Final Assessment Report – Political Science

Undergraduate and Graduate programs reviewed 2025/26

A. Summary

1. The Department's Self-Study was considered and approved by the Senate Academic Review Committee on December 1, 2025**.**
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Veronica Kitchen (University of Waterloo) and Erin Crandall (Acadia University), and one internal reviewer, Michael Driedger (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred February 25-26, 2026.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received April 6, 2026.
5. The Senate Undergraduate Program Committee response was received April 17, 2026.
6. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee response was received May 1, 2026.
7. The Department response was received May 5, 2026.
8. The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs response was received May 13, 2026.
9. The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences response was received May 27, 2026.
10. Annual Implementation Reports will be submitted from 2027-2030.
11. The next Cyclical Academic Review is scheduled to take place in 2033/2034.

The cyclical program review process was conducted under the terms and conditions of the 2023 IQAP.

Program Outcome Categories:

Based on their knowledge of the discipline, the content of the Self-Study and the interviews conducted during the site visit, the Reviewers gave the programs the following Outcome Categories:
NOTE: Selecting from Excellent Quality, Good Quality, Good Quality with Concerns and Non-Viable.

Excellent Quality:

- BA Political Science (Honours, Pass)
- BA Political Science, Co-op (Honours)
- BA with Major
- BA Combined (Honours, Pass)
- MA Political Science

Executive Summary:

The Reviewers wrote:
The Department of Political Science at Brock University is defined by high calibre faculty and academic programming. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the Department's academic programs meet the standards and expectations of the political science discipline, the Department's program learning objectives, and Brock's missions and academic plans. Students overwhelmingly find value in their degree and go on to employment that utilizes their skills after graduation. The faculty and staff in the Department stand out for their level of collegiality and commitment to their academic programs, well-illustrated by the success of the seminar system, MA program, internship program, and student advising. The Department provides teaching in the traditional subfields of political science, while increasingly engaging in research and teaching that extend beyond these traditional silos, like in Indigenous politics and digital politics and policy.

There are opportunities for the Department to continue strengthening academic programming by:

- ensuring new POLI major students receive adequate training in academic skills such as library use, AI norms in Political Science, citation training, and norms of academic writing;
- leveraging existing departmental strengths in digital politics and policy;
- ensuring the sustainability of Political Theory teaching;
- supporting the Department's experiential learning programs;
- requiring a 400-level POLI seminar for POLI majors;
- clarifying MA program structure, including the requirements for the MRP vs. thesis options.

Ongoing financial challenges at Canadian universities mean that strong student enrollment is a necessary feature of a program's long-term vitality. The Department of Political Science has been responsive to this challenge and has demonstrated commitment to innovation and collaboration in academic programing, with the Faculty of Social Sciences transdisciplinary Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice (FPAC) degree standing out as an example. The Department's existing strength in digital politics and policy is an opportunity to further highlight this innovation and collaboration, and if leveraged effectively, has strong potential to attract future students.

B. Program Strengths

The reviewers noted:

Everyone we met spoke highly of the Political Science Department and reinforced our impression from the Self-Study that this is a very successful program. In particular we note:

Seminars: Seminars are viewed by the Department as a unique attribute of Brock's Political Science program. When we spoke to students and alumni, they told us that the seminar system was integral to their success in the program. Seminars are a valuable opportunity for students to engage in practical applications of the material they cover in class, and to discuss important questions related to lectures. Alumni told us that the seminars prepared them to work in the field of Political Science by giving them skills in relationship building, oral presentation, and debate.

Staff Support: The Political Science Department has had remarkably consistent administrative and advising support from their long-term staff members. Over and over, we heard what a difference this institutional knowledge and support mean to students and faculty, and how much they benefit the functioning of the program as a whole.

Digital Politics: The Political Science Department has a clear strength in Digital Politics, with several faculty members doing research and teaching in this area. We recommend that the Political Science Department find ways to highlight and build on this strength.

Indigenous Politics: Likewise, we found a clear strength in Indigenous Politics that sets Brock's Political Science apart from other departments of similar size. Many faculty members who teach and research in Digital Politics also work in Indigenous Politics, leading to unique strengths in areas such as Indigenous data sovereignty.

Internship Program: The course-based internship program is popular and effective at placing students in short-term internship activities that are appropriate for Political Science students. Students and faculty are pleased with the program as a mechanism for providing experiential learning that complements the full-time co-op program. Administering this program is highly

labour intensive for the instructor but has a high payoff. It should only be expanded if it can be properly resourced.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

Recommendation #1: Ensure new POLI major students receive adequate training in academic skills such as library use, AI norms in Political Science, citation training, and norms of academic writing.
Supporting/clarifying text: *Under the current degree structure, the most logical place for this training would be in existing first-year courses. The Department might consider designating one or two of the existing first-year courses as required for majors, and adding common learning outcomes that will ensure first year POLI majors are introduced to important academic skills. We recognize that Brock is proposing a new degree architecture which may shift how the Department chooses to implement the spirit of this recommendation.*

The Department responded:
The Department agrees with this recommendation and will study how best to implement it, to ensure that students will receive an adequate and appropriate grounding in the academic skills – including training in academic writing, citation practices, library research, and disciplinary AI norms – and disciplinary concepts and theories necessary for their future academic and professional success. The original design of the Department's half-credit introductory (first-year) courses included harmonized standards for citation and some foundational learning outcomes around writing and research skills. Over the study period, we instituted various measures to address this but there is room for improvement. We will consider the recommendation that we designate as mandatory one or two of our first-year courses.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation falls under the purview of UPC as it relates specifically to the undergraduate curriculum.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
This recommendation is specific to the undergraduate program.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the Department's plan to revisit its first-year courses to include training for students in academic skills, including Political Science disciplinary norms, noting that drawing on and directing students to Student Learning Services and Library Resources would help incoming students acquire skills to be successful.

In addition, the Dean's office supports the Department considering making some of its first-year courses required.
Timeline: The Department is likely to be able to implement and report back on this in Year 2 or Year 3.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will continue to consult with the appropriate resources as outlined by the Dean, to move forward with this student training.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be medium-term.

Recommendation #2: Highlight departmental strengths in Digital Politics and Policy and leverage these strengths to attract students.
Supporting/clarifying text: *The Department has a clear strength in digital politics and policy, and we recommend that it find ways to highlight this strength to the university and use it to attract students. We recommend a transdisciplinary minor led by Political Science that could attract students from within and outside the major, bringing more students to Political Science courses. This, together with Political Science's participation in the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Artificial Intelligence, could then serve as the basis for growth of the program and potentially faculty cohort.* *We note digital politics as a potential area of specialization for a request for a new hire in Political Theory who could support both traditional political theory teaching as well as digital policy and the BA in Artificial Intelligence.*

The Department responded:
The Department thanks the committee for their recognition of the distinctive strengths we have consciously developed over the past decade, not just in digital politics and policy, but also in Indigenous politics, democracy, and other core faculty specializations. These specializations, rooted in faculty research and expertise, can help Brock and Brock Political Science stand out in the ever-more-crowded Ontario and Canadian university sector.

In direct response to the recommendation, we agree that digital politics and policy is a strength that could be better promoted, and a recommended minor would be an efficient method. We are also open to exploring transdisciplinary possibilities.

We also note that the proposed changes to the university's academic architecture will necessarily influence the form that this strengthening can take. Future hiring and program expansion remain contingent on enrollment trends and institutional budgetary decisions, both of which are beyond the Department's control. We look forward to working with the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Provost to explore the best ways to capitalize on and catalyze the program's strengths.

In keeping with the spirit of this recommendation and recognizing that the Department and its faculty have several strengths beyond digital politics, we hope to take the opportunities afforded by the proposed architectural reforms to identify, highlight, and reinforce our existing teaching and research strengths beyond just digital politics, in the service of improving the Department's visibility and recruitment efforts, making our program as enticing and policy-relevant as possible to students.

We agree that a potential political theorist hire (on which see Recommendation #4 below) could be used to buttress the Department's digital policy position. If the opportunity arises, we will also consider the issue in terms of the best way to build up a suite of departmental strengths, some of which we have identified in our response to Recommendation #1.

The Undergraduate Program Committee responded:
POLI has 2 minors. If it adds a third minor, particularly one which is transdisciplinary (involving other depts/units), planning should take into account timelines for cross-department consulting and for submitting revisions to Undergraduate Calendar through CMS (Curriculum Management System).

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation falls under the purview of UPC as it relates specifically to the undergraduate curriculum.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
This recommendation is specific to the undergraduate program.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office agrees with the Reviewers' recommendations and encourages the department to highlight its strengths in areas such as Digital Politics and Policy, among others, and to collaborate with related programs across the Faculty and the University to attract students.
Timeline for implementation and reporting: Year 2 and Year 3.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee considers that the Department is best placed to move forward with plans to highlight its existing strengths in digital politics and policy and to collaborate with related programs as needed to attract students.

Implementation Plan

Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be medium-term.

Recommendation #3: Increase TA training and implement clearer guidance for seminar assessment.
Supporting/clarifying text: *TAs, both those from the graduate program and those from the community or other graduate programs, should receive consistent training internal to the Department. We recommend working with the CPI to provide this training, and we recommend a focus on consistency of assessment in the seminar system. We heard from students that there is sometimes substantial variation in what is assessed in seminars, as well as variation in marks earned for what they perceive to be substantially similar seminar performance. Part of the way to address consistency may be to introduce rubrics for seminar assessment. The extent to which these are standardized should be at the Department's discretion.*

The Department responded:

As the external reviewers' report notes, the Department's seminar system is one of the signature elements of the Brock undergraduate political science experience, its benefits remarked upon by students and alumni. Our ability to combine the benefits of a large political science program with the intimacy of small-class seminars distinguishes Brock Political Science from its competitors. Teaching Assistants are an essential element of this experience. The Department will explore options to increase internal training, which could include better collaboration with existing university resources, while remaining mindful of the time, funding, and collective agreement constraints affecting teaching assistants and faculty alike.

While the Department supports in principle the recommendation to improve TA training, it does not endorse standardization of seminar assessment. The seminar system is used in a variety of ways by instructors, and standardization would both suppress pedagogical innovation and infringe on academic freedom. As such, the instructor's mentorship role in TA training would need to be retained in some way, but we can encourage supplementary CPI training modules. We also recognize the importance of instructors making seminar expectations clear.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation comes from feedback from students in seminars that are often led by TAs who may be graduate students. This falls within both the employment responsibilities and curriculum development which are the purview of the department. That said, SGSC strongly supports the importance of training and clarity for TAs.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
There are opportunities through CPI for Teaching Assistants to receive training. However, it appears that this recommendation is suggesting training that is specific/internal to the program. I appreciate the department's response and their willingness to explore options.

While standardization of assessment across courses and instructors would be challenging for the reasons the department outlined, rubrics or support that helps to ensure better consistency across TAs within a course is a reasonable recommendation.

I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the reviewers' recommendation to improve TA training and assessment by encouraging both instructors and Teaching Assistants (TA's) to draw on resources such as the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, as well as informal sessions offered in the Faculty of Social Sciences to follow best practises and consistent with Collective Agreement requirements in TA hiring and workload assessment (hours of allocation, for example).
Proposed timeline: Year 1 and Year 2.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration. The Committee expects that the Department will consult the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) and other resources mentioned by the Deans as it considers this recommendation, recognizing that TA hours are assigned in accordance with the CUPE Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and the Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be short-term.

Recommendation #4: Ensure the sustainability of Political Theory teaching.
Supporting/clarifying text: *As the Department functionally has one theorist (with the other in a long-term administrative position), we recommend prioritizing this as a potential future area for hiring (noting the possibility for also using this hire to enhance strength in digital politics and policy). In the meantime, however, we strongly recommend that the Department take steps to ensure that teaching in Political Theory is sustainable, that the existing political theorist has the opportunity to teach and train graduate students in Political Theory, that adequate and appropriate teaching can be provided during sabbaticals, and that seminars are adequately staffed with TAs who are trained in Political Theory. We suggest that this means making difficult choices about program delivery. The Department should consider reducing the major requirement of two political theory courses to one, or reducing the teaching frequency of the 1P96 Political Theory Through Film and Literature in order to allow for 400- and 500- level Political Theory offerings on a more regular basis, which would help provide a slate of qualified TAs for undergraduate courses.*

The Department responded:

The Department thanks the reviewers for highlighting this crucial issue, particularly since we anticipate that our sole functional theorist will have a 12-month sabbatical starting in June 2027. We would note that we have already made repeated requests for a tenure-track position in this area, unsuccessfully. A second theorist would also permit the admission of graduate students into our currently suspended MA specialization in Political Theory; without this, we lack sufficient capacity for supervisory committees, let alone senior course offerings.

As the preceding suggests, the effective availability of only one theorist presents a serious threat to the program's structural integrity, namely our ability to provide core teaching by tenured faculty at the undergraduate and graduate level.

We also note that since the External Reviewers issued their report, buyout retirements to faculty in the Comparative and International Relations subfields, and the tragic Fall 2024 death of a colleague in International Relations, mean that graduate and undergraduate teaching in those areas are now jeopardized as well, accounting now for three-fifths of the areas needed to deliver students a political science education. If left unaddressed, these will jeopardize the entire viability of the graduate and likely undergraduate program.

In terms of Political Theory teaching responsibilities, while we appreciate that we may have to make hard choices about how to deliver political theory content, we note that most undergraduate POLI departments in Canada require at least 1.0 credit of political theory. This issue may also be affected by the proposed degree architecture reforms. Any changes in this area, including potential reductions or reconfigurations of requirements, would need to be considered within the context of overall program coherence and institutional constraints on hiring and course delivery.

As noted above, we agree that a potential political theorist hire could be used to buttress the Department's digital policy position. If the opportunity arises, we will also consider the issue in

terms of the best way to build up a suite of departmental strengths, some of which we have identified in our response to Recommendation #1.

The Undergraduate Program Committee responded:
UPC encourages the Department to consider how the removal of a course impacts the curriculum map and learning outcomes for students and whether doing so isconsistent with comparable programs at other universities. Planning should take into account timelines for submitting revisions to Undergraduate Calendar through CMS (Curriculum Management System).

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation includes consideration of the availability of faculty to teach theory focused courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and suggests potential program changes to manage their limited resources. This is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider relating to their curricula. Additionally, faculty hiring within the department is outside of the purview of SGSC. Decisions regarding the academic foci for allocated Faculty Positions rest within the Department as stipulated in the BUFA Collective Agreement. That said, SGSC encourages programs to consider the alignment of hiring priorities to meet curriculum demands.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
This recommendation falls outside of FGSPA and, as it is primarily a resource issue, is a discussion between the department the Dean of Social Sciences.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the Reviewers' recommendation and the Department response to the reviewers in maintaining the viability of Political Theory teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level through a combination of program change and delivery and prioritizing faculty requests in areas of strength, noting that faculty position hirings are subject to a Faculty and University-wide approval process.
Proposed Timeline: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to ensure the sustainability of political theory teaching to be worthy of consideration. The Committee expects that the Department will undertake any necessary curriculum changes and prioritize requests for future hiring to achieve this goal. The Committee recognizes that resource allocation lies outside of its jurisdiction and advises the Department to pursue normal channels of advocacy for any new resources required.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be medium-term.

Recommendation #5: Implement departmental supports for the co-op program.
Supporting/clarifying text: *Political Science has a small undergraduate co-op program and has considered a graduate co-op program. Co-op receives mixed reviews from students and has the potential to be improved via direct support from the Department.* *a. We recommend that the Department make a staff or faculty member responsible for adding Political Science-specific preparation to existing, centralized co-op training.* *b. This training should include Political Science-specific discussions of skills that are transferable from courses to resumés, expectations for types of jobs that might be expected in first vs. subsequent co-op positions, and realistic discussions about the availability of field-related positions locally vs. in Toronto or Ottawa. This may be developed in-house or draw on the resources of the CCEE.* *c. Given the higher costs of living in Toronto or Ottawa vs. Niagara Region, the Department should consider working with Advancement to fund a co-op award to help defray those costs.* d. *If the Department decides to pursue a graduate co-op program, this should become a 16-month program to maintain equality in graduate funding across students.*

The Department responded:
The Department agrees that experiential learning is an important part of our UG program and that the co-op program could be strengthened and made more attractive to students. We welcome the opportunity to explore the question in greater depth. We agree that stronger Department-specific supports, subject to sufficient administrative support, could enhance both undergraduate and potential graduate co-op experiences. We are open to exploring whether and how this program might be expanded to respond to the specific needs of our political science students, provided adequate resources are available.

The addition of a co-op stream to our MA program, which we had submitted to ARC in 2023 but paused due to uncertainty around the university's graduate funding model, will depend on that model, notably the ability to provide sufficient funding for graduate students in a co-op stream. The high cost of living in Ontario makes it extremely unlikely that students could afford to attend graduate school for 12 months without funding (i.e., before their co-op term).

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation includes personnel and workload resources which are outside the purview of SGSC, as well as recommendations for the development of a co-op graduate program in Political Science. This latter recommendation is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider relating to their curriculum. SGSC encourages programs to consider the depth and breadth of

their curriculum and length of program as these relate to their program learning outcomes, resources, and ability to attract students.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
Current funding from FGSPA for master's research students (MRP and thesis) is calculated at 75% of annual tuition. This amount is provided for the duration of the program. If a co-op term is to be introduced, then it will be treated as all other graduate co-op programs. That is, the co-op is subject to a fee rather than tuition and so there is no fellowship provided during the co-op term. This will not, however, impact fellowships in the non-co-op terms.

If the department decides to move forward with a co-op option for the MA program, I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the Departmental response to the Reviewer's recommendations regarding support for the co-op program at both the undergraduate and graduate level, recommending that the Department reach out to the Co-op office for assistance in expanding and/or developing discipline specific opportunities for students. Also, the Department is encouraged to reach out to the Dean to arrange meetings with Advancement to discuss how Political Science can be better represented in Faculty and University Advancement priorities. Timeline: Year 1 and Year 2.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration. The Committee expects that the Department will continue to consult with the support units mentioned by the Dean, including the Co-op Office and the Advancement Office, as it considers this recommendation.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be short-term.

Recommendation #6: Consider expanding the course-based internship program.
Supporting/clarifying text: *The Department runs a successful course-based internship program. The internship program is strong and has student high satisfaction. The instructor who runs the program is able to place students in local positions that would not necessarily be appropriate for full-time co-op positions but that are still highly field-appropriate. The Department should consider whether and how the internship program could be scaled up if it is properly resourced.*

The Department responded:

As our internship course demonstrates, the Department recognizes the importance for students of providing such direct experiential opportunities to students, as they complement the valuable, practical skills – the ability to conduct independent research, synthesize and assess complex information, clearly communicate ideas orally and in writing – that are built into every aspect of their political science program. The utility of these skills, as well as the course's provision of high quality training for students' fields of interest, is reflected in our graduates' strong employment outcomes, illustrating how our program possesses significant labour market value. Many students secure summer or full-time positions as a direct result of their participation in the course, while others gain valuable preparation for further post-secondary education and professional pathways such as law.

The Department is appreciative of the External Reviewers' recognition of the quality of our course-based internship program. This fourth-year course has been sustained for years by the singular efforts of the course instructor. The Department has been fortunate to have faculty who have engaged in the intensive work, far beyond the preparation needed for regular courses and without administrative support, of identifying, securing, and liaising with consistently excellent internship partners. The Department would enthusiastically welcome the ability to sustain and expand the course-based internship program to benefit even more students. However, given the conditions conducive to the successful operation of our internship program, our ability to do so is contingent on the provision of additional administrative and faculty resources that lie beyond the ability of the Department to promise or provide. The course's effectiveness depends on maintaining a close-knit learning community, providing sustained individual support to students navigating complex placement experiences, and carefully matching students with community partners. Increases in enrollment absent increased faculty and administrative resources would make it more difficult to deliver this level of support and undertake the time-intensive, relationship-based placement matching that is essential to positive student outcomes and ongoing partner participation. We would welcome an opportunity to have a discussion about the expansion of the course-based internship program with the Dean and Provost.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider relating to their undergraduate curriculum and available resources.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
This recommendation is for the undergraduate program.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office continues to advocate for consistent support for Experiential Learning in the Faculty of Social Sciences, including expanding opportunities for successful program internships in Departments such as Political Science that have proven opportunities for student community engagement.
Timeline: Ongoing

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department, in conjunction with the Dean, will continue to advocate through normal channels to obtain the necessary resources as it considers this recommendation.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be short-term

Recommendation #7: Require 400-level POLI seminar course for POLI Honours and Majors.
Supporting/clarifying text: *Fourth year POLI Honours and Majors should be required to take a 400-level seminar course coded POLI and taught in-person by a Department faculty member. This is essential to ensure a small seminar experience that acts as a capstone to the degree, and builds on the strengths of the seminar system. This is a critical way to ensure program learning objectives are met.*

The Department responded:
The Department thanks the External Reviewers for their attention to and acknowledgement of the pedagogical importance of ensuring the integrity and availability of our capstone 400-level seminar courses for POLI Honours students.

This recommendation speaks to the need to maintain the integrity of our 400-level offerings, so as to ensure that the Department can foster the program learning objectives set out in our CPR review. The Department has been active in addressing this issue over the last several years. Outside of the depths of the Covid pandemic, most of our 400-level offerings have been via in-person seminars.

In 2023, the Department changed the degree major for the single major, so that students entering the program from 2023 onward will be required to take 1.0 400-level credits. In 2025, the Department proposed to UPC a change to the combined major to reflect the 2023 reform. However, it was not completed due to some administrative confusion on the part of UPC staff. We will re-submit the change this year. We also note that proposed university-level changes to the degree architecture may have implications for the provision and delivery of 390-level and 400-level courses.

Additionally, the Department has been endeavouring to ensure that our 400-level courses reflect the high standards needed for students, as determined by the Department and reinforced over successive cyclical program reviews.

However, while the reviewers acknowledge our assessment of enrollment pressures, the report does not directly address how cross-listing practices affect course availability, departmental autonomy, our ability to offer new program paths (such as digital politics) and the sustainability of POLI-coded offerings. In particular, currently Honours POLI student can satisfy most of their senior POLI credits outside the Department, via cross-listed courses over which the Department has no control, in terms of instructor, size, format, evaluation, or scheduling. This omission actively and directly prevents the Department from ensuring that the Department's "program learning objectives are met," which is the primary focus of this recommendation.

The Department strongly believes that this cross-listing issue warrants immediate further consideration in future discussions about curriculum planning and enrollment management, particularly given the incipient reforms to university program architecture.

The Undergraduate Program Committee responded:
These degrees already require one POLI credit numbered 4(alpha)00 or above. Specifying a *particular* 400-level course seems to be consistent with existing requirements. UPC encourages the Department to consider how the addition of a new required course impacts the curriculum map and learning outcomes for students. Planning should take into account timelines for submitting revisions to the Undergraduate Calendar through CMS (Curriculum Management System).

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider relating to their undergraduate curriculum, falling under the purview of UPC.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
This recommendation is for the undergraduate program.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the Department reviewing its curriculum to include appropriate 4th year course requirements, to continue to collaborate with programs across the faculty to improve flexibility in course offerings for students, and to be forward looking in its approach to curriculum review that is attuned to developments in university and disciplinary -wide initiatives. Timeline: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration. The Committee believes the Department is best positioned to determine the most effective curriculum at the fourth-year level, in conjunction with the suggestions of the Dean. The Committee further recommends that the Department consult with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) as it pursues a robust curriculum review and moves forward with any necessary changes.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be medium-term.

Recommendation #8: Clarify graduate program structure and Major Research Paper (MRP) vs. thesis requirements.
Supporting/clarifying text: *There appears to be some confusion around differences in length between a major research paper (MRP) and a thesis. The thesis option for the MA program has been effectively, if not officially, discontinued to support time of completion for MA students, but in practice the length of a typical MRP may actually be quite close to the expectations for a thesis in comparable MA programs. We recommend that the Department clarify expectations around length of the MRP with possible consideration given to shortening the page requirement. The Department should also consider whether it wishes to formally discontinue the thesis option and/or add a co-op option to its MA program.*

The Department responded:
The Department's Program Handbook states that a thesis should be at least 100 double-spaced pages in length, and typically not more than 150 pages, while a major essay (usually called a major research paper or MRP) is typically 50-60 double-spaced pages (p. 13). The Department will consider how best to publicize and communicate these differences to faculty supervisors, their students, and prospective students.

Regarding a co-op option, as noted in our response to Recommendation #5, the Department is open to implementing the graduate co-op option we had previously been developing before the introduction of funding uncertainty at the faculty level. Any decisions about program structure,

including the thesis option, would be pending the university funding model and the availability of other resources at the departmental, faculty, and/or university level, and trends in the discipline.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:
This recommendation relates to clarifying expectations for the MRP and thesis as a pedagogical issue for the department to consider and suggests that the department consider discontinuing the thesis option. SGSC encourages the department to reach out to other graduate programs in their faculty offering both options, their Associate Dean (Graduate/Research) and FGSPA as they consider this recommendation.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:
FGSPA supports this recommendation and appreciates the department's response. Expectations about the differences between a thesis and MRP are important for students and their supervisors. I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

The student funding issue related to adding a co-op option has been addressed in Recommendation 5. The resourcing aspect beyond graduate student fellowships is a discussion to be had at the department level and with the Dean of Social Sciences.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:
The Dean's office supports the reviewers' recommendation and Departmental response to clarifying and better communicating the differences between the MRP (Major Research Paper) and Thesis requirements.

The Dean's office supports the Department reviewing its Graduate programming, including considering the place of the Thesis option and a potential Graduate co-op.
Proposed Timeline: Year 2 and 3.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will continue to consult with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs to move forward with needed changes to its MRP and thesis requirements.

Implementation Plan
Responsible for implementation: Department Chair
Responsible for approving: Department Chair and Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources: Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline: ARC anticipates implementation to be medium term.

D. Summary of Recommendations

Short term: Recommendations 5, 6
Medium term: Recommendations 1, 2, 7, 8
Long term: N/A
Outside ARC's Jurisdiction: Recommendations 3, 4