

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGES
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

ACTION: **Approve Continuation of Social Science Program at Chadron State College with Annual Monitoring**

Per Policy 4200, existing academic programs shall be reviewed every seven (7) years by each College to determine the quality and effectiveness of each program, the efficiency with which each is delivered, and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Each program is evaluated based on the minimum threshold requirements established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE). Should a program not meet the established thresholds, Nebraska Statute 85-1414 establishes the expectation for the institution and its governing board to complete an in-depth review. Programs continued by the governing board shall be further monitored by the governing board which shall report the status and process of the monitoring to the CCPE.

During its last review, the Social Science Program at Chadron State College did not meet the required minimum 5-year mean threshold for number of graduates for baccalaureate programs, which is seven (7). The program has completed an in-depth review and has recommended continuation of the program. The findings of that review are provided to the Board in the attached report for approval and subsequent submission to the CCPE for consideration for continuation of the program.

The System Office and Chadron State College support the findings of the in-depth review and the recommendation for continuation of the program. The program has outlined strategies/approaches for continuing to improve enrollments and graduate production in the future, which warrants ongoing assessment and evaluation by the Board. An annual review of enrollment and graduate numbers will be shared with the Board each Spring term to monitor progress of the program's growth related to these recruitment efforts.

The System Office and Chadron State College recommend approval of the Continuation of Social Science Program at Chadron State College with Annual Monitoring.

ATTACHMENTS:

- CSC 2023 Social Science Program Review NSCS with In-Depth Review Final (PDF)

**CSC Academic Program Review Report 2023
 Social Science**

1. Section One: Overview of Program Offerings

Major	Option, Concentration, Focus Area or Endorsement	Minor	Undergraduate	Credit Hours
Social Science	Social Science (7-12)		BSE	60
Social Science	Social Science Middle (5-9)		BSE	24
		Political Science	BA	18

Accreditation:

- The Social Science program falls under Chadron State College’s good standing with the general accreditation body, the Higher Learning Commission [HLC]
- The Social Science program is part of the Education Department at Chadron State College, who issues BSE degrees in accordance with its good standing with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP]
- The Social Science program is part of the Education Department at Chadron State College, which is formally accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education

2. Section Two: Analysis of Program, Including Adequacy of Resources and Related Concerns

Analysis of Program

As reflected in the following 5-year table, while Social Science program has maintained over the required 300 level of SCH/Faculty FTE, the program has experienced below threshold for graduates. This drop from previous strong numbers results largely from the lengthy period where we did not have a full-time Political Scientist on campus to facilitate and promote the program. After the retirement of Dr. Robert Knight in the Fall of 2018, Chadron State College did not hire another in-person, full-time professor, until the Fall of 2020. As indicated by the drop in FTE in 2019-2020, this lack of a faculty member had direct effect on the number of students interested in the Social Sciences and, resultantly, in the subsequent number of graduates.

In some respects, we are still feeling the aftereffects of the period where the program went without a full time, in-campus faculty member. This downward trend was somewhat corrected by the hiring of a full time Political Scientist in the Fall of 2020. At that time, the program reworked the curriculum and established a Political Science Minor to help grow the program. Unfortunately, Chadron State College did not retain this faculty member and he moved to another position late in the summer of 2022. We managed to hire a one-year replacement, but the program continues to lack the faculty retention/consistency that is necessary to recruit and retain the expected number of graduates in a labor-short market of K-12 educators.

The History and the Social Science program reworked their curriculum in 2012. In this re-envisioning, History overtly adopted a Social Science perspective in the majority of its course offerings. As such, the History Education endorsement and History Major course track overlaps with the Social Science Education endorsement. The Social Science endorsement requires 21 hours of courses classified

with a HIST prefix and the History endorsement requires 6 hours of SS upper division electives. Our program explicitly identifies itself as HIST/SS and the History SCH/Faculty FTE remains over 500 on the 5-year average. As we have suggested in the past, not combining the reporting of History and the Social Sciences does not give a full accounting of the program’s shared vision and production, unduly skewing the actual measure of our program’s performance.

Adequacy of Resources and Related Concerns

Current Administration is aware of difficulties resulting from the lack of a full-time Faculty member to facilitate and grow the Social Science program. CSC is, as of early January 2023, close to posting a Vacancy for a tenure-track Political Scientist, with a start date of Fall 2023.

3. Evidence of Demand and Efficiency (per established CCPE standards for 5-year means)

Number of Degrees/Awards in Program		SCH/FTE
Baccalaureate	7	300
Masters	5	300
Specialist	4	300

		17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	5 yr avg
Student Credit Hours (SCH)		714	624	456	561	470	565.0
Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)		2.13	1.88	1.00	2.00	2.13	1.83
SCH/Faculty FTE		335.21	331.91	456	280.5	220.66	324.86
Number of Degrees and Awards <i>(list degrees/ awards separately)</i>	BSE	4	5	7	4	4	4.8

4. Section 4: Justification and Evidence of Need

The Social Science program fulfills a fairly unique need by combining a campus-wide reach with a concentration on a long-standing emphasis of Chadron State College: Teacher Education. The mission of the Social Science program directly corresponds to CSC’s mandate of preparing teachers as future leaders for our region and beyond. The degree components are BSE’s in 7-12 Social Science education and 5-9 Middle Grades Social Science education. The Social Science program provides a field endorsement in the 7-12 concentration and requires that future educators complete courses across several social science fields: history, political science, anthropology, geography, economics, and psychology.

As gleaned through the program’s discussions with the CSC education department and awareness of national education trends provided by the Nebraska Department of Education and other such

bodies, the Social Science program emphasizes historical content knowledge along with a concentration in Political Science, especially in the areas of Civics and American Political systems to meet the widespread demand for the teaching of history and government at the K-12 level. Our students not only populate the shared HIST/SS core curriculum, but are also needed by the other cognate social science courses across our campus. This includes offerings in Economics, Psychology, Geography, and Legal Studies. Further, we have recently expanded the role of Political Science by creating a Minor that complements many majors outside of Education. Finally, as evidenced by the consistently robust SCH/Faculty FTE (outside of the period where we had no full-time Political Scientist on campus), CSC's Social Science courses attract students.

Program is critical to the role and mission of the institution.

Chadron State College continues to acknowledge its origins as a teaching institution, which dates back to its establishment as a Nebraska State Normal School in 1910, and the mission of the Social Science program directly corresponds to CSC's ongoing mandate of preparing teachers as future leaders for our region and beyond. Further, Chadron State College, a FAR [Frontier and Remote serving] institution is the only four-year institution in Western Nebraska, which has evolved into a multipurpose institution with a significant regional pedigree and associated responsibility. The Social Science program, thus, is the only field level teaching endorsement available in the western half of our state and one of the few in the wider High Plains region. The Social Science program has historically produced a large number of regional educators who continue to see CSC as a model of teacher preparation. The Social Science program contributes to this reputation of excellence through its participation in CSC's Master of Education – History, composed largely of practicing K-12 teachers in the region seeking continuing education, a post-graduate degree, and/or further knowledge.

Program contains courses supporting general education or other programs.

The Social Science program actively contributed to the planning and implementation of Chadron State College's replacement of its General Studies Program with its Essential Studies Program [ESP]. Further, the Social Sciences, especially our suggested concentration option – Political Science – continues to offer courses in several ESP categories. Some staple courses include the oft-offered PS 101 – Introduction to Political Science and PS 321 U.S. Politics and Government in ESP-SLO 8 (Social Sciences) and PS 332 International Politics in ESP-SLO 10 (Diversity). Further, the Social Science program continues to evaluate its offerings relative to student need. We recently switched our PS 369: Civic Engagement and Practice, a robust course dependent on student interaction with politics at the local level, to PS 110 U.S. Politics and Democratic Citizenship to not only reflect an emphasis on democratic practices, but to also make it an entry level offering more appealing to all students.

Program provides unique access to an underserved population or geographical area.

As discussed, Chadron State College, a FAR [Frontier and Remote serving] institution is the only four-year institution in Western Nebraska, which has evolved into a multipurpose institution with a significant regional pedigree and associated responsibility. The Social Science program, thus, is the only field level teaching endorsement available in the western half of our state and one of the few in the wider High Plains region.

Program meets a unique need in the region, state, or nation.

Beyond contributing to Chadron State College's unique state and regional charge, the Social Science program can also respond to what has been deemed a national crisis in teaching licensure.

The Learning Policy Institute first labeled the teacher shortage a "crisis" in an influential 2017 study. Please see <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/uncertified-teachers-and-teacher-vacancies-state>.

A peer-reviewed study evaluated the issue in August of 2022, finding that there were almost 40,000 vacant positions nationwide and at least 163,000 teacher positions being held by underqualified teachers, with Nebraska in the group labeled "States with Clear Vacancy." Please see: <https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai22-631.pdf>

And, for a current, official statement on the shortage of Social Science teachers in our state, please see the Nebraska Department of Education Teacher Shortage Survey available at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/teacher-shortage-survey/>

Other

Despite the documented need for Social Science teaching endorsements, our program has experienced below threshold for graduates largely due to the lengthy period where we did not have a full-time Political Scientist on campus to facilitate and promote the program. After the retirement of Dr. Robert Knight in the Fall of 2018, Chadron State College did not hire another in-person, full-time professor, until the Fall of 2020. As indicated by the drop in FTE in 2019-2020, this lack of a faculty member had direct effect on the number of students interested in the Social Sciences and, resultantly, in the subsequent number of graduates. In some respects, we are still feeling the aftereffects of this period without full time, present faculty. This downward trend was somewhat corrected by the hiring of a full time Political Scientist in the Fall of 2020. At that time, the program reworked the curriculum and established a Political Science Minor to help grow the program. Unfortunately, Chadron State College did not retain this faculty member and he moved to another position late in the summer of 2022. We managed to hire a one-year replacement, but the program continues to lack the faculty retention/consistency that is necessary to recruit and retain the expected number of graduates in a labor-short market of K-12 educators. Please know that current Administration is aware of this problem and we are currently close to posting a Vacancy for a tenure-track Political Scientist, with a start date of Fall 2023.

Further, the History and the Social Science program reworked their curriculum in 2012. In this re-envisioning, History overtly adopted a Social Science perspective in the majority of its course offerings. As such, the History Education endorsement and History Major course track overlaps with the Social Science Education endorsement. The Social Science endorsement requires 21 hours of courses classified with a HIST prefix and the History endorsement requires 6 hours of SS upper division electives. Our program explicitly identifies itself as HIST/SS and the History SCH/Faculty FTE remains over 500 on the 5-year average. As we have suggested in the past, not combining the reporting of History and the Social Sciences does not give a full accounting of the program's shared vision and production, unduly skewing the actual measure of our program's performance.

Plan for continuation of low-performing program

The department is currently focused on strategically growing the program and increasing its success. A minor in Political Science was recently developed to attract and recruit students to the program. A new job posting for a faculty member with a specialization in political science has been submitted, with an expected start date of Fall 2023 for the new hire.