

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

March 17, 2021

ACTION: **Approve Continuation of Political Science Program at Wayne State College with Annual Monitoring**

Per Policy 4200, existing academic programs shall be reviewed every seven (7) years by each College to determine the quality and effectiveness of each program, the efficiency with which each is delivered, and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Each program is evaluated based on the minimum threshold requirements established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE). Should a program not meet the established thresholds, Nebraska Statute 85-1414 establishes the expectation for the institution and its governing board to complete an in-depth review. Programs continued by the governing board shall be further monitored by the governing board which shall report the status and process of the monitoring to the CCPE.

During its last review, the Political Science Program at Wayne State College did not meet the required minimum 5-year mean threshold for number of graduates for baccalaureate programs, which is seven (7). The program has completed an in-depth review and has recommended continuation of the program. The findings of that review are provided to the Board in the attached report for approval and subsequent submission to the CCPE for consideration for continuation of the program.

The System Office and Wayne State College support the findings of the in-depth review and the recommendation for continuation of the program. For each of these in-depth reviews, the Colleges are asked to outline strategies/approaches for continuing to improve enrollments and graduate production in the future, which warrants ongoing assessment and evaluation by the Board. An annual review of enrollment and graduate numbers will be shared with the Board each Spring term to monitor progress of the program's growth related to these recruitment efforts.

The System Office and Wayne State College recommend approval of the Continuation of Political Science Program at Wayne State College with Annual Monitoring.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 2021 WSC Political Science Program Review Report with In-Depth Review (PDF)

**WSC Existing Program Review Report 2021
Political Science**

1. Section One: Overview of Program Offerings

The Political Science program has five programs that it provides. The program is assessed at the undergraduate and graduate levels with both direct and indirect measures. Changes to programming have been made based on assessment including more focus on internship opportunities, the creation of a political science club, and more student travel.

Program	Teaching Endorsement	Concentration	Minor	Degree	Credits
Political Science	Political Science Subject Endorsement (7-12)			BA, BS	36
Political Science		Political Science		BA, BS	36
Political Science			Political Science		21
Political Science			Pre-Law		21
Political Science			Public Administration		21

This program is not externally accredited.

2. Section Two (Option A): Analysis of Program, Including Adequacy of Resources and Related Concerns

The Political Science major at Wayne State College is the only one in the Nebraska State College System (NSCS). It also is the home to a minor in Political Science, which is one of only two in the NSCS. Additional minors that are serviced through the Political Science program include pre-law and public administration. It is also home to the Public Affairs concentration in the Masters of Science in Organizational Management program, teaching courses that also contribute to the Criminal Justice MSOM concentration. Political science courses also contributes to the social sciences major and social sciences teaching endorsement (with 5 and 7 students in these programs respectively). The Political Science programming is a significant contributor to student credit hours with a five year SCH/FTE average of 601, but more importantly a growing level of demand for Political Science courses as the SCH/FTE has increased from 497 in 2015-2016 to 780 in 2019-2020.

Political Science is one of the preferred majors for students who apply to law-school and/or seek careers in public sector employment. According to data from LSAC Social Science Research, majors in Political Science were by far the most numerous in law school applications, around three times higher than the next major (criminal justice) and Political Science majors had a much higher percentage of applicants admitted to law school (81%) compared to criminal justice (65%).ⁱ The Political Science faculty have played a crucial role in the creation, administration, and programming of the Rural Law Opportunities Program at WSC. This program is a partnership between WSC and the University of Nebraska - College of Law to educate and train students from underserved rural areas in the state.

In addition to the law profession, Political Science is a common major for people seeking careers in public sector employment. One study shows that public sector jobs increased by 29% from 2013-2018 but applications decreased by 8%.ⁱⁱ While law school and public sector employment are typical areas

where Political Science majors are prevalent, it is a major that is widely applicable in the workforce and which serves its majors well in terms of compensation. Nationally over 43,000 degrees were granted in 2017 with the average wage of over \$96,000 compared to \$63,000 for majors in criminal justice and corrections.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Political Science program at WSC is growing, as illustrated by the table below. Due to Political Science faculty marketing their program and working on developing students for market demand employment, the numbers of majors and minors has increased dramatically over the last five years. In particular, there are clear and sustaining trends in Political Science majors and pre-law minors.

In order to continue this very positive trend the Political Science department will further expand the marketing of its program by annually having programming that brings former students back to WSC to discuss their careers. We have done this in the past and marketed it to the campus, and it has helped raise awareness of the potential for careers with a Political Science degree. We are also working with the local city administrator to create a local International City/County Management Association for our students that should open up more opportunities for them to explore careers in local government. We will also explore connecting our students with more opportunities to work in other areas of public service.

	% +/- Over 5 Years	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Political Science Major/Endorsements	+39%	18	13	16	15	21	25
Political Science Minor	+200%	3	5	7	8	12	9
Pre-law Minor	+78%	15	16	26	24	22	25
Public Administration Minor	+60%	5	18	10	10	8	8

Faculty and faculty-related resources

The program has two full-time (1 tenured, 1 tenure-track) faculty members with terminal degrees.

Informational resources (library, technology, data services, etc.)

Conn Library is open approximately 90 hours weekly and serves approximately 224,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members annually. The library's information desk provides service approximately 72 hours weekly. Librarians perform over 200 information literacy instruction classes or guest speaking sessions annually to Wayne State College students and area high schools. Interlibrary loan arrangements with state colleges and universities, as well as with libraries throughout the nation, make available within seven working days (on average) materials not housed in the collection.

The Instructional Technology Center makes a wide array of instructional software, hardware, and equipment available to the campus as well as coordinating satellite downlinks for the campus and the community.

Physical facilities and instructional equipment, if applicable

Classroom space and computing/projection equipment are adequate.

Fiscal resources

Each faculty member is allotted money for professional travel. Equipment items may be purchased through the Department History, Political Science, and Geography.

3. Evidence of Demand and Efficiency (per established CCPE standards for 5-year means)

Number of Degrees/Awards in Program		SCH/FTE
Baccalaureate	7	300
Masters	5	300
Specialist	4	300

		15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	5 yr avg
Student Credit Hours (SCH)		1,119	1,050	1,113	960	1,170	1,082
Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)		2.25	1.88	1.75	1.63	1.50	1.80
SCH/Faculty FTE		497	559	636	591	780	601
Number of Degrees and Awards	BA	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	BS	4	3	6	3	3	3.8
<i>(list degrees/awards separately)</i>							

4. Justification and Evidence of Need

Continuing the Political Science Program is essential to Wayne State College for a number of reasons, which are outlined below.

1. The program is critical to the role and mission of the institution.

WSC MISSION STATEMENT:

Wayne State College is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development. Offering affordable undergraduate and graduate programs, the College prepares students for careers, advanced study, and civic involvement. The College is committed to faculty-staff-student interaction, public service and diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community.

‘Excellence in teaching and learning’

The Political Science program students have excelled in areas of the law and public service both in government and non-profit sectors. There are many WSC Political Science alumni working in critical positions throughout the region. In fact, the current mayor, city manager, and director of economic development in Wayne are all Political Science alumni of WSC. However, our majors have also been successful outside of the region. For instance, the current Managing Director of Government Affairs for Goldman Sachs is a WSC Political Science graduate.

The Political Science faculty work with students on research projects that are of high quality and well received outside of WSC. For instance, in the last few years a faculty member in Political Science worked with an undergraduate on a research project that became the data for an article jointly published with the University of Nebraska Medical Center in the *Journal of Rural Mental*

Health. The success of Political Science majors has also been recognized in teaching awards, as over the last ten years the Political Science department has won several teaching awards at WSC from both students and the faculty.

'Regional service and development'

The Political Science program epitomizes regional service and development. For years the program has provided local organizations research and other technical assistance. Over the years, Political Science faculty have written several reports for area and national organizations in the form of needs assessment and program evaluation, including the SAM Project, the Center for Rural Affairs, Office of Minority Health and Human Services, Northeast Healthcare Partnership, Healthy Start of Northeast Nebraska and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Health, Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environmental Education, and Northern Nebraska Area Health Center. Both current professors are trained and experienced in social science research and willing to assist the region. One of the current faculty spent over a decade on the board of the Center for Rural Affairs. Faculty routinely provide public presentations. In recent years, faculty have presented for the Nebraska LEAD program, Leadership Wayne, League of Women Voters, the Center for Great Plains Studies, and the National Rural Health Association's Rural Health Policy Institute among other organizations.

'Prepares students for careers, advanced study and civic involvement'

Political Science students at Wayne State College are well prepared for careers in public service and the law. The curriculum incorporates significant reading, writing, public speaking, and critical thinking. The faculty of Political Science works to help students get internships and make connections in their area of interest.

'Faculty-staff-student interactions'

The Political Science program is founded on strong relationships between faculty and students. This interaction occurs in a myriad of ways. First, Political Science classes are founded upon classroom engagement between faculty and students. Classroom discussion is central to critical thinking and thus central to all of our instruction. Second, the Political Science faculty have a club that meets regularly with faculty typically being involved in the programming of the club which has included over the years travel, guest speakers, community-service, and on campus discussion of critical issues. In addition to our club we also have an honorary society linked to the national Pi Sigma Alpha honorary society in Political Science. The Political Science faculty also play a key role in programming for the Rural Law Opportunities Program that among other activities builds bonds among students and RLOP faculty. Third, Political Science faculty have a long history of travel with students. Faculty and students have travelled over the years as part of Model United Nations programming, to the state capitol in Lincoln to meet with policy makers and policy advocates, and to Washington, D.C. Finally, the Political Science program epitomizes the personal nature of education that WSC promotes to students. We are small enough to get to know our students and are able to spend significant time with them during office hours, advising, and on research projects. This is why our students have been so successful over the years.

'Public service'

Faculty in Political Science are significantly involved in public service. The faculty are trained in social science research and have used those skills on multiple occasions over the years to provide assistance to public and non-profit organizations in terms of research and analysis. The faculty have participated in area boards including the Center for Rural Affairs, the Northeast Nebraska Health Care Partnership and other local governing committees. Faculty have also been invited to give presentations on health policy to staff at area health care facilities. These experiences are valuable as we have used them to get our students involved in public service as well and at times leading career opportunities for students. Faculty in Political Science routinely provide public talks for area organizations and have participated in discussions with the media, e.g. NET Nebraska. The faculty are well-respected scholars in their disciplines and have published articles with practical application for Nebraska and surrounding states. The Political Science faculty are significantly involved in campus activities and governance.

'Diversity within a friendly and collegial campus community'

Diversity and collegiality are fundamental to Political Science programming. The study of Political Science is deep rooted in the study of pluralism. Thus, all courses and programming are rooted in the study of diversity. Beyond that, the Political Science program routinely engages in programming directed towards the understanding the benefits of diversity such as public talks on issues revolving around diversity including Nebraska LEAD presentations about other countries and research that addresses issues pertaining to underrepresented communities in the region. Further, Political Science faculty participate in on-campus diversity programming through their attendance and promotion of those activities within their classrooms and assistance to student organizations seeking greater awareness of and support for diversity in the campus community.

2. The program contains courses supporting general education or other programs.

The Political Science program is central to the general studies program at WSC, providing courses, in two areas of general studies requirements CAT 8 and CAT 10 (American National Government POS 100 and World Politics POS 110). These courses are routinely filled and demand typically is higher than supply.

The Political Science program is integral to several programs on campus. 1) The Political Science program began offering a concentration in the MSOM program in Public Affairs three years ago. This is a particularly viable growth area as there is increasing demand for Masters level training in the public sector in rural areas. 2) The Political Science program provides online courses for the online undergraduate and MSOM criminal justice programs. 3) The program contributes to the social sciences major and social sciences teaching endorsement. 4) The Political Science faculty also teach social science methods and statistics courses (SSC 300, SSC 319).

3. Student or employer demand, or demand for intellectual property is high and external funding would be jeopardized by discontinuing the program.

The Political Science department is the only Political Science major in the Nebraska State College system. Political Science majors are in high demand in the law and public sector employment and this is particularly true in rural areas. Wayne State College students need access to Political Science

programming not just as a major but also as part of their other programming in the social sciences and education.

4. The program provides unique access to an underserved population or geographical area.

Rural Nebraska faces significant shortages in attorneys as, “31 of Nebraska’s 93 counties have three or fewer lawyers and 11 have no attorneys at all. This shortage creates additional hardships for people in rural areas who need a lawyer’s help with developing an estate plan, handling a divorce, buying a home or business, enforcing a contract or resolving a criminal charge.”^{iv} This shortage has become so concerning that the University of Nebraska/College of Law has partnered with colleges/universities in the state to create the Rural Law Opportunity Program to recruit students from rural areas in Nebraska to attend partnering four-year programs with scholarships and with guaranteed admittance into UNL College of Law upon graduation. Wayne State College and the Political Science program has played a key role in developing this program and several WSC RLOP students are Political Science majors.

Public sector employment - where Political Science majors often find employment - is also facing worker shortages in the future. One study shows that public sector jobs increased by 29% from 2013-2018 but applications decreased by 8%.^v While law school and public sector employment are typical areas where Political Science majors are prevalent, it is a major that is widely applied in the workforce and which serves its majors well in terms of compensation. Nationally over 43,000 degrees were granted in 2017 with the average wage of over \$96,000 compared to \$63,000 for majors in criminal justice and corrections.^{vi}

5. The program meets a unique need in the region, state, or nation.

The Political Science program at WSC is the only one in the Nebraska State College System. Thus, it plays a significant role in helping train lawyers, public administrators, and policy advocates that are typically from rural Nebraska and who want to return to rural Nebraska. A lack of Political Science programming at WSC would force students to attend urban colleges and universities reducing their likelihood of returning to rural Nebraska and undermining their ability to learn about political and policy issues from a rural perspective.

Overall, “Politics is who gets what, when, and how” – Harold Lasswell. The study of Political Science creates a better understanding of the institutions and processes of that influence the world around us. Political Science courses can enrich students’ knowledge of across all fields of study. Table 1 (below) presents a list of majors and minors at Wayne State College that utilize Political Science courses in their own programs.

Table 1. Political Science courses are required, recommended as electives in the following fields at Wayne State College:

Major/ Minor	POS 100 American National Government	POS 110 Intro to World Politics	POS 315 Political Theory	POS 350 American Presidency	POS 355 Politics of the Supreme Court	POS 360 Congressional Politics	POS 365 Comparative Government and Politics	POS 390 Public Budgeting and Finance	POS 402 State and Local Politics	POS 410 Public Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation	POS 420 American Constitutional Law	POS 425 Rights and Liberties	POS 430 Public Policy	POS 445 Public Administration
Emergency Management									elective				elective	elective
Environmental Studies													elective	
History Education	elective													
International Studies		elective					elective							
Journalism				elective					elective				elective	
Mass Communication				elective					elective				elective	
Political Science	required	required	required	elective	elective	elective	required	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective
Political Science Education	required	required	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective
Pre-Law	required		elective		elective						required	elective	elective	
Public Administration	required					elective		elective	elective	elective	elective		required	required
Public and Global Health		elective											elective	elective
Social Sciences	required	required												
Social Sciences Endorsement	required	elective												

ⁱ [https://www.duq.edu/assets/Documents/philosophy/LSAT%20scores%202015-16_applicants-major\(0\).pdf](https://www.duq.edu/assets/Documents/philosophy/LSAT%20scores%202015-16_applicants-major(0).pdf)

ⁱⁱ <https://www.axios.com/city-governments-staffing-shortage-11b4f97d-7725-4f36-b8bc-dceb57ebfd25.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://datausa.io/profile/cip/political-science-government?compare=criminal-justice-corrections>

^{iv} <https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/nebraska-law-tackles-states-rural-legal-needs/>

^v <https://www.axios.com/city-governments-staffing-shortage-11b4f97d-7725-4f36-b8bc-dceb57ebfd25.html>

^{vi} <https://datausa.io/profile/cip/political-science-government?compare=criminal-justice-corrections>