

# Eastern Wyoming College

## **Instructional Program Review 2018-19**

### **Program:**

**Social Sciences Cluster**

### **Including:**

**Degrees - Social Sciences with emphases in History, Political Science, Psychology,  
Social Work or Sociology**

### **Prepared by:**

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### **Date of Report:**

**Spring 2019**

**EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE**  
**Instructional Program Review**

**Program Name: Social Sciences**

**Part I: Statistical Data from the past three years:**

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	5-Year Average
Annualized FTE Enrollment	152.4	153.9	154.5	154.8
Annualized FTE Faculty	11.1	9.9	10.1	10.7
Annual Student Majors	29	33	46	37
Annual Degrees Conferred	7	7	10	6.6

FTE = Full-time equivalent      Notes:

Modes of Delivery:

online

face-to-face

Advisory Committee Members: N/A

Community Partners or Internships (if applicable): The SOSOC degree continues to offer internships in POLS for students interested in working during the Wyoming Legislative Session and also in Topics courses.

Revisions in Curriculum: There have been very few revisions in the curriculum of the core social science courses since the last program review.

**Part II Narrative Analysis**

**Description of Community Need:**

Current Community Need/Growth of Industry: These are academic transfer programs. After obtaining four year degrees, many students obtain employment in the fields of government, law, education, business, social or counseling work, international relations, advertising, analyses, archiving, consulting, congressional aides, foreign service officers, foundation staffers, information specialists, intelligence agents, journalists, legal assistants, lobbyists, personnel managers, or public relations staffers. Some of our students also pursue graduate degrees.

**Activities in Support of Student Recruitment and Retention**

The Social Science program has been very consistent in enrollment and graduation rates from the independent degrees that existed prior to 2012. It is an attractive program with its flexibility and transferability. Further, our courses are the basis for all transfer students in terms of electives and general education categories.

Our students have access to a variety of scholarships including the Black and Gold, First Generation, Department Scholarship and the Hathaway Scholarship. These scholarships aid in recruitment of students.

**Assessment of Student Learning:** Analysis of Student Learning—The program assessment for SOSOC is a capstone project. Students complete an online portfolio containing their transcript, a resume, a goals statement, samples of completed coursework, and a reflection on their educational experience in the program at EWC.

Statistical Data Results: Since the capstone course is required for graduation, the graduation rates in each program reflect capstone completion.

What has been learned?

The majority of students completing the Social Science program at EWC transfer to four-year institutions to pursue degrees in those respective fields. There are few job opportunities available to graduates who possess only Associates Degrees. The Social Science program is vital to the institution because it provides not only courses for majors but also multiple courses that fulfill general education requirements.

Students who transfer to the University of Wyoming are fully accepted at junior standing and have had no problems completing degrees in social science areas. Students who transfer to Chadron State College sometimes do have transfer issues with individual courses, but do transfer with junior standing.

EWC faculty have worked in conjunction with their counterparts at the University of Wyoming to develop 2+2 transfer agreements in the areas of Political Science, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work, History, and Social Sciences Secondary Education (in progress). These agreements provide students a pathway to complete a bachelor's degree in four years.

Courses include those in the following fields: American Studies, Anthropology, Communication, Economics, Geography, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Spanish, Statistics, and Women's Studies.

**Strengths of the Program and Faculty:** The Social Science program maintains consistent enrollment in core courses as well as providing courses satisfying a General Education requirement for many educational programs at EWC. For several years, faculty have been devoted to developing program courses for distance delivery, increasing enrollment and course offerings.

The Social Science degree at EWC provides a high quality transfer education for an affordable price in a non-threatening and supportive environment; this is a place where students *want* to come to get a good education and good college experience. When they leave EWC, students are prepared to meet academic, technological, social, and cultural demands. EWC keeps our community young and vibrant by producing quality graduates and by offering quality programs.

The full-time faculty members in the social sciences are well-qualified and well-respected. They have the requisite graduate training and stay current in their fields with graduate course work and conferences.

### **Part III Recommendations**

#### **Faculty Recommendations:**

The faculty are concerned about the situation that exists with respect to upper level courses. In psychology and sociology in particular, upper level face to face classes are not successful because of the lack of student enrollment. The faculty has successfully put these courses on-line, but student comments reflect that they are frustrated with the number of classes that are ONLY offered on-line without an in class equivalent.

The faculty are further concerned with the loss of a full-time person in the departments of history and political science. These departments used to have 1.5 faculty dedicated to them; currently there is one full-time faculty member with other vital and core courses being taught by adjuncts. The loss of the faculty position lead to the inability to teach the range of courses needed to keep students at EWC for a full two years, thereby weakening the program. It also leads to the overuse of adjuncts who, while qualified, do not take ownership in these areas nor in the growth or advising of students.

Finally, the lack of consistent raises and below comparator salaries is very concerning. Raises and cost-of-living adjustments have not kept up with the economy. Faculty are among the lowest-paid among the comparators. This makes it difficult to find adjuncts willing to teach as well as be competitive if and when the need arises to fill faculty positions.

**Advisory Committee Recommendations:** N/A

#### **Department Chair Recommendations:**

I have read the Instructional Program Review for the Social Sciences Cluster authored by instructors Ellen Creagar, Debbie Ochsner and Jenny Hart and I agree with their view of the current status of the program and their assessment of the future. The Social Science Program represents a cluster of disciplines allowing a student to select a variety of coursework to satisfy Program requirements and, for many other students, General Education requirements. This allows for flexibility and higher level of personal preference in scheduling. Maintaining that flexibility in schedules, course work and modality of learning through campus classes, online, outreach and concurrent education and special topics classes will keep the Program vibrant rather than in a maintenance mode. The addition of the Human Services program will help the department increase enrollment and provides a pathway for students to enter the workforce.

The issue of limited upper level course offerings continues to be concerning for faculty in the Social Sciences Cluster. While I would like to see the department be able to offer more face to face upper level courses I do not see that as an immediate concern at this time. In fact, the alternative online option tends to be the most effective way to address this issue at this time.

In addition, the loss of a faculty member in the history and political science department means we rely heavily on adjuncts. At this time we have been able to manage, but I am concerned that if we experience any additional faculty changes in the department we will struggle to find qualified adjuncts. I am most concerned with EWC's ability to find qualified adjuncts to teach Sociology coursework in the future as the credentialing requirements are much more difficult to meet.

Finally, I would also concur with the faculty recommendations with regard to salaries and lack of raises. Further concerning is the fact that Eastern Wyoming College also ranks at the bottom for adjunct pay in the state. If we are to maintain the current level of course offerings we must address the loss of faculty positions.

It goes without saying our fulltime and adjunct faculty are highly qualified and committed to student success in the classroom, the workplace and through transfer to a four year institution. To accomplish this they must routinely demonstrate knowledge of their program and its students, the academic content and pedagogy. They have clearly established a culture of learning reflective of professional teaching.

#### **Vice President's Recommendations:**

The faculty members and the Department Head provide an accurate representation of the status of the Social Science Department, and I concur with their assertions. The concerns surrounding the diminishment of full-time faculty within the department are legitimate, in my opinion, as the reliance on adjunct faculty may in time have a negative impact on student completion and retention. Conversely, the opportunity to use skilled professionals within the fields of study to aid in educating students brings value to the department and students' experiences. Exploring the possibility of ways to attract and maintain quality adjunct faculty to support this department is suggested. I recommend conducting an assessment of adjunct compensation and considering adjunct compensation.

I would also like to emphasize the importance that this department has placed on developing 2+2 articulation agreements with the University of Wyoming. With the addition of the Social Work 2+2 completed this Spring, the opportunities students at EWC have to seamlessly transfer into a variety of programs at the University of Wyoming are notable. I commend the department faculty on their ongoing commitment to pursuing and maintain these agreements.