Extraordinarily large number of undergraduates; impressive growth in the number of masters and doctoral students
- Very active, engaged research faculty well-recognized by the discipline nationally and internationally for their research contributions, with publications in major journals and major presses
- Very good progress in recruiting women faculty

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Creating a centralized curriculum committee to address redundancies and gaps in the undergraduate curriculum
- Providing more internship or co-op opportunities to enhance students' employability
- Improving graduate course offerings in quantitative and qualitative methods
- Addressing the uneven quality of teaching assistants and implementing TA training at the departmental level
- Increasing the length of Ph.D. support
- Resolving gaps in coverage due to several recent and upcoming retirements
- Ensuring that the climate for women continues to be positive and that issues of racial/ethnic/national diversity are furthered in the student body and in the courses offered
- Addressing the diversion of the leadership and teaching efforts of the faculty away from the department towards research centres
- Encouraging more centralized decision-making structures in the department, which has traditionally made decisions via small groups
- Increasing departmental control over its financial situation

4 Implementation Plan

Immediate Term (6 months)

- Creating a centralized curriculum committee
 - The Department will establish a cross-area-group committee to assess the curriculum at least once within every five-year period
- Improving graduate course offerings in quantitative and qualitative methods

- The Department is committed to the improvement and enhancement of methods training at the graduate level. They now have mandatory quantitative and qualitative courses for all Ph.D. students, and a general research design/methods course for M.A. students.
- The Department began offering a mandatory research design course aimed at facilitating and accelerating the preparation of Ph.D. dissertation proposals
- Implementing TA training at the departmental level
 - The Department has a new TA coordinator, who has been working to place TAs in courses matching their particular area of interest and utilizing their special skill sets
 - The Department will consult with the Vice Dean, Graduate Education to review options for TA training, and in particular to explore options for optimizing TA training at the departmental level
- The reviewers remarked that there are gaps in coverage due to several recent and upcoming retirements.
 - The Department has engaged in internal consultations to best determine how to fill gaps and is actively searching to fill seven new positions across the three campuses, including a joint position in Sexual Diversity Politics
- Encouraging more centralized decision-making structures
 - The Department has created an Appointments Committee to redefine priorities across fields and redeploy faculty resources as required
- Increasing departmental control over its financial situation
 - The Department has recently been successful in attracting external donations and endowments, and the Department will consult with the Dean's Office to review its financial situation and obligations to better assess what options are available

Medium Term (1-2 years)

- Providing more internship or co-op opportunities to enhance students' employability
 - The Department will consult with the University's Career Centre to review options for providing internship opportunities for its program students
- Increasing Ph.D. support
 - The Faculty of Arts & Science introduced an increase to base funding for all doctoral-stream students in the funded cohort. The funding increase may also reduce financial need for students who are entering their 6th year.
 - The Department will consider options for a more targeted approach to addressing the needs of the post-funded cohort. In 2016-17, the Faculty of Arts & Science launched two new programs, Milestones and Pathways, which can assist students at all stages of their degree program, with a particular emphasis on facilitating time to completion and enhancing professionalization opportunities.
- Resolving gaps in coverage due to several recent and upcoming retirements

- The Department will consult with the Dean's Office to review areas where "gaps" are beginning to emerge to determine how best to address them
- Maintaining a positive environment for women and furthering diversity
 - A search for a joint appointment between the Department and the Centre for Indigenous Studies (CIS) will begin once the appointment of a new Director for the CIS is confirmed
- Addressing the diversion of the leadership and teaching efforts away from the department
 - The Department will work with the Dean's Office on how best to address the diversion of faculty to other units and determine possible options will be needed to resolve this concern

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the well-designed undergraduate curriculum; the many research options for undergraduates and experiential learning opportunities for graduate students; the extremely satisfied, highly-employable graduate students who contribute to the profession; the extraordinarily large number of undergraduates; impressive growth in the number of masters and doctoral students; the very active, engaged research faculty, well-recognized by the discipline nationally and internationally for their research contributions with publications in major journals and major presses; and the very good progress in recruiting women faculty. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: creating a centralized curriculum committee; providing more internship or co-op opportunities; improving graduate course offerings in quantitative and qualitative methods; addressing the uneven quality of teaching assistants and implementing TA training at the departmental level; increasing the length of Ph.D. support; resolving gaps in coverage due to several recent and upcoming retirements; maintaining a positive environment for women and furthering diversity; addressing the diversion of the leadership and teaching efforts of the faculty away from the department towards research centres; encouraging more centralized decision-making structures; and increasing departmental control over its financial situation. The Department will establish a cross-area-group committee to assess the curriculum at least once within every five-year period. The Department now has mandatory quantitative and qualitative courses for all Ph.D. students, and a general research design/methods course for M.A. students. The Department has a new TA coordinator, and will consult with the Vice Dean, Graduate Education to review options for TA training. The Department is actively searching to fill seven new positions across the three campuses, including a joint position in Sexual Diversity Politics. The Department has recently been successful in attracting external donations and endowments, and the Department will consult with the Dean's Office to review its financial situation and obligations to better assess what options are available. The Faculty of Arts & Science introduced an increase to base funding for all doctoral-stream students in the funded cohort, and the Department will consider options for a more targeted approach to addressing the needs of the post-funded cohort. A search for a joint appointment between the Department and the Centre for Indigenous Studies (CIS) will begin once the appointment of a new Director for the CIS is confirmed. The Department will work with the Dean's Office on how

best to address the diversion of faculty to other units. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.