



Northern Illinois University

2021 Program Review Report

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College of Education

Program: M.S. Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction (13.0301)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science in Education (M.S. Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) prepares teachers to be knowledgeable, reflective practitioners and instructional leaders to work in both formal and informal educational settings. Graduates of this program are employed as curriculum specialists, teacher coaches, department chair or lead teachers, content specialists, and program leaders in K-12 settings. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected job growth for instructional coordinators and for postsecondary teachers, both employment categories pursued by graduates of this program, is six percent and nine percent respectively which is faster than the national average. Students within the M.S. Ed. C&I program may specialize in one of three areas including: Teacher Leader (which includes the Teacher Leader State endorsement and a Certificate of Graduate Study in Instructional Coaching), Curriculum and Cultural Pedagogies in Social Justice; and Academic Literacies, Language and Culture. These specializations were approved in 2020. The program is offered through a mix of modalities including face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses.
- Major findings and recommendations: The program has experienced a steady increase in enrollments over the last four years (21 students in fall 2016 to 34 students in fall 2020) and retention rates are high across all specializations of enrolled candidates (86.7% from fall 2019 to fall 2020). The program attributes their high retention to the supportive cohort structure or contracted groups. Diversity in the student population is high, especially for students enrolled in the Curriculum and Cultural Pedagogies in Social Justice specialization. Per the latest alumni survey completed in 2018 (response rate of 21%), a substantial number of program alumni reported being employed (88.4%). Amongst those employed, a majority reported working in elementary and secondary schools (58.9%) and about 19 % were employed in college and university settings. Most alumni (95.9%) indicated their jobs were related to their graduate degree. Based on this review the faculty in the C&I program have requested the revision of the Academic Literacies, Language and Culture specialization to better serve stakeholders.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last summative program review, the C&I program was merged with the former Department of Literacy during the 2015-2016 academic year, which subsequently changed its name to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Spring of 2017. The C&I program tenure and tenure track faculty transitioned from the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations (LEPF) to the C&I

department adding their disciplinary expertise to this newly configured department. Presently, there are two tenured faculty and one 0.5 FTE faculty in the C&I area. The half time faculty has a joint appointment with the Center for Black Studies. All three new specialization areas were developed and approved in 2020. Assessment processes within the program continue to be modified to maintain alignment with accreditation (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; CAEP) standards. Other changes instituted since the last review include year-round program cohort scheduling of courses which provides enrolled students the opportunity to schedule classes in a timely manner, online delivery of courses, improved strategic communication and transparency through an improved program webpage, greater access to virtual program advising sessions, and targeted student recruitment sessions by the college recruitment coordinator.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: Based on the current review, the following actions have been identified as future goals for the program: 1) continue to identify and develop new master's degree cohorts by using innovative delivery, tailored curricular offerings, and working closely with the College of Education Office of External Programming and recruitment staff person, 2) continue to recruit and retain diverse students and align program efforts with the College of Education's Diversity Plan, 3) streamline the way data are collected for assessment reports, program review, and program evaluation and subsequently organize and maintain a consistent depository for these data, 4) request a regional stakeholders' needs assessment and conduct a program analysis to revise low enrollment specializations, and 5) advocate for new tenure-track lines to replace the program faculty who have left C&I since the last review cycle.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program is in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029)

Explanation: The Master of Science in Education (M.S. Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction continues to experience steady enrollment gains and attract a diverse student population as it prepares graduates for careers in K-12 and higher education settings. Faculty remain engaged in continuous quality improvements in curriculum, assessment, and program delivery. There is a renewed effort to implement strategies that target retention of enrolled students in addition to enrollment efforts. Additionally, the program continues to model assessment practices that are guided by relevant accreditation standards.

Program: Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction (13.0301)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) in Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) prepares student candidates for professional work in postsecondary education including academic or administrative careers. Program graduates engage in research responsibilities as a consumer and producer, thus preparing them for academic,

administrative, clinical, professional, or research positions in K-12, higher education, civil service, private organizations, and public institutions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected occupational growth rate for graduates from this program is nine percent, which is higher than the average job growth in the U.S. Doctoral students enrolled in the Ed. D. program in C&I may specialize in one of the following three areas: Curriculum Leadership; Literacy Education; or Science, Social Studies and Environmental Education Integration. The program teaching and learning modality is mixed, with face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses.

- Major findings and recommendations: Trends in student enrollment within the Ed. D. program indicate a decrease over the past four years (-34 students from fall 2016 to fall 2020). Despite lower enrollment, the program maintains a high retention rate (83.9 % from fall 2019 to fall 2020). The program plans to improve its recruitment rates by identifying student needs and using innovative delivery methods to tailor curricular offerings to match the needs of these students, most of whom are practicing professionals in schools. The last alumni survey report from 2018 (response rate = 38%) indicated that 100% of alumni respondents reported their graduate program prepared them for their jobs and 98% agreed they were satisfied with their overall experience at NIU. A substantial number reported being employed mostly in elementary and secondary schools (83.7%) and about 16% were employed in college and university settings. Alumni also indicated that their jobs were related to their degree (98%). Student outcomes data from the last mid-cycle review conducted by the University Assessment Panel in 2016 indicated that students were progressing well (with 98% passing their candidacy examinations and 100% successfully presenting and defending their final research). These data suggest that candidates in the program appear to be well prepared to meet the four student learning outcomes determined by departmental faculty and grounded in the unit's conceptual framework. In alignment with the college strategic plan, the program continues to increase its efforts toward recruitment of diverse students in all programs within the department.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last summative program review, the C&I program was merged with the former Department of Literacy during the 2015-2016 academic year, which subsequently changed its name to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Spring of 2017. The C&I program tenure and tenure track faculty transitioned from the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations (LEPF) to the C&I department adding their disciplinary expertise to this newly configured department. Other changes in the program have included the removal of one of the specializations (Secondary Education) in 2018 due to low enrollment, and hiring of an Ed. D. program coordinator in 2019 to support overall student experience, and especially support needs of students of color.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Based on the current review, the Ed. D. program in C&I intends to continue to identify and develop new doctoral degree cohorts by using innovative delivery, tailored curricular offerings, flexible scheduling, and working closely with the College of Education Office of External Programming. Current curricular modifications in the program include re-conceptualizing dissertation options to better suit the majority of doctoral candidates. The program faculty are also considering modeling the curriculum to standards and guidelines from the Carnegie Project on Educational Doctorate (CPED) model which supports research appropriate for professional or research positions in

K-12 settings. A second area of focus is to continue explore best practices to attract and retain diverse students and align program efforts with the College of Education's Diversity Plan.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029).

Explanation: The Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction program has high retention rates. Alumni data indicate that the overwhelming majority of program completers were very satisfied with their educational experiences and have employment in their field. The curriculum is updated frequently. For doctoral candidates, 100% successfully presented and defended their dissertation research. Assessment processes are consistent and comprehensive and the program has developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement.

Program: M.S. Ed. in Counseling (13.1101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science in Education (M.S. Ed.) in Counseling is a nationally accredited program (by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), requiring a minimum of 60 semester hours, that provides preparation in the theory, techniques, and information needed by professional counselors. Students may specialize in school or clinical mental health counseling. The program courses are delivered face-to-face in DeKalb and online. The job outlook for professional school and clinical mental health counselors is strong. School and career counselor positions are expected to grow much faster than average (22 percent nationally between 2019 and 2029; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Graduates from the program are employed in a variety of settings including hospitals, agencies, private practice, and school settings.
- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollment remains strong (50 – 60 students in clinical mental health, and 40 – 50 students in school counseling). Graduation rates (98%) and licensure pass rates (99%) are also strong. Most students are employed upon graduation. The program is fairly diverse (two-thirds women, 75% White, 13% Black or African-American, 7% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish-American, and 5% Asian-American). Students are active in several diverse organizations across campus such as the Black Counselors Association, and the Society for Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities. The program was re-accredited for a period of two years (through October 2021) with the stipulation that it would address issues of high student-to-faculty ratio and improve documentation of supervision records of its counselors-in-training. In addition to the accreditor feedback, as part of continuous quality improvement, the program recommended it review the credentials of supervisors in its Community Counseling Training Center, which serves the larger NIU and DeKalb communities.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last summative program review, the program addressed its accreditor's (CACREP) feedback regarding the high student-to-faculty ratio by reducing the incoming cohort of students by about 50% (from 50 to 25) in fall 2020. Further, the program strengthened their clinical supervision process by highlighting supervision requirements in all syllabi and ensuring that all practicum supervisors in the community counseling center have proper credentials. Other changes include curricular and operational changes within the program (e.g., revisiting pre-requisites, revising the practicum process model, moving to a cohort model starting fall 2020, and adding more structured mentorship opportunities with faculty advisors) based on feedback from its Advisory Board. Finally, the program incorporated a mentoring program designed for students of color, facilitates and encourages faculty equity dialogues, and has modified course schedules to accommodate students.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program continues to work on meeting the accreditor-required lower student-to-faculty ratio and improving the supervision process for their graduate students in training. In addition, faculty are being intentional in their actions to improve experiences of students by promoting a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and actively combating racism and bias.

Outcome

- Decision:

 x Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029 in alignment with CACREP).

Explanation: The Master of Science in Education (M.S. Ed.) in Counseling has stable enrollments with a highly diverse student body. Graduates of the program indicate high satisfaction with the program and on average all counseling students pass their licensure examination. The curriculum is updated frequently. Assessment processes are consistent and comprehensive and the program has developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement via internal and external (i.e., CACREP) assessment protocols.

Program: Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision (13.1101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Counselor Education and Supervision at NIU prepares program graduates for careers as faculty, advanced licensed clinicians, clinical supervisors, and researchers. The job outlook for the counselor education profession continues to be strong. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that counseling jobs are growing at a much faster than average rate thus, the need for qualified doctoral-program graduates who are prepared for counselor education faculty positions will also grow significantly to be able to produce master's level practitioners to meet the demand. Accredited by the Council on the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) since 1989, NIU's programs were recognized with the Innovative

Counseling Program award by the North Central Association of Counselor Education & Supervision in 2018. The doctoral program is delivered both in person and online. The program's doctoral students complete internships, supervised by program faculty, in the areas of teaching, clinical supervision, counseling, research, and leadership.

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollment (approximately 40 students) and graduation rates (86% in 2019) have been stable. Close to 100% of doctoral students find job placements upon graduation (in education and clinical settings). The program is fairly diverse (roughly two-thirds women, 54% White, 31% Black or African-American, 6% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish-American, 6% Asian-American, and 3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander). The program has four active student organizations including diverse professional organizations such as the Black Counselors Association and an NIU chapter of SAIGE (Society for Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities). The program was re-accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for a period of two years (through October 2021) with the stipulation that it would address the issue of high student-to-faculty ratio.
- Actions taken since the last review: To address the accreditor's feedback regarding high student-to-faculty ratio and to ensure adequate supervision of dissertations, the program has temporarily reduced its incoming cohort of doctoral candidates. Additional programmatic enhancements during the past few years have included: greater number of faculty scheduled socials to facilitate student connection and informal mentoring opportunities and research alliances; modifying course modalities (including online offerings) to better accommodate student schedules; initiating a new mentoring program designed for students of color; and faculty initiated bi-weekly faculty equity dialogues to facilitate greater awareness and justice orientation in the overall program context.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program has ensured compliance in meeting CACREP accreditation standards relating to student-faculty ratio by reducing the number of doctoral students admitted in 2021-2022 academic year. Supervision requirements for doctoral students have been clarified and the program specifically ensures all practicum supervisors have adequate credentials. The program is intentional in improving the experiences of students by promoting a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and actively combating racism and bias. In addition, program faculty have created several research groups to provide students with opportunities to conduct research under faculty supervision and collaborate with peers.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Degree program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029 in alignment with CACREP)

Explanation: The Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program has increased enrollments with a diverse student body and a faculty-led mentoring program. The program has 100% job placement. The curriculum is updated frequently. Assessment processes are consistent

and comprehensive and the program has developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement via internal and external assessment protocols.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Program: B.A. / B.S. in Communication Studies (09.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) in Communication Studies ensure a broad study of the communication field while providing students an opportunity to focus on one of three chosen areas of emphasis: Advocacy and Public Communication, Media Studies, or Organizational/Corporate Communication. Alumni from these programs pursue careers in alignment with the emphases, including public relations, management, television production and film and video editing, and some pursue graduate degrees in complimentary fields (e.g., Business Administration, Fine Arts, Communication Studies, and Jurisprudence).
- Major findings and recommendations: There has been an approximate 10% decrease in enrollment from 2016 to 2019, a trend that is mirrored at the college level. In spite of the decline in enrollments, the B.A. and B.S. in Communication Studies program services a large number of undergraduate majors (2016 to 2019 average is 720 majors). The broad base of students enrolling in Communication classes allows for a high level of diversity within classes and in the major with a stable major enrollment (51.7% non-Hispanic white, 14.7% of Hispanic, 26.8% black non-Hispanic and 6.7% other). The median course completion rate overall is high (96.4%). There have been slight equity gaps in several critical major courses (ranging from -7.4% to -3% from 2016-2019). Alumni responding to a survey (2018) reported that their degree prepared them well for their current job (66.7%) and they are satisfied with their degree (75%). Recommendations made include creating an advisory board that would include alumni to further their connections and provide impetus for innovative curricular changes and refine learning outcomes based on market conditions for Communication majors; and centralizing the department to one location to help improve the student and faculty experience and productivity.
- Actions taken since the last review: In the last review, the department was asked to reorganize departmental administrative/governance structure to integrate the journalism and Communication faculty into a unified body. The merger is complete with a single administrative team and a completely integrated administrative culture. In addition, there have been major revisions to the degree program requirements to take advantage of overlapping content between degrees within the communication department. There have also been numerous curricular changes implemented to eliminate redundancies and to expand the course offerings to cover both journalism and Communication degree programs. Curricular revisions have been undertaken within each of the three emphases in the undergraduate program.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The department is addressing equity gaps by reducing class size and therefore increasing opportunities for faculty- student interactions in the undergraduate program. Cultural competency training is now required for all graduate teaching assistants. In addition, curricular changes are being pursued in each emphasis and the program has begun to revise its student learning outcomes to reflect these curricular changes. Efforts are also in motion to develop an advisory board.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in seven years i.e. 2027-2028).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) in Communication Studies program services a large number of undergraduate majors. Curricular changes were implemented since the last review period in all areas of emphases to provide greater student access to courses, strengthen retention and facilitate degree completion. Alumni report satisfaction with the degree program.

Program: M.A. in Communication Studies (09.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Masters of Arts (M.A.) in Communication Studies offers a broad-based program of advanced studies in four areas: (1) media studies, (2) rhetorical studies, (3) journalism, and (4) interpersonal, organizational, and persuasive communication. These areas of specializations prepare students for careers in business and industry, public service, higher education, or further graduate studies. Several modifications were made to the program curriculum/degree requirements to support the recruitment of full-time students pursuing either the thesis or the non-thesis option for degree completion. New courses have been added to strengthen the organizational and media course offerings, again supporting a broad approach to student training. Collectively, these changes have improved degree progress and outcomes in critical content competencies, including theory, method, argumentation, and inquiry.
- Major findings and recommendations: Data compiled since the last review indicated a decline in the number of graduate students by approximately 30% (fall 2018 to fall 2019.) However, the most recent enrollment trends show the number of M.A. students has stabilized since fall of 2017 with an average of 22-23 students enrolled in the program per year. The “per capita metrics” show that Communication faculty in nearly every category are ranked above 50th percentile compared to IPEDS Peer institutions, especially in book publications, citations and articles—the highest weighted categories for research productivity. Faculty productivity has been acknowledged by NIU awards (e.g., Board of Trustees Professor) and external awards (e.g., Best Book of the Year for National Communication Association). The impact of high-quality faculty for the graduate program is clear through the graduate program’s recognition by Communication Institute for Online Scholarship as a distinguished

program with “top 10 research” strengths in 8 areas. Program faculty serve as journal editors and on editorial boards for national and international journals and as leaders in their professional organizations, such as University Film and Video Association.

Recommendations include to 1) create an advisory board that includes graduate alumni to further their connections and also provide a venue for innovative curricular changes by understanding market conditions for M.A. students, 2) monitor and improve efficacy of the modified assessment plan and curriculum, and 3) centralize the department to one central location to increase student belongingness within the department, improve collaborative academic and research efforts between faculty and students, and improve efficiency of administrative function.

- Actions taken since the last review: In the last review, the department was asked to reorganize departmental administrative/governance structure to integrate the journalism and Communication faculty into a unified body. The merger is complete with a single administrative team and completely integrated administrative culture. Along with these changes, the department has modified its curriculum to include a broader selection of courses, modified its degree requirements to support a non-thesis option, hired additional faculty, and created a new laboratory (Human-Machine Communication Laboratory) in support of research for both faculty and graduate students.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review, the department will continue to monitor their revised assessment and advising approaches related to time to mastery of core concepts and graduation rates. While they developed a 4-year hiring plan in 2020, they will continue to refine those plans and further strengthen their graduate course offerings and the breadth of their research faculty. In light of the pandemic and its impact on higher education generally, but specifically on graduate education, the faculty in the Department of Communications have already engaged in a wide- ranging discussion about what delivery modes will be most helpful for delivery of content and best serve the needs of the graduate students. Finally, the program is developing an advisory board to provide input into its operations and learning outcomes.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e. 2027-2028).

Explanation: The M.A. in Communication Studies program offers a broad-based program of advanced studies in interpersonal, organizational, and persuasive communication; journalism; media and rhetorical studies. Since the past review the M.A. curriculum has been revised to provide a broader selection of courses to align better with the program’s identity and reputation as a generalist M.A. program. Moving forward from the pandemic, the department is considering delivery modes for their graduate courses to serve the needs of their students.

Program: B.A. / B.S. in Journalism (09.0401)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) in Journalism prepares students for success in a wide array of professional roles in journalism, media, and public relations, or for higher education in journalism studies, communication and news media. Students may take classes in topics such as: Sports Journalism; Environment, Health and the Media; News and Entertainment; Artificial Intelligence, Robots, & Journalism; and Social and Mobile Media. Since the previous review, Journalism world-wide has changed and the curriculum offered at NIU reflects these global changes. One major transformation of the news industry is the technological changes in media landscapes, audiences and markets, which demand an innovative and integrative approach to journalism. To align with current news industry standards, journalism faculty are regularly engaged in curriculum revision, development and delivery. In relocating broadcasting classes from the Northern Television Center to Watson Hall and in consolidating facilities with higher end technology and equipment, for example, journalism faculty initiated the transition away from classes focused on a single medium (TV) toward multimedia skills training. In response to industry trends and student demand, journalism faculty have developed and offer classes in current high-interest topics in journalism such as: Sports Journalism; Environment, Health and the Media; News and Entertainment; Artificial Intelligence, Robots, & Journalism; Social and Mobile Media. In addition, journalism faculty have collaborated with media faculty to establish a lab in the emerging field of Human-Machine Communication.
- Major findings and recommendations: Journalism has seen a steep decline in students pursuing their degree (32% decline from 2016-2019), although in recent years the enrollment is more stable. This larger decline is greater than national trends in journalism education that report approximately 12% for the same time-period (National Center for Education Statistics). Although the number of students enrolled in the program declined, course enrollments and degree retention remained high with 98% fill rates and fall-to-fall retention rates of 78.7%. Similar to students, the number of faculty and instructors also declined by approximately a third. The broad base of students enrolling in Journalism classes allows for a high level of diversity within classes. The median course completion rate overall is high at 97.3% with no equity gaps between fall 2016 and fall 2019. Alumni responses to a 2018 survey indicated that program graduates reported their degree prepared them for their current jobs (61%) and reported satisfaction with the time needed to earn their degree (94%).

Recommendations include to: 1) redesign the broadcast curriculum to meet future needs of journalism degree seekers, 2) re-envision the coordination between Media Studies (subspecialty of Communication) and Journalism to address changes in pedagogy with continuously changing object of study, and 3) centralize the department to one central location to increase student belongingness within the department, improve collaborative academic and research efforts between faculty and students, and improve efficiency of administrative function.

- Actions taken since the last review: In the last review, the department was asked to reorganize departmental administrative/governance structure to integrate the journalism and Communication faculty into a unified body. The merger is complete with a single administrative team and a completely integrated administrative culture. In addition, the program has made major revisions to the degree program requirements to take advantage of overlapping content between degrees within journalism and communication. There have also been curricular changes made to eliminate redundancy and increase efficiency with respect to instructional staffing. Curricular changes also reflect updates to the field of journalism such as technological changes in media landscapes, audiences, and markets. To improve student retention and improve transition into the major, a full-time undergraduate student advisor was added for students pursuing degrees in journalism and Communication.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review, the department will continue to pursue curricular changes to re-envision and redesign the broadcasting component of the Journalism BA/BS degree. Program faculty have begun to revise their student learning outcomes to align these with curricular modifications, as advised by the University Assessment Panel at NIU. Further, efforts are underway at the college level to secure a centralized location for the Communication department to enhance the integration of Communication and Journalism faculty and students.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in seven years, i.e. 2027-2028).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) in Journalism degree provides students with a broad education, while developing their skills, knowledge, and values in a wide array of professional roles in journalism, media, and public relations. Since the previous review, Journalism world-wide has changed and the curriculum offered at NIU reflects these global changes, as well as hired a full-time program advisor to mentor students through the degree. Due to ever-changing nature of journalism, the department will continue to evaluate their curriculum and student learning outcomes.

Program: B.A. / B.S. in Political Science (45.1001)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) in Political Science undergraduate program in political science prepares students for a range of occupations by enhancing students' written and oral communication skills, their critical thinking and analytical abilities, and problem-solving skills. The knowledge of politics and government that students gain can be beneficial for pursuing careers in legal fields, political campaigns, policy analysis, criminal justice, government agencies, business, lobbying firms, nonprofits, labor groups, and public interest firms. The projected job outlook for political scientists is a six percent increase in employment from 2019 to 2029, which is faster than

average. Nearly half of political scientists are employed by the federal government, with many others working in political organizations, lobbying firms, and labor unions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

- Major findings and recommendations: The number of majors enrolled in the program have fallen slightly over the last five years (from 271 in fall 2016 to 239 in fall 2020). Similarly, the number of total degrees awarded declined from 113 in FY 2015 to 73 in FY 2019. Political science faces the challenge of maintaining and increasing enrollments for their undergraduate degree program. In a post-COVID world, the program anticipates at least a modest rebound in part due to the larger mixture of classes online and in person. Regarding trends in student diversity, the BIPOC enrollment counts in the department for the last five years have been consistent, with 126 students in fall 2016 and 124 in fall 2020 (down from 136 in fall 2019). Similarly, the number of degrees awarded to BIPOC students was 37 in FY 2015 and 34 in FY 2019. In terms of percentages of total enrollments, BIPOC students now represent a higher percentage of all enrolled majors than in previous years. Whereas BIPOC students made up about 25 percent of enrolled students in political science in 2007, and 35 percent of enrolled students in 2011, they constituted about 52 percent of enrolled students in 2020. Likewise, the department has also shown a strong consistency in the enrollment of women over the past five years, with a slight increase from 111 in 2016 to 120 in 2020. This population accounted for 30 degrees earned in FY 2015 and 33 in FY 2019. In terms of percentages of total enrollments, women now represent a higher percentage of all enrolled majors than in previous years with a growth from 37 percent of total enrollments in 2007 and 33 percent in 2011, to currently over 50 percent of the total enrollments in 2020. Students are continuously engaged in the program through a number of student organizations and activities, which are supported by the department via faculty advisors and other resources. Department faculty also continue to support students in collaborations through research and scholarship.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review, the department has implemented several changes in the undergraduate program, especially related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The program hosts an annual Political Science Open House each spring, to which all of our majors and non majors and admitted high school students interested in political science are invited. Additional curricular changes to the undergraduate major now provide timely options. An emphasis in “Justice and Democracy” which combines public law and political theory has been added. Another curricular addition is POLS 210 that helps introduce students to the legal system and for students who want to go on to take more rigorous upper-level public law courses, provides a foundation to help them succeed in the major and eventually law school if they go that route. In addition to the above changes, the department has implemented an online degree completion program for students pursuing a B.A. in political science. Two accelerated degree programs in which students could earn either a Master of Arts or a Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) in addition to their bachelor’s degree a year earlier than the normal path can be completed through these online course offerings.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The Political Science department is committed to diversity, inclusion and antiracism, and will continue support a hiring plan that prioritizes joint hires with the Center for Black Studies and the Center for Latin and Latin American

Studies. The program plans to broaden its curriculum to include courses relevant to students of color and NIU's diverse student body. It will also continue to affirmatively recruit students of color to participate in the numerous extra/co-curricular programs it supports. The political science faculty continue to offer a many online courses to support the online degree completion program and to provide flexibility to students.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029).

Explanation: The Department of Political Science delivers a high quality undergraduate program whose graduates secure careers in various legal fields, such as political campaigns and analysis, criminal justice, government agencies, business, lobbying firms, nonprofits, labor groups, and public interest firms. Since the last review, the program has made changes to its curriculum and invested in a fully-online degree program. The department plans to prioritize its faculty hiring process to increase the diversity of the department and broaden its curriculum offerings.

Program: M.A. in Political Science (45.1001)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Political Science provides students with a strong research foundation to pursue further graduate study in a doctoral program. Students will also have substantive knowledge of political institutions and processes, including appreciation of diverse points of view, in at least two subfields of study. All master's students are required to produce and defend a master's thesis that consists of original political science research in their primary field of interest. Students who do not go on to doctoral studies typically attain employment in government agencies. The projected job outlook for political scientists from 2019 to 2029 is a six percent increase in employment, which is faster than average. Nearly half of political scientists are employed by the federal government, with many others working in political organizations, lobbying firms, and labor unions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- Major findings and recommendations: The total enrollments in the M.A. program have remained consistent over the past five years, averaging about 10 students per year (from 8 in fall 2016 to 10 in fall 2020). The number of women and BIPOC students in the entire political science graduate program (M.A. and Ph.D. students) has remained fairly consistent with a slight increase in both groups in fall 2020. 14 women enrolled in fall 2016 and 17 in fall 2020, representing 45% of graduate students; 20 BIPOC students enrolled in fall 2016 and 25 in fall 2020, representing 66% of graduate students. Although the enrollment of diverse students in the graduate program was strong, women and BIPOC students have not made up a very high proportion of students completing the graduate program and earning the M.A. degree (2 women completed in fall 2016 and 2 in fall 2019; 2 minority students completed in fall 2016 and 1 in fall 2019). Improvements in these numbers are anticipated for

degrees to be conferred in 2020 and 2021 with the higher enrollment numbers.

- Actions taken since the last review: One of the main findings of the 2012 program review suggested that the program was too large and appeared to lack clear objectives and focus. The department addressed this concern by implementing key changes in the program. These included adopting a more selective admissions process to reduce the size of incoming classes and modifying its curriculum and requirements to focus more on preparing students for doctoral studies (i.e. independent, original research skills). By reducing the size of the program, the student-to-faculty ratio was reduced which provided faculty the time to focus on the one-on-one instruction it takes to mentor graduate students to conduct original research. Students who taught undergraduate courses also received diversity training to help eliminate equity gaps found in the undergraduate courses they were teaching. In addition, the department has established itself as an independent entity, separate from the Department of Public Administration. Finally, there is now an accelerated master's degree program in which students can earn the bachelor's and master's degrees in political science in five years instead of the normal six years.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The Political Science Graduate Studies Committee intends to focus on improving the numbers of M.A. degrees conferred by examining the causes of the reduction in master's level degrees. The program is also committed to increasing diversity among its students and faculty by revisiting the current admissions process and promoting faculty joint hires with the Center for Black Studies and the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies. Those hires would likely help diversify the political science faculty teaching the graduate program and further provide an opportunity to broaden the curriculum to include relevant courses and topics that appeal to students of color. The program faculty and staff intend to leverage their experience in remote learning during the pandemic to allow more flexibility to students.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029).

Explanation: The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Political Science program prepares students for a doctoral program by providing a strong foundation of methods courses and requiring original research for the master's thesis requirement. Since the last program review, the department focused its goal for the program and strengthened its diversity in enrollment. The department plans to evaluate and take steps to improve the completion rate for the master's degree, especially among women and minority students.

Program: Ph.D. in Political Science (45.1001)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Political Science provides students with a level of substantive knowledge in political science that reflects a high degree of specialization appropriate to their future careers. It also helps students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct original research that meets the high standards expected of professionals in public and private sectors. Students who earn a degree attain employment primarily as faculty in political science or related academic departments and as analysts for government agencies, policy institutes and foundations. The projected job outlook for political scientists from 2019 to 2029 is a six percent increase, which is faster than national average. Nearly half of political scientists are employed by the federal government, with many others working in political organizations, lobbying firms, and labor unions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- Major findings and recommendations: The number of students enrolled in the Ph.D. program remained fairly stable during the review period (33 students enrolled in fall 2016 and 29 in fall 2020). The number of women and BIPOC students in the graduate program as a whole (Ph.D. plus M.A. students) has remained fairly consistent with a slight increase in both groups in 2020. 14 women enrolled in fall 2016 and 17 in fall 2020, representing 45% of all graduate students; 20 BIPOC students enrolled in fall 2016 and 25 in fall 2020, representing 66% of all graduate students. The program graduated a total of 28 doctoral students during the review period for an average of 5.6 degrees per year. Although the number of faculty has declined (from 24 in 2012 to 11 in 2020), they have remained active in scholarly activities from 2016 - 2020 (5 books, 21 book chapters, 38 refereed journal articles, 28 other articles, and 103 conference presentations).
- Actions taken since the last review: The program modified its admissions practices for the Ph.D. program by increasing selectivity and reducing the size of entering doctoral cohorts. This was especially important as the number of faculty in the department continued to decrease during the period after the last program review. The program also took great care to accept students in the disciplinary fields that had an adequate number of faculty to work with the doctoral students. Since the last review the department and program have focused their efforts to strengthen a culture of research among graduate students by encouraging faculty to find multiple ways to collaborate and publish with current doctoral students. This culture-shift as well as the smaller doctoral cohorts has helped faculty to devote more time to mentoring these students, a practice that has led to more co-authorships and publications by doctoral students. Additional practices have include greater funding for doctoral students to support presentation at professional conferences, direct efforts by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Political Science Graduate Student Association each semester to hold research workshops on campus in which students present their research to their peers and to faculty. Another change has been a revision of graduate teaching requirements as the prior review indicated students were teaching too early in their program. Current doctoral students who teach undergraduate courses receive diversity training to help address equity gaps seen in the undergraduate courses. Finally, the department has begun providing support and mentoring for faculty as they progress through the promotion and tenure process.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: The program plans to continue the changes made after the previous review including ensuring graduate students are not teaching too early in the program and having preferences for assigning teaching responsibilities to doctoral candidates who have passed candidacy exams and have experience as a support teaching assistant. The department will also continue to work on increasing the diversity of its faculty and doctoral students by supporting a hiring plan that prioritizes joint hires with the Center for Black Studies and the Center for Latin and Latin American Studies. Finally, the program intends to use technology to facilitate advising and mentorship during times when face-to-face meetings are inconvenient or not possible (e.g., during summer break, or when Ph.D. students are away from campus conducting fieldwork or another research).

Outcome

- Decision:

 x Program in good standing (review in eight years, i.e. 2028-2029).

Explanation: The Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Political Science has successfully maintained its graduate enrollment and graduation rate over the past review cycle, while shifting major areas of emphases to correspond with its current faculty. The Political Science faculty remain research productive and have focused their graduate program to emphasize scholarly productivity and training of the doctoral students. One area of continued growth will be to diversify the faculty and graduate students, with particular attention to minority and female students' successful completion of the doctoral program.