

**UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR**  
**UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)**  
**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS**  
April 2024

**Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Department of Political Science's Programs**

In accordance with the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external review and the internal responses of the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Political Science.

In addition to identifying the strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, the report prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation and sets out a plan (including the agent(s) responsible for addressing the recommendations and deadline dates) for follow-through. Timelines for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations are built into the process, with areas reporting mid-cycle on their progress to the Senate Program Development Committee, or earlier where there are significant concerns requiring urgent follow-up.

The Department of Political Science 2021-2022 Self-Study (covering the preceding eight years), submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance on September 26, 2023, included: 1) a summary recommendations and actions from the last review; 2) descriptions and analyses of the programs, their learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and student experience; 3) information on enrolments as well as financial, physical, and human resources; and 4) the program data including the standard data package provided by the Office of Quality Assurance. Included in the appendices to the Self-Study were faculty member CVs, the Leddy Library report, course descriptions and syllabi, the Department's renewal, tenure, and promotion criteria, and student and alumni satisfaction surveys data.

The Department of Political Science programs were reviewed by Peter Graefe (Department of Political Science, McMaster University), Elizabeth Bloodgood (Department of Political Science, Concordia University), and Jennifer Johrendt (Faculty of Engineering, University of Windsor). In addition to assessing the Self-Study, the Review Team conducted a two-day site visit on November 7-8, 2023 which included meeting with faculty, administrative staff, and students, the Graduate and Undergraduate and Program Committees, the EDID Subcommittee, the Academic Librarian for the Department, the Head of the Department of Political Science, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and the Associate Vice-President Academic.

In their report (December 22, 2023), the Review Team noted that the program review met the IQAP evaluation criteria and that the programs are consistent with the University of Windsor mission statement and its strategic priority to provide an exceptional and supportive student experience, as evidenced by the quality of faculty teaching and research, the variety of research opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students, the mentoring program embedded in the required first-year Introduction to Canadian Politics course, and the design of the MA program which provides a high degree of flexibility enable the Department to meet diverse student needs. The growth in opportunities for career development and experiential learning since the last review was also lauded, with a recommendation that the Department continue to build on these efforts. The reviewers confirmed that admissions requirements are appropriate, the program requirements are consistent with the current state of the discipline, the program-level learning outcomes were clear for both the undergraduate and graduate programs, and that the teaching and assessment methods ensure students' attainment of the course learning outcomes and their successful progression through the program. The programs are delivered by faculty deeply committed to teaching, research, and service, and supported by dedicated and enthusiastic staff; all of whom are committed to providing an exceptional student experience.

The Review Team noted that the Department has been responsive to student needs and changes in market demand, introducing programs, curriculum revisions, and supports to enhance student recruitment and retention. While some initiatives have seen successful (Law and Politics program), others, such as the Political Science with French

Specialization program, have struggled; the latter potentially due to the requirement for students to complete a semester abroad. The Political Science Help Centre also was noted as conceptually sound and innovative, though more needs to be done to advertise it so that students are aware of this support service. In addition to commending the Department for its high degree of undergraduate program innovation, the Review Team encouraged Political Science to consider moving away from traditional capstones at the graduate level given limited student demand, such as the thesis option, in favour of the major research paper and internship options with a focus on applied work such as policy briefings and applied case studies.

The Head of the Department of Political Science and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences submitted their response to the External Reviewers' Report (February 2, 2024 and February 25, 2024, respectively), addressing the recommendations, identifying follow-up actions, and providing clarification or corrections, as appropriate. The Senate Program Development Committee (PDC) Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (April 2024) considered all the above documentation. The Executive Summary and Implementation Plan, along with any response from the area on the final recommendations, were submitted to Senate in May 2024.

### **Final Recommendations and Implementation Plan (in priority order)**

*Final recommendations were arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers (ER) report, the response from the Department of Political Science, and the response from the Dean of the Faculty.*

**Recommendation 1:** That the Department increase experiential learning opportunities (course integrated and extracurricular) within both the graduate and undergraduate programs. Concrete steps which the Department might consider, resources permitting, include:

- 1) enrolling UWindsor in the Federal Co-op program so that students can apply for internships with the federal government in Ottawa and the regions.
- 2) engaging more with Department alumni for advice (to consider what sorts of training might be helpful for students), support (internship and job opportunities, philanthropic gifts to the Department for students to travel to internships or to support them during unpaid internships), and involvement (guest lectures or workshops on preparation and career alternatives).
- 3) pursuing a Jurist (or Lawyer or Policymaker)in-Residence program to bring practitioners to campus with a small stipend for their time over a one- or two-year period during which they provide mentorship, guest lectures in classes, a speaker's series, and a bridge with a relevant professional community in and around Windsor. This sort of program provides a means of increasing awareness for the activities of the Political Science Department in the local community (and larger professional circles of the in-Residence holder) as well as a means to recruit new students (both undergraduate and graduates), and to improve the career opportunities and professional development of current students.

[ER Recommendation 2]

**Agents:** AAU Head, AAU Council

**Completion by:** Fall 2026

**Recommendation 2:** That the Department work with the Dean of the Faculty to ensure students be required to take an Indigenous course, whether on Indigenous governance/politics, from a suite of courses currently identified with the FAHSS Indigenous Minor, or other course to be offered and managed by FAHSS.[ER Recommendation 6]

**Agents:** AAU Head, AAU Council, Dean of the Faculty

**Completion by:** Fall 2025

**Recommendation 3:** That the Department build and encourage a sense of community and increase engagement with students by re-establishing student clubs and societies, encouraging student participation in conferences and competitions, hosting events, engaging alumni in fundraising and/or participating in such events, and facilitating students' access to pools of funding within the University for such events. [ER Recommendation 4]

**Agents:** AAU Head, Dean of the Faculty, Advancement

**Completion by:** Fall 2025

**Recommendation 4:** That the Department, through its governance committee and working with the Office of the Dean and the Office of Research and Innovation Services, enumerate and define policies for allowable expenses for external grant applications. These policies should provide consistent and clear information on potential Department, Faculty, and University contributions to successful grant applications, including course releases and the conditions under which faculty members can ask for these as well as matching funds (e.g. graduate student support) and the use of hospitality services, meeting rooms, or lab space. [ER Recommendation 3]

**Agents:** AAU Head, Political Science Governance Committee, Dean of the Faculty, Office of Research and Innovation Services

**Completion by:** Fall 2025

**Recommendation 5:** That faculty members explore cross-border teaching and research linkages, where feasible and appropriate, and that the Department make a case to the Dean of the Faculty and the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, for seed-funding to faculty members who are developing small-scale relationships such as developing research groups, giving joint courses, or building grants. [ER Recommendation 5]

**Agents:** Faculty members, AAU Head, Dean of the Faculty, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation

**Completion by:** Fall 2026

**Recommendation 6:** That the Department submit requests, as needed, to the Dean of the Faculty, outlining specific and clear measurable deliverables for one-time funds to extend staff part-time hours over the summer months. As FAHSS's budget situation improves, that the Department make a case to the Dean of the Faculty to maintain, and if possible increase, staff support for the Department and its programs throughout the year. [ER Recommendation 1]

**Agents:** AAU Head, Dean of the Faculty

**Completion by:** Fall 2025