ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
Fairmont State Board of Governors

___ **Program with Special Accreditation**   **X** **Program without Special Accreditation**

Degree Program Bachelor of Arts in Political Science   **Date Submitted** December 1, 2023

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATION Approved by the Board of Governors (§ 5.2.8)

The institution is obligated to recommend continuance or discontinuance of a program and to provide a brief rationale for its recommendation:

_____1. Continuation of the program at the current level of activity; with or without action

_____2. Continuation of program at a reduced level of activity (for example, reducing the range of optional tracks or merging programs) or other corrective action

X____3. Identification of the program for further development (for example, providing additional institutional commitment);

_____4. Development of a cooperative program with another institution, or sharing courses, facilities, faculty, and the like;

_____5. Discontinuation of the Program

Rationale for Recommendation: The faculty associated with the B.A. in Political Science have continued to make improvements to the program. As a result, the program has demonstrated an increase in majors, course enrollments, retention, and graduation rates. It is important to note that the B.A. in Political Science is purposely intertwined with the B.A. in National Security and Intelligence (NSI) in order to be economical in its faculty assignments. Therefore, the programs will be discussed in tandem. For example, the faculty for each major are the same and nearly all upper level courses are cross-listed and over 90% of all students enrolled in the programs pursue dual Political Science and NSI degrees. In addition, taking the two programs together there have been *6,752 students enrolled in the Political Science and NSI courses in the last five years.* There are over 1,350 students each academic year who take at least one political science / NSI course. This includes the students who major in the discipline and the service courses offered by the discipline. *The Political Science and the NSI programs have generated over $6 million dollars in the last five years.* The continuation of this program is strongly recommended.

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Signature of person preparing report:

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Signature of Dean   Date: 2024.06.14 06:51:10 -04'00'
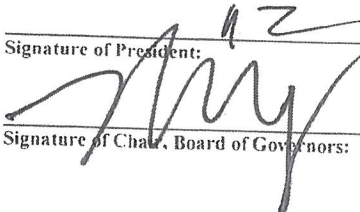
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Signature of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs:

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Signature of President:

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Signature of Chair, Board of Governors:

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Executive Summary for Program Review

Degree Program:	Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
College or School/Department:	College of Liberal Arts
Chair/Program Coordinator	Dr. Gregory P. Noone, Ph.D., J.D. Director, National Security and Intelligence program
External Reviewer:	FSU Political Science Advisory Committee
Reviewer Email:	

A. Synopses of significant findings, including findings of external review (include the external reviewer(s) information): The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science is a degree that is designed to provide students with an understanding of the political process in its many manifestations, including the structure of government institutions, the political behavior of individuals and groups, the study of political problems characteristic of modern societies, and a consideration of the interrelationships of institutions at different levels of government.

The following findings have been developed in coordination with the faculty and the Political Science Advisory Committee:

1. Fairmont State University is fortunate to have exceptional and caring faculty with real-world experience that are accessible to our students, and devote a great deal of time advising and mentoring students.

2. The Fairmont State University Political Science program has been successful over the past five years retaining majors, growing enrollment, and increasing graduation rates. However, we need to open the aperture in our catchment area with a fully online degree program in order to continue these growth trends.

3. Fairmont State University has a tremendous Political Science program with a comparatively low tuition rate, and conversely a high success rate of graduates being accepted into top law schools and graduate programs, as well as finding professional employment.

B. Plans for program improvement, including timeline.

The following plans for improvement have been developed in coordination with the faculty and the Political Science Advisory Committee:

1. Continuing to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates will be one of the major goals in the next five years. This will involve closely monitoring and early advising efforts.

2. Offer a completely online Political Science degree by Academic Year 2025-2026 in addition to our traditional campus-based degree offering. An online degree will expand the catchment area of potential Fairmont State University students

3. All Political Science / National Security and Intelligence faculty members need to be paid a competitive salary commensurate with their experience and commitment to their students and exceptional growth of the academic programs.

C. *Identify weaknesses or deficiencies from the previous review and describe how these have been addressed.*

There were not any recommendations from the previous five-year program review. Nevertheless, the program of study has been incrementally revised in recent years to reflect needs in the field, increase and diversify upper level course offerings, and increase recruitment and retention.

The Political Science and NSI programs produce a significant profit for the institution and additional salary support of the faculty is necessary in order to maintain the programs' upward trajectories.

D. *Five-year trend data on graduates and majors enrolled (Data provided by the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness).*

TABLE 1

AY	*Enrollment	**Degree Awarded	HEPC Series 10 Productivity Standards Programs are required to meet at least one of the indicators listed below.		
2022-23	101	35			
2021-22	101	27			
2020-21	54	21	Average of Five Most Recent Years		
2019-20	60	19	Degree Level	*Enrollment	**Degree Awarded
2018-19	60	12	Baccalaureate	75	22.8
5-YR AVG	75.2	22.8	Masters	1	0
* Unduplicated academic year head count					
** IPEDS Graduation data (July 1 - June 30)					

The political science program has grown significantly because of the quality curriculum and faculty. In the last fifteen years the number of majors has grown from 13 to 101, and in the last five years few programs have matched the continuous growth of the Political Science and NSI programs. The number of majors and degrees awarded continues to increase in both programs despite the damage done by the COVID pandemic to higher education.

E. *Summary of assessment model and how results are used for program improvement (A full Assessment Report is in TaskStream and can be downloaded or viewed by academic year for summation).*

Assessment for the Political Science program is based on student scores on written research papers, oral presentations, and examinations. Performance on all oral and written assignments has been well above the targeted goal. The Political Science program has made and continues to make great strides in the assessment area. The Political Science program and Fairmont State University document assessment materials in Taskstream. This program provides an archive for program documentation, and a database for program analysis and improvement. A review of the program's outcomes and assessments along with individual course outcomes and assessments have occurred over the past five years as part of the program's assessment plans. This assessment process is embedded in the program and will continue.

F. Data on student placement (e.g., number of students employed in positions related to the field of study or pursuing advanced degrees).

The data regarding placement of Political Science majors graduating from Fairmont State University from 2018-2023 has been collected primarily through personal contacts between faculty members and their former students and resulting requests for reference letters and background checks. This data indicates that well over half the graduates do not seek immediate employment upon graduation but go on to enroll in graduate programs in political science, national security & intelligence, policy studies, public administration, or law school.

Our majors have been accepted into the following law schools and graduate programs: American University, Duquesne University, Suffolk University, Quinnipiac University, College of William and Mary, Wake Forest University, University of Virginia, George Mason University, Emory University, Villanova University, University of Miami, The Catholic University of America, University of Pittsburgh, West Virginia University, and Fairmont State University.

Those who join the workforce have obtained employment with the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, U.S. Congress, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Army, United States Marine Corps, the Department of Defense, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshals Service, out-of-state business firms, local government, and the State of West Virginia.

The political science program makes every effort to further the ambitions of its majors by disseminating information of interest to job seekers on positions available in state, out-of-state, or abroad. Students are regularly told of opportunities advertised in professional literature whenever appropriate. This information is also shared with the Placement Office and other relevant departments. Faculty members also encourage capable students to consider furthering their education by providing them with information on graduate programs, internships, and scholarships available to them.

V. FINANCIAL HEALTH

The financial health of a program refers to the cost and revenue portion of the program. This analysis reveals the extent to which the program is contributing to the institution's financial health and if additional resources are necessary to sustain the program.

The metrics below represent required program financial data to be collected in reviewing the financial health of the program [IEO supplied for the report].

Table 7. Financial Health						
Category	Metric	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change
Revenue	General Tuition and Fee Revenue	$1,082,200	$952,261	$884,581	$817,174	-24%
	Program Fee Revenue	$18,297	$14,427	$13,134	$16,972	-7%
	Course Fee Revenue	$115,650	$102,388	$115,500	$96,402	-17%
Expenses	Direct Costs	$120,624	$121,059	$122,499	$129,812	8%
	Indirect Departmental Costs	$56,097	$31,540	$55,130	$65,797	17%
	Indirect College Costs	$23,980	$9,934	$2,944	$11,849	-51%
	Indirect Institutional Costs	$270,164	$346,304	$513,300	$235,015	-13%
Net Position without Indirect Institutional Costs		$1,015,447	$906,542	$832,642	$723,090	-29%
Net Position Per Credit Hour Delivered with Indirect Institutional Costs		$196.39	$165.31	$103.31	$177.22	-10%