

2023-24 Program Review

Program Name: Political Science

Program Contact: Lee R. Miller

Academic Year: 2023-24

Status:

Updated on:

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PROGRAM REVIEW FOR?

The goal of program review is to assess how well our programs are doing. Program review asks us to:

- Reflect on the state of student learning or support in our disciplines and programs, by discussing:
 - efforts to achieve equity across student populations and modes of delivery;
 - results of assessment activities aimed at improving or researching student learning;
 - new challenges or changes to the program.
- Identify resources that we need to change and improve.

Though program review is tied to accreditation, ultimately, we want program review to be meaningful for us. This means we want to use program review to highlight and celebrate what is working, identify what isn't and to figure out what we can do about it. Program review also provides an opportunity to assess how those things work in practice, and work to improve our practices to be able to serve our students even better. It also serves to create cross-campus understanding and dialogue and make more informed decisions in our teaching and programs. Program review is also an opportunity to advocate for change and for resources by showing need and equity issues that we need additional support to be able to address.

1. Description of Program (200-400 words)

- Provide a brief description of the program and how it supports the following:
 - [CSM Mission and Values Statements](#)
 - [CSM Statement of Solidarity](#)
 - [CSM's Strategic Priorities](#)
 - [SMCCCD's Strategic Goals](#)
 - [CSM Forward 2028 - Education Master Plan](#)
- Identify any factors, including federal, state, or local initiatives, that have impacted the program and the students served

The political science program offers a variety of courses, which are taken primarily by students who are working on an AA/AS degree and/or intend to transfer to a baccalaureate program. Currently, we have one full-time faculty member (myself) and three adjunct faculty members. About half of course sections are taught by me and half are taught by adjunct faculty.

Our courses have been articulated with the California State University and University of California campuses in our region. CSM students awarded the AA-T in political science may transfer into those institutions with 18 semester units already completed in their political science majors.

2023-24 Program Review

Our courses explore some of the thorniest issues affecting American society and the world at large. The program's courses require a great deal of reading and writing. The articulation of the program's courses with all of the CSUs and UCs in the region, plus the fact that the program offers an AA-T degree in political science, means that the program's courses have achieved a level of excellence equivalent to lower division courses at the state's finest public universities. Moreover, rather than lowering standards to achieve student success, the program helps students to develop the analytical skills to meet the program's high standards. To this end, the political science program actively collaborates with the Learning Center's Peer Tutoring program, with the aim of enhancing student success.

Program Learning Outcomes are aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes. Course SLOs for all courses offered by the program are aligned with Program Learning Outcomes.

Consistent with the District Strategic Goal 1 (to develop and strengthen educational offerings) and District Strategic Goal 2 (to establish and expand relationships with 4-year college partners), the political science program has developed AA-T degree, which gives students the opportunity to complete at CSM many of the CSU requirements for B.A. in political science. The AA-T degree in political science has been in place since the 2017-2018 academic year.

Prior to the pandemic, the program helped prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens by regularly bringing in local, state and federal elected officials as guest speakers. We hope to resume inviting guest speakers this semester, now that face-to-face enrollment has risen sufficiently. In addition, various assignments are designed to encourage civic engagement/political participation activities: attending city council meetings; volunteering for political organizations, elected officials, and election campaigns; writing letters to elected representatives; registering to vote; and voting. This is consistent with the CSM Institutional Priority of Community Partnerships, the District Strategic Priority 2 (establish and expand partnerships with community-based organizations and employers), and the CSM Institutional Learning Outcomes of Independent Learning & Development, Effective Communication, and Ethical Responsibility/Effective Citizenship.

In furtherance of District Strategic Goal 3 (promote innovation and excellence in instruction to support student learning and success) and the CSM Value of Inspiration and Innovation, the program has integrated into our core courses (PLSC 200 & 210) an American politics simulation, The Civic Mirror. In this simulation, students directly experience the roles of citizens, business owners, litigants, and public officials operating in complex political, legal and economic systems modeled after those of the US.

Consistent with the College Mission, the political science program is committed to "academic excellence." Our courses are designed to facilitate the CSM Institutional Learning outcomes: Independent Learning & Development, Effective Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Social Awareness and Diversity, and Ethical Responsibility/Effective Citizenship:

- The course outlines for PLSC 100, 130, 200, 210, 215 and 310 include the following student learning outcome: "Evaluate the ethical issues and conflicts inherent to ... political issues"
- The course outlines for PLSC 200, 210, 215 and 310 include the following student learning outcome: "Demonstrate understanding of the rights and duties of a citizen through participation in the political system."
- In addition, all of our courses emphasize the information literacy and critical thinking skills necessary in building an informed citizenry that is engaged in selecting and holding to account engaged and informed political leadership.

2023-24 Program Review

- Students engage in a wide range of civic engagement activities, such as registering people to vote, writing letters to their elected officials, and volunteering for political organizations and political campaigns.

Consistent with CSM's "Solidarity Statement," and CSM's institutional priority of Antiracism/Equity:

- The course outlines for PLSC 100, 200, 210, and 215 include the following student learning outcome: "Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy."
- The PLSC 110 course outline includes the following student learning outcome: "Discuss the impact of regional, historical, ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political institutions, issues and policy."
- The PLSC 130 course outline includes the following student learning outcome: "Discuss the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on international relations."
- The PLSC 150 course outline includes the following student learning outcome: "Discuss how different political theories conceptualize the impact of ethnic, cultural and economic diversity on political issues and policy."

Let me share some examples of how the curriculum in our core courses reflect the commitment to equity, solidarity and social justice. While I cannot speak to the curriculum in course sections taught by adjunct faculty, I teach half the course sections offered by the program each semester, and it's my hope that my own approach is representative of the program.

The foundation course in the political science program is PLSC 200, which covers national, state and local government. Students take weekly online quizzes on the chapters in the textbooks (one focused on the national government, the other focused on state and local government). The interactive part of the course focuses on discussions and debates. Roughly every other week, students study a new issue of controversy through a variety of media and then engage in a discussion or debate. Topics are usually closely related to equity/solidarity/social justice. Examples:

- Consensual crimes such as drugs and prostitution (disproportionately impacting people of color and women)
- White privilege
- Immigration
- Voter suppression/disenfranchisement
- Habeas corpus and the "war on terror" (disproportionately impacting Arabs and Muslims)
- Campaign finance (the amplification of the political power of the wealthy elite, often to the disadvantage of women and people of color)
- Foreign policy (how support for corrupt/repressive foreign governments and military interventions can lead to human rights abuses, extreme inequality and, ultimately, an influx of refugees/asylum seekers)

PLSC 210, our course that focuses on national politics from an historical perspective, takes this a step further. In addition to the discussion/debate assignments above, its core textbook, *American Government in Black and White*, looks at the history of American politics through the lens of race relations.

Both courses also have a capstone political participation assignment that can be fulfilled by multiple options. Most students draw upon what they've learned from the social justice/equity components of

the course and choose to volunteer for a political campaign, an elected official, or a political organization— or to write a series of letters to their elected representatives to request changes to public policy. In other words, they go beyond just learning about equity/social justice/solidarity and attempt to put those lessons into practice as an active participant in the political system.

2. Results of Previous Program Review (200-500 words)

- a) Describe the results of your previous Program Review’s action plan and identified equity gaps.
- Previous Goals
 - Results Achieved
 - Changes Implemented
 - Plans still in progress
 - Any notable or surprising results and outcomes

Goal 1: Increase enrollment in the program

- Unfortunately, there’s been a significant decline in enrollment, from 58.4 FTES in 2020-21 to 40.9 in 2022-23.

Goal 2: Increased student participation in politics/government internships (gaining political science-related work experience)

- Still working on this. Post-pandemic, internships are becoming more widely available.

- b) Explain any curriculum or programmatic changes since last program review
- To specific courses, or to any discipline as a whole
 - Includes degree, certificate, or course sequences, program delivery or structure, etc.

Course outlines have been updated to raise the level of recommended preparation to “Completion of, or enrollment in ENGL 100, or ENGL 105.” This was in response to a large percentage of students taking political science courses who appeared to be poorly prepared for the reading- and writing-intensiveness of political science course courses.

I completed QOTL 2 training.

- c) Discipline-level and SLO (Student Learning Outcomes) assessment/Student Services and SAO (Service Area Outcomes) assessment: Describe learning or area assessment plans implemented since last Program Review, including any activities undertaken to address equity or delivery mode gaps. Your summary should explain:
- SLO/SAO
 - What did the assessment focus on?
 - Was it discipline/program/service-specific or interdisciplinary/a collaboration between programs or services?
 - Why was it prioritized (e.g., equity issue, key disciplinary issue, etc.)?
 - Assessment results

2023-24 Program Review

- What was the activity or intervention?
- What were the outcomes?
- Program improvements implemented
 - What did you learn from it?
- What changed?

I assessed student learning outcomes via anonymous student surveys in sections of PLSC 200 and PLSC 210. Students rated how much they learned on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest level of learning). For both courses, more than 50% of students (often more than 70%) rated their learning as a 4 or 5 on 15 of the 16 topics covered in the courses; on most topics, less than 15% of students rated their learning a 1 or 2.

3. Current Program Review (200-400 words)

Please use the statistics below, which are college-wide, as a reference. Please refer to the Program Review website for individual program data.

College Stats 2022-23	Ethnicity	First Gen	Age	Gender	Total
Headcount (unduplicated)	Latinx 32% White 26% Asian 20% Filipino 7% Multiracial 7% Black 3% Pacific Islander 2% Unknown 3% Native American 0%	45% of our students are the first in their family to go to college.	66% 24 yrs. and under 18% Ages 25-34 17% over 35 yrs.	49% Female 48% Male 3% Non-disclosed or non-binary	13,180 students
Enrollments (duplicated)	Latinx 35% White 26% Asian 16% Filipino 6% Multiracial 8% Black 3% Pacific Islander 3% Unknown 3% Native American 0%	47% of enrollments were by students who are the first in their family to go to college.	76% 24 yrs. and under 13% Ages 25-34 11% over 35 yrs.	48% Female 50% Male 2% Non-disclosed or non-binary	37,014 enrollments

- a) **Student population equity:** Discuss any gaps in student success, persistence, satisfaction, utilization or enrollment across student populations (statistics provided for ethnicity, first-generation, age, gender and total enrollment), or student population served.
- Findings: What has changed from the previous program review?
 - Analysis: What factors do you feel contribute to these gaps?
 - Resources: If you were granted a resource request, please note what that was and the impact it had.
 - Plans to address opportunity gaps: What has your program done to address these gaps? Include information on:
 - interventions implemented

2023-24 Program Review

- any successes in closing gaps
- ongoing challenges

Findings	Analysis	Resources	Plans to Address Opportunity Gaps
<p>1. Student success rates fell from 81.3% in 2020-21 to 73.1% in 2021-22 to 62.7% in 2022-23.</p>	<p>This can be explained, in part, by a return to historical norms. Prior to 2020-21, success rates were in the 60s and 70s, like in 2021-22 and 2022-23. Faculty were acutely aware of the physical, economic and mental-health challenges our students faced during the pandemic and understandably graded a lot easier from spring 2020 through at least fall 2021. This is consistent with the trends in success rates.</p> <p>This can also be explained, in part, by a deterioration of students' preparation for college-level work, as a result of the pandemic. Academic studies (https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/california-test-scores-show-devastating-impact-pandemic-student-learning) have found evidence of a sharp decline in English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) from 2018-19 to 2021-22 among high school students.</p> <p>This decline was particularly pronounced for economically disadvantaged, Black, Latino, and Pacific Islander students. These are the same groups that have seen the steepest declines in student success rates in political science. The high school cadres that experienced the sharpest ELA drops during the pandemic have in large part graduated and are now students at CSM.</p> <p>Given that success in (reading- and writing-intensive) political science courses is greatly dependent on ELA skills, it's not surprising that success rates have fallen over the past couple of years.</p> <p>Also, AB 705 may have resulted in a lot more students enrolling in political science courses (all of which are extremely reading- and writing-intensive) without adequate reading</p>		<p>To the extent that the drop in success rates is the result of exogenous factors such as declining rates of ELA skills among former high school students who are enrolling in community college, it seems as if this needs to be addressed by students taking more English writing courses before enrolling in political science courses.</p> <p>With regard to the increasing numbers of students who fail to do their assignments, resulting in D or F grades—perhaps someone can do a study to find out the reasons behind this phenomenon. (My emails to such students usually go unanswered.) It's difficult to determine what needs to be done to remedy the problem without knowing the cause.</p>

2023-24 Program Review

	<p>and writing skills. Such students would be unlikely to succeed in political science courses.</p> <p>In general, I've noticed an increase in students who fail to do their assignments. I send such students messages every week or two, identifying the missing assignments and asking whether they're ok. In most cases, I get no response. Regardless of whether such students drop the course or stay in the course and earn a D or F, they lower the overall student success rate.</p>		
2.			
3.			

b) **Modes of Delivery equity:** Discuss any gaps in student success, persistence, satisfaction, utilization or enrollment, and student population served across different delivery modes. Please comment on in person services/instruction vs hybrid services options/instruction vs completely online services/instruction.

- Changes since last Program Review: What has changed, in terms of gaps, since last program review?
- Analysis of gaps: What factors do you feel contribute to these gaps?
- Plans to address opportunity gaps: What has your program done to address these equity gaps? Include information on:
 - interventions implemented
 - any successes in closing gaps
 - ongoing challenges

Changes since last Program Review	Analysis of Gaps	Plans to Address Opportunity Gaps
1. The success rates in face-to-face, distance/online and distance/hybrid is very similar, ranging from 64% to 68%. The success rate for distance/synchronous is higher, at 80%.	Distance/synchronous sections were taught primarily during the pandemic, a time when faculty were grading easier than normal, in recognition of the hardships students were experiencing at that time.	The gap should disappear on its own without any action. Distance/synchronous sections generally are no longer being offered.

2.		
3.		

(c) **Challenges and Opportunities:** Describe any **other** particular challenges, opportunities, or other factors that impact the success of your program (e.g., natural or health disasters, assessing whether a degree program is meeting its learning outcomes, developing new degree programs or courses, adapting to a changing student population, keeping a flagging program alive, starting a learning community, resources, etc.).

4. Planning

a) **Discipline-level and SLO (Student Learning Outcomes) assessment/Student Services and SAO (Service Area Outcomes) assessment for 2023-2025:** Describe learning or area assessment plans for this Program Review cycle, **including any activities planned to address equity or delivery mode gaps.** Your summary should explain:

- SLO/SAO
 - What will your assessment focus on?
 - Is it discipline/program/service-specific or will it be interdisciplinary/a collaboration between programs or services?
 - Why is it prioritized (e.g., equity issue, key disciplinary issue, etc.)?
- Assessment plan
 - What is the planned activity or intervention?
 - Describe next steps and the timeline for your SLO/SAO assessment
- Resources for SLO/SAO assessment
 - What resources will you need to assess changes (i.e., PRIE support in the form of specific data, surveys, etc.)?

SLOs/SAOs	Assessment Plan	Resources for SLO/SAO assessment
------------------	------------------------	---

2023-24 Program Review

1. Effectively communicate the impact of state and non-state actors on the development and implementation of policy. (Effective Communication)	Continue to assess in course sections by student surveys	N/A
2. Critically analyze political theories and ideologies. (Critical Thinking)	Continue to assess in course sections by student surveys	N/A
3. Evaluate ethical issues and conflicts inherent to political issues. (Ethical Responsibility)	Continue to assess in course sections by student surveys	N/A

b) Program goals

Based on your current review of your program's equity gaps, learning assessments and challenges and opportunities, identify specific goals and plans. Please note that whereas SLOs/SAOs involve assessing and measuring a specific skill or knowledge students will be able to do/understand upon successful completion of a course, program, service, and/or degree/certificate, program goals reflect overall aspects of your program or service you hope to improve.

Please note that closing equity gaps is a College-wide priority. If there are significant equity gaps in student success, persistence, satisfaction, utilization or enrollment, and student population served in your program, these should be addressed in at least one of your goals (see 3a and 3b).

For each goal, you should include:

- A brief description of the issue being addressed (equity gap, etc.)
- What actions you plan to take
- What measurable outcomes you hope to achieve
- A timeline
- Who is responsible
- What support do you anticipate needing in order to achieve your goals and plans, including:
 - Professional development activities
 - Institutional support
 - Collaborations
 - Training

2023-24 Program Review

- Resources

Goal	Actions	Measurable Outcomes	Timeline	Responsible Party	Support Needed
1. Increase enrollment in program	Redesign political science page on CSM website	Increase in FTES	Completion by fall 2024	Lee Miller	Collaboration with CSM Web Content Coordinator
2. Increase student participation in politics/government internships (gaining political science-related work experience)	Work with Cooperative Education Program	Increase in number of political science majors enrolled in Cooperative Education Program jobs/internships with government agencies, elected officials and political organizations.	Speak with program service coordinator in fall 2024. Establish an action plan by end of spring 2025. Implement action plan according to timeline established in action plan.	Lee Miller	Collaboration Cooperative Education Program Collaboration with government agencies, elected officials and political organizations.
3.					

5. CE Only

- Review the program's available labor market data, as applicable, and explain how the program meets a documented labor market demand. Here are two relevant links:
 - [State of California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division](#) (the official source for California Labor Market Information):
 - [Employment data](#) (by Program Top Code) from the State Chancellor's Office
- Summarize student outcomes in terms of degrees and certificates. Identify areas of accomplishments and areas of concern.

2023-24 Program Review

- c) Review and update the program's Advisory Committee information. Provide the date of most recent advisory committee meeting and outcomes of the meeting (updates, changes, new members, etc.).
- d) What strategies have you discussed in your recent Advisory Committee's meetings to meet the needs and challenges of getting people retrained and back to work?