

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

Designation Code: 02-03 CAPR 16

Date Submitted: July 15, 2003

To: The Academic Senate

From: Committee on Academic Planning and Resources (CAPR)

Subject: Political Science Five-Year Review

Action Requested: Approval of CAPR's report on the Political Science Five-Year Review and continuation of the program without modification

1. Background

Overview Description of the Program

The Political Science Department offers a B.A program that combines elements of liberal arts education with professional preparation through its options in Prelaw and Public Affairs/Administration. The primary goal of the B.A degree program in Political Science is to promote knowledge and understanding of politics and society through instruction and scholarship in the areas of American government, comparative government, political theory, international relations, public administration and public law. The career opportunities for graduates of this program are mainly in the public service area. Students who successfully complete the pre-law option would typically pursue a law degree. The Department has a successful internship program and two very active clubs (Political Science Club and Model United Nations Model). The faculty are very active in the areas of teaching, service and scholarship.

The data warehouse figures indicate a slight decline in FTES, from 157.6 in Fall 1998 to 150.1 in Fall 2002. Overall the department was able to maintain a healthy enrollment.

In 2002, the department had 5.33 tenure-track (TT) FTEF compared to approximately 10 in 1997. Over half the instruction in the department has been performed by lecturers. During the 2002/2003 academic year, the department has submitted a tenure-track search request for a faculty with specialty in American Government.

The Department has worked hard to respond to the suggestions of the last outside reviewer in the areas of curriculum improvement, instruction, community building and in improving program assessment.

Overview of the documents submitted to CAPR

To comply with CAPR Policies and Procedures for Five Year Reviews and Plans (00-01 CAPR 7), Political Science submitted to CAPR a collection of the four required documents: 1) Self Study 2) Five-Year Plan (2003-2008) 3) Report of the External Reviewer 4) Program's Response to the External Reviewer's Report. The document also included the following: a copy of the department

assessment program, statistical data about the program (enrollment history, FTES, etc), catalog copies of political science requirements at CSUH and at comparable institutions, a summary of the pass rate of political science majors and their GP A's relative to all CSUH students, a copy of recent tenure-track requests made by the department, a copy of the 1998 outside reviewer report and a summary of faculty achievements.

2. Five-Year Program Review Self/Study (1997/98-2002/03)

Summary of Specific Areas of the Self Study

To fine tune their program, the department has worked hard to respond to the suggestions of the last external reviewer (Feb. 1998). To improve instructional performance, the department continued to hold periodic meetings of TT faculty to discuss teaching issues and to share "best practices in instruction" with each other. The department has strengthened the curriculum by adding a required course on "Value in Politics, Administration and Law" to all three versions of the major. The department also now requires all students to take a Capstone course that includes an assessment component. The department also added a service component to the Public Affairs/Administration option and dropped a few courses. The department continued its community outreach practices by offering forums on political science subjects. The department also supports two clubs, the Political Science Club and the United Nations Club. Both clubs have faculty advisors.

The department has been focusing on outcomes assessment in the last few years. The outcomes envisioned cover both skills and subject matter in each of the subfields in the major. Some faculty has begun to structure their courses with outcomes in mind. A focus group and exit questionnaire have been incorporated into the sections of the Capstone course. Currently, the curriculum is being reexamined to assess whether additional instruction in the skills goals is needed.

The CSUH program requires somewhat fewer units than most other programs, especially for the traditional major. However, the distribution requirements (American Government, Comparative Government, International Relations and Political theory) are standard and equivalent to what is offered in other programs. CSUH differs by adding Public Law to the aforementioned list. By so doing, the department tries to cater to CSUH students who are interested in pursuing a law degree.

Summary of Supporting Data

The quantitative evidence on the "majors by option" sheets from the data warehouse indicates that the number of majors in Fall 2002 is 141 as it was in Fall 1998 (140 students). According to the department records, the option in public affairs has 30-plus majors. Pre-law has 40 majors. The data warehouse figures show a slight decline in FTES, from 157.6 in Fall 98 to 150.1 in Fall 2002. The department feels that, given the nationwide decline in political science majors, the given figures are surprisingly good.

In 1991 the department had 10 TT faculty, this number had declined to 5.0 in 1997 and currently the department is at 5.33. The department has 4 full professors (one of whom is in Pre-Retirement Reduction in Pay), 1 associate professor at 0.67 (0.33 in International Studies), 1 assistant professor and 2 lecturers. In Fall 2002, the SFR for full time faculty was 16.25. The SFR for part-time faculty was 25.13. The department has made four TT requests in recent years (97-98, 98-99, 00-01 and 02-03).

3. Outside Reviewer's Comments and The Department's Response

Dr. Terry Christensen, Professor of Political Science at San Jose State University served as the external reviewer of the Political Science Program at CSUH. Dr. Christensen reviewed various documents including the department self-study and five-year plan along with various appendices and the report of the previous external reviewer. Dr. Christensen also reviewed the department's website and its curriculum in the CSUH on-line catalog. Dr. Christensen met with all full time faculty members, a lecturer, the department secretary, students, and the Acting Dean of the School of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences.

A summary of the external reviewer comments is provided below:

Enrollment and Service to students: Dr. Christensen's conclusions were: despite, limited staffing, declining budgets and the necessity of offering fewer sections of classes, the department has weathered a decline in FTES and experienced overall enrollment growth since 1999. Most impressively, the department has maintained the number of majors. Dr Christensen noted that success in maintaining majors at CSUH should be attributed to good teaching and advising as well as to the department's efforts in Pre-law, and Public Affairs/Administration options. Dr Christensen observed that the department commitment to these programs is of great benefit to the university but it constitutes considerable demand on faculty time and energy.

Staffing: Dr. Christensen observed that currently, lecturers teach 50% of the Department's classes. Dr. Christensen praised the lecturers and their role, but noted that they are unable to provide the range of services to students, the department, and the university that full-time faculty members can offer. Dr. Christensen noted that two areas of the curriculum need consistent staffing: US/California Politics and Comparative Politics. Dr. Christensen concluded that the department needs at least two additional faculty members with the top priority position being in U.S./California Politics. Dr Christensen also noted that the department faculty are competent in covering Eastern and Western Europe, but that the department currently relies on lecturers to cover all other regions of the world. Dr. Christensen recommended the hiring of a full-time faculty member in Comparative Politics to better the curriculum development efforts.

Curriculum: Dr. Christensen observed that the political science program at CSUH compares favorably to those of other departments in similar institutions as well as those of some research universities. The department offers all the essential courses in political science and also offers innovative and more specialized courses. Dr. Christensen noted that the department made a tough decision when it decided to eliminate the scope and methods requirements for political science majors and agreed with this decision, although with some reservations. He noted that the course is essential for students who intend to pursue graduate studies, however the department believes that it sends very few majors to graduate study. Dr Christensen recommended that to compensate for the elimination of the methods requirement, the department must make sure that somewhere in the curriculum, political science majors are introduced to the science of political science. Dr Christensen also noted, by reading the Catalog and looking at the course schedules, a thorough review and pruning of courses listed is needed. Sixty upper division courses are listed in the catalog and the reviewer indicated that, these courses cannot be offered on a regular basis with the faculty and budget available. He observed that listing all these courses in the catalog is misleading to students. Even though the department is conscious of this issue, Dr. Christensen recommended an aggressive

curriculum review could strengthen the case for additional hiring and clarify the needs of the program. Dr. Christensen praised some recent changes in the curriculum. The introduction of a course on "Value in Politics, Administration and Law" was a good move by the department. The reviewer also praised the revitalization of the Public Affairs and Administration Option. Dr. Christensen noted that the hiring of a full-time faculty member who serves as an advisor for this option played a vital role in giving it life and in increasing the enrollment. Dr. Christensen noted that the advisor of this option, Dr. Geron, currently supervises interns in addition to a full course load. The reviewer advised that resources should be provided to include internships as part of Geron's course workload. Without such time, it will be difficult to expand the program and provide more students with this valuable opportunity.

Outcomes Assessment: The reviewer praised the department for developing a detailed assessment plan and the faculty for their commitment to carry out the plan. Dr. Christensen noted that this plan compares favorably to others adopted throughout the CSU and at other universities. However, the reviewer indicated that the plan is too ambitious given the current staffing of the department. He was troubled by the fact that even for the purposes of outside review, the department was unable to organize assessment data it has collected in a systematic way and it has not carried out a recent survey of alumni. The reviewer had an opportunity to read a sample of student comments from exit surveys. He recommended that the department should seriously consider scaling back the plan by focusing in the short term on selected elements of the plan.

Student Satisfaction: Dr. Christensen noted that comments from two groups of students were entirely positive and constructive. The one problem that emerged from the reviewer's discussion with the groups concerned scheduling of classes and timely access to needed classes for graduation. The reviewer observed that cutbacks in budget and staff are exacerbating the problem. He noted that the department is aware of the issue and it is doing its best to cope with this problem.

Community Building: Dr. Christensen noted that even though community building is difficult to accomplish on commuter campuses, the political science department seems to have a strong sense of community among both faculty and students. The reviewer praised the department support for the Political Science Club and the Model United Nations Club. Dr. Geron was commended by the reviewer for his trip with students to the Sacramento Legislative Seminar each year.

Faculty Achievement and Support: Dr. Christensen noted that both full-time and part-time faculty are active scholars and several of them have published articles and book reviews during the period under review. The reviewer also noted that the faculty have been involved with curricular and teaching innovation. However, the reviewer indicated that faculty members are spread too thinly across teaching and service to expect much scholarship from them. For some, additional professional contribution was not possible because of insufficient time and support. The reviewer concluded that greater university support would result in an increase in scholarship.

Other Matters: Dr. Christensen made the following observations: the department should consider lecturer access to benefits in making appointments; due to budget constraints, the department is considering offering large sections of selected classes, but the reviewer prefers smaller classes and noted that current class sizes are consistent with other CSU programs, nevertheless, the reviewer recommended that the department should consider proposals for a limited number of large classes to maximize enrollment and shift some resources to other course offerings; the reviewer commended several faculty members for their community outreach, by giving public talks, participation in forums and by providing input to news media. The reviewer praised the efforts made by the

department to visit community colleges; however, it was observed that, given the current staffing, it is unlikely that the department will have the resources to conduct a more systematic outreach effort.

Department's Response: The department found the report of the outside reviewer to be both fair and useful. The department stressed the fact that the loss of resources, combined with the department commitment to general education, the Code requirement, and liberal studies has forced the department to offer the absolute minimum number of courses in the major consistent with a credible program. The department agreed with the reviewer's conclusion that increasing the allocation of full-time faculty positions should be the University's top priority for the program. The department will follow the reviewer's recommendation in making "U.S & California Government" their first priority for a new position. The department also indicated that it intends to undertake a review and pruning of Catalog course listings as recommended by the reviewer. The department was appreciative of the reviewer's praise of the comprehensive assessment plan and agreed to his suggestion that they should scale back by focusing in the short term on selected elements. The department understands the students' desire for a greater variety of courses scheduled at the students' convenience; however, budget problems are making it impossible for the department to stretch its limited resources much further. The department indicated that it will improve its outreach effort by upgrading the program's website and by producing brochures for recruitment purposes. The department concluded the response by emphasizing the fact that to sustain and improve the program, the provision of adequate resources by the university is a must.

4. Program's Five-Year Strategic Plan (2003-2008)

The program plans to wait for a few years while observing the impact of the recent curricular changes before considering any new changes in the curriculum. The department believes that the new curricular changes make the major more attractive. It decided to put on hold its plans to offer a third-career option in Campaign Politics due to the administration's refusal to fund a position and uncertainty about students' interest in this option. Even though the department lost approximately one-third of its sections, the number of majors was not affected. The department plans to continue to do the same things that it believes have sustained the enrollment until now, namely, focus on excellence in teaching, schedule many pre-law and pre-public administration courses, and continue to support the clubs, forums and social events that help in building the community. The department plans to continue experimenting with time schedules for classes with the hope of finding time slots that appeal to most students.

The department plans to use the feedback from the outcomes assessment plan to improve the program. It will continue to request additional faculty members and hopes to have seven full-time faculty in the near future.

5. CAPR's Analysis of the Program's Five-year Review

CAPR received the following documents from the Political Science Department as part of the Five-Year Program Review:

- The Department's Self-Study
- The Department's Five-Year Plan (2002-3-2007-8)
- External Reviewer's Report
- Department's Response to External Reviewer

- Appendices

The Document Format

The material supporting the five-year program review provided by the Department of Political Science followed the required format.

The Five-Year Review

CAPR shares the external reviewer's sentiment that the Political Science Department is doing a great job with limited resources. CAPR recognizes the dedication of the Political Science faculty and staff to their department and students. CAPR commends the faculty on their active participation in teaching, professional and service activities.

CAPR shares the external reviewer's concern that the department is stretched to its limits. CAPR notes that the 50% proportion of lecturer instruction is quite high compared to the 75% regular faculty goal aimed for by the university. CAPR recognizes that due to resignations, retirements and pre-retirement reduction in pay, the department has lost four faculty members in the last five years. CAPR also recognizes the immediate need of the department for a specialist to teach upper division courses in the area of US./California Politics.

CAPR supports the Political Science Department's plan to hire two additional faculty members, the first in 2003-2004, and the second in 2004-2005. This will provide the department with personnel in two critical areas of the program "US./California Politics" and "Comparative Politics". The Department agrees with the external reviewer that priority should be given to the "US./California Politics" specialty.

CAPR commends the department for the recent curricular changes, specially the introduction or expansion of service learning in some courses. As noted by the outside reviewer, this change addresses a major trend in political science and a high priority for the CSU administration and state legislature. CAPR commends the department for developing a detailed assessment plan. CAPR also commends the department for its success in maintaining the number of majors, despite limited staffing and declining budgets. CAPR also recognizes the faculty for their effort in mentoring two very active Clubs, namely, the Political Science Club and the United Nations Model Club.

CAPR shares the outside reviewer's concern that the current listing of courses (60 upper division), double the number of courses listed by the Political Science department at San Jose State university with a faculty double the size of that of CSUH, is misleading to students. The department is aware of this issue, but did not provide in its plan a target year as to when the pruning of courses will be implemented and the change reflected in the CSUH Catalog.

The department eliminated what seems to be an essential requirement in Political Science Programs, namely, "The Scope and Methods" requirement. The outside reviewer accepted this change based on the understanding that most CSUH political science majors aspire to be lawyers and to join public service and very few continue to graduate schools. CAPR recommends that the department start gathering data by tracking its alumni to quantify this claim. Also, it was not clear in the document provided to CAPR as to where and in which courses, students learn about the science of political science after the elimination of the scopes and methods component from the curriculum.

In conclusion, CAPR is satisfied with the performance of the Political Science Program in the past Five- Year Review period for its curriculum development, educational service, and faculty professional activities. CAPR commends the efforts of all those involved, faculty, staff and students in maintaining the quality of the program during difficult times. CAPR recognizes the urgency of hiring a full-time faculty in the area of U.S./California Politics in the immediate future and supports the planned department request for a future TT position to strengthen the "Comparative Politics" component in the program. CAPR concurs with the outside reviewer that Political Science is an academically worthy program that makes an important contribution to the university and community.

6. CAPR Recommendation for Continuation of the Program

Continuation of the program without modification

7. Dates of the Program's Next Five-Year Review

Next Five-Year Review dates: 2007-08