Date: June 3, 2010

To: Michael Kraft, Chair Public and Environmental Affairs

From: Scott Furlong, Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Re: Report on the Political Science Program Review

The Political Science program at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is a disciplinary program that offers both a major and minor. There are currently seven political science faculty, but one serving as a full time administrator. It is important to note that the remaining six faculty are covering a range of courses outside of the Political Science disciplinary program so that the actual number of faculty “dedicated” to Political Science is closer to 2.5-3 FTE. The program has an extremely talented, productive, and in many cases internationally known faculty. They are extremely active in their scholarship and have also been at the forefront of a variety of activities to improve student learning in the classroom. Political Science supports other majors on campus including Public Administration, Environmental Policy and Planning, Social Change and Development and to a lesser extent Urban and Regional Studies. It is also heavily involved in general education particularly its courses in American Government and Politics and Global Politics and Society. Some of the faculty are also involved in the ES&P graduate program.

Enrollment Trends/Resource Issues:
Enrollments in Political Science have remained steady over the past five years averaging a little over one hundred majors (and nearly 40 minors). This was after some tremendous growth in the number of majors prior to this point. Enrollments in their courses are very healthy at both the upper and lower level. Within the upper level, enrollments have averaged over thirty students in recent years and many of their upper level courses close at the maximum. Lower level classes average between approximately 80-100 students depending on the fall or spring semester. For some reason, the lower level political science classes in the fall enroll fewer (but still a healthy number) students.

Faculty resources within the program have remained somewhat consistent for a number of years. There has been some turnover in faculty since the last review due to resignations and movements into administration. In one case, Public and Environmental Affairs redefined one of their positions from Public Administration toward Political Science with specialties in Comparative Politics/International Relations. This was an important improvement for Political Science in that...
it provided more expertise and depth in this subfield. Yet, there continues to be a need in Political Science for additional faculty resources given the number of students and limited curriculum in certain subfields. There is a comment from the AAC regarding a course release for those faculty overseeing a large number of internships. I know that both PEA and SCD provide a release to their internship coordinators, but that other faculty also oversee student interns. It is unclear to me based on the information I have what overlap there may be between the internship coordinators for the budgetary units versus the Political Science program.

Assessment:
Political Science primarily uses an embedded assessment to evaluate their four student learning objectives. They do their embedded assessments within their core upper level classes and use these results if warranted to examine the curriculum. They also use the senior and alumni surveys as a source of information.

Curriculum:
Political Science is traditionally said to have four subfields: American Government, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. A fifth, Public Policy, is often subsumed under American Government. The addition of some of the newer faculty has improved curriculum choices within the Comparative/IR and Political Theory subfields over the past couple of years, but there are still limited choices for our students here. The Political Science curriculum has traditionally been strongest in American Government/Public Policy and this continues, but there are still gaps here as well. Some of the curriculum strength, particularly in public policy, is attributable to the link with Public and Environmental Affairs where there are courses that are cross-listed with Political Science. The program also allows a few other non-political science courses to count within the major, but these are rarely selected by students and are not political science courses in the true sense of the word.

There have been a few changes to the curriculum since the last review. Within the core, majors must now take Comparative Politics (before it was a choice between this or Politics of Development Areas), select between International Relations or Foreign and Defense Policies, and select between Political Theory and American Political Thought. This was possible due to the hiring of new faculty. The program also no longer requires Foundations of Social Research.

In summary, Political Science is a healthy program that prepares students to be “engaged and contributing citizens.” It continues to have a large number of majors and provide an important service to general education as well as a number of interdisciplinary programs on campus. Its students praise the program and its faculty. The faculty are very active in scholarship and are very engaged with improving learning in the classroom. In addition, the faculty are very involved in both institutional and community service activities that are important for the institution.

Cc: Chris Style, Academic Affairs Council
    Tim Sewall, Associate Provost