



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

**Institutional Program Review
Report to the Board of Regents**

Use this form to submit a program review report to the system Chief Academic Officer. Complete this form for all units/programs undergoing an accreditation review, nationally recognized review process, or institutional program review. The report is due 30 days following receipt of the external and internal review reports.

UNIVERSITY:	SDSU
DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL:	History, Political Science, Philosophy and Religion
PROGRAM REVIEWED:	Political Science
DATE OF REVIEW:	3/24/2017
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Institutional Program Review

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this report, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.



President of the University

Click here to enter a
8-1-2017
Date

1. Identify the program reviewers and any external accrediting body:

Cecilia Manrique, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, External Reviewer

Matt Miller, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD, Internal Reviewer

2. **Items A & B should address the following issues: mission centrality, program quality, cost, program productivity, plans for the future, and assessment of progress.**

2(A). Describe the strengths and weaknesses identified by the reviewers

The reviewer identified as the primary strengths the dynamism of the current tenure-track faculty; the collegial relationship among the different programs in the department and the rapport among the three members of the political science program; the ambitious students that the faculty attract and faculty willingness to learn and improve the program.

The reviewer states: "Offering the kinds of experiences that are important to students (internships, study abroad, undergraduate research) are valuable opportunities for producing the kinds of engaged citizens that are important in the workplace. Having the necessary skills (communication, critical thinking) that employers value will go a long way in having these Political Science students appreciate the education that they are receiving."

The identified weaknesses include resources, such as the library, technology and the need for student work studies to assist faculty. Beyond resources, the two most important weaknesses were regular (annual) program assessment and the continued diversification of program faculty and course offerings.

2(B). Briefly summarize the review recommendations

1. The reviewer noted that a well thought-out, coordinated assessment plan will need to be developed so that what the students are learning and how they are learning can be tracked.
2. Provide faculty with greater resources, such as student help, resource funding, release time and travel funds.
3. While the program has been successful in attracting faculty and students of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the reviewer believed that diversity needs to be expanded and maintained.
4. The reviewer acknowledged the current financial constraints within the College, but nevertheless suggested exploring the possibility of an additional position, or working towards a multi-disciplinary School for Public Policy and International Affairs.

2(C). Indicate the present and continuous actions to be taken by the college or department to address the issues raised by the review. What outcomes are anticipated as a result of these actions?

1. With the addition of Dr. Lisa Hager in FA 2016, the political science program was able to update their curriculum. This was done and has now been approved by the BOR. The next step is in assessment, which like the curriculum, is about two years behind that of the history program. The first step will be to develop a nationally normed multiple-choice entrance and exit exam along the lines of history. The purpose is to track the growth of content acquisition. Once the newly-approved capstone course begins running in 2018, the program will develop entrance and exit writing-research exercises that test higher-order thinking. The final stage will be to integrating the research methods and upper-division courses into the capstone, so the entire curriculum functions seamlessly.
2. Most travel to conferences are fully covered by the department for at least one conference, if not more. The hiring of student workers is an excellent suggestion and has now happened since the time of the site visit. Beyond simply menial work, we are working with some students to help in the writing of the newsletter and social media, something that they are frankly savvier at than faculty, and frees up the relatively expensive time of the department head and faculty to refocus their efforts on other tasks.
3. I see point 3 as being the solution to point 4. While the political science program has become much more diverse in the past six years, our department and SDSU as a whole still has a long way to go. Taking advantage of the Colleges dissertation fellowship, which offers Ph.D. candidates from underrepresented communities the opportunity to teach two classes for SDSU in their final year, has become an amazing recruitment vehicle for creating a more diverse faculty. Our department has embarked on an effort to rationalize this approach – instead of waiting for applications, this year our department sought out qualified PhD candidates in Native American spirituality – an area the College of Arts and Sciences is looking to develop. The strategy was successful, and so now the political science program will apply the same strategy to another area of need, American Indian policy. By aligning our program with the needs of the University, I am confident that political science can grow its size.