
Final Assessment Report- Executive Summary

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

2024-2025

To: Algoma University Senate

From: Interim Vice President, Academic and Research

Date: June 2026

In accordance with the Algoma University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan provide a synthesis of the cyclical program review process (and related outcomes) of Algoma University Political Science programming, including i.) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Political Science- Single Major [BA4.POLI]; ii.) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Political Science Combined Major [BA4.xxxx.POLI] or [BA4.POLI.xxxx]; iii.) Bachelor of Arts (General) Political Science Single Major [BA3.POLI]; and iv.) Bachelor of Arts (General) Political Science Combined Major [BA3.xxxx.POLI] or [BA3.POLI.xxxx]. This report identifies the program's strengths, as well as opportunities for improvement and enhancement. The report sets out and prioritizes the recommendations selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies (a) what bodies are responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report, (b) what bodies are responsible for providing any resources made necessary by the recommendations, (c) any changes in the organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations, (d) what bodies are responsible for acting on those recommendations, and (e) the timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Cyclical Program Review Summary for the Psychology Program

The Political Science Self Study Committee submitted the completed self-study to the Acting Academic Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences on August 1, 2025 who shared it with the CAO Office on August 1, 2025. The Quality Assurance Committee approved the Self-Study and recommended it for external review at its next meeting on August 25, 2025. The self-study included an analysis of program strengths and areas for improvement informed by quantitative data analysis, feedback from students, and an analysis of the program curriculum. Included were the CVs for full-time faculty, course outlines, and student survey results.

Two arm's length reviewers were selected by the Quality Assurance Committee of the Senate to conduct the external review. The reviewers (Dr. David Tabachnick, Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Science- Philosophy, Political Science, Economics- Political Science at Nipissing University; and Dr. Patrick Cain, Associate Professor of Political Science at Lakehead University) were provided with a briefing package and conducted a virtual site visit on October 17, 2025. The external reviewers met with faculty in the program, the members of the Self-Study Committee, the Department Chair, academic and administrative unit heads, including the Interim Vice President, Academic and Research/ Associate Vice President, Research and Graduate Studies/ Acting Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Associate University Registrar, the Director of Information Technology, the University Librarian, the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Senior Specialist, Learning Management System, the Manager of Quality Assurance and current students and alumni of the program.

The reviewers submitted the Reviewers' Report on the Political Science program on November 11, 2025. In their report, the external reviewers provided feedback on each evaluative criterion in the IQAP. The objectives, admission standards, curriculum, teaching and assessment, and quality indicators were assessed for the programs under review.

The reviewers provided 8 recommendations to improve the Political Science program.

Below is a summary of the findings and recommendations.

Summary of Significant Program Strengths

- The Political Science Department has collaborated with the Department of Law and Justice, including cross-listed courses and a combined major, thereby providing FT faculty support for teaching loads and student access to a cognate discipline.
- The Political Science faculty are actively engaged in research and scholarship, and provide Research Assistant opportunities for their students.
- The Political Science programs have undergone revisions to enhance and extend Indigenous content in their courses.

Summary of Recommendations

The Political Science program is a high-quality, high-impact program that is a clear asset to the university. It successfully prepares students for graduate studies and careers by leveraging a strong partnership with Law and Justice and providing unique experiential learning opportunities. We make the following recommendations:

1. Fund a Dedicated Internship Placement Officer—Recommendation to Administration: Fund a dedicated Internship/Placement Officer at the Faculty level to identify and recruit placement opportunities for students. While students value global experiential learning, they also feel the lack of local internship opportunities, particularly in the areas of municipal government and local law firms. This networking and partnership-building requires a dedicated administrative resource, as it is beyond the capacity of the two core faculty members.
2. Prioritize Faculty Hire for University Mission and Program Enhancement—Recommendation to Administration: Approve a 0.5 to 1.0 faculty hire, preferably with expertise in Indigenous Law/Governance/Public Service. This position could be cross-appointed with Law and Justice to support program certificates and the university's mission. This is a critical area for improvement in aligning with the university's mission.
3. Streamline and Refocus Program Certificates—Recommendation to the Department: Review and streamline its certificate offerings. This should include considering combining certificates (e.g., into a "Canadian Governance and Public Service" certificate) to create a more focused, marketable credential that directly supports a career path. The Certificate in Public Administration is currently undersubscribed. Refocusing the certificate to align with student-identified career goals (like local public service) and connecting it to a formal internship stream (see Recommendations 1 & 7) would increase its value and enrolment.
4. Include a Global Audience in Program Recruitment—Recommendation to Administration (Recruitment Office): In collaboration with the Department, specifically highlight the program's unique strengths for its significant international student cohort. International students are a critical component of the program, and important experiential learning opportunities, and employment prospects are well aligned with this global audience and should be the centerpiece of recruitment efforts.
5. Clarify University Governance Structure—Recommendation to Administration: Clarify the governance structure of the department and Faculty to ensure clear lines of communication and support for program review and development. The review process was hampered by meetings with new or interim staff who often had limited knowledge of the program. A more stable and clear administrative structure is necessary for effective quality assurance and long-term planning.
6. Develop a Formal Public Service Stream—Recommendation to the Department: Formalize a "Public Service Stream" within the program, leveraging its existing strengths in Canadian Politics. This structural change addresses a clear student and alumni desire for a more defined career path. A

formal stream would provide a clear pathway for students, connect directly to the undersubscribed certificate (Recommendation 3), and create a structure for the internships (Recommendation 1).

7. Enhance Focus on Northern Ontario Policy Issues—Recommendation to the Department: Find new opportunities to further integrate issues relevant to Northern Ontario into its curriculum, in alignment with the university's mission. While the program has a strength in Canadian Politics, this recommendation reinforces the university's special mission to focus on the needs of Northern Ontario. This recommendation must be achieved in concert with Recommendations 1-3, and 6.
8. Support Faculty Sabbaticals and Research—Recommendation to Administration: Ensure that faculty are fully supported in taking sabbaticals and that resources are in place to maintain program quality during their leave. The program's reliance on only two full-time faculty makes taking sabbaticals difficult, creating a risk of faculty burnout. Students themselves noted the need for "More support for professors" (Self-Study, 796). Supporting sabbaticals is essential for faculty retention, research quality, and, ultimately, the long-term health of the program.

Program Quality Outcome

The Quality Assurance Committee of the Senate discussed the distinguishing features of the Political Science programming described by both the Self-Study Committee and the Reviewers. The Quality Assurance Committee drafted and approved the Report on Program Quality on March 10, 2026, and rated the program as being **"Good quality – QualCom has no serious concerns about program quality, as it is apparent that students are receiving a sound educational experience. The number and nature of the recommendations for quality enhancement, while they may be significant, do not impact the overall quality or viability of the program"**.

The Political Science program shall prepare a report of the status of the agreed-upon Implementation Plan 18 months following Senate approval of the Final Assessment Report. This report shall be submitted via the Office of the CAO to the Quality Assurance Committee for review. The date of the next Political Science program review is 2031-32.

Implementation Plan

The Academic Dean was asked to review the Report on Program Quality and rank the recommendations. The Dean completed the prioritization practice and informed the Department on April 13, 2026. The Department Chair submitted the draft Implementation Plan to the Designate of CAO on April 21, 2026. The Quality Assurance Committee (QualCom) approved the draft Final Assessment Report and the Implementation Plan on May 12, 2026. Items in the chart below are ordered according to the ranking and priority level provided by the Academic Dean.

Political Science Implementation Plan

Rec. Nr.	Recommendations	Who is responsible?	What resources are required?	Timeline
NA	RECOMMENDATION 1: Fund a Dedicated Internship Placement Officer Recommendation to Administration: Fund a dedicated Internship/Placement Officer at the Faculty level to identify and recruit placement opportunities for students. While students value global experiential learning, they also feel the lack of local internship opportunities, particularly in the areas of municipal government and local law firms. This networking and partnership-building requires a dedicated administrative resource, as it is beyond the capacity of the two core faculty members.			
NA	RECOMMENDATION 2: Prioritize Faculty Hire for University Mission and Program Enhancement Recommendation to Administration: Approve a 0.5 to 1.0 faculty hire, preferably with expertise in Indigenous Law/Governance/Public Service. This position could be cross-appointed with Political Science to support program certificates and the university's mission. This is a critical area for improvement in aligning with the university's mission.			
3	RECOMMENDATION 3: Streamline and Refocus Program Certificates Recommendation to the Department: Review and streamline its certificate offerings. This should include considering combining certificates (e.g., into a "Canadian Governance and Public Service" certificate) to create a more focused, marketable credential that directly supports a career path. The Certificate in Public Administration is currently undersubscribed. Refocusing the certificate to align with student-identified career goals (like local public service) and connecting it to a formal internship stream (see Recommendations 1 & 7) would increase its value and enrolment.	Trevor Tchir, Dept Chair	none	One year (Spring 2027) - Tchir will consider this recommendation, review the existing certificate offerings, and, in consultation with his department colleagues, discuss viable and desirable changes to the certificate. If there are any, he will develop new courses or revised course

				templates for Senate.
1	RECOMMENDATION 4: Include a Global Audience in Program Recruitment Recommendation to Administration (Recruitment Office): In collaboration with the Department, specifically highlight the program's unique strengths for its significant international student cohort. International students are a critical component of the program, and important experiential learning opportunities, and employment prospects are well aligned with this global audience and should be the centerpiece of recruitment efforts.	Recruitment Office, Department Chair	None for the department. Perhaps the Recruitment Office needs particular resources for this recommendation	One year, in time for next year's recruitment materials (Spring 2027)
NA	RECOMMENDATION 5: Clarify University Governance Structure Recommendation to Administration: Clarify the governance structure of the department and Faculty to ensure clear lines of communication and support for program review and development. The review process was hampered by meetings with new or interim staff who often had limited knowledge of the program. A more stable and clear administrative structure is necessary for effective quality assurance and long-term planning.			
4	RECOMMENDATION 6: Develop a Formal Public Service Stream Recommendation to the Department: Formalize a "Public Service Stream" within the program, leveraging its existing strengths in Canadian Politics. This structural change addresses a clear student and alumni desire for a more defined career path. A formal stream would provide a clear pathway for students, connect directly to the undersubscribed certificate (Recommendation 3), and create a structure for the internships (Recommendation 1).	Trevor Tchir, Dept Chair	1 new faculty hire in Public Service and Public Administration	Two years (Spring 2028), to develop the stream and hire the new person. (I don't see this recommendation as viable, given the budget, and the messaging that we are unlikely to get new FT hires.)

2	RECOMMENDATION 7: Enhance Focus on Northern Ontario Policy Issues Recommendation to the Department: Find new opportunities to further integrate issues relevant to Northern Ontario into its curriculum, in alignment with the university's mission. While the program has a strength in Canadian Politics, this recommendation reinforces the university's special mission to focus on the needs of Northern Ontario. This recommendation must be achieved in concert with Recommendations 1-3, and 6.	Trevor Tchir	none	One year (Spring 2027).
NA	RECOMMENDATION 8: Support Faculty Sabbaticals and Research Recommendation to Administration: Ensure that faculty are fully supported in taking sabbaticals and that resources are in place to maintain program quality during their leave. The program's reliance on only two full-time faculty makes taking sabbaticals difficult, creating a risk of faculty burnout. Students themselves noted the need for "More support for professors" (Self-Study, 796). Supporting sabbaticals is essential for faculty retention, research quality, and, ultimately, the long-term health of the program.			