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*Division of Politics, Administration and Justice*

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Memo: Response to the Political Science Program Performance Review, External Review Report

From: Stacy L. Mallicoat, Division Chair

We would like to thank the PPR review team for their feedback on our self study and site visit.

In reviewing the recommendations by the PPR review team, I note the following suggestions:

1. Appointment of a facilitator to assist with the review of our Division RTP standards

As noted in the PPR review team report, the Division is currently beginning the process of revising our RTP standards. Such standards have been in place for at least the past fifteen years and a revision is needed to both update the standards to the current state of the disciplines in the Division as well as to comply with revisions to UPS 210. I have consulted with both Dean Fontaine and Michelle Tapper in Employee Relations to identify an external facilitator to assist with this process. There is a current draft of the proposed DPC document that is available for faculty review and all faculty have been encouraged to submit their written feedback to an anonymous forum. We hope that a facilitator is found soon as many faculty in the Division are frustrated by the process and its lack of progress. In addition, the Division may benefit from a mediator who could help manage the challenges that have arisen. While the site visit team suggests that adopting discipline specific RTP standards, we believe this would heighten the differences between us, not celebrate the unique ways in which our faculty cross-over disciplinary boundaries and collaborate on research across the Division.

2. Support for High Impact Practices

The PPR team identified two potential solutions to assist with the delivery of Division HIP's.

- a) The allocation of an additional faculty member to support the logistical planning and fundraising for all HIP's.

We currently have a vacant staff position (currently staffed by a temporary worker) who handles the logistics for all event planning. It is our intent to staff this position with a full-time staff by the end of the Spring 2017 semester. The addition of substantive fundraising activities would have to

involve a change to the job description, which is something that would need to be explored for feasibility as well as the skill set of the staff member.

b) Assigned time credit for HIP faculty

Contingent on curricular needs and budget availability, we currently offer assigned time credit for faculty participating in HIP programs (such as Model UN, Moot Court and Town Hall). To date, we have been able to successfully fund these releases internally. If the state budget were to change, the Division would need to weigh out the priority of support for this item over other forms of assigned time, such as for committee chairs (such as searches, personnel, and curriculum) and advising.

In addition to the site visit team's proposals, it may be valuable for the University to reconceptualize how campus wide resources are allocated for HIP's. For example, the Town Hall format that has been praised both across campus and in this report serves primarily students from outside of the major. Similarly, many of our experiential programs draw from students across campus. Recent changes in funding sources such as IRA have resulted in a reduced capacity to support these types of programs. These challenges are not unique to POSC/PA but have a significant impact on our ability to continue these efforts. We encourage the campus to investigate opportunities to fund these programs which have such a significant impact for the campus in reducing the achievement gap and in improving the time to graduation.

### 3. Enrollment Issues

We appreciate the suggestions made by the site visit team and find that they are in line with some of the strategies that we are currently employing. In addition, the Division is working to identify potential opportunities for outreach with local community colleges that advisors can engage in as a part of their workload to network with potential transfer students that might consider a major in Political Science and Public Administration. Related efforts are in place to increase our recruitment of students for the MAPS program.

We appreciate the suggestions on the revisions we are considering to the major. We are particularly excited to begin to offer the minor in public policy beginning in Fall 2018. We hope this will yield both an increased interest in the Division as a partner to many other majors on campus, as well as increase interest in the POSC/PA majors in general.

### 4. Space Allocations

The PPR site visit report also affirms the need for additional space allocations. As a Division, we are allocated 4.5 classrooms. Based on our current offerings of 150 sections each semester, we would need 8 allocated classrooms in order to meet our needs.



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While we appreciate the efforts that the Dean's office has gone to to prioritize PAJ in the first round of scheduling for any available classrooms in the college, having additional first-right/allocated classrooms will help the Division to create a more consistent scheduling process. This would yield four key benefits. First, it would allow our students to take advantage of the tools available through Titan Scheduler and allow students to be more proactive in planning their schedules. This in turn would help increase the student's time to degree by knowing when particular classes will be scheduled in future semesters. Second, the uncertainty of classrooms means that with each round, our schedule of classes can change dramatically in order to offer a balanced schedule such that we don't have too many classes in a single time slot or that we offer a balance of required/electives, day vs. night and MW vs. TuTh offerings. This leads to a significant use of staff and leadership (Chair, Vice Chair and Program Coordinators) resources that could be diverted to other areas of need in the Division. Third, the site visit team suggests that the issue of under-enrollment in 400-level students could be improved with additional allocated classrooms to "combat the students' tendencies to fill their schedules based on course times rather than intentional building of a course of study, offering concentration paths perhaps through the scheduling of classes may help students tie their classes together". Finally, the Division has continued to grow over the past several years, resulting in an increased demand for our classes in general while the number of classrooms has remained static.

## 5. Assessment

We thank the committee for their feedback on their review of our ongoing efforts to revamp the curriculum. We will consider their suggestions and how to tie these efforts to our assessment structures.

We appreciate the suggestions for improvement for our assessment; we have some concerns as well. The current structure of our courses often provide for a substantive writing assignment towards the end of the semester. Such assignments create a natural space for assessment, but there is significant resistance from the faculty to complete the assessment piece of this work, particularly since these deadlines can often fall during the intersession or summer breaks (a time when faculty are generally uncompensated for work). In the past we have used assigned time for one semester to coordinate our assessment efforts, which has yielded minimal success. We are unsure of a solution to improve our assessment efforts given these challenges and are open for suggestions on how to improve this within the faculty.

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