

Political Science

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:

Senate in February 2025

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in January 2025

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

TO: Joanne MacLean, Chair, Senate

FROM: James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

CC: Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

DATE: January 31, 2025

RE: Political Science Program Review

The Political Science program within the College of Arts program review in 2024. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review at its January 29, 2025 meeting and recommend this program review to the Senate for approval.

The APPC expressed appreciation for the work done in the program review by the Political Science faculty and staff and the dean. And it thanked Political Science for its work on Indigenization, publicizing a two-year plan for students, and the development of an implementable action plan.

Attachment:

- Action Plan and Dean's Summary

Program Review: Action Plan
Political Science

Instructions: Consider the data gathered through the program review process (i.e., self-study report, external reviewer report and recommendations and commendations, survey results, consultations with community and industry partners, and internal consultations). Identify goals for improvement of the program over the next five-seven years. Detail the specific steps that will be taken to advance these goals including key milestones, measurable outcomes, and people responsible for implementing the changes. Depending on the results of the program review, some areas may require greater attention than others. Please add/remove rows to each section, as needed.

Curriculum and Assurance of Learning			
Goal #1: A course on Statistics for the Social Sciences should be developed and added to the list of courses that satisfy the POSC 'stats' requirement. Interdisciplinary by nature, such a course need not be developed by POSC faculty. This would remove a current pain point whereby POSC students lament the lack of POSC-relevant content among current statistics offerings.			
Political Science fully supports this initiative, and we are eager to work with other departments in developing this course. The Associate Dean, Social Sciences, will work with POSC and other departments (e.g. Crim and Math & Stats) to explore the feasibility of this concept (including faculty capacity to teach the course)			
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Approved by POSC in principle. Meet with other departments and discuss. Analyze feasibility.	Meet to discuss	Winter-Spring 2025	Department, Head and ADF
Develop OCO and curricular approval	If feasible, develop course outline for approval through CACC and UEC for Fall 2026 implementation.	Fall 2025	To be determined, based on ownership of the course
Goal #2: Add a requirement that POSC Majors take 6-credits of 400-level seminars rather than 3 credits. This would align POSC graduates admirably with a standard requirement of graduate work (namely, a focus on two of the disciplinary sub-fields), and assuming no increase in the number of seminar sections offered, it would also help with enrollment in these seminars: Majors would be directed into two seminars rather than one. Given the exceptional quality of these learning experiences, a 6-credit requirement should ramify favourably upon POSC students' overall program experience.			
This recommendation aligns with the best practices in the field of political science (for example, graduate programs include a major subfield and a minor subfield). This will help those going to graduate school and will help students get a wider breadth and depth of the discipline.			
The department plans to strike a Program Structure subcommittee to consider the impact on the program structure and budgetary feasibility so that students have the opportunity to take a seminar in two major subfields.			

At the same time, given current discussions about the application of the 150-rule, the department is concerned that offering more seminars will put our faculty at a disadvantage when it comes to reaching 150 students per year.

POSC is ready to work with the dean's office to implement this excellent recommendation.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Program Structure subcommittee	Proposal to revise program structure Work with Associate Dean, Wade Deisman in the process	Winter- Spring 2025	Edward, Hamish, Jessica, Noah, Simon (will join post-leave)
Develop a seminar course for the Public Policy Subfield.	Pending results of program structure analysis, develop Public Policy seminar for approval by CACC and UEC	Fall 2025	Noah Schwartz

Goal #3:

POSC indicated a four-year course plan, which shows an admirable level of forethought. On the other hand, POSC communicates its plans to students only one semester ahead and does so in a rather ad-hoc way. We recommend sharing two-year plans with students, and doing so as widely as possible (website, social media, handouts, posters, etc.). While such materials should include the proviso that the plan is subject to change, they would nonetheless enhance student course planning.

POSC accepts this recommendation. We will post a two-year plan on our website and advertise on other platforms to bring awareness to students and enhance their course planning and graduation plans.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
List two-year course offerings on the website, posters, and social media platforms by following UFV guidelines.	Courses posted to website, posters, and social media	Winter-Spring 2025	Edward, Natasha

Goal #4:

We encourage POSC to reflect further upon the asymmetrical status of the political theory subfield in its program structure.

The history of political thought is an integral element of the discipline and one of its four standard subfields. Traditionally this has been an area of strength in POSC, and we applaud POSC's ongoing commitment to it. Still, there are incongruities regarding the political theory requirements in the POSC Major.

First, if POSC 120 is not 'truly' a theory course, and therefore not aligned with a disciplinary sub-field, why require that Majors take it? Unless POSC 120 is viewed as a theory course, its required status in a program structure defined by the four 'pillars' (i.e., subfields) appears arbitrary.

Second, the BA Major treats political theory quite differently from, and much more prescriptively than, other subfields. All Majors must take 6 credits of 300-level theory courses (and 9 credits of theory in total, if POSC 120 is indeed classified as 'theory'). With every other subfield, by contrast, Majors face only a 3-credit lower-level requirement.

We encourage POSC to consider whether this imbalance might be eased. For example, the political theory subfield could be made to align with the other subfields in having one 3-credit lower-level course requirement (as opposed to requiring 6 credits at the 300-level, as no other subfield does). This would enhance student flexibility and remove a seemingly incongruous emphasis upon one subfield in the BA structure. (An alternative, less symmetrical option would be simply to lower the 6-credit 300-level theory requirement to 3-credits).

Most Political Science programs (UBC, SFU, KPU, TRU, etc.) run lower-level political theory courses, so it is not a standard assumption within the discipline that this material cannot be effectively taught below the 300-level.

Perhaps these are merely harmless idiosyncrasies in program structure. Then again, flexibility is *prima facie* preferable to unnecessary restrictiveness in program design; and since not all students with an interest in politics necessarily embrace the political theory subfield, some such adjustment might also make the program more welcoming. (We do not have supporting evidence for this speculation, but a program wishing to grow its intakes will be open to considering such possibilities).

This recommendation has implications for the existing Political Science program structure. POSC has formed a program structure subcommittee as indicated above to consider this recommendation in their deliberations.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Program Structure subcommittee established	Produce a proposal to revise program structure Work with Associate Dean, Wade Deisman in the process	Winter-Spring 2025	Edward, Hamish, Jessica, Noah, Simon (will join post-leave)

Goal #5:

POSC should consider enhancing its ties to work-integrated learning spaces at UFV, such as Arts Worx, and raise the profile of such opportunities as a viable option among POSC students. As prospective students and their families may seek reassurance regarding 'employability' for POSC graduates, beefing up this connection and promoting it can help with student recruitment. POSC faculty should work with Arts Worx to identify opportunities that are attractive to POSC students, as the current offerings appear to be limited to relevant POSC fields.

Political science accepts this recommendation and will work to deepen the relationship between the department and work-integrated learning spaces at UFV.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Identify work-related opportunities for students	Meet with Tamara Courage to discuss and identify practicum opportunities for POSC students Meet with the Arts COOP Coordinator, David Warkentin, to explore COOP opportunities for POSC students Provide the information to students	Winter 2025 Winter 2025	Edward Natasha
Goal #6: We recommend that POSC consider trimming its list of 300-level courses to ensure a better chance of running the full slate within the life-cycle of an average BA Major. POSC has 23 elective 300-level courses on the books. This is a lot for a relatively small program (e.g., the similarly-sized KPU program has 10), and the impossibility of running all of these courses in a reasonably timely fashion may mean that not all of them are viable options for many POSC students.			
Although POSC accepts this recommendation, we need to stress that the External Review Committee did not acknowledge that POSC offers its courses on rotation as contained in the four-year plan. Nevertheless, the program structure subcommittee will consider this recommendation.			
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Program Structure Committee to consider recommendation	Proposal to revise program structure and four-year course rotation Work with Associate Dean, Wade Deisman in the process	Winter-Spring 2025	Edward, Hamish, Jessica Noah, Simon (will join post-leave)
Goal #7: We encourage POSC to continue to reflect upon a shared vision of POSC 100 and its purpose within the wider program. We noted some ambiguity and ambivalence around POSC 100. The student focus group was unenthusiastic about it. Faculty seem to agree that it has the potential to be useful in recruiting non-degree students into the program. Some faculty affirm its value as a 'buffet' course – a royal sampler allowing casual students to get a taste for the discipline – while others would prefer a stronger narrative through-line tying the course together.			
POSC takes notice of this feedback. The Program Structure Subcommittee will consider it in their deliberations.			

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Program Structure Subcommittee to consider in their deliberations	Proposal to revise program structure Work with Associate Dean, Wade Deisman in the process	Winter-Spring 2025	Edward, Hamish, Jessica, Noah, Simon (will join post-leave)
Goal #8: We recommend that POLITALK be more fully resourced so that the department can continue to attract high-impact guests. POSC should consider a mix of in-person and Zoom/online events, helping to contain costs while also maximizing public engagement, and consider liaising with UFV Community Engagement to maximize public awareness of this series. Political Science fully accepts this recommendation. POSC looks forward to strengthening the diversification of its POLITALK programing, and use the extra budget allocation to bring in more speakers from outside the Fraser Valley, and explore other funding opportunities, like Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF).			
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Diversify and grow POLITALK programming	- Bringing in at least one external speaker per year. - Dean's Office has designated \$2,200 for Politalk in operational budget as part of its submission for 2025-26 and ongoing. - Apply for extra funding	Ongoing	Edward, Noah, Natasha
Goal # 9			
Consider the role and status of the Extended Minor in the POSC Program.	Produce a proposal to revise program structure that considers the Extended Minor Work with Associate Dean, Wade Deisman in the process	Winter-Spring 2025	Edward, Hamish, Jessica Noah, Simon (will join post-leave)

Student Achievement	
Goal #10 Administer student and graduate surveys to better track student success and outcomes.	
Political science will work with Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) to obtain more data. The department already collects this data informally but could supplement it with the help of the University.	
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>	

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Liaise with Institutional Research and Planning	Political Science to collect and house data in time for next program review.	Ongoing	Edward/Department Head Natasha/ Department Coordinator (to assist)

Goal #11:

Request detailed data from Institutional Research and Planning to examine retention and completion rates for students from diverse backgrounds to assess whether students are supported.

The department agrees with this recommendation and will work with IRP going forward.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Liaise with Institutional Research and Planning	Collect data from IRP to inform program structure review Track change over time for continuous improvement	Winter-Spring 2025 Ongoing	Edward/Department Head Natasha/ Department Coordinator (to assist)

Goal #12:

Encourage a stronger relationship with Academic Advising to identify areas of student needs and supports with respect to program requirements and course offerings.

The department agrees with this recommendation.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Liaise with Academic Advising	Consult with Advising to inform revisions to program structure Set up ongoing meetings with Academic Advising	Winter 2025 Ongoing	Edward/Department Head Natasha/ Department Coordinator (to assist)

Governance and Resources

Goal #13:

Provide a dedicated seminar room for the Department of Political Science.

The department strongly agrees with this recommendation and looks forward to working with the Dean to find a suitable existing space. A seminar room is necessary to facilitate student learning during seminars, especially given that we are considering expanding our offerings of 400-level seminars based on the External Review Committee's recommendation that students complete at least two of the seminars for their BA.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Work with the Dean's Office on a suitable room for seminars	Schedule a meeting with Dr. Sylvie Murray to discuss solution	Winter 2025	Edward

Goal #14:

Increase the department head's course release to three (3) sections.

The department strongly agrees with this recommendation, given the arduous and uncompensated workload placed on the department head. We note that this is still less than the compensation for the POSC head before the pandemic.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Work with the Dean	- Meeting with Sylvie - Receipt of course release	Winter 2025/Ongoing	Edward

Goal #15:

Expand the site visit to include tours of facilities used by the department.

Political Science agrees with this recommendation.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Ensure inclusion of site visit during next program review	Work with the PDQA's Office to ensure this happens at the next program review.	2029	Department Head

Goal #16:

Improve coordination with the Department and other university bodies like Community Engagement.

The department strongly agrees and plans to coordinate with the College of Arts Digital Communication Strategist and the Marketing Department to broaden the impact of the department's community engagement activities, including Politalk.

We should note that our faculty routinely engage with the community, including local and national media, and international media.

The department encourages the university to expand its efforts to track, promote, and support UFV faculty research, community work, and media engagement. We note that peer universities have awards for faculty engagement with the media.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Liaise with CoA Digital Communication Strategist	- Meeting with Bianca Blati - Substantive compensation for faculty who regularly engage with the community and media.	Winter 2025/ Ongoing	Edward

Planning and Sustainability

Goal #17:

Improve coordination with the Department and other university bodies like Community Engagement and Advising.

Please see above

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Please see above	Please see above	Please see above	Please see above

Goal #18:

Pursue a multi-disciplinary Public Policy minor.

The department agrees with this recommendation in principle but requires additional resources, including program development assistance and, if a full program proposal is needed, a course release for the program developer will be discussed.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Follow up with Dean	Meeting with Dr. Sylvie Murray	As soon as possible	Edward

	Setting up Policy Minor Program Development Committee		
	Revision of the Applied Ethical and Political Philosophy Minor or development of a concept paper and program Proposal for Policy Minor		
Goal #19: If the policy minor is successful, move towards developing a fifth field in political science: public policy. This would mean adding a fifth senior seminar and, perhaps, the requirement of the introduction to public policy course for all majors.			
The department has invested significant resources in developing this subfield, including the hiring of a faculty member and the development of several new courses. We note that we have strong student demand for these courses. This will align well with the policy minor if developed.			
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Continue developing curriculum	Create a Public Policy seminar	Spring 2025	Noah
Goal #20: Increase the sessional pool, especially in the field of Canadian, but also possibly International Relations.			
The department agrees and will recruit sessionals as needed.			
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): <i>Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.</i>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Recruit Sessionals	Hire sessionals	As needed	Department Head
Goal #21: Include some political science courses in the BA program core competencies in the area of civic and intercultural engagement.			
The department strongly supports this recommendation and notes that we are actively providing feedback during the BA Program revision process.			

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Continue to participate in BA Program revision process	Attend CAC, provide feedback and vote on revision	Ongoing	All POSC faculty
Submit courses to revised BA Program competencies	Include POSC courses in the revised BA program	TBD	All POSC faculty

Dean's Summary Statement

See Memo provided

Action Plan reviewed and approved by:

Information verified by:

Department Head: Dr. Edward Akuffo

Date: December 24, 2024

Dean: Dr. Sylvie Murray

Date: January 4, 2025

Dean's Summary Report

Political Science Program Review, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Arts

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean of Arts, January 4, 2025

Introduction

Program review for the Political Science major, extended minor and minor in the Bachelor of Arts occurred in Winter and Fall 2024 in accordance with Policy 189.

The Program Review was informed by a self-study conducted by the department in accordance with the template provided by UFV's program review office and the Dean's scope letter. The External Review Committee (ERC) conducted an in-person site visit on October 10-11, 2024. The site visit included meetings with a Political Science student focus group, the Political Science faculty and staff, and the Dean of Arts. The External Review Report (ERR) was received on November 3.

We wish to express our appreciation to the members of the ERC for their thoughtful observations and advice. They made a number of suggestions that will be helpful as we move forward with the Political Science program. The department submitted an Action Plan that addressed all recommendations made by the ERC. I have asked the department to also address a question raised in the scope letter (regarding the Extended minor) that was not discussed by the ERC. The summary below and Action Plan attached includes several action items that will ensure realization of the panel's main recommendations in the next few years.

The main recommendations and goals resulting from the program review pertain to the following areas of program improvement:

- Data gathering: work with IRP to identify retention and completion rates for students from diverse backgrounds (goal #11) and consult with Academic Advising to identify areas of student needs (goal #12)– to be done prior to program structure analysis
- Program structure: Recommendations related to curriculum will be considered by the department, in consultation with the Associate Dean, in the Spring of 2025. Budgetary feasibility will be explored before detailed courses are developed and major program changes prepared for review and approval in Fall 2025-Winter 2026. Specific changes to be explored are:
 - Creation of a Statistics course for the Social Sciences (goal #1)
 - Add a required 400-level seminar (goal #2)
 - Clarify the role of political theory in the program structure (goal #4)
 - Review list of 300-level courses (goal #6)
 - Role of POSC 100 in the program (goal #7)
 - Value of the Extended minor in relation to the minor and the major (goal #9)
- Develop an interdisciplinary Policy Studies Minor (goal #18 and #19)
- Publicize a two-year plan for students and advisors (goal #3)
- Enhance its ties to work-integrated learning (goal #5)
- Strengthen POLITALK (goal #8)
- Space and Head releases (goals #13 and #14)
- Broaden the impact of community and media engagement activities (#17)

The department should be proud of the following commendations made by the external reviewers:

- Curriculum and Assurance of Learning: good coverage of core disciplinary subfields, excellent capstone seminars and accomplished faculty
- Student Achievement: range and depth of faculty expertise, and mentorship provided by faculty to prepare students for graduate school and law school
- Governance and Resources: The library is commended for responding to faculty requests for new monographs
- Planning and Sustainability: development and revision of new courses in recent years.

The ERC recommended that site visits for program reviews include tours of facilities used by the department (goal #15).