Political Science Program Review 2012

Department of Political Science and Public Affairs

College of Arts and Sciences

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Background and Overview

The Department of Political Science and Public Affairs is a key unit within the College of Arts and Sciences that houses the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees in Political Science, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in International Studies (beginning in Fall 2013), the minor in Political Science, the minor in International Studies, the Master of Public Affairs (MPA) degree program, and the highly engaged Public Policy Institute (PPI) and Local Government Training Program (LGTP). For the program review process, we were asked to conduct two reviews: an Undergraduate Political Science review and a review of the Public Policy Institute.\(^1\) These two entities work seamlessly together to reinforce the mission of the department, college, and university.

Standard I. The purpose of the program reflects and supports the mission and strategic vision of Western Carolina University and the mission of its School and/or College.

The undergraduate programs in Political Science and the Public Policy Institute are integral to the University’s mission. According to the WCU mission statement (Appendix A), the university will create “engaged learning opportunities” for students and conduct activities that “enhance economic and community development in the region, state and nation.” Our department embodies this mission (see Appendix B for the department mission statement). For example, many of our courses include engaged learning opportunities, requiring students to attend community meetings, contact elected officials, or influence the policy process. Faculty members and students frequently conduct engaged research with community partners including the Town of Sylva, the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor (CuRvE), and the City of Asheville. The Public Policy Institute (and its associated faculty and students) has been particularly active in these

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\(^1\) The quality of our MPA program will be assessed by the National Association for Schools of Public Affairs and Administration next year when we apply for accreditation and the quality of the LGTP and International Studies programs will be assessed in a future program review.
engaged research opportunities, working on survey projects with Buncombe County, the Town of Black Mountain, the French Broad Congestion Management Plan, and the United States Economic Development Administration. Students were intimately involved in the research design, analysis, and write-up of all of these projects. Further, the Public Policy Institute hosts engaged learning activities such as Constitution Day, the American Youth Congress, the Food Forum, and a large number of speakers throughout the year. These activities involve undergraduate and graduate students as well as members of the community not affiliated with WCU.

Our department also supports nearly all of the major recommendations of the UNC Tomorrow (UNCT) report. For example, UNCT recommends that the university “enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates” focusing specifically on “equipping students with the tools they will need for an ever-changing world” and enhancing “the global awareness of its faculty and students.” Undergraduate majors in Political Science are required to take courses in international relations and comparative politics where they focus on issues of globalization, international political economy, and democratization. To improve our role in fulfilling this mission, in the last two years, we have added two new faculty in this area: Dr. Jen Schiff, who joined us last year after completely her PhD in International Studies, and Dr. Na’ama Nagar, who is on leave this year but will be joining our department in the Fall. Based on the expertise of these new faculty, we have created five new courses: International Environmental Politics, International Political Economy, Model United Nations, Politics of the Middle East and Political Violence. In addition, we have increased our commitment to study abroad for our faculty and students. Our students have traveled around the world through our Office of International Programs and our department has offered classes in England and France. Drs. Cooper and Knotts have taught at the Middelburg Center for Transatlantic Studies in the Netherlands.² Dr.

² Dr. Cooper also served as a Director for this program in summer 2011.
Michelsen has also traveled to Spain, Wales, and China in support of international teaching and research missions.

UNCT also recommends improvement in “the quantity, quality, and geographic distribution of public school teachers.” The department plays a key role in the BSEd in Social Sciences program, which helps WCU fulfill its long-standing role in educating teachers. BSEd students who concentrate in Social Sciences are required to complete PSC 406 (Teaching Civics and Economics) and 12 hours of upper division Political Science electives by selecting from the following courses: PSC 303, PSC 305 (Congress), PSC 306 (Presidency), PSC 310 (Constitutional Law: Structure and Power), and PSC 347 (American Social and Political Eras). The department’s contribution to the BSEd in Social Sciences program is critical. The NC Standard Course of Study requires that all high school students take a year of Civics and Economics and our department prepares BSEd students to teach that course. Students in the BSEd in Middle Grades Education also take Political Science courses. We offer graduate-level Political Science classes for students completing the Master of Arts in Teaching or the Master of Arts in Education degrees and we are also pleased to contribute to the BS in Emergency and Disaster Management, which uses two of our classes (PSC 303 and PSC 304) as electives. Finally, the BSW requires that all students take PSC 150 to help them prepare for careers working in and working with government agencies.

The UNCT report also calls on universities to become “more actively engaged in enhancing the economic transformation and community development of North Carolina’s regions and the state as a whole.” As mentioned above, our faculty and students conduct important research in the region and contribute to regional, state-wide, and national policy discussions. At the undergraduate level, students in PSC 348 (Political Analysis) recently worked with the Town of Sylva to conduct a survey of local businesses related to economic development. Also, professors instructing PSC 349 (Civic Learning) have guided students through many community
development projects, including conducting surveys and forums on the economic development of Cullowhee, NC. Please see Appendix C for examples of Public Policy Institute engaged projects.

The UNCT report also recommends that universities “assume a leadership role in addressing the state’s energy and environmental challenges.” Our students develop the knowledge and skills to contribute to these policy debates. Currently, our undergraduates can take PSC 302 (Problems and Policies in American Politics), PSC 303 (State and Local Government), and PSC 304 (Public Administration) where students learn about the state and local institutions that shape and manage these policies. Students in PSC 349 (Civic Learning) have also been involved in projects that focus on environmental concerns, such as fundraising for campus recycling programs. In addition, the newly created course, International Environmental Politics, helps our students understand the world’s environmental challenges.

Lastly, the UNCT report recommends that universities “become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.” Through student projects, faculty research, or the work of the PPI and LGTP, our department and students engages with and connects to the people of North Carolina and the western region on a daily basis. Indeed, our engaged curriculum, and our embrace of the Boyer Model of scholarship ensures that we are an engaged department.

In addition to our centrality to UNCT, the PSPA department makes significant contributions to the university’s Liberal Studies program. Our department offers PSC 150 (American Government and Politics), which meets the P1 (Social Sciences) requirement in Liberal Studies and addresses the QEP’s “Practicing Civic Engagement” learning outcome. This class exposes students to cutting-edge research about American government and politics and provides them with the knowledge and skills to influence the political process. During the 2010-2011 academic year, 328 students took PSC 150 and only 5% of these students had Political Science declared as their first major. While there are many valuable offerings in the P1 category, we believe that the knowledge and skills learned in this course are particularly important for
college students. In fact, some states (such as Georgia and Texas) require all public college and university students to take a basic Political Science course. Our department also offers PSC 110 (Global Issues), which fulfills the P6 (World Cultures) Liberal Studies requirement. In the 2010-2011 academic year, 413 students completed this course, which helps them better understand globalization and the international political environment. Of these students, only 3% had declared Political Science as their first major. Finally, we make substantial contributions to the Freshman Seminar requirement in the Liberal Studies program. In 2010-2011, 101 students took PSC 190 and only 2% of them had declared Political Science as their first major. Recent PSC 190 topics include civic activism, interdisciplinary approaches to Political Science, conflict management, and public ethics.

Our department is also a central player in the International Studies BA degree and the International Studies minor. We currently house the International Studies Minor and beginning in Fall 2012, we will also house the International Studies major. Dr. Niall Michelsen is the program’s director and Dr. Schiff serves on its advisory board. International Studies students must meet core competencies in politics, culture, and globalization and there are nine Political Science courses that students can take to complete the degree (two in the core competencies and seven in the guided electives). In addition, PSC 110 serves as a required introductory course for all international studies majors.

The Public Policy Institute (PPI) is a unique and essential unit, focusing on the tripartite mission of (1) outreach and applied research relevant to policymakers, (2) civic education, and (3) engaged student learning. It is housed in the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, but the PPI works with faculty from across campus and influences policy debates in the region and the state. The Public Policy Institute is the primary applied research and outreach arm of the University for issues surrounding public policy. It is mentioned several times in UNC Tomorrow and the previous Chancellor and Provost publically identified the PPI as an important unit targeted for growth and expansion.
In sum, the Political Science department and Public Policy Institute are critical to the university’s success. We are central to almost every major strategic direction of the University, and our faculty and students have fully embraced the Quality Enhancement Plan and the Stewards of Place model.

**Standard 2: The program engages in ongoing, systematic planning that is reflective of the University’s strategic priorities.**

In 2009, the Department created a new mission statement and assessment plan. Rather than creating a separate set of goals, we instead chose to align our strategic goals directly with that of the University. As such, our goals are identical to the goals of the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan. Our specific learning outcomes, however, do reflect specific outcomes within our discipline. Each year, our department assesses one of these goals. Please see Appendix D for a list of our goals and outcomes.

Given the small size of our department, we do not have a strategic planning committee, but instead engage in strategic planning decisions through the annual assessments referred to above, and through regular, monthly department meetings. For example, for the past few years, many of our faculty had remarked in department meetings that they were concerned that the students in our upper-level classes did not have sufficient background solve complex problems in our field (Goal #2). Students indicated similar problems in their exit essays in the Portfolio course. As a result, we reviewed the prerequisites for all of our classes and decided to implement curriculum changes to ensure that students would have some background in the broad topic area before enrolling in upper-level courses (See Appendix E for details on this plan).

The Public Policy Institute Director reflects on the mission and role of the Public Policy Institute each year in his Annual Faculty Evaluation. In addition, the Public Policy Institute Director frequently consults with his student staff, and the Department Head about strategic Directions of the unit. We have discussed creating an advisory board for the PPI to help with this
process, but concluded that we should wait until we had formed an advisory board for the MPA program.³

Standard 3: The program provides and evaluates a high quality curriculum that emphasizes student learning as its primary purpose.

We offer a quality curriculum that is consistent with disciplinary standards, can be completed within 4 years, meets university needs, and most importantly, is focused first and foremost on student learning (see Appendix F for copies of the current curriculum). As is traditional in Political Science, we divide the discipline into four broad areas: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. To meet major learning objectives in American politics, students must complete Introduction to American politics, and an upper-level class in American politics of their choice. To learn about comparative politics and international relations, students must earn a C or higher in Global Issues (which covers introduction to both comparative politics and international relations), and an upper-level course in comparative politics or international relations. All students must also complete one course in political theory and a tool-based course in research methods (PSC 348-Political Analysis).

While these courses are fairly standard in the field (and with good reason), our program includes at least three features that are notable and represent our unique approach to teaching and learning. First, our department features a unique “1+1+1” program that requires students to complete three one-hour classes at strategic times during their academic career. Newly declared majors take the first step in the program, an Introduction to Political Science course, where students learn about the myriad of engaged opportunities available to Political Science majors, are

³ We made this decision because we are actively involved in the NASPAA accreditation process and NASPAA requires that we have an advisory board. We were concerned that the boards might overlap and we decided to put all of our energy into the MPA advisory board—which just had its first meeting a few months ago.
introduced to the major subfields of Political Science, and begin to think about their career development.

Students in their second or third year take the second course in the sequence, Civic Learning, where they apply the tools of Political Science to help solve a community problem. Under the leadership of Dr. Todd Collins, students in this course have focused on economic and community development in Cullowhee and work with the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor (CuRvE). More recently, Professor Mike McDonald raised awareness of micro-financing through an innovative project where students raised money, chose a worthy loan partner and loaned money to an African basketweaver through the web site Kiva.4

In addition to the 1+1+1 program, we also require all students to participate in at least one “engaged activity” before graduation. To meet this requirement, students select from an Internship course or a Model United Nations class.5 Our internship program (which is supplemented through our relationship with the LGTP) is a long-standing feature of our department, but the Model UN course is a recent addition. Originally started as a student extracurricular club, Model UN aligns so well with the Department and University missions that we developed a class, largely under Dr. Schiff’s leadership, for this scholarly activity. In recent years we have had several students win individual awards at Model UN competitions, where they compete against other universities. Last semester, students in this course traveled to Atlanta, GA. The teaching evaluations for this course were phenomenal and we want to continue this success in future semesters, therefore we are planning to offer it both semesters next year.

Third, our students have the option of obtaining a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts degree. Students who choose the Bachelor of Arts option are required to master a language through the MFL 231 level, whereas students who choose the Bachelor of Science must take a second research class in the department (PSC 448). Both majors have healthy enrollments and we

4 Professor McDonald recently presented a paper on this course at the Political Science Teaching and Learning Conference.
5 We also plan to add a Model State Legislature course.
believe that by giving our students the choice of two quality majors, they can select an education that best fits their long-term goals.

We offer a quality curriculum, but also one that can be easily completed in 4 years (average time to completion for Political Science majors is 4.2). In fact, our 120 hour program (36 hours in the major) is far fewer than the number of hours required in most of the programs of our peers. For example, Appalachian State University requires 65 hours for the BS degree. This model is in keeping with WCU’s emphasis on giving students the best education possible, while making it possible to graduate in 4 years.

We firmly believe that all else being equal, smaller class sizes are preferable. Although our class sizes are creeping up, we are pleased that we have maintained a reasonable class size. In Fall, 2010, our average class size was 31 and in spring 2011, our average class size was 32. Given enrollment pressures, we are creating one “large” section a semester. Chris Cooper taught a 100 person section of Introduction to American Government in Fall, 2011, Mike McDonald is teaching a 60 person section of Global Issues in Spring, 2012 and Na’ama Nagar will be teaching an 80 person section of Global Issues in Fall, 2012. The teaching evaluations for Dr. Cooper’s section were excellent and we plan to keep a close eye on these large courses. We hope that by offering one large section of introductory courses, we can keep our other courses much smaller—particularly in courses like Model United Nations were the pedagogy requires a small class size.

Our evidence for the quality of our curriculum can be found most easily in our excellent student evaluations, our end-of-program evaluations from our PSC 450 class, and in more qualitative results like the exceptional number of students who present papers at conferences like the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (over a dozen in four years), the Midwest Political Science Association, and the North Carolina Political Science Association.

Although the Public Policy Institute does not offer courses, it is integral to meeting the department’s goals of an engaged education. Graduate and undergraduate students gain unique applied research and engagement opportunities through the Public Policy Institute. Indeed, our
graduate and undergraduate studies have many more publications, policy reports, research design experience, and community organizing experience due to the excellent work of the Public Policy Institute.

**Standard 4: The program has sufficient faculty resources to meet its mission and goals.**

The Department of Political Science and Public Affairs employs eight tenure track faculty members, spanning most major areas of the discipline.\(^6\) Five of these faculty specialize in American politics and/or public affairs, and three specialize in International Relations and/or Comparative Politics. Unfortunately, we do not have a faculty-member who specializes in Political Theory but Dr. Michelsen is certainly qualified to teach in this field and has taught the Theory class to great success for a number of years. Two of our tenure-track faculty are full professors, two are associate professors, and four are assistant professors. In addition to our tenured and tenure-track faculty, we employ one full-time instructor (Fred Fisher), and two part-time instructors who teach in the undergraduate program. All tenured and tenure-track faculty hold a PhD in Political Science, International Studies, or Public Administration, and our instructors all hold masters degrees in Political Science or Public Affairs.

Our department recognizes and appreciates the importance of a diverse faculty to reaching our mission. Two of our faculty are women, although we expect that number to increase next year as both of the finalists for our current search are women. One of our faculty-members is a non-US citizen but no current faculty members are persons of color. Clearly racial and gender diversity is an area where our department needs to continue to improve.

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\(^6\) One of our faculty (Na’ama Nager) was hired last year and is currently on maternity leave this year. In addition, Gibbs Knotts is currently serving as Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences. Dr Knotts will be leaving next year to become Department Head at the College of Charleston, but a search is currently underway to fill his position.
The standard teaching load in our department is a 3-3 and we work hard to ensure that faculty have teaching schedules that give students the courses they need at times that are convenient for them, and at the same time give faculty the time to plan courses and conduct research. When creating the schedule, the Department Head balances the 3-3 load with considerations of FTE. In Fall, 2011, the seven faculty who were 100% in the department generated 7.1 faculty members. Our adjuncts and full-time administrators generated another 1.5 faculty.

Of course, course loads and SCH generation are indicators of quantity, not quality. We believe the evidence regarding quality is even more impressive. In the last few years, our faculty have been finalists for the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award three times, the Arts and Sciences Teaching Award twice, and the Board of Governors Teaching Award once. In addition, members of our faculty have won the Board of Governors Teaching Award, the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award, the Last Lecture Award, the Service Learning Teaching Award, and the Graduate School’s Teaching-Research Award (twice).

As befitting the teacher-scholar model, our faculty are not only excellent teachers, but are also active contributors to the knowledge base in the field. Our faculty CVs demonstrate that faculty have published dozens of articles over the past five years in Political Science and Public Affairs journals including *Political Research Quarterly, Public Administration Review, Social Science Quarterly, PS: Political Science and Politics, Politics and Religion, Judicature, Law and Policy, Justice System Journal, Public Performance and Management Review*, and *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*. Fitting with the QEP and UNCT, our department also rewards interdisciplinary teaching and research. In addition to work in Political Science, our faculty publish articles in related fields including Psychology (*Psychological Assessment, Journal of Applied Social Psychology*), Sociology (*Social Forces*), Appalachian Studies (*Journal of Appalachian Studies*), Geography (*Southeastern Geographer*), the Scholarship of Teaching and
Learning (*International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*) and Southern Studies (*Southern Cultures*).

Our work is not only impressive in terms of quantity, but also in terms of impact. Our research has been cited hundreds of times, appears on syllabi throughout the country, and has been featured in prominent national and state media outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *National Journal*, *Miller-McCune*, and the (Raleigh) *News & Observer*. In addition to publications, all of our faculty actively participate in national and regional academic conferences, such as the annual meetings for the American Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, the American Society for Public Administration, the Midwest Political Science Association, the Southern Political Science Association, the Western Political Science Association, the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the Political Science Teaching and Learning Conference, the Citadel Symposium on Southern Politics, and the North Carolina Political Science Association.

Perhaps most importantly for a university focused on teaching and learning, we frequently work with students. In the past few years, our students and faculty have co-authored published articles in journals (e.g. *Southeastern Geographer*), newspapers (e.g. *Charlotte Observer*), policy reports (e.g. *An Assessment of Public Opinion in Black Mountain*), and encyclopedia entries (e.g. *Encyclopedia of Criminal Law*). In recognition of this work, two of our faculty have received the University Scholar Award—our university’s highest award for research.

Our faculty frequently apply this knowledge by contributing to policy debates throughout the southeast. Two faculty have a series of columns in the *Asheville Citizen Times* and other op-eds have appeared in dozens of op-ed pieces for newspapers including the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the (Raleigh) *News & Observer*, the *Charlotte Observer*, the *Durham Herald-Sun*, the *Greenville News*, and the *Asheville Citizen-Times*. Our faculty also give speeches on political issues to groups throughout the state including the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the North Carolina Local Government Budget Association, the John Locke Foundation, the Emerging
Issues Forum, the Sylva Rotary, and Leadership Highlands. We are also frequently quoted in the media on political issues. This year we have been quoted in *The Washington Post*, NPR.org, the *Raleigh News and Observer*, the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, and the *Smoky Mountain News*—just to name a few.

Our faculty excel at service. Within the University, you can find our faculty serving on almost every major committee on campus including the 2020 Commission, the International Studies Advisory Board, the College Curriculum Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the University Athletics Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Student Tuition and Fees Committee, the Academic Space Committee, and many, many more. In the region, you can find our faculty on boards of non-profits and major government initiatives. In the profession, our faculty review papers for most major journals (e.g. *AJPS*), serve on editorial boards (e.g. *Justice System Journal*), and governing bodies for major organizations (e.g. NASPAA). One of our faculty has received the University’s highest honor for service and another has been a finalist.

The Public Policy Institute includes only one half-time employee (the Interim Director, Todd Collins), a quarter-time administrative Assistant, four graduate students (each working 20 hours a week) and one undergraduate student, working part-time. The Director, Todd Collins is uniquely qualified for this position, given his educational background (JD and PhD), extensive publication experience, and his experience with applied research. In fact, Dr. Collins was recently called to speak at a national retreat on the Boyer Model of Scholarship due to his experience with the Scholarship of Application.

**Standard 5: The program attracts, retains, and graduates high quality students**

Our undergraduate Political Science program is highly productive. We have healthy enrollments in our Political Science program (109 in 2010-2011) and graduate a large number of majors each year. In fact, data from UNC General Administration (presented in the figures below) demonstrate that our growth in graduates from 2000-2010 is the largest of any Political
Science program in the UNC System and our growth in upper-level enrollment is second only to Appalachian State.
In the 2010-2011 Academic Year, our average High School GPA was 3.18 and our average total SAT score was 988. These numbers place us near the average at WCU. Although we certainly have room to improve, we should also note that our students are slightly more diverse than the student population as a whole.

The undergraduate program in Political Science is high quality. Our students graduate and become leaders in the public sector, working in a range of fields including city and county management, education, sales, nonprofit management, and the law. Recent graduates include Andrew Brock ’98 (member of the North Carolina Senate), Andrew McRae ’05 (telecommunications policy analyst at the U.S. Department of Commerce), Jim McCabe ’04 (intelligence analyst with the U.S. Department of Defense), Hayden Smith ’11 (PhD student at Washington State University), Clyde Ray ’05 (PhD Student at UNC, Chapel Hill), and Mary Margaret Smith ’04 (legislative writer/congressional affairs specialist with the Office of Compliance). Political Science is a popular pre-law major and our students perform well on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). In fact, our majors have the highest average LSAT score of
all WCU departments with at least 10 students taking the test since 2006. Recent graduates from our major whom are current law students attend such schools as Kent College of Law (Chicago), Florida Coastal School of Law, Cumberland School of Law (Samford University), Campbell Law School, North Carolina Central University School of Law, and the Charlotte School of Law. There are currently 14 practicing attorneys in our undergraduate alumni network including a superior court judge, an administrative law judge, and 3 district court judges.

The Public Policy Institute is integral to recruiting and retaining high-quality students at WCU and within the Political Science major. Very few Political Science departments have an applied research and outreach arm similar to the Public Policy Institute (PPI). Although other university centers may focus on research, the PPI is unique in that it has been, since its inception, committed to the notion of integrating student success and student work into its outreach and applied research missions. In one example of the impact this has made, the former Director was asked to speak to the Morehead State University leadership team about the work of the PPI.

**Standard 6: The Program has an Administrative Structure that Facilities Achievement of Program Goals and Objectives**

The Department of Political Science and Public Affairs houses two undergraduate Political Science majors, the Political Science minor, the MPA program, the Local Government Training Program, the International Studies major\(^7\), and the International Studies minor. There are separate Directors of the MPA program, the PPI, the LGTP and the International Studies program. The Department Head supervises each director and program, serves as the program head for the Political Science major, and serves as the primary liaison between the department and the administration.

Our Department created and passed a document governing the Department Head terms of office and elections, which is included in Appendix G. Gibbs Knotts was serving in his second

\(^7\) Pending final approval by the Board of Trustees.
term as Department Head when he was named Interim Dean. Chris Cooper took over as Interim Head this summer and Todd Collins took over as Interim PPI Director. Given Dr. Knotts’ departure for the College of Charleston, the Department voted unanimously to remove the “interim” name from Dr. Collins and Cooper’s titles. This has been approved by the current Interim Dean and is pending approval by the Provost. No such document governs the Public Policy Institute Director, but given the unique role of the unit on campus, we do not believe that a rotating head would be beneficial. Instead, we believe the PPI works best when the Director has time to develop his own mission.

The Department meets once a month to discuss administrative and curricular matters and minutes from those meetings are made available to the department. In addition, the Department has a standing committee to handle teaching evaluation and a standing Tenure, Promotion and Reappointment committee, as mandated by University policies. Tenure, Promotion and Reappointment decisions are made consistent with the Department Collegial Review Document (Appendix F). Other committees (such as hiring committees) are created on an ad-hoc basis. All other decisions are made as committees of the whole.

**Standard 7: The Program has Adequate Resources to Meet Its Goals and Objectives**

The Political Science program, the MPA Program, and the Interdisciplinary International Studies program share one budget, while the LGTP and PPI maintain their own separate budgets. The department base budget is exceedingly small (~$10,000), meaning that the Department has had to be entrepreneurial about finding funds to meet our teaching research and service missions. For example, faculty apply for the Chancellor’s Travel fund before trying to acquire department travel funds. Further, our department has been unusually active in fundraising and currently has a non-state development account of ~$20,000. We have also been very active in teaching summer school courses, which has generated a substantial sum of money over the past few years. Finally, we have become quite adept at funding alternate sources of funding on campus such as QEP.
Funds, small student grants from the Honors College and other needs. Although being entrepreneurial with regards to budgeting has enabled us to meet student and faculty needs, this type of budgeting is unstable as it is based on non-reoccurring funds, may vary highly from year to year, and requires considerable faculty and staff resources to raise each semester.

Budget cuts mean that the University does not have a regular policy to refresh computers, but the department has supported new computing needs for department faculty. All faculty have computers that are no more than four years old. Further, we have purchased new software packages, such as STATA to allow our faculty to remain professionally active. Our office space has been adequate until this point, but it will be much tighter next year when our new faculty join us in the fall. Our library resources are excellent—particularly for a university our size. We have access to almost all of the major journals in our field, and we are ICPSR members. The monograph selection is somewhat limited, but the ability to borrow books from UNC-Asheville and Appalachian State University help us fulfill our mission. Our librarians have also been very responsive to meeting our needs.

The Department employs one full-time Administrative Assistant who maintains budgets, orders supplies, greets visitors, and handles the administrative side of the department. For 9 years, this position has been filled by Lynn Kaufman. Ms Kaufman is retiring at the end of February, but we have filled her position with Phyllis Hoffman, who has extensive experience in a similar role at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Our Administrative Assistant is a key member of the department who not only helps administer the department’s work, but also interacts with our students and contributes to our teaching and learning mission through their daily interactions.

The Public Policy Institute budget has fluctuated tremendously over the past few years. When Dr. Cooper took over as Director, the state budget was $12,000. After the Institute for the
Economy and the Future closed, the (former) Provost increased the budget to almost $40,000. After the last round of budget cuts, however, the budget was once again cut to around $12,000. These fluctuating budgets have made it exceedingly difficult for the Public Policy Institute Director to plan for the year. Many important programs were also lost due to the budget cuts—most notably the unique Faculty Fellows program which provided $2,000 for a faculty-member to conduct applied research on an area related to public policy. In the past, the Institute employed an assistant director, but this has not been the case for several years. However, for the past year the Public Policy Institute has been able to hire an administrative assistant at one-quarter time. This has greatly relieved the administrative duties of the Director and allowed the Director to focus on the substantive projects of the Institute. The PPI also has a non-state account that has primarily been raised through donations, contacts, and grants but, as with the Department budget, reliance on these funds is difficult due to their variability from year to year.