2026-27 Comprehensive Program Review

Program: Political Science

Division: BSSL

Writers: Joanna Tice Jen

SLO/SAO Point-Person: Joanna Tice Jen

Email your completed form to Karin Spirn and your dean by November 2, 2026.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts and info for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Discipline Data Packets – institutional research about disciplines and student services
- ★ Course Success Rates Dashboard – allows you to research your program's success rates

Detailed information and instructions appear at the end of this form. For help, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu.

Section 1: Program Reflection and Planning

These questions appear on all Program Reviews including comprehensive and updates.

1. Please describe your program's most important **achievements** in year 25-26.

- With changes made to Introduction to American Government and Politics (POLS C1000) credit load (from 4 to 3 credits), we can now offer four sections each semester (one asynchronous and three in person).

- Introduction to Gender, Sexuality & Politics (Poli 27) has been added back to our curriculum after a failed test run during COVID. This course will complement offerings in Women's Studied and LGBT Studies, as well as providing a Social Science GE course of a different flavor.

- The Program chose seven current Political Science majors for the 2026-2027 Inaugural Political Science Fellowship. This program offers opportunities for the fellows to work closely with Professor Jen on a variety of projects from speaker events, tutoring and a LPC Political Science peer-reviewed journal.

- Colin Thormoto is serving as an embedded librarian in two of Joanna Jen's courses this semester (Fall 2026). He has had meetings with all of my asynchronous (POLS C1000) students to support their term paper research and with my California Government (Poli 12) students to support their research for their first paper. (Prof. Jen has used all of the librarian course support services over the years and they

always contribute so much to my course and the experience of my students as they build their research skills across multiple library databases.)

2. Please describe your most important **challenges** in year 25-26

- The biggest ongoing challenge is the status of Professor Jen as the sole full-time faculty member, juggling a heavy course load with Program Coordination for Political Science and Women's Studies.

- In the classroom, the biggest challenges continue to be AI use and post-COVID student norms relating to attendance and assignment completion.

3. What are your upcoming **plans**? Please note any ways that these support student achievement and equity.

- Continuation and development of the Political Science Fellowship in the 2027-28 school year, especially the journal.

- As we did in the Fall of 2025, we hope to offer another honors section of American Government and Politics in the 2027-28 school year.

Section 2: SLOs/SAOs

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review, with brief annual check-ins on the Program Review Updates. The following resources will be useful when completing this section:

- Three-Year Assessment Template
- Aggregated and Disaggregated Data from the following sources:
    - ELumen (if saved--no longer available online)
    - CurrIQunet
    - Student Success Dashboard

1. During the 2023-2026 three-year assessment cycle that just concluded, what did your program set out to learn through your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessments?

- Due to Joanna Jen's medical leave and the conversion to CurrIQunet Meta, we did not create a three year assessment plan and several rounds of PSLO and CSLO assessments were skipped.

- I have reached out to SLO Chair, John Rosen, to start to get myself back on track this semester.

2. Based on your analysis of your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessment data, what conclusions did you draw about student outcomes and equity in your program?

3. Explain potential plans to improve student outcomes and close equity gaps.

4. Describe any obstacles that you encountered in your assessment process and any supports that would be helpful.

- Since I am a single full-timer program and SLO coordinator, my absence during medical leave prevented collection of SLO data.

- I attended a CurrIQunet training last academic year, but then it wasn't working for me to create assessments last semester. The SLO coordinator couldn't explain why the assessments I created weren't working.

Section 3: Data Discussion

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review. Workshops and office hours will be offered in Fall 2026 to support Program Review writers.

1. RPIE Data Review: Discuss any significant trends in the data provided by the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (or any other data you use for decision-making and planning).

*(**Note**: Not all Programs have RPIE data available; if your program does not have a data packet or dashboard data, you may note that in the response box and reach out to the RPIE team.)*

Data may come from:

- RPIE Data Packets
- Transfer data
- Succes Rates Dashboard (scroll down on page)
- Requested data from the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE)
- SLO/SAO data
- Data from program-created surveys or investigations
- Any other relevant source of quantitative or qualitative data

- Our student headcount and enrollment numbers have been steadily increasing since Fall 2021, reflecting recovery from COVID and growth of the program due to change of POLS C1000 to a three-credit course and interest generated by the club and fellows programs and the general political environment.

- Course success rates have also increased, from 69% in Fall 2021 to 85% in Fall 2025.

- Productivity and fill-rates have also been increasing.

- Performing well above our program-set standard of 70.1, with a success rate of 83%.

- The number of degrees awarded has also steadily risen over the last five years, from 19 in 2020-2021 to 26 in 2025-26.

2. Equity: Did your data reveal any patterns of inequity? If so, please explain those patterns and any actions that should be taken at the program or college level.

- As I've reported in the last two program reviews, African-American students, as a group, still struggle with the Political Science curriculum and teaching. While this data is based on a relativel small sample size (16 students in 2025-26), there has been progress there. This year represents the highest success rate and lowest withdrawal rate for African-American students out of the last 6 years in the program. This represents improvement from a low of a 36% success rate in 2021 to a high of 75% this cycle. At this point, there isn't a lot of difference between African-American men and women. While I met with Sean Brooks about this issue several years ago, I haven't changed much in the course based on his recommendations, so I'm not sure what to make of this improved data. I will reach out to the BSSL division leads, Erick Bell and Felipe Ponce, for analysis and suggestions.

- There is a six-point difference between the success rates of Asian American males and females. Males have a success rate of 93% and females a rate of 86%. That seems like a pretty big gap. I plan to speak with Meghan Swanson-Garoupa for advice based on her work with AAPI students.

- Like their African American counterparts, Filipino/a students also have the highest success rates in six years, but there is a big difference between male and female Filipino/as, with female success rate at 100% and male success rate at 75%. I will bring this up with Professor Swanson-Garoupa too.

- The area of biggest concern for our program is the Hispanic/Latinx cohort. Their success rates are the lowest of all the groups and it's a very large group of students. Overall Hispanic/Latinx success rate is 71% (based on 91 students) and the rate for female students is 70%. This is also especially concerning, given that they have not seen improvement over the last few years the way every other group has. I will reach out to the BSSL division leads, Erick Bell and Felipe Ponce, for analysis and suggestions.

- This was also the most successful year in the last six years for multi-ethnic students in Political Science. However, I am seeing a similar pattern of male success exceeding female success (male 95%, female 63%) in this group. Given that this is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the US Census, we need to be prepared and proactive in serving these students.

- Lastly, this was also a successful year for white political science students, whose success rate rose to 88%, up from a low of 66% in 2020-21.

- Native American, Other/Unknown and Pacific Islander categories are all too small to produce meaningful data.

3. Course Modality (Instructional Programs Only): In reviewing your program's data packet and Succes Rates Dashboard, are there differences in success rates by modality (i.e. face-to-face, asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid, or hyflex)? If so, reflect on what might account for differences and any actions that should be taken. (Non-instructional programs may also choose to reflect on online vs. in-person services if applicable).

- Our success rates in asynchronous courses (79%) are below the overall program success rate of 83%, but the hybrid modality (87%) and in-person modality (85%) make up the majority of our courses offered. I will meet with Kathleen King to discuss methods for improving the success numbers for asynchronous students. Given the inundation of AI use, asynchronous courses are the most difficult to teach in a way that is both fair and technologically approachable. I find that many students struggle when online proctoring tools require more setup and a reliable Wi-Fi connection. Hopefully the introduction of a proctoring center will improve the situation.

4. Program-Set Standard (Instructional Programs Only): The program-set standard is a baseline that alerts programs if their student success rates have dipped suddenly below 95% of the rolling 5-year average. There is no punishment for not meeting the standard, and many valid reasons this may occur. When a program does not meet this standard, they are asked to examine possible reasons and note any actions that should be taken, if appropriate. | Program-set standard data can be found on this page

5a. Did your program meet its program-set standard for successful course completion in AY25-26?

Yes__X__ No____

5b. If your program did not meet your program-set standard, discuss possible reasons and how this may affect program planning or resource requests. Success rates for individual courses can be found on the Success Rates Dashboard.

- Not applicable

Section 4: Special Topics

These questions have been chosen for this year's Comprehensive Program Review to meet reporting mandates (for accreditation, Ed. Code, or other sources).

1. Mission: Describe 1-3 examples of how your program's work has aligned with the college's mission, vision, values, and/or educational master plan over the past three years. (Possibilities might include new initiatives, resource allocation/use, program improvements, or other activities).

- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Educational Master Plan

- With discussion of demographic trends in legislatures, the executive and the courts; reading the work of diverse authors across all courses and the focus on political theories and movements working towards equity for groups based on ethnic, racial, gender and sexuality identities, the Political Science program lays the groundwork for an " inclusive... and equity-focused education."

- In addition to introducing students to the American and California governmental and political systems and constitutions, the political science program encourages students to choose news sources wisely, register to vote, vote, and make their voices heard in the political arena, as well as instructing them on methods of voting research and the other myriad ways they can get involved politically, thereby directly "support[ing] and empower[ing] students to develop the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities needed to become engaged participants and leaders in their local and global communities."

- Addressing emerging identities and movements, such as MAGA and the Democratic Socialists of America helps them "respond... to the ever-changing... society."

- The Political Theory curriculum, in particular addresses and defines "ethical behavior."

- Every element of the program prepares students to "[d]emonstrate... civic, social and environmental responsibility," because in order to be responsible in any of these ways, you must first understand how the governmental system on the local, state and federal level works.

- Discussion of anti-racist, immigrant rights, and international human rights movements in multiple classes directly bolsters three of the College's values, "Committing to anti-racist policies and practices; Ensuring that Las Positas is a sanctuary campus for undocumented students; [and] Holding firm to the belief that each of us makes an astonishing difference."

2. Regular Substantive Interaction (Instructional Programs Only)

To meet our college, ACCJC, state, and federal standards, **all online instructors** must demonstrate "**regular and substantive interaction**" (RSI) with students. That is, we must be clearly providing instruction and interacting with our online students, just like we would in an on-campus class. The following reflection questions allow us to capture how RSI is occurring in our classes.

The following documents explain requirements and best practices for RSI:

- ACCJC Quality Continuum Rubric for Distance Education

- Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements

2a. If your program offers DE courses, how are Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements met in your area? Examples appear on the DE addendums of your Course Outlines of Record. Place an X next to each method used in your courses.	
X	Course materials make clear to students how often and when the instructor will interact with students (e.g. syllabus/home page lists email/office hours/other ways to communicate and typical response times)
Not applicable	Provides direct instruction over Zoom (e.g. regularly scheduled live online class sessions in synchronous/hybrid/hyflex courses)
X	Provides direct instruction through instructor-created videos (e.g. lecture videos created using Studio in asynchronous courses)
X	Provides additional information from various sources/mediums to engage students with course content (e.g. instructor-curated content in Canvas pages that help deepen students understanding of course content)
X	Facilitates discussions (e.g. through Canvas discussion boards, Pronto, Studio, or Hypothesis)
X	Provides feedback on students' coursework (e.g. through detailed rubrics and/or assignment comments in Speedgrader; note: a grade alone does not quality as RSI, nor does auto-graded feedback students may get through completing publisher content)
X	Responds to students' questions (e.g. through timely responses to student messages in Canvas Inbox, discussion boards, social annotation assignments)
X	Facilitates student success through ongoing outreach (e.g. posts announcements; uses "Message Students Who" to encourage struggling students to attend office hours or access free tutoring)
	Other [explain]:

2b. What challenges if any have you faced in implementing RSI? What additional training or resources might instructors in your program need to increase the quality of RSI in online courses?

- All DE instructors in Political Science use all of the methods listed (we don't have any synchronous course offerings), because doing so is our job and was our job, long before the language of RSI started being used.

- The only challenge we encounter is responding to student emails promptly, with 44-46 person course caps that mean we usually have close to 200 students, if not more.

Section 5: Program Review Feedback

What questions or suggestions do you have about this year's Program Review forms or process?

- This was very well organized and a nice opportunity for reflection. Thanks for all the work of the committee!

Detailed Instructions

Instructions

1. Send an electronic copy of this form to Program Review chair, Karin Spirn, and your Dean by Monday, November 2.
2. Please respond to questions with enough detail to present your information; it doesn't have to be long.
3. If the requested information does not apply to your program, write "Not Applicable."
4. Even if you don't have much to report, we want to hear from you, so your voice is part of the college planning process.
5. Optional/suggested: Communicate with your dean while completing this document.

Sections: There are five sections to the document:

1. Program Reflection and Planning
2. SLO/SAO Review
3. Data analysis
4. Special topics
5. Feedback on the PR template and process

Time Frame: This Program Review should reflect your program status during the 25-26 academic year. It should describe plans starting now and continuing through 2026-27. It is fine to discuss topics beyond these time frames, but please specify the time frame in your responses.

Audience: Deans, Vice Presidents of Student Services and Academic Services, All Planning and Allocation Committees. This document will be available to the public.

Uses: This Program Review will inform the audience about your program. It is also used in creating division summaries, determining college planning priorities, and determining the allocation of resources. The final use is to document the fulfillment of accreditation requirements.

Equity: Here is the LPC definition of equity, which is a guiding principle in reviewing programs: "Equity is parity in student educational outcomes. It places student success and belonging for students of color and disproportionately impacted students at the center of focus."

Please note: Program Review is NOT a vehicle for making requests. All requests should be made through appropriate processes (e.g., Instructional Equipment Request Process) or directed to your dean or supervisor.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Fall 2023 Program Reviews
- ★ Program Review FAQs

For help with your program review, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu