

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Senate Committee on University Priorities
Memorandum

S.08-46

*As amended by
Senate 7 Apr 08*

TO: Senate

FROM: John Waterhouse
Chair, SCUP and
Vice President, Academic

RE: Department of Political Science

DATE: March 13, 2008

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report on the Department of Political Science, together with responses from the Chair and Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, and input from the Associate Vice President, Academic.

Motion :

That Senate approve the recommendations from the Senate Committee on University Priorities concerning advice to the Department of Political Science and the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences on priority items resulting from the External Review.

The report of the External Review Team* for the Department of Political Science was submitted in March 2007 following the review team's site visit. The response from the Department of Political Science and the response from the Dean were received in September and November 2007.

A number of recommendations were made by the Team which may further strengthen the Department.

SCUP recommends to Senate that the Department of Political Science and the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences be advised to pursue the following as priority items.

1. Undergraduate Programmes

- Revisit the decision not to act on the recommendation to remove the cap of 30 students on third year (300) courses.
- Develop an upper level course that examines non quantitative/qualitative research methods.

2. Graduate Programmes

- Inform prospective PhD students of the funding they can expect to receive through scholarships and Teaching Assistantships.
- Seek ways to guarantee PhD students a minimum of four years of funding.
- Ensure PhD student funding packages do not include sessional teaching earlier than the fourth year of study.

- Consider limiting the number of areas of specialization, particularly at the PhD level in order to better differentiate SFU Political Science programmes from those at other universities.
- To assist students to be eligible for more scholarships.
- Consider requiring all graduate students to take POL 801 (Theoretical Perspectives in Political Science) and POL 802 (Political research: Design and Analysis).
- Ensure that POL 801 retains its broad objective of introducing students to major epistemological Political Science debates.
- Pursue the development of a qualitative methods course for graduate programmes.
- Reduce the number of cross-listed courses (POL 400/800) significantly.
- required* ○ Offer all graduate courses annually in the fall and spring.
- Make better usage of the Departmental website to provide information and support for students.

3. Faculty

- Develop a strategy which ensures equity in faculty teaching loads.
- Prioritize the securing of more external grants and research funding.
- Prioritize the publication of research in high profile journals and other quality venues.

4. Governance

- In recognition of the importance of ongoing departmental planning, create a Priorities and Planning Committee and a Curriculum Committee to provide advice to the chair on governance issues and recommend academic priorities for the Department, including hiring.

5. Relationships within SFU

- With the involvement of the Dean, create a joint committee mandated to develop a collegial and mutually beneficial relationship with the School of International Studies.

*** Review Team**

Dr. Grace Skogstad – Review Team Chair (University of Toronto)
 Dr. William Coleman (McMaster University)
 Dr. Reeta Tremblay (Memorial University)

CC Lesley Cormack, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
 David Laycock, Chair, Dept of Political Science

External Review of the Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University

Report of the External Review Team:

William D. Coleman, McMaster University
Grace Skogstad, University of Toronto (Chair)
Reeta Tremblay, Memorial University

Site Visit: March 7– 9, 2007

Report Submitted: March 22, 2007

Introduction

The members of the Department of Political Science external review team visited Simon Fraser University March 7 – 9, 2007. The review was well organized, both in advance of and during our site visit. Prior to our visit, we were sent ample documentation of the Department's programs and faculty, as well as of the university's academic and strategic plans. The on-site visit provided us with considerable opportunity to meet on an individual basis with many faculty members, the officers of the Department, groups of students and staff, and other individuals with responsibilities for ancillary programs.

We would like to thank all the individuals who met with us during our visit and whose cooperation was invaluable in producing this report. We thank Bal Basi in the office of the Academic Vice-President; Dr. Bob Anderson, who served as the fourth member of the review committee but did not participate in the writing of this report; the faculty, staff and students in Political Science who took time to meet with us; Dr. David Laycock, Chair of Political Science, who attended to all our requests for information and arranged additional meetings for us; Dr. John Harris, Director of the School for International Studies; Dr. Kennedy Stuart of the School of Public Policy; Dr. Karl Froschauer, director of the Centre for Canadian Studies; Dr. Anthony Perl, director of Urban Studies; Dr. Eric Hershberg, director of Latin American Studies; Gwen Bird and Colleen Alstad from the SFU library; and Eva Lewis, Co-op Coordinator.

We address the questions that were posed for the review in six parts. Part I reviews the undergraduate program; Part II, the graduate programs; Part III, the faculty; Part IV, governance and administration; Part V, the relations of Political Science with other units in the university; and Part VI contains a summary of our recommendations.

I. Undergraduate Program

The Terms of Reference for the External Review Committee ask for an evaluation of the quality of the undergraduate programs with respect to structure, breadth, orientation, integration, and management of enrolment; the adequacy of teaching resources and the balance of undergraduate and graduate courses; and 'strategies necessary to attract students in a competitive market, including the possible creation of a direct entry option for Political Science majors and perhaps an enhanced Honors program.' The Review Committee is also asked to determine whether the Department has measures in place to ensure programs are evaluated and revised.

The External Review Committee finds the Political Science undergraduate programs—Major, Minor, and Honours—to be well structured. Programs strike a judicious balance between required courses and breadth requirements, on the one hand, and latitude for students to choose course options in keeping with their interests, on the other hand. Requiring Major and Honours students to take compulsory courses in political theory.

Canadian politics and statistics, as well as meeting breadth requirements across the sub-fields of the discipline, is consistent with the best programs in Political Science in Canada. At the same time, the removal of a number of prerequisites to upper level courses has provided students with flexibility in course selection.

Although students are not always able to access the courses they need (see below), the Department has made a very good effort to offer a full range of courses and to expose students to the major sub-fields of Political Science. The one possible gap is the absence of an upper level course that examines non-quantitative /qualitative methods. Many undergraduate programs now list such a course as a counterpart to courses in quantitative methods (Statistics). The 'Undergraduate Report for External Review 2007' indicates that the Department is proposing a fourth year course on 'Qualitative Methodology for Comparative Politics, and we support this initiative.

Management of enrolment, however, has proven to be difficult as enrolment in Political Science courses and programs has risen sharply since the last review. The Department has not been able to service the necessary range of undergraduate courses with its existing complement of tenure-stream/tenured faculty and has had to rely extensively on sessional or limited term instructors (hereafter, we refer to these instructors as simply sessional appointments). In addition, students are being 'turned away' from courses, with the consequence of students being denied entry to courses of their choice and experiencing a delay in completing their program.

Political Science at SFU is not alone in experiencing the problem of a large amount of undergraduate sessional teaching. It has occurred elsewhere in Canada as the full time faculty complement has lagged behind undergraduate enrolment increases. However, extensive teaching by sessionals is not ideal for students, no matter how effective the sessional instructor. As the Department points out, when sessionals are teaching upper level courses, students have less interaction with full time faculty, lose important mentorship, and often find it difficult to obtain letters of recommendation from reputable and well known faculty to support their applications for post undergraduate training. Individual faculty members have recognized how students are disadvantaged by this situation and have offered directed readings courses. This strategy is not an efficient one, however, and can only deal with the needs of a handful of students at best.

Recent new appointments, including those of faculty who will join the Department in September 2007 and January 2008, should help to alleviate some of the need to rely on sessional appointments. However, without additional growth in the faculty complement (beyond replacements for retiring faculty), servicing the needs of undergraduate (and graduate) students, without relying on stipend or limited term appointments will continue to prove difficult.

One initiative that we believe could alleviate the proportion of undergraduate sessional teaching is to terminate the current enrolment cap of 30 students on third year courses. This practice is now working against the students' best interests, and indeed, the Department has had to abandon this goal in recent years with respect to certain third year

courses. We recommend that the cap on third year courses be lifted to 60-80 students. A higher cap should allow more students to access a given third year course, and free up faculty to offer lower level or upper level courses more frequently. If this change is made at the third year level, then it should still be possible to retain the seminar experience at the fourth year level. We agree with the Department that a small seminar experience at the fourth year level is highly desirable and consistent with best practices in undergraduate training in Canada.

The Department seeks advice about its Honours program. We recommend it be eliminated. As the Department notes, four year undergraduate programs are now the norm, and we think little is added to the undergraduate experience by having students do more courses.

Eliminating the Honours program need not mean eliminating the opportunity for undergraduate students to write a thesis. It could be retained as one option among two others that we recommend. These other options are for fourth year Major students to complete an internship (for example, with a governmental or non-governmental agency) or a Research Opportunity Course wherein students conduct their own research or work with a faculty member on his/her research project. Course requirements for both the internship and the Research Opportunity course would include an extended paper (25-30 pages). The internship or Research Opportunity would not displace other opportunities SFU provides for students to enrich their undergraduate experience, including participating in international exchanges and field schools.

The Department seeks advice on a direct entry option for Political Science Majors. We do not have a view on whether this will make Political Science more attractive as a Major. At the same time, we see no reason to oppose it.

In terms of ongoing curriculum evaluation and revision, the Department has been sensitive to the need to revisit curriculum offerings as the discipline changes, as boundaries between sub-fields become more permeable, and as new faculty members with new areas of expertise are hired. However, we heard some concerns about the efficacy of the current decentralized structure of curriculum renewal (with field committees responsible and acting relatively independently of one another). We suggest that a Curriculum Committee be created and take over responsibility from field groups. (We flesh out its composition more fully in Part IV, Administration and Governance.) It would provide for a more centralized and coordinated structure to undertake annual review of course offerings and to adjust the curriculum consistent with the expertise of new hires.

In our meeting with undergraduate students, we were told that the results of teaching evaluations are not published in aggregate form for each course taught. If these evaluations are not published, this practice departs from the norm in most Canadian universities, including political science departments. If this information is correct, we recommend that the evaluations be aggregated and published for each course and made available to students.

Finally, we suggest that the Department seek ways to bolster its provision of academic advice to students. The Department has made efforts to serve students counseling needs, but these could be enhanced, through greater information on its website and/or by designating a faculty advisor to assist students with course selection and provide advice on career options.

The foregoing modifications can strengthen the delivery of what is overall a well conceived and structured undergraduate program to which the Department has devoted considerable attention. We see our recommendations as minor modifications that would reinforce the good reputation that the Department and its faculty enjoy with undergraduate students.

II: The Graduate Program

The External Review Team is asked to examine the structure, breadth, depth and course offerings of the graduate programs; graduate student progress and completion; enrolment management; their comparative advantages within Canada; the success of the specializations in theme areas of public policy, governance and political economy; the competitiveness of funding offers with other Ph.D granting departments in Canada; the adequacy of the current research design and research methods program requirements; and 'possible changes to planning processes and internal structures that may result in enhancing the profile of the graduate program.'

Our observations about the MA and PhD programs come at a time when the Department is graduating its first PhD students and they are obtaining university teaching positions, and some graduate students are winning prestigious SSHRC awards. The graduate students whom we met were overwhelmingly positive about their experience in the Department and their relationships with Political Science faculty, their supervisors, and staff. They voiced their enthusiasm for a Department whose faculty are diverse in their epistemological and methodological approaches and take their supervisory responsibilities seriously.

Turning to the structure of the graduate program, we find the Department's requirement that MA (and PhD) students take courses in 'Theoretical Perspectives in Political Science' (POL 801) and 'Political Research: Design and Analysis' (POL 802) to be consistent with best practices of graduate training. We note and support graduate students' belief that POL801 works best when it examines all the major epistemological debates in the field, rather than concentrating overwhelmingly on one approach (for example, rational choice). Increasingly, graduate programs are adding courses in Qualitative Methods as requirements to their graduate training and we recommend that the Department either introduce Qualitative Methods as a component of its POL802 course or identify a separate qualitative methods course. We note (see above) that the Department is planning to introduce such a course at the 400-level, but we generally do not support cross-listed courses (see below).

We also believe that the Department has the capacity to deliver the MA in the three fields of International Relations, Canadian Politics, and Comparative Politics that it has identified.

By contrast, we think the PhD program should be narrowed to the two fields of a) Global and Regional Political Economy and b) Public Policy. We suggest that the three themes (political economy, public policy, and governance) be eliminated. Students will therefore write their two examinations in these two fields. The Department has admirable strength in the regional political economy of Latin America, Africa, NAFTA, and Asia, as well as global political economy issues, including development. It can also aspire to be the leading university in western Canada in Public Policy: Canadian, Comparative, and International. There are currently several Canadian universities offering Masters' degrees in Public Policy (including Simon Fraser) but there are far fewer that offer a PhD in Public Policy – and certainly none that we know of in western Canada. A focus on Public Policy will allow SFU to distinguish itself from UBC and the University of Victoria at the doctoral level.

Concentrating on the two fields of Global and Regional Political Economy, and Public Policy, does not rule out the possibility of adding other fields in the future as recent hires build a research profile. One potential third PhD field is Political Representation, to reflect the expertise of current faculty in theories of political representation as well as in the empirical study of representation via political parties, interest groups, digital communities (for example, around blogs) and social movements. The addition of a few new appointments would suffice to list this area as a new field and one that would have important synergies with Global and Regional Political Economy as well as Public Policy.

There are nonetheless some real concerns about the graduate programs, most notably their attractiveness to students. The Masters' program has experienced a precipitous drop in enrolment this current academic year and the PhD program is struggling to attract students. We lack the information to offer sensible suggestions on the reason for the sharp decline in MA students this current year or for the failure of the PhD program to grow to the numbers desired by the Department. The Department will need to try to build its own database, contacting students who don't take up offers of admission to find out why, for example, they chose to go elsewhere.

We think there are other steps the Department can take with respect to the delivery of its MA and PhD programs to make them more attractive to potential applicants and to enhance the quality of the training of those enrolled in the programs. First, we recommend the Department reduce significantly the number of cross-listed (400 level undergraduate and 800 level graduate) courses. If the Department wants to recruit the best of its own students into its MA (and PhD) programs, it will need to reduce the number of cross-listed courses since these students will already have taken the courses in question and hence will see little merit in staying on at SFU.

Second, the Department should make a concerted effort to offer courses in the designated graduate fields, particularly core courses, in the fall and winter terms. We heard from students who had come to study in one subfield only to find that there were no courses offered in that subfield in either the fall or winter terms. We hope that our recommendation above to remove caps on third year courses—thereby allowing for fewer, larger courses at this level--will free up faculty to teach more graduate-only courses. We anticipate that the recent addition of new faculty members will also allow for more graduate courses to be offered more frequently. We also pass on the suggestion of a graduate student that the Department make a more concerted effort to inform students about courses outside the Department that could serve students' interests and needs, and direct students to them.

Third, the Department needs to take steps to shorten the length of time students take to complete the programs. Full time PhD students should be able to complete in 5-6 years rather than the current mode of 7 years. MA students also appear to be taking longer than desirable to finish.

In our view, the most important steps to reducing time to completion rate are a) to reduce appreciably the teaching and TA responsibilities of graduate students; and b) enhance their financial package. We recommend that the Department provide PhD students with a minimal guarantee of funding for four, not three years. In addition, this guaranteed funding should not be contingent upon PhD students being required to teach their own course prior to their fourth year or until they are finished their field work and have commenced writing their dissertation.

The collective experience of the members of the Review Team is that while *some* teaching experience is an asset in applying for tenure-stream faculty positions, and while teaching potential is weighed in the determination of successful candidates, it is not necessary to have *extensive* teaching experience. The most successful candidates are, as a rule, those who have finished their PhD dissertation in a timely fashion and have begun to publish.

We believe that a better financial package for PhD students is vital to successful recruitment of the number of students needed to ensure the viability of the graduate program. Putting in place the resources for a competitive financial package is the responsibility of the University and it should consider whether it needs to match the 'free tuition' strategy of the University of British Columbia. It might also investigate more closely the kinds of offers being made by the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta to their Ph.D students.

And finally, the Department will likely need to intensify its recruitment initiatives to increase its applicant pool and retention rate. We don't have anything novel to add here, but would simply reiterate the importance of making brochures about the graduate programs available to colleges and other universities, as well as constructing a more attractive website. The Department's website, for example, could profile successful students in the program. In our experience, students turn to Department websites as the

first and major source of information about graduate programs. Hence, the website creates an impression of the department that can either spark or diminish interest in applying. Resources invested in providing prospective applicants with comprehensive information online about these programs are usually a good investment.

III: The Faculty

The External Review Team is asked to evaluate the quality of faculty teaching and research; the level of external research support; service contributions; faculty collaboration and interaction to the end of providing 'a stimulating academic environment'; and the size and quality of the faculty complement in relation to the Department's responsibilities and workload.

Beginning with the quality of the faculty, our overall impression of the Political Science faculty is one of unquestioned competence. Faculty members take their teaching responsibilities seriously and step up to the plate to meet students' needs, including by offering directed reading courses, turning their courses into distance-education courses, assuming responsibility for mounting the University-wide writing courses, and teaching larger classes. There is also evidence of not just competence but also excellence: some faculty have won teaching awards and garnered large external grants for their research projects, including those in collaboration with Departmental colleagues and others outside the university. Most of those without large funding are nonetheless actively engaged in research and publishing.

Given this overall productivity, the members of the Review Committee are somewhat surprised that the levels of external research grants are not higher in relation to other units in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and in relation to other PhD-granting Political Science departments. We recognize that SSHRCC success rates are not high (an application has a greater chance of being turned down than awarded), but we do believe that all faculty should be strongly encouraged to apply for SSHRCC and other external research grants. These research grants will be a boon for attracting and funding graduate students, and would expedite the Research Opportunity initiative that we propose be added to the undergraduate program.

We also recommend that faculty seek higher quality outlets for their publications: we expected to see more articles published in such journals than was evident on average in the CVs we received. We urge faculty to publish in widely recognized high quality peer reviewed journals and with academic presses. Doing so will help raise the profile of the PhD program, assist in improving success rates at SSHRCC, and attract good PhD students.

Several members of the Political Science Department have made an important contribution to the wider Canadian and international political science and academic community. Hosting the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* is one clear example of such service, but there are other examples as well.

The Department has taken steps to create a lively intellectual environment and to work collaboratively. We are struck by several examples of members co-publishing. We applaud the Speaker Series as a vehicle for promoting intellectual exchanges in the Department (although we do question whether its Monday morning slot is good timing!). To build on initiatives to date, we recommend that the Dean of FASS provide a small budget for the speaker series. At the same time, many Departments also find that 'brown bag' lunch seminars can create a more informal setting in which colleagues and graduate students can present their own 'research in progress.'

We turn finally to the matter of the size of the faculty complement relative to its teaching responsibilities and workload. There is little doubt that the increase in undergraduate enrolment and the University-wide requirements to offer undergraduate writing courses have placed additional demands on faculty. We understand from the senior administration that Political Science should not expect any appreciable growth in its faculty complement to take account of these larger numbers. Accordingly, we think it should be a priority for the Chair of the Department to pay close attention to equity in the work load of faculty members. By equity we mean a similar distribution of students across faculty members, with similar levels of support in the form of TAs and or graders, and roughly similar responsibilities across graduate and undergraduate teaching and graduate supervision. Many departments, for example, expect each faculty member to teach a combination of a large undergraduate lecture course, a smaller lecture course at the third year level, an undergraduate seminar and a graduate seminar on a rotating basis.

Our appraisal suggests that the distribution of responsibility for Masters students' supervision has been quite well shared. The numbers of PhD students are fewer, but even so we are struck by the fact that no single faculty member has a disproportionate number of PhD students. The distribution of undergraduate teaching responsibilities may be or may become more of a problem if our recommendation to remove the cap of 30 students on third year courses is pursued. Faculty members teaching large third year courses would then need some compensation for doing so.

Although we don't believe there is any major problem as yet with respect to equity in teaching/supervision faculty work loads, we recommend that the Chair of the Department develop, in consultation with faculty, a proposal for how equity in undergraduate/graduate teaching and supervisory responsibilities will be achieved.

IV: Administration and Governance

The External Review Team is asked to appraise the effectiveness of administration in the Department, the adequacy of administrative resources, and whether the environment within the Department 'is conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the Department.'

We see good administration and governance as crucial to the success of the ability of the Department to attain its teaching and research objectives. Our impression from our site visit is that faculty, staff and students work collegially and with respect for one another.

However, we are aware of both some recent tensions and ongoing matters that, in our view, require careful attention to administrative and governance mechanisms in the Department.

First, there are some serious concerns about *hiring procedures*. We stress that the concern is not with the *outcomes* of these procedures; the Department is excited about the arrival of new faculty members and there is consensus that they are all excellent additions, with first rate credentials and research potential. But there are concerns about new hiring procedures that a) attempt to quantify in absolute terms the degree to which applicants meet teaching, research and service criteria; b) vary from one competition to another in the weights accorded to teaching, research and service; and c) are not applied consistently with stipulated procedures. These concerns have led to the unfortunate perception that the hiring procedures can be manipulated to favour hiring priorities related to epistemological and methodological approaches that have not been explicitly endorsed by the Department.

We agree that rigorous scrutiny of candidates with regard to their potential research and teaching excellence is important. The present quantification approach used by the search committee, however, appears to inhibit rigorous scrutiny of candidates according to advertised criteria and appears to undermine the legitimacy of the outcome even when there is a strong consensus in the department about a given candidate. In fact, employment equity principles require that the advertised criteria for a position be those used exclusively in evaluating prospective candidates. In the schema used by the department, we did not see direct linkages to the advertised criteria.

Accordingly, we recommend that the hiring committee provide a qualitative written statement to the Department regarding how short listed candidates meet the advertised criteria with regard to teaching and research. Such a written report would provide the members of the Department with the information needed to deliberate and evaluate individual candidates.

Second, as the Department continues with its process of faculty renewal (with three retirements pending in the next two years), it will be important to have a mechanism in place for long term planning. We do not believe this task can fall to the Department as a whole in the first instance, but is properly the mandate for a committee headed by the Chair of the Department. Such a Priorities and Planning (P&P) Committee would be responsible for recommending the priorities of the department with respect to not only academic appointments but also programs. It would address the question of what the Department should look like (in terms of areas of strength, fields in the MA and PhD programs) by the time of the next review in 7 years time. It could also advise the department on how best to capture opportunities through collaborating with other cognate units and programs.

Third, and further to planning, we recommend a Curriculum Committee be created with responsibility for ongoing curriculum review. This recommendation grows out of our discussions with faculty members, including the Undergraduate Chair, who are concerned that the existing structure--delegating responsibility for curriculum review/renewal to field areas--is not functioning as effectively as needed to provide integrated programs and a judicious balancing of undergraduate and graduate courses. The Curriculum Committee would be chaired by the Undergraduate Chair and its members would include the Graduate Chair, representatives of different epistemological and methodological approaches as well as the different subfields of political science. It would report to the Department.

Fourth, we are aware of some recent changes in, and additions to, staff personnel and heard about the complexity of administering the graduate and undergraduate programs. We suggest that the time is ripe for the Departmental Manager to institute a weekly meeting of administrative staff. Its purpose will be to ensure effective communication across staff and an efficient allocation of responsibilities, especially during those times in the calendar year when staff responsible for graduate admissions face heavy work loads. It would be helpful if the Department Chair attended these meetings once or twice a month as well.

Finally, we judge administrative resources to be adequate. We note undergraduate students do not have a dedicated lounge or study space or computer equipment, but heard no complaints from them about any of these deficiencies. We judge library resources to be excellent in terms of availability of electronic journals, free access to Interlibrary Loan, and librarians eager to share their expertise with faculty.

V: The Department of Political Science and Other Units

The External Review Team is asked to evaluate the Department's relationships with other units and centres, as well as 'the circumstances under which the Faculty structure review process could benefit the Department.' We were not briefed on the latter and are thus unable to comment on it.

We begin with the Department's operational relationship with the Centre for Canadian Studies. We judge it to be good. Although we were not asked to evaluate the Canadian Studies program itself, we believe that the major/minor programs in Canadian Studies are not adequately resourced. We do not believe it is good pedagogical practice to run a program virtually entirely on sessional appointments. In our view, the SFU administration has a decision to make: either put resources into full time faculty for Canadian Studies or wind it up.

Turning to relations with the School of Public Policy, we heard of a harmonious relationship between the Chair of Political Science and Director of the MPP. Our understanding is that there is limited Political Science faculty involvement in the delivery

of the Masters of Public Policy program and also little competition between the two masters programs. The MA program in Political Science is an academic program while the MPP is an applied program. We think there is some room for more collaboration and course sharing across the two programs. In particular, MPP students could be invited to take the Methods courses (POL 802, and a qualitative methods course once it is mounted) in Political Science. There could also be movement of students across optional courses for both programs. We learned that there were no particular administrative obstacles to the movement of students between regular and premium tuition programs.

Our conversations with the Chair of Political Science and the directors of the Urban Studies and Latin America programs also confirm cordial relationships. The Department's contribution to the BAFF program also bodes well for a continuing harmonious relationship here.

Things have not, however, proceeded so smoothly in terms of the relationship between Political Science and the School of International Studies (SIS). While the Chair of Political Science and the Director of SIS are both committed to working together, a synergistic relationship between the two units, to the benefit of SFU as a whole, will require senior administrative leadership.

In our view, SIS's undergraduate and graduate programs will have a clear impact on programs in Political Science. Faculty members in Political Science, with colleagues elsewhere in the university, have worked hard to build Development Studies at SFU, including the introduction of a Development Studies certificate. They understandably would like to see these efforts bear fruit in the construction of new programs at the School of International Studies. Their specialties in international political economy, development studies, and human security are the very ones at the core of the SIS Masters' program. In our view, this overlap of teaching and research interests means that there are clear opportunities for enhancing both the Department of Political Science and the School if the two units cooperate in the design and delivery of MA (and PhD) programs.

The history of the creation of the SIS, however, means that there is a strong risk that such synergistic opportunities will not be realized unless steps are taken immediately at the highest administrative levels of the university to build bridges between the two units. Through the even-handed direction of senior administrators, it should be possible to counter perceptions that new programs at the School will undermine undergraduate and graduate programs in political science.

Over the medium and long term, a good operational and academic relationship between Political Science and SIS will increase the ability of both units to attract highly qualified graduate students in Canada and abroad, as well as recruit excellent faculty members. SFU will be more attractive to those who are already at SFU and a good working relationship will help to retain current faculty and move their own research projects forward. Programs at the two units will be strengthened as faculty members can collectively offer more courses and share graduate student supervision.

We think it imperative that the serious strains between the Department and the School be addressed immediately or both units will suffer and opportunities for mutual growth and support will be lost. Accordingly, we recommend in the strongest possible terms that the Vice-President, Academic create a coordinating committee, chaired by himself or his designate, and whose membership includes among others the chair of Political Science, the director of the School, one faculty member from Political Science whose expertise is Human Security and another whose expertise is International Political Economy, and a SFU faculty member whose expertise is Development Studies.

VI. Recommendations

The Review Team has been asked to prioritize its recommendations and we do so here, beginning with the most important.

The highest priority should be given to ensuring a collegial and mutually beneficial relationship between the School of International Studies and the Department of Political Science. To this end, the Vice-President Academic should create a committee to coordinate programs offered by the School and the Department. The membership of the coordinating committee should include, among others, the Chair of Political Science, the Director of the School of International Studies, one faculty member from Political Science whose expertise is Human Security, another faculty member whose expertise is Development Studies, and a Political Science faculty member whose expertise is International Political Economy. The Vice-President Academic or his designate should chair the committee.

The Department of Political Science should remove the cap of 30 students on third year (300) courses.

The Department should guarantee PhD students a minimum of four years of funding (through a combination of scholarships and TAships.)

The Department should strive to increase the relative proportion of graduate student funding through scholarships rather than Teaching Assistantships.

POL 801 (Theoretical Perspectives in Political Science) and POL 802 (Political Research: Design and Analysis) should be required courses for all graduate students.

The number of cross-listed courses (POL 400/800) should be reduced significantly.

The Department should offer 2 PhD fields: a) Global and Regional Political Economy; b) Public Policy. It should eliminate themes of study.

The Departmental hiring committee should provide a qualitative written statement to the Department regarding how short listed candidates meet the advertised criteria with regard to teaching and research.

The Department of Political Science should eliminate its Honours program.

The Department of Political Science should introduce an Internship or a Research Opportunity Course as two additional options to a Thesis for fourth year undergraduates in the Major program.

All required graduate courses should be offered annually in the fall and winter terms.

PhD students' financial packages should not include sessional teaching earlier than the fourth year of study.

The Department of Political Science should coordinate the responsibilities of providing academic and program advice to students in a single office.

The Department should consider creating a Priorities and Planning Committee, with the mandate to recommend academic priorities for the department, including hiring.

The Department should consider creating a Curriculum Committee with responsibility for regular curriculum review and renewal.

The Chair of the Department, in consultation with faculty, should develop a strategy to ensure equity in teaching responsibilities.

Faculty should put a high priority on securing more external grants and research funds.

To raise the profile of the PhD program and attract good PhD students, faculty should aim to publish in high quality peer reviewed journals and with academic presses.

The Department should make full use of its website to provide information on courses, inside and outside the Department; applying for SSHRCs and other fellowships; and university support services and programs.

The Department of Political Science should follow through on its proposal to adopt an upper level (400) course that examines non-quantitative /qualitative methods.

POL 801 should retain its broad objective of introducing students to the major epistemological debates in the field of Political Science.

POL 802 should incorporate qualitative methods; if it does not, the department should identify a separate qualitative methods course for graduate students.

The Department may wish to add a third PhD field in the future in the area of Political Representation.

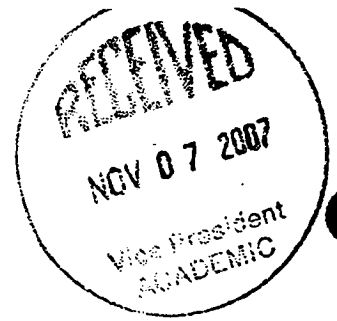
The MA program should retain the three fields of International Relations, Canadian Politics and Comparative Politics.

The Dean of FASS should provide a small budget for the Department's Speaker Series.

Consideration should be given to holding a weekly meeting of administrative staff in order to ensure effective communication and efficient allocation of responsibilities.



Faculty of
Arts and Social Sciences



MEMO

Faculty of
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ATTENTION Bill Krane, Associate VP Academic

FROM Lesley Cormack, Dean, FASS

RE External Review - Political Science: Dean's Response

DATE November 7, 2007

I welcome the opportunity to respond to the External Review for the Department of Political Science, written in April 2007, as well as the Department's reply of September 2007.

I am particularly pleased that the reviewers found the undergraduate programs in Political Science to be well structured and the faculty members committed and strong teachers. I encourage the Department to continue to support this program and to ensure that their enrollment numbers remain strong in this area.

Many of the review's suggestions pertain to individual practices within the Department and I am happy to leave such suggestions to the Department itself. Rather than speak to all the recommendations, I would like to respond to the ones I think are key.

Perhaps the most significant issue facing the Department of Political Science is its relationship with the School for International Studies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the External Review gives highest priority to "ensuring a collegial and mutually beneficial relationship between" the two units. While I completely agree with this direction, I disagree that this should be done at the level of the Vice-President Academic. Clearly this is a Faculty issue and the relationship should be mediated within a Faculty-based committee. Indeed, this process has already begun, and will, hopefully, result in a cooperative relationship that provides synergies and increased capacity in both units.

I applaud the suggestions of the External Review that pertain to planning and the Department's interest in planning. I believe that it is of fundamental importance for the Department to develop (and continue to develop) long-term strategies with regards to curriculum, hiring, areas of emphasis, and outreach. Whether this is

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done by a Priorities and Planning Committee and a Curriculum Committee, as suggested in the Review, or through some other configuration, as suggested by the Department, is less important than that on-going planning take place in a collegial atmosphere.

With regards to curricular development, the Department must be creative and work within its resources to make all its programs the best possible. I encourage them to consider all possible suggestions. The department should examine how well students flow through their program. They need to ensure that lower level courses fill an effective recruiting function as well as laying down fundamentals in the field, and once in the program, students should not encounter course access bottlenecks. For example, I urge them to take seriously the External Review's suggestion to lift the cap on 3rd year courses. While I understand their reluctance to increase class size, they need to weigh the relative merits of 3rd year caps, 400/800 courses, lack of choice at the 4th year level, and stand-alone graduate courses.

I agree with the Department that it does not make sense to eliminate the Honours program. The External Reviewers' Ontario orientation makes them misunderstand the important role of honours programs at SFU in training the best of our students and preparing them for graduate work. It might be interesting, however, for the Department to consider the suggestion of an Internship option, if this is not already a possibility within their undergraduate program.

Concerning the Graduate Program, I urge the Department to take seriously the External Review's suggestions with regards to limiting the number of areas of specialization, particularly at the PhD level. While it is understandable that the Department wishes to maintain an active PhD program in all areas, in order to be competitive and attract the best graduate students it is important to differentiate themselves from programs at other universities. The best way to do this is through the development of particular areas of strength. This would not prevent students in other areas from being admitted to the program, but would allow the Department to develop and promote the areas in which they are particularly strong.

I applaud the Department's tangible commitments to funding graduate students, particularly their recent transformation of the

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Michael and Jan Stevenson Graduate Scholarship in Political Science to an entrance scholarship, and their commitment to 4 year funding for PhD students. This is very important in the competitive world of attracting graduate students and I encourage them to continue to find creative ways to increase funding (especially through mentoring students as they apply for SSHRC grants, through faculty grants supporting students, etc.)

I urge the Department to take seriously the comments by the External Reviewers regarding research profile. It is very important for the Department to demonstrate its research excellence, through publishing in top venues, through applying for and winning important external grants, and by making a significant contribution to the national and international scholarly community. This is itself a key step in ensuring a top graduate program; the recruiting of good graduate students will follow where there is research leadership shown by faculty members.

There is a suggestion that the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences contribute funding for a speakers series. Unfortunately, FASS is not in a position to increase funding to departments at this time, and suggests that the Department consider using its FIC funding for such a purpose.

Finally, I understand that the hiring policy, criticized by the External Review, has now been changed, so this should not be an area of concern.

This review has given the Department a strong agenda for moving forward. I strongly urge the Department to take the key recommendations from this review and work diligently to assess them, and implement those that will benefit the Department and its programs into the future.



Lesley Cormack

Cc: D. Laycock, Chair, Dept. of Political Science

**Response to 2007 External Review
Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University
September 2007**

Our department welcomes the opportunity to respond to a thoughtful and often helpful External Review Report. We have discussed all of the recommendations in a combination of e-mail conversations and several meetings of the whole department. We will respond to the recommendations in order of the subject areas addressed in the External Review Report, following the rank of importance they attach to these in their final list of recommendations. We will offer one of four responses to each recommendation:

1. accept the recommendations without qualification,
2. accept the recommendation with some qualification,
3. take the recommendation under review by relevant department committees, and report to the SFU Administration at a later date on the verdict and course of action intended; and,
4. reject the recommendation, with explanation.

I. Undergraduate Program

We were pleased with the External Review Committee's overall assessment of our Undergraduate Program, in which their recommendations were presented as "minor modifications that would reinforce the good reputation that the Department and its faculty enjoy with undergraduate students." Where we disagree with their suggestions, it is typically because we believe the ERC missed or under-appreciated some important aspect of the specific context in which we operate, or has not appreciated how crucial student recruitment and retention will be for us and SFU overall in the coming decade.

While the ERC placed a high priority on their proposal that **the Department should remove the cap of 30 students on third year (300) courses, POL colleagues are unanimous in rejecting this recommendation.** We agree that our teaching resources must be sufficient to offer more graduate courses, but we are not prepared to make such a sacrifice to do this, and do not believe it is necessary to achieve this result. At a time that SFU is asking departments to develop strategies to retain UG students, we feel it would be unwise to surrender one of the major advantages we offer POL majors when compared to other Canadian and BC universities. Our undergraduate students' association has told us that the relatively small 300 level courses we offer provide them with key reasons for coming to and staying in our program. We also note that in the five courses in which we have lifted caps at the 300 level, we did so in response to different enrollment crises – that is, far too many students chasing too few class spaces, between 2003 and 2006. We do not appear to be in this enrollment

environment any longer. To free up some additional teaching resources at the graduate level, however, we are prepared to increase the cap in those 300 level courses that already have over 50 students to a level of 102 per course. By so doing we will also discover more accurately whether there is additional unmet UG demand for our most popular 300 level courses.

It is worth noting here that in Macleans' 2007 *Guide to Canadian Universities*, the SFU profile's section on "What's Not [Hot]" included a mention of "large class sizes: many multiple-choice exams, less one-on-one time with profs" [p. 155]. Whether this is a fair depiction of SFU's undergrad programs is somewhat beside the point; Macleans has created this perception, and it will affect many prospective Political Science students' university choices unless we can show that this is not true in our department. Political Science is happy to continue to provide an example of how pedagogically superior, low-enrollment 300 level classes can make SFU an attractive destination for top students.

The ERC also suggests that **the Department should eliminate its Honours program, and introduce an Internship or a Research Opportunity course as two additional options to a Thesis for fourth year undergraduates in the Major program.** Our Department overwhelmingly supports retention of the Honours program, and hence rejects this recommendation. We note that it does not currently consume substantial resources, and that we perceived some lack of understanding among the reviewers regarding our program. Part of the problem is that the 'Ontario model' features a different set of options, in which an Honours degree is [or was, until recently] the only four-year option, while regular majors graduated with the equivalent of 90 SFU credits. So it is difficult for Ontario and Quebec-based academics to see the rationale for a distinct Honours program if it is also a 'four year' option. We acknowledge, however, that we need to find ways to make our Honours program more attractive to top students if it is to be retained. We have thus asked the Undergraduate Committee to study various alternative models, and report back to the Department by the end of April 2008 with a set of recommendations.

We do not believe that either a new Internship course or a Research Opportunity course is desirable, since we currently offer Direct Readings courses [POL 498] and a "Directed Practice in Political Science" [POL 497], which can together satisfy most of the objectives of the Internship and the Research Opportunity courses proposed by the Review Committee.

We can understand why the ERC proposed that **the Department of Political Science should coordinate the responsibilities of providing academic and program advice to students in a single office.** Once again, however, we believe this recommendation is off the mark and are rejecting it. One colleague noted that this was the third straight Review Committee to be confused by the responsibilities and functions of the Departmental Advisor [now Manager of Academic and Administrative Affairs] in our department. It is easy to see how

colleagues from other universities have difficulty understanding how we have one person who can handle student advising and general department management. Our reality, however, is that our 'DA' provides degree completion advice [which requirements need to be met, when, before graduation, etc.], without presuming to offer academic advice on course selection, relation of the sub-field courses to each other, career options after graduation, consideration of and preparation for graduate and professional school applications, etc. This work is transferred to both the Undergraduate Chair and colleagues at large. We have recently begun to make more structured efforts to provide all POL majors with key information along these lines, and the Undergraduate Committee is reviewing ways to enhance our ability to assist students with career planning. There is no question that we need to make improvements in these areas, especially as more FASS and SFU resources are devoted to this aspect of student experience at SFU. However, we believe that by making these improvements, we will be able to effectively divide academic and program advice between our academic faculty, UG Chair and DA in a way that serves students well.

Our department stands by its earlier Undergraduate Committee proposal to **adopt an upper level (400) course that examines qualitative methods**, so is pleased to accept this recommendation. We have asked the Undergraduate Committee to review the proposal with an eye to preparing a new course proposal for the FASS Curriculum Committee's evaluation next spring.

II. Graduate Program

The External Review Team had generally positive comments on both the structure and success of our graduate programs since 2000. They noted that our graduate students are "overwhelmingly positive about their experience in the Department and their relationships with Political Science faculty, their supervisors, and staff," and voiced their enthusiasm for a Department whose faculty are diverse in their epistemological and methodological approaches and take their supervisory responsibilities seriously." One is tempted to quote these lines in our graduate program website. Nonetheless, they offered 13 separate recommendations concerning our graduate program. The Department is pleased and in agreement with the vast majority of these. Where we differ, an explanation will be provided. In cases where the recommendations are very closely linked, we will address them together.

We are happy to accept the ERC's recommendation to guarantee PhD students a minimum of four years of funding (through a combination of scholarships and TAs), though it is beyond our power to implement it. The External Review Committee clearly feels we need to make our program more attractive to a larger number of top quality PhD candidates, which is also easy to agree with. Acknowledging that we lack the power or resources to offer such a guarantee, however, we can note that: 1. we expect our graduate students to benefit appreciably from recent provincial government programs offering new

funding for graduate students; 2. We have good reasons to believe that our faculty will soon be able to offer considerably more RAships on the basis of increased levels of major grant funding; and, 3. Our experience over the past seven years is that we have been able to provide four years of funding for our PhD students, through a combination of graduate fellowships, scholarships, TAships and RAships. We give PhD students priority over MA students in our TA allocations, so this alone can be used to practically provide four years of funding.

We acknowledge, however, that to make our PhD program more attractive we must **strive to increase the relative proportion of graduate student funding through scholarships rather than TAships**, as the Committee recommends. To this end we will consider converting the Michael and Jan Stevenson Graduate Scholarship in Political Science from one awarded to a current student to a PhD entry scholarship. We will also provide better instructions/links on our website for students to apply for SSHRC and other external scholarships, make efforts to create new endowments that can act as a basis for additional internal PhD scholarships, and attempt to 'bundle' existing RA monies in ways that provide students with opportunities to do dissertation research in areas linked closely with those specified in faculty research grants.

Also in the area of graduate student funding, the committee recommends that **PhD students' financial packages should not include sessional teaching earlier than the fourth year of study**. We are happy to accept this recommendation, but note that it appear to have come from a misunderstanding of how the standard financial packages then advertised on our website are delivered in practice. It is true that we have rolled sessional teaching opportunities into the standard PhD financial package for students nearing completion, in order to give them some full course instruction experience before they enter the job market. In practice, however, we never invite PhD students to teach before the beginning of their fourth year unless they complete comprehensive exams, defend a dissertation proposal and make substantial progress on dissertation chapters by the middle of the third year. This is quite rare. In any case, we have changed the wording on our Graduate program web site to prevent misinterpretation of the role of sessional teaching in PhD funding.

With regard to the graduate curriculum, the External Review Committee recommends that **POL 801 (Theoretical Perspectives in Political Science) and POL 802 (Political Research: Design and Analysis) should be required courses for all graduate students**. Our department has agreed that POL 801 and 802 should both be required of all our PhD candidates, but is not prepared to require both of MA students. Currently while PhD students are required to take either POL 801 or 802, virtually all except those who have taken an MA level equivalent elsewhere take 801. We also have very strong support among faculty and graduate students for requiring 802 of all PhD students, on the grounds that such methodological and research design training is crucial for their dissertation research and for their research and teaching once they graduate. There is no

question that the North American norm is to have at least one course like 802 required of PhD students, and we have no desire to disadvantage our PhD candidates and graduates in their competitive job searches. For MA students, we require either POL 801 or POL 802. We prefer to keep this arrangement, as requiring both 801 and 802 of our MA graduates would mean that they have only 3 other non-required courses in their probable course set before graduating. We do not believe this would allow them to achieve the combination of substantive breadth and depth that most seek in the MA program.

A closely related External Review Committee recommendation is that **POL 801 should retain its broad objective of introducing students to the major epistemological debates in the field of Political Science.** Our department is pleased to endorse this recommendation, which entails no departure from our approach to this valuable course.

Another closely related External Review Committee recommendation is that **POL 802 should incorporate qualitative methods; if it does not, the department should identify a separate qualitative methods course for graduate students.** Colleagues and graduate students readily acknowledge that we must find some way to offer our graduate students structured, class-based exposure to training in qualitative methods. Many are inclined, however, to think that dividing attention in POL 802 between research design, qualitative and quantitative methods would result in insufficient attention being devoted to all three. For this and other reasons, it may be desirable to have a freestanding graduate course on Qualitative Methods, POL 803. The Department has asked our Graduate Committee to develop a proposal for teaching qualitative methods in our graduate program, either as the focus of a separate course or as part of POL 802. The Graduate Committee will present that proposal to the Department for review and decision by April 2008.

Finally in the area of required graduate courses, we accept the Committee's recommendation that **all required graduate courses should be offered annually in the fall and winter terms.** This has always been true of POL 801, offered every fall. We plan to offer POL 802 annually in the spring term.

By contrast with our positive response to the above recommendations for our graduate program, we find ourselves strongly opposing the recommendation that we should offer 2 PhD fields: a) Global and Regional Political Economy, and b) Public Policy, and eliminate themes of study. The overwhelming consensus was, in fact, that we should encourage students from all fields of study to apply to our PhD program. Our department feels strongly that doing so is not only feasible given our size and breadth, but also desirable as a means of a) continuing our commitment to intellectual pluralism, b) sustaining a broad undergraduate program, and c) encouraging new colleagues to feel fully incorporated into and benefited by all aspects of department life. Even though we have impressive strength in the two areas identified by the Committee, we do not

feel the need to limit our graduate program or our department's development within a set of niches passed over by UBC's political science department. We do not accept the idea that all but the few largest Political Science departments in Canada must specialize to prosper. We are quite confident that our faculty is both sufficiently diverse and substantively accomplished enough to attract and support PhD students from all major fields of study.

Our rejection of the Committee's recommendation to dramatically narrow the PhD program's field of study entails that we also reject their recommendation that the Department may wish to add a third PhD field in the future in the area of Political Representation. While we appreciate the Committee's acknowledgement that we have experienced and newly acquired faculty strength in this area, we will not adopt it as a separate or third field of PhD study. 'Political representation is as an aspect of the conventionally described fields of comparative politics, Canadian politics, normative political theory and even International politics and public policy. We will thus (continue to) incorporate comprehensive exam readings on matters of representation, to varying degrees, into all our fields' comprehensive reading lists.

The Committee recommends **eliminating our 'themes' of political economy, public policy and governance.** We acknowledge that the program's configuration into 'fields' and 'themes' is somewhat confusing for prospective applicants, so we have asked our Graduate Committee to see whether there is some way of clarifying this expression of our commitment to a broad and inclusive PhD program. They will report to us on this issue within several months, with proposals that can be implemented prior to our graduate program application deadlines. However, we do not plan to eliminate these themes in the manner proposed by the Committee.

With respect to our MA program focus, the Committee recommends that we should **retain the three fields of International Relations, Canadian Politics and Comparative politics.** Once again, we feel that this recommendation is based on an incomplete understanding of our actual practice, and are thus not willing to accept it as stated in the External Review Report. As noted above, our department is not comfortable with the 'niche program' recommendation in relation to our PhD program, so there is no reason for us to narrow the scope of our MA program in the manner recommended. Aiming to be diverse and inclusive at the PhD level, we will have the orientation, course curriculum and departmental events consistent with a wide-ranging MA program. We also note that many of our MA graduates have specialized in public policy, a field not mentioned in the Committee's recommendation re. the MA program. A significant number have even specialized in normative political theory. We see no reason to stop serving MA students with widely varied interests.

Also with respect to our graduate program curriculum, the Committee proposes that **the number of cross-listed courses (POL 400/800) should be reduced significantly.** We concur with this recommendation and the rationale behind it,

and will do our best to offer graduate students a higher proportion of seminars without substantial 'fourth year' undergraduate participation.

Finally, the Review Committee recommends that **the Department should make full use of its website to provide information on courses, inside and outside the Department; applying for SSHRCs and other fellowships; and university support services and programs.** We can easily agree with this suggestion, and acknowledge that our website design and content have been less than optimal over the past several years. We have recently hired a website design consultant within SFU, and our Department Manager is now being trained to apply the web design program we are adopting to accommodate future changes. We have already introduced a host of changes to our graduate program pages, and will soon introduce more with the aim of advancing the aims of this recommendation.

III. The Faculty

The External Review Committee report expresses not just confidence but considerable praise for the Department's overall commitment to and achievements in teaching and research. Specific recommendations regarding the graduate and undergraduate curricula are addressed elsewhere; the Committee chose to offer no general recommendations regarding the quality, scope or focus of our teaching. However, the Committee did express a concern about 'equity in the work load of faculty members,' equity referring to "a similar distribution of students across faculty members, with similar levels of support in the form of TAs and/or graders, and roughly similar responsibilities across graduate and undergraduate teaching and graduate supervision." Noting that they did not yet see any major problem in this set of teaching equity issues, the Committee nonetheless recommended that **the Chair of the Department, in consultation with faculty, should develop a strategy to ensure equity in teaching responsibilities.**

Our department welcomes this recommendation. While we agree that no major teaching equity problems currently exist, and recognizing the importance of viewing teaching loads in the context of overall faculty work loads, we believe that further steps should be taken to ensure that major teaching equity problems do not arise in the future. We currently operate with the expectation that faculty members will teach some combination of a high-enrollment lower division or high-enrollment 3rd year course every year, several low enrollment 300 or 400 level classes and perhaps a graduate seminar. We also allocate initial MA and PhD supervision responsibilities on the basis of both student preferences and a balancing of faculty loads for such supervisions. Inevitably, some colleagues carry more graduate supervisions than others, but the Graduate Committee and Chair distribute the initial supervisory load as equitably as possible. This work can certainly be improved through the creation of a more explicit department strategy on this issue. Allocation of responsibility for teaching high enrollment undergraduate classes, currently undertaken by the Chair with input from the

Undergrad Chair and Field Committee Chairs, can also yield more equitable results with reference to an explicit equity strategy. We also note that various faculty members' service commitments and research grant-leveraged teaching buyouts will always mean that complete teaching equity will be impossible, as the Review Committee appreciates. Nonetheless, we can improve on our current efforts to move closer to this goal.

On the research side, the Committee informally suggests that **POL faculty be encouraged to seek more SSHRC and other external research grants.** We agree, and are pleased to report that the number of external grant applications has risen appreciably over the past several years, and that with seven dynamic new faculty members, this will be an even more prominent aspect of faculty activity in the near future. Our colleagues have already broadened their range of granting agency 'targets' significantly beyond traditional SSHRC programs, to include major applications to SSHRC's CURA program, CIDA, Canada's Department of National Defence, Genome BC, the IMF, the World Bank, the Ford, MacArthur and Rockefeller Foundations, NATO, the Inter-American Development Bank, and a variety of Canadian 'think tanks,' including the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Canadian Policy Research Network, and the Fraser Institute.

Also on the research side, the Committee recommends that to attract strong PhD applicants, enhance the graduate program's profile, and increase our SSHRC and other granting agency success rates, **POL faculty should seek higher quality journal and academic press outlets for their publications.** It was not that such publications were missing from faculty CVs, but that the committee members felt that our substantial research output could receive better recognition and more attractive funding and recruitment results if a greater proportion of this output found its way into widely respected peer-reviewed journals and academic press volumes. We concur with this recommendation and its rationale, and will act on it accordingly.

IV. Administration and Governance

The External Review Committee offers four recommendations in this area, on issues of hiring procedures, long-term planning mechanisms, ongoing curriculum review and administrative staff meetings.

The ERC reported a division of Political Science department opinion regarding our recent use of a weighted score assessment system for evaluating and comparing short-listed candidates' strengths in the areas of research, teaching and service. In applying this system, the hiring committee received department approval for candidate evaluation criteria for research, teaching and service prior to each set of interviews. As the External Review Committee Report stated, there was no concern with the outcomes of searches conducted using this process: "the Department is excited about the arrival of new faculty members and there is

consensus that they are all excellent additions." However, after six searches in two years, we do not have a consensus that a quantitative weighted assessment system is the best way to undertake a systematic evaluation of candidates. Consequently, in response to the Review Committee's recommendation that **the Department hiring committee should provide a qualitative written statement to the Department regarding how short-listed candidates meet the advertised criteria with regard to teaching and research, the department has decided to replace the current quantitative approach with a qualitative method of assessment.** Our Appointment Committee will propose a systematic alternative method of assessing candidates for tenure-track academic appointments that can provide the basis for these qualitative written statements.

The External Review Committee also recommended that **the department consider creating a Priorities and Planning Committee, with the mandate to recommend academic priorities for the Department, including hiring.** We have considered this option, and decided that while it may well be necessary in the future, it is not yet needed to perform these functions. In discussing why we reject this option, colleagues noted that we currently set such priorities through several means, including regular Retreats and annual reviews of our hiring priorities in full department meetings (with recommendations from the Appointments committee). In light of the support shown in response to other recommendations for an enhanced range of roles for our field committees, colleagues consensually supported the idea that initiatives to retain or alter department priorities can come through better utilization of existing committees. For example, initiatives of this kind might start in field committee discussions, find fora in Undergraduate and Graduate Committee meetings, and include the Chair before coming to full department meetings. Should such additional uses of our existing committees and practices fail to support effective academic priority setting, colleagues agreed that we might re-consider a Priorities and Planning Committee.

Related to the above recommendation is one that **the Department should consider creating a Curriculum Committee with responsibility for regular Curriculum review and renewal**, to facilitate more effective planning, more integrated programs and a "judicious balance of undergrad and graduate courses." Once again, we acknowledge that the Review Committee has identified a significant issue, and that we should renew efforts to improve program integration and course balancing. However, the consensus within our department was that to achieve these purposes we would prefer to enhance collaboration between our field committees, the Undergraduate and Graduate committees (and their Chairs), and the Chair. While appreciating the attention paid by the Review Committee to this issue, then, we reject their recommendation as unnecessary given our existing committee mandates and potentials.

Finally, the Committee recommends that our Department Manager hold a **weekly meeting of administrative staff in order to ensure effective communication and**

efficient allocation of responsibilities. We canvassed our staff on this issue, and are satisfied that though the objectives are desirable, they are already being met with bi-weekly staff meetings, so we do not see a need to accept the recommendation for a weekly meeting. The Chair will stay in touch with the Department Manager to ensure that bi-weekly meetings continue to be sufficient; if they seem not to be, we will re-consider the weekly staff meeting proposal.

V. The Department of Political Science and Other Units

Under this heading, the Review Committee discussed our relations with a number of other units at SFU, with generally positive comments on the wide range of connections we have with other programs and departments at SFU. The exception concerns our relations with SFU's new School of International Studies. After considerable comment on this relationship to date, and on the prospects for mutually beneficial relations between POL and SIS, the Review Committee recommended that **the Vice-President Academic should create a committee to coordinate programs offered by the School and the Department**, and specified a particular configuration for this committee's composition. Our department expresses strong support for this recommendation in principle, seeing the need for such program coordination and the importance of protecting key department interests in doing so. The department commits to discussing how this coordination can occur with the Vice-President Academic, the Dean of FASS, and the Director of the School of International Studies. We look forward to identifying ways to ensure that, through enhanced coordination and consultation, both units can attract strong faculty and top graduate students, and collaborate on a variety of mutually advantageous initiatives.

In conclusion, then we will take action on a large number of the External Review Committee's recommendations, in some cases with easily implemented changes to which the department has already agreed. In a variety of other instances we note, above, that the Department will await the results of Department committee reports. We will soon set specific schedules for these committees to invite input, deliberate, and report in a timely manner to Department meetings, at which colleagues will decide on how we can best implement these External Review recommendations. There are, however, some recommendations that Political Science Department colleagues find inappropriate or unnecessary, and have accordingly decided to reject. We trust that our rationales for doing so are clear, and that any questions regarding these decisions will soon be brought to us.

Collegially, on behalf of the Department of Political Science,



David Laycock, Chair