

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

DESIGNATION CODE: 98-99 CAPR 3

DATE SUBMITTED: January 21, 1999

TO: The Academic Senate
FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources
SUBJECT: Five-Year Program Review for the Political Science Department

ACTION

REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve the CAPR Program Review of the Political Science Department

In Fall, 1998, CAPR met with Emily Stoper, Interim Chair of the Political Science Department, to discuss the Department's response to the external review that occurred in February 1998. Prepared by Janet A. Flammang, Associate Professor of Political Science and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Santa Clara University, the review was found by the Department to be "constructive and helpful."

The reviewer met with all the full-time Political Science faculty members and one lecturer. She also attended one class. To a large extent, her review revolves around a set of questions posed by the Department as a means of soliciting advice for ways the program's quality level, believed to be high, could be raised further. The reviewer combined and rearranged the questions into six specific inquiries, sweeping in scope.

How Appropriate are the Department's Planning Goals?

How Can the Department Improve Self-Assessment?

How Can the Department Improve the Quality of Teaching?

How Can the Number of Political Science Majors Be Increased?

How Can the Department Stimulate the Faculty's Professional Work?

How Can the Department Improve Service to Students?

Embedded in the reviewer's thoughtful responses to these questions were numerous suggestions as to how the Department might enhance the quality of its program. Among the most meaningful to emerge were these suggestions:

That the Department hold periodic meetings of regular faculty and lecturers to discuss teaching issues.

That the program focus more on citizenship education and in the process reexamine the curriculum with an eye toward rejuvenating instruction in methodology.

That the Department actively seek ways to build and foster a sense of community, especially between students and faculty, and amongst faculty.

That the Department take steps to improve methods of assessment.

Acknowledging that this is an exciting time for the Department (two new hires in Public Administration/Public Policy and American Government), the reviewer recognized that now is also the time for substantive changes in curriculum, pedagogy, student advising and faculty development.

POLITICAL SCIENCE'S RESPONSE:

Interim Chair Stoper provided CAPR with a measured written response to the Five-Year Review, which was augmented by a Q & A session, candid and wide-ranging, with the Committee.

CAPR was pleased to learn that the Department has moved swiftly and decisively to implement several of the reviewer's suggestions. To wit:

The entire faculty has recently met to share ideas and successful techniques for raising the skill level of their students, especially in the realm of helping them apply theory to specific political situations.

The curriculum is being revised along the lines outlined by the reviewer. Revisions of existing courses, several new course proposals, and structural changes to the program all are in progress. Much of the momentum behind these moves was generated at a faculty retreat at the beginning of the academic year.

To build and foster a sense of community, the Department hosted a dinner for graduating seniors and their families last June. It will become an annual event. The September retreat and teaching workshop appears to have strengthened bonds and ties among the faculty and helped decentralize decision making.

Outreach in the form of contact with local community colleges is occurring on several fronts, perhaps most impressively in the awarding of a joint intersegmental grant (with Los Medanos College) for the purpose of helping high schools better prepare students for college work in social sciences.

New measures of assessment, including a redesigned student course evaluation form and a reinstated practice of annually surveying alumni and graduating seniors are already in place. A new mission statement for the department, a first, is under development. And student portfolios will soon be used as assessment and advising tools.

CAPR'S EVALUATION:

CAPR concurs with the sanguine view of the Political Science program shared by the external reviewer and Interim Chair Stoper. These do indeed appear to be times of increased morale, enhanced by a sense that a genuine "rejuvenation" and "rebirth" is underway. Having lost half its full-time faculty during an 18-month period in 1991-92, the Department has spent most of the 1990s simply "making do," an academic form of jogging in place. Stretched thin by essential commitments, the faculty found it difficult to devote sufficient energy to issues such as curricular reform, long-range planning, and assessment of student outcomes. The much needed additions to the faculty are expected to infuse the Department with "renewed vigor."

Based on the recommendations contained in the Department's Five-Year Review and the substantive changes occurring in response to those recommendations, CAPR concurs with the external reviewer's conclusion that "the Political Science Department is well poised to make a significant contribution to students, the university community, and the public it serves."

Therefore, CAPR recommends the approval of the Five-Year Review and the continuation of the Political Science ~~Department~~ programs without any modifications that are not already in progress.