

BS Political Science CPR Index (AY22-23)

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Comprehensive Program Review

AY 2022 – 2023

Institution: Middle Georgia State University

Academic Program: BS in Political Science

College or School: School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Department: Political Science

CIP Code: 451001

Date of Last Internal Review: 5/18/2022

Faculty Completing Report: Christopher N. Lawrence, Ph.D.

Current Date: February 6, 2023

5 Year Enrollment by Campus and Graduation Trends

Enrollment

Campus	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	5 YR Growth	Fall 2018 compared to Fall 2022 only
Macon	1	11	12	9	10	77.83%	900%
Cochran	1	11	4	1	2	18.92%	100%
Warner Robins		2		2	2		
Dublin				1	2		
Eastman							
Online		2	9	17	17		
Off Campus					1		
Total	2	26	25	20	34	103.05%	1,600%

Graduates

- For data consistency, the fiscal year is in which the degree was awarded. For examples, academic year 2019 includes degrees conferred in Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019.

AY 2018	AY 2019	AY 2020	AY 2021	AY 2022	3 YR Growth	AY2020 compared to AY2022 only
		2	4	4	41.42%	100%

Program Purpose and Mission: The Bachelor of Science in Political Science is a degree program designed for students interested in careers in government and public service, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, as well as graduate study in law, political science, and public administration. The degree program includes training in the application of research and data analysis skills to real-life political and social problems, as well as opportunities for experiential learning either in the workforce or through the completion of an independent research project. The political science degree is designed to produce graduates who are equipped to meet the changing demands of citizens in contemporary society. The mission of the program is aligned with those of the department, school, and university.

Program Age, Tracks, etc.: The degree program was approved by the USG Board of Regents in early 2018 and was included in the MGA catalog starting with the 2018–19 academic year. The courses unique to the program were initially mostly offered on the Cochran campus, using a mix of faculty based on the Cochran campus and faculty traveling from other campuses to teach in Cochran, with some courses being delivered fully online. In 2019 and 2020, the department also increased the availability of the program by delivering courses on the Macon campus, and in 2022 the department initiated the use of synchronous videoconferencing to provide more access to electives for students on various campuses and ensure faculty on all campuses could contribute equitably to the program. In line with other MGA programs that initiated bachelor’s degree programs, we deactivated the associate of science degree program in political science in 2019, encouraging students to either switch to the bachelor’s program in political science or the A.A./A.S. core curriculum programs. This comprehensive program review is the second review of the degree program since its inception.

Initially, we planned to offer two tracks in political science in the major, a track on public policy and administration and a track called “applied politics” that was a more traditional political science degree program. However, the public policy and administration track would have required many of the required classes to be taught by a faculty member without a terminal degree and we did not have available resources to recruit additional faculty, so we redesigned the program in 2020 to eliminate the two tracks and add an additional required course in public administration to ensure all students would have exposure to this disciplinary area.

Accreditation information: While the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) offers voluntary accreditation for professional master’s programs in the listed subfields of political science, there is no recognized accreditation for undergraduate

programs in political science. As a result, the political science program is only accredited as part of MGA's general accreditation to confer undergraduate degrees as a Level 5 (Doctoral granting) institution by SACS COC.

Methods of Delivery: As noted above, the program was initially offered in-person on the Cochran campus, supplemented with a number of required and elective courses offered fully online and with some use of videoconferencing as well. In 2020, we began also offering in-person upper-level courses in Macon. At present, to ensure access to the program with a limited number of faculty and to effectively serve other degree programs as well, we are offering most of the required courses in the program fully online, supplemented by elective courses that are offered either online, via videoconferencing (synchronous online), or in-person on the Macon campus.

Changes since last review: Our last review was completed in May 2022. At that time, the provost's office concurred with the dean's recommendations that the department focus on three areas: reviewing the delivery strategy of the program; engaging in further promotion of the program; and identifying job market opportunities for students in the program. In the 2022–2023 academic year, we have addressed these recommendations as follows:

Delivery strategy: In our 2022 CPR, we had identified online programming as an area of potential growth, noting that the majority of our declared majors had wholly or partially online schedules even though this was inconsistent with the degree program's core being offered face-to-face. As a result, starting in fall 2022, we essentially flipped our program delivery strategy to deliver the core courses required to graduate in a fully online format at least once per year, while courses that count as electives in the program are delivered in three primary formats: fully online (asynchronous); videoconferencing with an in-person component in Macon or Cochran (synchronous); or fully face-to-face in Macon. This strategy allows us to continue to offer some upper-level face-to-face classes while also expanding the reach of the program to a potential global audience.

This program delivery change did not affect our delivery of core courses in Area E including POLS 1101, which continue to be delivered consistent with the university's campus presence strategy on the Macon, Cochran, Dublin, and Warner Robins campuses as well as fully online.

Program promotion: The department has worked with the Office of Marketing and Communications on projects to increase the visibility of the department, its programs, and its faculty, including participation in the Finding Greatness profile series and an upcoming website feature with Dr. John Hall discussing the history and future of the Social Security program. We have also continued a series of faculty discussion events on current issues facing the state, nation, and world, with events this academic year including discussions of the War in Ukraine, the 2022 gubernatorial and congressional elections, important Supreme Court cases, and other topics. During the AY2023–24 academic year, the department will be hosting a Fulbright

scholar-in-residence, Dr. Yuriy Loboda of the National University of Defense, Ukraine, which should also help bring additional attention to the department and its programs.

Job opportunities: Our degree program already embeds a substantial experiential learning component connected to careers after graduation; the majority of students in the program complete an internship at a mutually-agreed site that is connected to their career goals. Dr. Julie Lester is currently in discussions with representatives of the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), the state-level organization representing the interests of city governments, to establish career pathways in local government including expanded internship opportunities and additional undergraduate-level courses aligned with the needs of local governments, with a view to potentially establishing either an undergraduate certificate or nexus program in local government administration aligned with our bachelor's program.

We are also pursuing strategies to increase awareness of the lifetime earnings potential of the degree program (which is comparable to many of MGA's pre-professional bachelor's programs),¹ better connect students to job opportunities via the Center for Career and Leadership Development, and improve our tracking of alumni outcomes through a new departmental presence on LinkedIn. Finally, we have encouraged students to pursue minors and certificates connected to career opportunities in areas such as business and criminal justice to broaden their appeal to potential employers.

Benchmarks of Progress: While the quantitative measures of program growth to date are satisfactory, they lag substantially behind the initial projections for the program and seem to be well behind the program's potential. However, the program has been one of the few liberal arts-oriented undergraduate programs at MGA to show consistently positive enrollment and graduate growth over the 2018–2022 period, despite the substantial enrollment headwinds that the institution as a whole has faced during this period, particularly among the first-time, full-time freshman demographic that a program like ours would be expected to largely appeal to. This growth has continued; in AY2023, we had 37 students enrolled in the program in fall 2022 (including 3 double-major students with other primary degrees) and we anticipate having 7 graduates this academic year. If current trends hold, we anticipate we should be able to meet the USG productivity benchmarks in the next two or three years.

As noted in last year's report, there are a number of extenuating factors that may have impaired program growth. While the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, the other identified factors (a shortage of full-time faculty, lack of program awareness, and changes in the institution's first-year student profile) remain ongoing challenges. Nonetheless we believe the

1 See e.g. <http://www.doug-webber.com/data.html> and <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/valueofcollegemajors/>.

adjustments to the program described above should place us on a trajectory to be successful going forward.

IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Date Reviewed: 3-29-23

Program Reviewed: B.S. Political Science

<p>Contextual Notes: Summarize any demographic or environmental factors described in the introduction that might significantly impact assessment of the program</p> <p>Lack of full-time faculty with terminal degrees to teach upper-level courses.</p>

Area of Focus	Exemplary Area	Satisfactory Area	Area of Concern	No Evidence	Notes
<p>Enrollment</p>	<p><i>This program has significantly positive enrollment trends and robust credit hour production</i></p>				<p>Strong enrollment online and on Macon campus; lower enrollment on other campuses.</p>
<p>Graduation Trends USG benchmark:</p> <p>Bachelor's Degrees: 10 graduates/year</p> <p>Graduate, Associate's or Certificates: 5 graduates/year</p> <p><small>Programs falling under these benchmarks are designated as "low performing"</small></p>			<p><i>Three year rolling average does not meet USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred; the program is "low performing" by USG definition</i></p>		<p>Trending in a positive direction, but still well below the benchmark of ten graduates per year.</p>

IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Program Strengths of Note: Flexibility in content delivery—online, hybrid, and videoconferencing—shows potential for increasing enrollment. There are some good strategies implemented by the faculty to increase the profile of the program (like public faculty lectures and interviews on current issues). Faculty clearly focus on student success.

Areas of Concern: Low growth on other campuses besides online and in Macon might be of concern. Low graduation rates are also a concern given the increase in enrollment. Perhaps the newness of the program is one reason for these rates, but program administrators and faculty should monitor this carefully.

Other Comments: A well-written document; a pleasure to read!

Comprehensive Program Review Report

Academic Program Name: BS in Political Science

College or School: School of Education & Behavioral Sciences

Department: Political Science

Date of Last Internal Review: Spring 2022

Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement, if applicable):

Current Date: 5/11/2023

Executive Summary: *Provide a summary related to the academic program's quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. If this is the initial review of the program address how the program is/is not meeting the enrollment and credit hour projects contained in the original program proposal. Include a statement of plans for action based on the overall categorical summation contained in the next section.*

The Bachelor of Science in Political Science is a degree program designed for students interested in careers in government and public service, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, as well as graduate study in law, political science, and public administration. The degree program includes training in the application of research and data analysis skills to real-life political and social problems, as well as opportunities for experiential learning either in the workforce or through the completion of an independent research project.

The BS in Political Science program launched in Fall 2018, and just 3 semesters later came the COVID-19 pandemic which was especially disrupting for a fledgling program that was campus-based. Additionally, the political climate in our country has likely impacted interest in this kind of major. However, the program has experienced a rebound of growth in the past academic year, moving from 20 students enrolled to 34 current students in Spring 2023. Much of this growth occurred in the online format. Additionally, we are graduating 4 students in Political Science at the May 2023 Commencement, a number that is essentially 20-25% of the total program enrollment over the last few years. This suggests that the students who choose this major are academically well-prepared and are graduating on-time. Outreach and marketing efforts will continue to focus on building enrollment, with anticipated continued increases in the next academic year. If we can get enrollment to over 50 (just 16 students away), we can expect graduation numbers to surpass 10 students per academic year.

One other point of pride that speaks to the quality of this program – 5 out of our 6 graduates from this current academic year took the national major field test in political science. Group

results show that our graduates in Political Science beat the national average in every category, including analytical thinking and political thought.

Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

✓ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

✓ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.

Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

Program will be deactivated.

Program will be voluntarily terminated.

Other (identify/add text):

Academic Dean Signature: *David M. Birk*
Dean of Graduate Studies Signature (when applicable):

Date: 5/8/2023

Comprehensive Program Review Report
Academic Program Name: BS in Political Science
College or School: School of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department: Pol
CPR Review Schedule AY22-23

Provosts Response:

Since the last review conducted in May 2022, the department has made noticeable strides in addressing the recommendations put forth by the Provost's office and the Dean. The changes implemented in the delivery strategy, program promotion, and job market opportunities have yielded positive outcomes. However, it is important to critically assess the program's current state in light of enrollment and graduation trends, which have triggered discussions with the system office during academic forecasting. Consequently, further pursuit of these areas is imperative to ensure the program's continued success and alignment with the evolving needs of students and the job market.

Regarding the delivery strategy, the department's shift towards online programming and offering core courses in a fully online format has undoubtedly improved accessibility and expanded the program's reach. Additionally, an exploration of a program pivot to a concentration area under interdisciplinary studies (IDS) or recruitment from the IDS ranks can provide additional opportunities for students and enhance the program's appeal. However, careful consideration must be given to maintain the program's core integrity and ensure that the interdisciplinary concentration aligns with student interests and market demands. Regular assessment and evaluation will be necessary to monitor the effectiveness and relevance of this pivot.

The collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Communications has yielded acceptable results, raising the department's visibility and promoting its programs and faculty. To build upon this progress, it is recommended to actively demonstrate the department's expertise and accomplishments in the interdisciplinary concentration area. This can be achieved through showcasing faculty research, publishing scholarly articles, and actively participating in interdisciplinary collaborations both within and outside the university. Emphasizing the unique opportunities and advantages offered by the program will help attract prospective students and increase enrollment.

The department's initiatives to embed experiential learning and establish connections with the Georgia Municipal Association have undoubtedly enriched job opportunities for students. To further strengthen career pathways in the interdisciplinary concentration, it is crucial to forge partnerships and collaborations with organizations and industries relevant to the field. Additionally, engaging alumni from the concentration area and involving them in mentorship programs and networking events will provide valuable guidance and connections for students. Continued assessment of the concentration's impact on student career outcomes and regular updates to the curriculum will ensure its alignment with market demands.

Given the program's evolving nature and the need to respond rapidly to changes in the academic landscape and market demands, it is recommended to conduct a comprehensive program review (CPR) again in three years. However, it is important to note that the program's viability and relevance will be subject to annual academic forecasting analysis. The findings from these analyses will necessitate accelerated responses and timely adjustments to ensure the program's continued viability. Regular monitoring of enrollment, graduation trends, student feedback, and market demands should inform ongoing improvements and adaptations to the program.

In conclusion, the department's efforts to address the recommendations have shown positive outcomes in the areas of delivery strategy, program promotion, and job market opportunities. However, continued pursuit of these areas, along with the exploration of a concentration area under interdisciplinary studies, is essential to meet the evolving needs of students and the job market. Conducting a CPR in three years and subjecting the program to annual academic forecasting analysis will ensure its viability and facilitate timely adjustments. The department's commitment to responsiveness and improvement is crucial for the program's continued success and impact.

Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

X Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in

Annually during the assessment cycle, subject to Academic Forecast Analysis, and CPR in 3 Years (2026)_____.

Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

Program will be placed on a monitoring status.

Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

Program will be deactivated.

Program will be voluntarily terminated.

Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature:

Date:



1/23/24