

Five-Year Program Review

Political Science Faculty Response

The Political Science program faculty truly appreciates the thorough and insightful review provided by Dr. Anne Hildreth and Dr. Adam Johnston. We believe that the review team quite accurately captured the essence of the political science program in the opening line of their report when they described the Political Science program as a “dynamic, student-centered enterprise.”

Program Strengths

The review team identified four basic strengths of the Political Science program: 1) student engagement; 2) department leadership; 3) recent changes to the curriculum; and 4) the connection to and with the Walker Institute of Politics and Public Service. The Political Science faculty agrees with this assessment of the program’s strengths. Student engagement deserves to be listed first on a list of program strengths. The Political Science faculty takes great pride in the accomplishments of their students and seeks to do what it can to facilitate student success.

Program Challenges and Opportunities

The review team identified six “challenges and opportunities.”

1. The future of the Walker Institute with the departure of its director, Dr. Carol McNamara in June of 2017.

This is a definite challenge, but one that extends beyond the grasp of the Political Science program itself. While two members of the Political Science faculty will serve on the search committee to hire a new director, technically, the position of Director of the Walker Institute is not housed within the Political Science program.

2. Advising

The previous Five-year Program Review report identified advising a particular challenge and recommended a change to the division of labor. The 2017 Program Review team agrees with the Political Science faculty that such a division of labor is not needed. The Review team applauds efforts within the program to encourage students to seek advisement early and often.

3. Assisting students to graduate in a “timely fashion”

The Review team identified this item as “not a major concern,” but “worthy of some consideration,” and the Political Science faculty agrees. We will continue to explore avenues to assist students to be able to take the classes they need in order to graduate, including developing long range planning tools (such as a Graduation map) and continuing to offer students the opportunity to take some classes on an independent study basis (when absolutely necessary). See also item 6 in this section.

Once again, the Political Science faculty would like to thank the Program Review team for their work. We believe that they have accurately identified program strengths and challenges. We thank them for their recommendations.