

10/20/2025

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT FORM AY2025-2026**Program(s) in the review:** Political Science BA**Specialized Accrediting Agency (if applicable):** N/A**Campuses where the program is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Year of last review:** AY2022-2023**Final decision from last review:** Continued Review**PROGRAM SECTION (Due on March 1)****Program Review Committee:**

Forrest Nabors, Chair & Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Political Science, UAA Main Campus

Joseph Warren, Assist. Professor, Dept. of Political Science, UAA Main Campus

Kimberly Pace, Term Professor, Dept. of Political Science, UAA Main Campus

1. Demonstrate that the program has responded to previous recommendations.

Recommendation 1: *Consider narrowing the program's focus to align with the department's strengths.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Some background on this recommendation is warranted. During the review period ending in 2021-2022, existing faculty were under pressure to continue to offer the courses that our students majoring in Political Science needed to graduate. The program curriculum that the department was supporting had been created long before, when student enrollments and total available faculty were substantially larger. Hence, the faculty's expertise then was more diverse and covered all subfields in the program. With fewer members of the faculty with less collective expertise the faculty's ability to cover all subfields in our discipline was strained. Thus, we understood that the Dean wanted our program to be changed so that courses offered would better utilize the faculty expertise on hand. Success as we understood it would mean that all offered courses would be taught by instructors who have the strongest research background in the course material.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

In short, action by the Dean and Provost had much to do with solving the problem. After one permanent member of the faculty retired, the Dean and Provost approved the hiring of one new assistant professor and one adjunct professor, who now teaches five courses per year for us. Both are new PhD's. These new members of the faculty were chosen for their scholarly backgrounds that differ from existing faculty. The retirement removed one source of the overlapping expertise within our faculty and the two new hires added new, complementary expertise in democratic theory, international relations, political economy and rational choice. The problem has been solved by diversifying faculty expertise rather than by narrowing the focus of the curriculum. However, changes to the curriculum (see below) have allowed us to offer a more diverse array of courses spread over a longer cycle rather than a repeating one-year cycle as was the

10/20/2025

case, so that our course offerings are actually more diversified with marginally more faculty and substantially more diverse faculty.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

All courses now offered by the department align with instructor expertise. The research expertise of instructors more closely matches the content of courses.

Recommendation 2: *Consider including greater flexibility to offer courses that align to current student interest.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

A clear metric of student interest is increased enrollments. The intensity of student interest is harder to measure consistently across the department. However, relative participation in voluntary class activities and co-curricular activities, though subjective, can reveal intensity of student interest. Another metric of course alignment with current student interest is the currency of course titles and course material.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

The redesign of our curriculum is the most important action that we have taken. One aspect of our redesigned curriculum is that it now reflects more current approaches and interests in the discipline of Political Science and in political news, generally. The structure of our curriculum, course content and new course titles were redesigned to reflect this, so that students may better connect to our offerings and see the relevance to themselves and to what they read in news reports about the world and the country. Another action that we have taken is the addition of a new cohort of instructors. While experience has value, so does the infusion of new talent, so that relative experience is more balanced in our faculty. Another is the creation of James W. Muller Dialogues, a program of ongoing discussions among faculty and students, that invite students to visit the department on certain Saturdays to apply what they are learning in their courses to contemporary events. In this way they can see the relevance of their classroom learning to the world around them.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

The redesign and approval of our new curriculum has occupied the last two years of the review period and has just now been made official. Therefore, it is too early to judge the impact of the redesigned curriculum on enrollments. The addition of new faculty and the energy they bring might partially account for increasing enrollments and increased intensity of interest from students. All student slots in our Muller Dialogues program have filled. Voluntary student participation in department organized activities has increased. More students have attended our lectures in the last two years of the review period. For the first time, all open slots in our "Little Platoon" seminars were filled and a waiting list was created, in 2024-2025. More students are visible in the department during regular business hours. More students are enrolled in Model UN and participating in the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship Program. Our new and retitled courses now align with course titles in our profession. For example Comparative Political Economy has been renamed States and Markets. Other course changes include;

Comparative Northern Politics --> Arctic and Northern Politics

International Organizations --> Global Governance

American Political Tradition --> American Political Thought

State and Local Politics --> American Federalism

10/20/2025

Public Opinion and Political Behavior --> Voting, Public Opinion, and Democracy

In addition, we proposed two new courses during the review period demonstrating our commitment to the currency of our program; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Constitutional Democracy. Both are not yet approved but are timely and address topics of widespread concern.

Recommendation 3: *Review the curriculum. As there will be a new hire to replace a retiring faculty member, it is an opportune moment to make changes to the courses and the major, to look at current trends, and to evaluate the currency of the curriculum. Particular attention should be given to the coverage of the subfields of political science so that the faculty have the expertise to cover the curriculum.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

That the department has reviewed and amended the curriculum and submitted a plan for approval.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

The department did submit a major curriculum revision.

First, we moved our upper-division courses from a one-year rotation to a two-year rotation. By doing this, we were able to double the number of upper division courses that we offer with no increase in faculty resources. Additionally, we maintain the same incentive for majors in Political Science to take our courses each semester, responding to a concern about enrollments. We accomplish this by expanding the number of courses that students can use to fulfill the four subfield requirements in Political Science (Comparative Politics, American Politics, Political Philosophy, and International Relations). Currently, students can use one of two courses to fulfill each subfield requirement, and each course is offered once a year in the fall and spring semesters. In the curriculum revision, we allow students to use one of four courses to fulfill each subfield requirement, and each course is offered once every two years. During each semester, we maintain our goal to have one of each subfield-specific course offered a semester, which affords flexibility in how students complete their degree.

Second, the department added a 200-level course to the political science major. Currently, the political science department offers two 100-level courses. All of our other courses are 300-level or 400-level. We believe that adding a 200-level course will provide greater intellectual structure and academic guidance for our students. Based upon existing faculty resources, department strengths, and student interests, the course we proposed is PS A201 Constitutional Democracy. This course is designed to unite a rigorous introduction to constitutional principles with open-ended discussions of ongoing political issues in American politics and elsewhere. Our goal is to appeal to students who are interested and concerned about American and global politics, while encouraging them to connect these interests and concerns to the history of political thought and, specifically, constitutional and democratic principles. To develop academic skills that students can utilize in their 300-level courses, the course design emphasizes structured seminar-style discussions and short writing assignments.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Our proposal has passed rigorous review, is now in the last stages of approval and is being rolled out.

10/20/2025

Recommendation 4: *Investigate interdisciplinary opportunities, perhaps in relation to civic engagement or leadership in conjunction with the Alaska Leaders archive.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Success is measured by new or revived relationships and engagements, with other programs and parts of the university or UA system.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

The department strengthened its partnerships with Alaska Native Studies, Legal Studies, UAF Political Science, created new partnerships with the Alaska Leaders Archive and South Anchorage High School and began forming a new partnership with the Jack Miller Center (JMC) with respect to civics education. JMC formed a consortium of universities that we have been invited to join. Through this consortium JMC supports graduate and continuing education in civics for middle and high school teachers. The purpose of this partnership is to give teachers (primarily targeting teachers in Alaska) the opportunity to gain higher education or continuing education credit while strengthening their command of civics, at no cost or low cost to themselves and to UAA in providing instructors.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

After many years of waning partnership with AKNS, due to resource constraints, faculty in Political Science and AKNS have joined our efforts together once again. Our faculties meet several times per semester on Friday afternoons to share plans and to collaborate. AKNS and Political Science have begun to rotate instructors from our respective faculties for Alaska Native Politics. More opportunities for collaboration have been discussed. Legal Studies and Political Science have jointly promoted our courses to our respective students and have discussed the creation of new cross-listed courses. Instructors of record from Political Science for the courses Alaska Native Politics and in Arctic and Northern Politics mentored students on how to use the Alaska Leaders Archive for original research, and they did use the archives in their finished projects. The archivist and Political Science faculty are working together to create assignments to make the archives more accessible and useful to students. In collaboration with faculty from UAF Political Science, UAA Political Science participated in a pre-law opportunity whereby students intending to matriculate to law school were given support to travel to Juneau where they met government leaders, including members of the Alaska State Supreme Court. Political Science faculty did serve as instructors in the civics leadership program at South Anchorage High School. Lastly, our partnership with JMC is in formation and currently under review by UAA's Office of Special Programs.

Recommendation 5: *Increase enrollment in courses for the major and non-major alike.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

We can measure our success by counting the numbers of students enrolled per course section, and noting whether the trends are increasing or decreasing. We can also observe the five-year trend of credit hours earned by students "out-of-discipline," that is by students who are not majors in Political Science.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

During the review period, the department strengthened our relationships with student advising, ASD's Middle College, Kenai Peninsula College and Mat-Su College, which are all good sources of student enrollees in 100- level courses and in our major program. We are in contact with all of the aforementioned to be sure that they can represent our program effectively and can draw on our faculty for instructors when needed. We generally meet with college advisors once per semester at our regular

10/20/2025

departmental meeting. Political Science faculty on the Anchorage campus taught for KPC during the review period and currently, for Mat-Su College. We have also taught cross-listed courses for AKNS and have enrolled their students. We continue to use co-curricular events to promote our courses. Our instructors now are more in the habit of creating posters during registration week to promote their courses. Department faculty meet during and after registration week to track enrollment.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Enrollments have increased. According to course data, the average enrollment per course section in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 combined, was 14. For 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 combined the average enrollment per course section was 18.2. The latest enrollment data from 2025-2026, admittedly outside the review period, indicate that these trends are solid and continuing. In Fall Semester, 2025 and Spring Semester, 2026, enrollments exceeded our course caps and the department chair raised them multiple times for multiple courses to accommodate rising enrollments.

In addition, the percentage of credit hours earned by students who do not major in Political Science rose to its highest 5-year trailing trend (81%), in the last academic year of the review period. In the prior three academic years, that percentage consistently trended higher (76%, 77%, 81%). These results reflect our efforts to "reload" our 100-level courses from our good relations with student advising and ASD's Middle College.

Recommendation 6: *Continue to monitor the costs to cover the curriculum.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Our ability to control costs consists in fully deploying committed instructional resources to courses and doing everything that we can to insure the maximum enrollment in those courses. We are aware that we can only justify the expansion of our faculty, which we would like to do, by demonstrating consistent growth in enrollments.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

Since the last review period, the department has continued to emphasize enrollments in everything that we do. This emphasis is now part of our departmental culture. It is a topic of every departmental meeting. We are constantly searching for new ways to drive enrollments, cutting activities that do not appear to increase enrollment growth and doubling down on activities that do. We consider plans throughout the semester to promote our courses, calibrated to the start and end of registration.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

The results of our efforts are noted above in enrollment figures. The trends indicate that course enrollments are growing steadily, but we do aim to grow them further and consistently. Also, all of our committed faculty (term and tenure-line faculty) were fully deployed during the review period, whereas in the prior review and early in the review period courses instructed by committed faculty sometimes were canceled due to low enrollments.

Recommendation 7: *Think about how the program puts students first.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

One easy way to measure whether the program in Political Science puts students first is to recount the principles of liberal arts that guide what and how we teach, as well as the co-curricular opportunities that faculty make available to students, above and beyond the faculty's normal teaching responsibilities.

10/20/2025

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

The organizing principles of our curriculum and instruction are the foundation of the liberal arts, and certainly put students first (see our answer below to question #2, especially to core competency #3). The artes liberalis are studies for people who live in freedom. Our courses and instruction are designed to challenge students to think for themselves so that they better distinguish the noble and base, the good and the bad, the just and the unjust. As a result they will be better able to use their freedom well, think better thoughts, live better lives and will be more likely to contribute to the common good of our country.

In addition, all Political Science faculty are heavily engaged in developing opportunities for our students outside the classroom. All faculty participate in promoting or directing our co-curricular programs, which include the James W. Muller Dialogues, Little Platoon Seminars, the Seward and Chartwell Lecture Series, The James Madison Cup, and the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship. With the addition of the Muller Dialogues, these programs have been expanded. After substantial recruitment efforts, the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship has been brought back to life. From AY21 and AY22, we did not send any students due to the pandemic. We are now sending students to work as legislative interns again in Juneau and the numbers of student interns are climbing.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Signs that our alumni appreciate and have gained from their liberal arts education are the work that they do now (see below at our answer to question 4c), our strong ties to our alumni and their visits to campus for events we organize, including our public lectures. Student participation in our co-curricular programs is robust and growing. These co-curricular programs develop our relationships with students, deepening students' interests and making faculty more familiar with them. These relationships put faculty in a stronger position to write informed letters of recommendation and to give students informed advice and direction in navigating their academic careers, matriculating to graduate or professional school, or finding outstanding career positions in the workforce.

Recommendation 8: ***Identify at least one opportunity for students to develop each of UAA's core competency within the program's curricular and/or cocurricular offerings.***

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Addressing UAA's Core Competencies is woven into everything that we naturally do. All of them; viz., Effective Communication (1), Creative and Critical Thinking (2), Intercultural Fluency (3), and Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (4) are cornerstones of liberal arts education. Our program embraces liberal arts principles. Hence, in the normal conduct of our academic roles many of these core competencies are directly or at least indirectly addressed. Let us take one, Intercultural Fluency (3). A measure of intercultural fluency is whether students develop an educated awareness of the world around them and how to be sensitive of differences and how to bridge them.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

Students majoring in Political Science must take courses in both Comparative Politics and International Relations. In Comparative Politics, students directly study different cultures and the different systems of government that are supported by those cultures. In International Relations they directly study how those differences are bridged in the real world, and the successful and unsuccessful consequences of encountering differing interests and values embedded in different cultures.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Model United Nations (MUN) simulates the work of the real United Nations and tests students' competency in Intercultural Fluency, by introducing students to different systems of government, unique cultures, contemporary policy questions that concern them all and diplomatic conduct. Acting as delegates, students represent a nation-state, an indigenous peoples group, or a non-governmental organization; they make connections between their own government and culture to others, numbering over 70 different entities represented at MUN conferences. They apply what they have learned in their classrooms to the organization and management of K-12 students in a mock setting of international governance, including for example, the United Nations Security Council. There, they coach K-12 students in their tasks, to know the countries that they represent in role-play, to advocate for their countries' interests effectively, and finally, to forge agreements and resolutions that lead to justice and lasting peace among the nations. Student success in MUN is direct proof of students' development of this core competency.

2. Demonstrate the centrality of the program to the mission, needs, and purposes of the university and the college/community campus. Include how the program is integrating (or planning to integrate) intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop the four core competencies (Effective Communication; Creative and Critical Thinking; Intercultural Fluency; and Personal, Professional, & Community Responsibility). (3000 characters or less)

1. Personal, Professional & Community Responsibility - Many of our courses, especially those in American Government and Politics, emphasize good citizenship. In addition to our courses, our co-curricular programs address this competency. In the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship, students are placed in legislative and executive branches of state government, where they learn that good policy outcomes and personal success reward effective professional conduct. We recruit all majors to apply to the internship. The Madison Cup tests students' knowledge of the Constitution. Students learn to collaborate and compete in teams, demonstrating their knowledge of American citizenship based on the Constitution of the United States.

2. Effective Communication - Most of our courses study statesmanship, or the actions of political actors, which requires learning the difference between effective and poor communication. The consequences of poor communication may lead to war abroad or tyranny at home. In studying effective communication, students also must develop their own powers of expression, both verbal expression in the classroom, and in writing, which we emphasize. Our courses often require collaboration, diplomacy, and constructive dialogue. Our Little Platoon seminars require students to read one book and come prepared to discuss it for most of one day with their peers and a content expert, sometimes the author, flown to Alaska for that purpose. All students who participate must take an active part in the discussion, speaking about the text. The program is popular and attracts majors in Political Science as well as other majors.

3. Creative and Critical Thinking - Courses in Political Science, especially courses in Political Philosophy, are taught according to the traditional liberal arts, emphasizing critical thinking, writing, and speaking well. Political Philosophy presents sharply contrasting visions of the universe and mankind which produce radically different conceptions of justice. In the ordinary course of student learning, students learn these conflicting visions, learn to discuss them and to write about them fluently, and learn how to consider and weigh them. This is particularly important in their written work. We teach that clear thinking precedes clear writing and speaking.

4. Intercultural fluency - See the prior answer to Recommendation #8.

3. Demonstrate program quality and improvement through assessment and other indicators.

i. BA Political Science

- 1) Demonstrate the ability to write clear and precise English prose; 2) Demonstrate the ability to understand basic principles of American government; 3) Demonstrate the ability to understand the relationship between the United States and the larger world; 4) Demonstrate the ability to identify and criticize competing political science arguments; 5) Demonstrate the ability to identify and interpret important political texts; 6) Demonstrate the ability to write a satisfactory senior-level research paper; 7) Demonstrate knowledge of each recognized field within political science.

Describe your key findings for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

During the review period the seven PSLOs denoted above were measured per our assessment plan. In the prior review period student outcomes were below our expectations twice. In the period under review, outcomes rose to satisfactory in all categories for all years.

Describe actions taken to improve student learning for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

The marginal improvement in student learning is attributable to the addition of new faculty and to our enhanced ability to match course content to instructor expertise. However, while these measures show that student learning is improving, subjectively, we believe that their learning has improved markedly, more than what is captured by the assessment. Student performance in our courses and our every-day interactions with students convince us that their learning is broader and deeper than in prior review periods. We are now beginning the process of changing our assessment plan so that we can better capture results that we see every day but are not represented in assessment results. This change also is timely because we have substantially overhauled our curriculum and the composition of our faculty now is very different since the time when our previous curriculum and assessment plans were devised decades ago. Much has changed in our discipline, in the country and in the world.

Describe evidence that these actions are working. (3500 characters or less)

We will not have evidence that student learning has improved beyond what our current assessments show until a new assessment plan is devised, implemented and delivers results. Those results will better inform us of successful or unsuccessful student learning, and how to make changes to improve gaps.

- b. **Demonstrate program quality and improvement through other means, for example, maintaining specialized accreditation, using guidance from advisory boards/councils, responding to community partners and local needs, maintaining currency of the curriculum, implementing innovative program design, intentionally integrating high-impact teaching and learning practices into the program, and meeting indications of quality in distance education, such as the C-RAC Standards. (3500 characters or less)**

See our response to Recommendation #2 above. During the review period the department proposed renaming eight existing courses in order to reflect new approaches in the Political Science profession. In that proposal the department created two new courses that were proposed in the review period (and are both not yet approved), which demonstrates our commitment to the currency of our program; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Constitutional Democracy. Both are timely and address topics of widespread concern. In addition, due to the redesign of our curriculum, we are able to offer a wider variety of courses to meet student interests, and specifically to offer a greater number of Alaska and Arctic-focused courses. Students are interested in these courses, and this allows our program to contribute to the mission of the University of Alaska system.

10/20/2025

In the final year of the review period, all faculty participated in peer review of our teaching, although it was not required, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement. Through the review period we shared best teaching practices during our department's faculty meetings and continue to do so.

During the review period our major was accessible to students who attend courses remotely. All courses offered were made available to students online, whether synchronously as part of a hybrid section of the course, or asynchronously. All instructors who teach asynchronous courses online are trained to meet the federal C-RAC standards.

In the prior review period, the department created the "Little Platoon" seminars. In the current review period this program has been maintained, due to student popularity. These seminars require students to read the same book and come prepared to discuss it for most of one day with their peers and a content expert, sometimes the author, flown to Alaska for that purpose. All students must participate, speaking about the text. For example, in April 2023 participating students read *His Greatest Speeches: How Lincoln Moved the Nation*, in a seminar led by the author Dr. Diana Schaub. The program attracts majors in Political Science as well as other majors.

In addition, the department has continued to bring notable outside lecturers to the university in our Chartwell and Seward lecture series. The subject of the lectures and seminars always concern Political Science, broadly understood. The advantage to our program is that our guests bring perspectives, pedagogical strengths and knowledge different from the existing faculty with whom are students are familiar.

Led by alumni from our program, the department formed an Advisory Council for Model United Nations to provide guidance, increase public interest, community awareness, and to attract outside funds for the program. Members of the Advisory Council participate in MUN conferences to coach students, take on roles and manage parliamentary process. These alumni were an integral part of student success.

4. Demonstrate student success and the closing of achievement gaps.

- a. Analyze and respond to the disaggregated data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to close any achievement gaps. The Student Success program review metrics are Junior Graduation Rate, Associate Graduation Rate, Semesters to Degree – Graduate Programs, and Course Pass Rates by Course Level. (3500 characters or less)**

Given the relatively low numbers of program graduates in the review period, the analysis of achievement gaps might not be statistically valid. Nevertheless, we note the lowest Junior Graduation Rates for Part-Time Students AY25 - 0%, African American AY21 - 0%, Asian AY25 - 0%, 2 or More Races Non-Hispanic AY24, AY25 - 0%, Male AY25 - 0%, Pell Grant Recipient AY25 - 0%. However, many of these metrics did not have data in other years, or show very high graduation rates in adjacent years (e.g. African American AY22 - 100%, AY24 - 91%). It is difficult to identify systemic gaps given the data.

Course Pass Rates in Lower Division range from lows among African American (AY25 - 0%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AY23 - 50%) and Alaska Native/American Indian (AY23 - 51%) but those cohorts also show strong performance in other years (African American AY22 - 100%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander AY22, AY24 - 100%; Alaska Native/American Indian AY22 - 80%, AY25 - 90%). These cohorts were alternately highest and lowest performing, probably reflecting low cohort numbers. First Generation students in the prior review period hit a low in one year (55%) and in this review period rebounded. This cohort's lowest pass rate was 69% in AY23 and exceeded that level in all other years.

For Course Pass Rates in Upper Division, our highest performing groups were African American (AY22, AY24 - 100%) and Alaska Native/American Indian (AY22 - 100%), Non-Resident Alien (AY21, AY23, AY24 - 100%) and 2 or More Races: Non-Hispanic (100%). The lowest pass rate of all cohorts was Alaska Native/American Indian (AY23 - 50%), one year after showing 100% pass rate. Again, these results are probably due to low cohort numbers. Most other cohorts range in the 80-90%.

- b. Numerous US universities, and a number of programs across UAA, have holistically evaluated their programs and courses to look for unintended barriers to student success. For example, the Purdue IMPACT (Instruction Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation) effort between 2011 and 2018 resulted in 325 courses being redesigned to incorporate research-based strategies known to increase student outcomes, while maintaining academic quality and rigor. Other efforts have involved course sequencing and scheduling, resulting in improved success even for [graduate students](#). Please consider your program's graduation rate, course pass rates, and similar data sources to reflect on any barriers to students moving through the curriculum, and describe what steps you have taken (or are planning to take) for possible redesign of gateway courses, course sequence changes, course scheduling, or similar efforts. (3500 characters or less)**

We believe that our overhauled curriculum will have a major impact on student success. Please see the detailed response to Recommendation #6 above. In particular the diversity of courses that appeal to student interests and better align with the Political Science profession, the new curriculum's great currency will offer students more paths to their degree.

Also, our department takes careful note of the days and times that we schedule courses. We try to avoid scheduling lower division courses on the same dates and times to give students greater flexibility. We do the same in scheduling our upper division courses. We also schedule 100-level courses at the optimal time for Middle College students, in consultation with their advisors and with each other among our faculty. Scheduling intelligently is a simple but powerful way to avoid barriers in the form of scheduling conflicts. This approach that we take is now a permanent part of departmental culture.

During the last review period the department committed to making our major fully accessible online. In the period under review we have honored that commitment. All courses offered were made available to students online, whether synchronously as part of a hybrid section of the course, or asynchronously. Some of us regularly record class meetings so that students may refer back to them to hear lectures again or to catch up on a class that they might have had to miss. Students have greater flexibility to complete their coursework and their degree.

- c. Provide evidence of the overall success of students in the program. For example, you might talk about the percent of students in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field, the percent of students who go on to graduate school or other post-graduation training, and/or the percent of students who pass licensure examinations. You might also give examples of students who have been selected for major scholarships or other competitive opportunities. [Please do not use personally identifiable information.] (3500 characters or less)**

Graduates majoring in Political Science continued to excel in their professional placements. Examples include: Director of Public Affairs for the University of Alaska system; Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Alaska; Government Relations and Policy for Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions (CRES) Forum in Washington D.C.; Wilson Center's Polar Institute as the U.S. Polar Leadership Project Coordinator in Washington DC; Projects & Policy Specialist at ANCSA Regional Association; Director of Koniag Corporation's Advocacy Department; and several Anchorage School District Social Studies K-12 teachers.

10/20/2025

During the review period at least five of our past graduates continued their studies in law school.

Two of our graduates were successfully reelected to the Alaska House of Representatives during the review period and two more ran for legislative office in Alaska. Several graduates who had served as interns for the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship joined professional legislative staffs. The Governor of Alaska appointed one of our students as a Student Regent on the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska system in 2024. She was also a national finalist for the Truman Scholarship.

One of our majors won a Fulbright Scholarship to Norway; another was announced a Truman Scholar. In 2025 one of our graduates won a James Madison Fellowship award. In 2024 a graduate who teaches social studies at Dimond High School in Anchorage was among three teachers nationally (the other two were from Maryland and New Jersey) who received the American Civic Education Teacher Award.

Our Chartwell and Seward lecture series continue to be attended by our alumni, and we are looking forward to inviting them to programs co-sponsored by our new partner the Alaska World Affairs Council.

In 2024 among the winners of the CAS Excellence Scholarship three who were majors in other programs also were minors in Political Science.

5. Demonstrate demand for the program.

- a. **Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The Demand program review metrics are Ratio of Out-of-Discipline Credit Hours to Total Credit Hours, Number of Program Graduates Who Continue Education, and Number of Program Graduates Who Return to UAA to Pursue an Additional Program. (3500 characters or less)**

See the response to Recommendation #5 above. The percentage of credit hours earned by students who do not major in Political Science rose to its highest 5-year trailing trend (81%), in the last academic year of the review period. In the prior three academic years, that percentage consistently trended higher (AY23 - 76%, AY24 - 77%, AY25 - 81%). We attribute these results to our efforts to maintain good relations with UAA student advising and ASD's Middle College.

The number of students who continued their education from AY21-AY25 are; 7, 4, 8, 3, 9. Although these low numbers might lack statistical significance, we view our last year in the review period as indicative of a future trend. Instruction in our upper division courses, especially our senior seminar, is improving due to new faculty and better course content - faculty expertise alignment. Our contacts with students outside the classroom are increasing since the Covid pandemic. We expect that more students will be encouraged to continue their education after graduation from UAA with a degree in Political Science.

The number of students who return to UAA to continue their education from AY21-AY25 are; 5, 2, 1, 1, 4. Currently, the graduate programs at UAA remotely related to the BA in Political Science are the MBA program and the master's degree program in public policy, both in the College of Business and Public Policy. Admittedly, our links with CBPP are not as strong as those we have with other parts of the university. However, our graduates do enter good careers and attend law schools out of state.

6. Demonstrate program productivity and efficiency.

Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The Productivity and Efficiency program review metrics are Five Year Degree and/or Certificate Awards Trend,

10/20/2025

Student Credit Hours per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty, and Full-Time Equivalent Student per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty. (3500 characters or less)

Although trends from the review period into the present academic year indicate that enrollments are growing, the numbers of our graduates during the review period peaked, bottomed and then increased to prior levels again (AY21 - 10, AY22 - 14, AY23 - 6, AY24 - 14, AY25 - 9). We believe that the pandemic accounts for this pattern although we have not checked with other departments to confirm whether the pattern was observable in their cohorts of annual graduates. During the pandemic we believe that more students who had previously begun their studies continued their studies until graduation than students who began studies during the pandemic. The low numbers of matriculating and enrolled students during the pandemic account for the down year in AY23. The numbers of graduates in the last two years, roughly equal to that of the first two years probably show recovery from low enrollments during the pandemic. The department aims to exceed these numbers of graduates in the next review period. We expect that our numbers of graduates will remain at this higher level of the last year of the review period or will grow more.

Our rationale is that our enrollment trends have shown growth in the last years of the review period and into the present academic year (See response to Recommendation #5 above). We expect this growth in enrollments to translate into more graduates in Political Science in due time. We are achieving higher gross enrollments while improving efficiency.

Student Credit Hours per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty from AY21-AY25 are; 462.2, 342.6, 351.6, 461.4, and 432.7. Full-Time Equivalent Student to Full-Time Equivalent Faculty from AY21-AY25 are; 15.4, 11.4, 11.7, 15.4, 14.4.

These efficiency measures rebounded strongly in AY24, then dipped in AY25, although the AY25 levels were higher than the lows of AY22 and AY23. So, the department's efficiency according to this metric is trending higher but not in a straight line. In the present academic year beyond the review period, the department chair had to raise course caps multiple times for multiple courses in both Fall Semester, 2025 and Spring Semester, 2026, which indicates stronger enrollments per instructor, or, greater efficiency in the deployment of faculty resources. While one factor in these higher enrollments might be the rebound in student enrollments, generally, from pandemic lows, we believe that our actions and constant attention to enrollments have much to do with this. We expect to improve upon these measures as a result of these measures. Please see the response to Recommendation #6 above for more detail on what we are doing to improve our results.

Optional: Discuss the extent to which, if any, extramural funding supports students, equipment, and faculty in the program. (3000 characters or less)

During the review period, several outside educational organizations, among them, the Jack Miller Center, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and the national honors society in Political Science, Pi Alpha Sigma, have supported our programming, faculty and students in several ways. They sent notable guest speakers and authors to us for the benefit of our Chartwell and Seward Lecture Series and our Little Platoon Seminars. The Hertog Foundation, Henry Clay Center, Student Conference on U.S. Affairs (US Military Academy), Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and others have offered scholarship funds to our students to attend educational conferences.

At the end of the review period in AY25, one of our faculty was awarded a prestigious grant for a book project, resulting in a course release.

7. **Assess program distinctiveness, as well as any duplication resulting from the existence of a similar program or programs elsewhere in the University of Alaska System. Is duplication justified, and, if so, why? How are**

10/20/2025

you coordinating with UAA's community campuses and the other universities in the system? (2500 characters or less)

First, our program provides a comprehensive education in Political Science that is firmly grounded in the liberal arts (see our reply to Recommendation #7 above and to question #2 above). Similar programs in the UA system are more oriented to public policy or are not Political Science-specific. While we do integrate policy studies and respect other social sciences disciplines, our grounding in liberal arts is our strength and is what makes us distinctive.

Second, our program serves the unique needs of Southcentral Alaska, the state's major population center and the home of almost all students in political science. Many graduated from high schools in Kenai, Mat-Su, and Anchorage. Many high school students who participated in Model United Nations have come to UAA as a result, as majors in Political Science or in other programs at UAA. Many students develop a connection to UAA because they attended our department's lecture series while they were high school students in Southcentral Alaska, often at the suggestion of teachers.

Many of our majors are non-traditional students whose families are established here. Many are veterans or active duty military connected to their base here. Many are able to work half-time and sometimes full-time jobs, due to the convenience of our class schedule. Our open admissions policy gives some the opportunity to earn a degree in political science who would otherwise not be able to do so in Alaska.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that our students would not move to another part of the state to pursue the same degree. In a 2019 survey of non-matriculating students who were admitted to UAA, a large majority chose not to attend college or to attend college out of state rather than attend another university in the UA system.

8. Assess the strengths of your program and propose one or two action steps to address areas that need improvement. (4000 characters or less)

Our strengths reported in the prior review period remain the same for this one: We are highly productive and do far more for our students, the university and the community than the size of our faculty might indicate. The opportunities that the program in Political Science offers students are many: Award-winning research faculty; internships in state legislature (funded) and local government; Model UN; funded opportunities to attend conferences (Hertog, SCUSA, ISI, Clay Center); high quality lecturers (Chartwell & Seward Lecture Series); additional learning opportunities ("Little Platoon" seminars). In the course of offering all of these opportunities to students, faculty are readily available for increased individual contact with students and student mentorship, which often form the basis of long friendships between them and the department, after they graduate. Our program cultivates leadership so that our majors can take up significant responsibilities in government, business, non-profits and the professions.

We believe that with the major changes we have lately made to our program, with added new faculty and an overhauled curriculum, our best approach now is to keep doing what we are doing and wait for results. We do need a new assessment plan so that we can better assess student learning. But apart from that, we believe we are on track and ought to remain focused on program quality, driving enrollments and maintaining our very active co-curricular programming.

9. Over the past two years programs and colleges conducted a comprehensive review of all fees. Moving forward, per the [UAA Course Fee Policy](#), programs conduct a comprehensive review and re-approval of all course fees as part of the cyclical Academic Program Review process. The college's strategic budget officer will conduct a review, and the dean will review the results and work with the program on any changes. The

10/20/2025

authorized lead, per the Course Fee Policy, will submit forms for each fee, whether to delete, retain, or change the fee. Forms are due to OAA by the regular February 15 deadline.

What was the general outcome of the comprehensive fee review? (2500 characters or less)

The department does not charge fees. Therefore, this question does not apply to us.

Committee chair first name last name: Forrest Nabors

Date: 3/1/2026

END OF PROGRAM SECTION

DEAN SECTION (Due on April 1)

1. Evaluation of Progress on Previous Recommendations

For each recommendation from the last program review, indicate if the recommendation has been met or has not been met and provide commendations and guidance as appropriate. (2500 characters or less for each recommendation)

Recommendation 1: Consider narrowing the program's focus to align with the department's strengths.

Recommendation has been met.

The department recently hired additional faculty that diversified faculty expertise as well as aligned course offerings with faculty expertise.

Recommendation 2: Consider including greater flexibility to offer courses that align to current student interest. Recommendation has been met.

The new rotation plan for the department allows courses to be offered on a rotating basis taught by faculty with specific expertise in these areas. Course enrollments have improved overall, but continued monitoring is needed. The department notes that participation in co-curricular activities has grown, showing an increase in student engagement

Recommendation 3: Review the curriculum. As there will be a new hire to replace a retiring faculty member, it is an opportune moment to make changes to the courses and the major, to look at current trends, and to evaluate the currency of the curriculum. Particular attention should be given to the coverage of the subfields of political science so that the faculty have the expertise to cover the curriculum. Recommendation has been met.

The department submitted a major curriculum revision and updated their course offerings, to offer upper division classes on a 2-year cycle. Combined, these two actions decrease barriers for student completion. In terms of currency, the report mentions two new courses that are currently in the curriculum process.

Recommendation 4: Investigate interdisciplinary opportunities, perhaps in relation to civic engagement or leadership in conjunction with the Alaska Leaders archive. Recommendation has been met.

The program has purposely and meaningfully expanded relationships with departments at UAA – Alaska Native Studies & Legal Studies, as well as the Political Science department at UAF, local k-12 partners and national organizations such as the Jack Miller Center. Faculty in the department have made use of the Alaska Leaders Archive as well as participated in the Civic Leadership Program at South Anchorage High School.

Recommendation 5: Increase enrollment in courses for the major and non-major alike. Recommendation has been met.

Enrollments across UAA and in fact across the US declined during the pandemic, this is also true for UAA's Political Science program. Enrollments have grown steadily in the past three years. As the report mentions, recruitment and retention are in the forefront for the faculty.

Recommendation 6: Continue to monitor the costs to cover the curriculum. Recommendation has been met.

Strategic use of instructional resources and rising enrollments have improved overall efficiency. The department has made cost-conscious scheduling and enrollment management part of its regular practice

Recommendation 7: Think about how the program puts students first. Recommendation has been met.

The faculty demonstrate strong student-centered approaches in their courses, advising, internships and co-curricular programs. Robust student participation and alumni engagement signal that the program fosters a meaningful academic community.

Recommendation 8: Identify at least one opportunity for students to develop each of UAA's core competency within the program's curricular and/or cocurricular offerings. Recommendation has been met.

The program embeds the core competencies throughout its required subfields and co-curricular activities. In particular, the integration of intercultural fluency through Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Model UN is a strong model

Provide your analysis of #2-8 below, based on the data provided and the program's responses above.

2. Centrality of the Program (2000 characters or less)

The BA in Political Science and the courses in the program are central to UAA's mission, and the program intentionally addresses the four core competencies in its curricular and co-curricular activities. The emphasis on civic engagement, democratic principles and the value of a liberal arts education support student success and community engagement.

3. Program Quality and Improvement (2000 characters or less)

The redesigned curriculum, alignment of courses with faculty expertise, revision of course titles to align with national disciplinary norms, and commitment to C RAC-aligned online instruction illustrate a rigorous, student-focused approach. Peer review of teaching and active sharing of pedagogy are additional strengths.

4. Student Success and the Closing of Achievement Gaps (2000 characters or less)

Given the fluctuations and somewhat low numbers in the number of graduates, the disaggregated data are not particularly useful. With a redesigned curriculum, the program should see an increase and a steadying in the number of students enrolled in the major and in their courses. The faculty should continue to monitor student success, with a careful eye on completion rates.

5. Demand (2000 characters or less)

SCH per FFTE shows a marked increase in the last few years. The percentage of SCH earned in political science by non-majors rose to its highest last year at 81%, showing the programs popularity among students. The report notes this is due in part to an increase in enrollment from students in the Middle College.

10/20/2025

6. Productivity and Efficiency (2000 characters or less)

Rising enrollments and increased SCH per faculty member indicate upward momentum. The number of majors declined during the pandemic but appears to have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. The program has implemented practical, effective strategies including course rotation changes and optimized scheduling to increase enrollments and aid students in the completion of their degree.

7. Duplication and Distinctiveness (2000 characters or less)

The program is meaningfully distinct within the UA system as the only Political Science BA grounded in the liberal arts rather than policy or administration. Located in Anchorage, the state's economic and population center, gives students in the program opportunities both to study at UAA as well as to interact with local partners.

8. Strengths and Ideas for Moving Forward (2000 characters or less)

The faculty have a strong commitment to high-impact co-curricular programing, which when combined with a comprehensive and recently modernized curriculum prepares students for careers in government, business, non-profits and education. Recently significant changes were made to both the curriculum and the faculty, moving forward the program is encouraged to monitor demand and student success metrics to assess if these changes are achieving the desired outcomes.

9. Comprehensive Fee Review (2000 characters or less)

N/A

Dean's Final Evaluation

I commend the program for: (number and list the specific commendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)

1. redesigning the curriculum and aligning course offerings with instructor strengths,
2. revamping their course scheduling so as to better meet student needs and increase enrollments,
3. providing students with robust co-curricular activities that engage students and complement their in-class training,
4. strong collaborations, especially with our community campuses and Middle College, and a
5. clear commitment to student success.

I recommend that the program: (number and list the specific recommendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)

1. continue to monitor the impact of the redesigned curriculum to ensure it supports student degree completion,
2. regularly review course scheduling and rotation patterns to maintain robust enrollments,
3. leverage rising enrollment and co-curricular activities to increase the number of Political Science majors,

10/20/2025

4. continue to deepen partnerships, including the Alaska Leaders Archive, and to explore new relationships that benefit our community, faculty and students.

Dean's overall recommendation to the provost: Continuation -- Program is successfully serving its students and meeting its mission and goals. No immediate changes necessary, other than regular, ongoing program improvements.

If an Interim Progress Report is proposed, recommended year: Select N/A or Academic Year.

If a Follow-up Program Review is proposed, recommended year: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Proposed next regular Program Review: AY2033

Dean first name last name: Jenny McNulty

Date: 3/30/2026

END OF DEAN SECTION

PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION (Due within one week of receiving dean's review)

Are you submitting an optional response? If yes, add your response below, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission. If no, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission.

No

Optional Response: *(10,000 characters or less)*

Committee chair first name last name: Forrest Nabors

Date: 4/6/2026

END OF PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION

PROVOST SECTION (Due on August 1)

Provost's commendations, additional or adjusted recommendations, if any, and other general comments (3500 characters or less):

I agree with the dean's commendations, and wish to call out in particular the program's efforts to increase overall enrollments through revamping their approach to course scheduling, among other things. I also wish to commend the program for its comprehensive review and update of the curriculum.

I also agree with the dean's recommendations, and would like the program to particularly focus on #4 continue to deepen partnerships, including with the Alaska Leaders Archive and its related activities. Likewise, the program will want to consult with the advisory council for the Model UN to get feedback on program strengths that the program can continue to build on. The program will also want to explore additional internal connections. For example, the program might consider developing an accelerated masters with the Master of Public Policy.

10/20/2025

In addition, there are a handful of active Political Science courses which do not have a course content guide fully completed in the Curriculum Management System, and the program will want to put those up through the curriculum process in Fall 2026.

Finally, I fully agree with the dean's final decision of continuation. The program has put in place a strong foundation from which it can continue to grow.

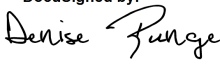
Provost's decision: Continuation -- Program is successfully serving its students and meeting its mission and goals. No immediate changes necessary, other than regular, ongoing program improvements.

Interim Progress Report: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Follow-up Program Review: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Next regular Program Review: AY2032

Provost's signature:

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Date: June 26, 2026