

# Student Authored Program Review

Austin Zwick, Assistant Professor of Policy Studies  
 Julia Howard-Flanders and Morgan Laucius, Student Presenters

## Introduction

In Fall 2018, the Policy Studies department developed a Benchmarking class where five undergraduate students were tasked with writing the Program Review for the department overseen by Professor Zwick. The review focused on (1) the four dimensions specified by Middle States (Quality, Demand, Cost Effectiveness, and Centrality to Mission), and (2) how the Policy Studies Major fulfills the strategic plan of College of Arts and Sciences and the Maxwell School. This poster presentation overviews (a) the work done by these students, (b) presents findings, and (c) encourages other departments to use students in their program review process.

## Why Undergraduates?

Student involvement in operations revolutionizes undergraduate education. By giving students real responsibilities, students learn how to produce meaningful work which mimics a real workplace setting. Specifically by having undergraduates produce the program review, it makes the major more responsive to students' needs and interests.

## Process

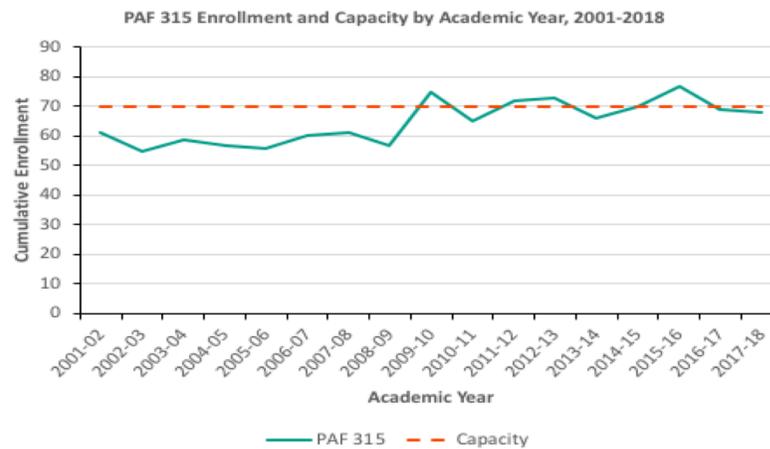
Fall 2018 students collected data from:

- Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
- Senior Exit Surveys
- Annual Reports
- Course Evaluations
- Comparisons to other colleges' policy-related degree programs

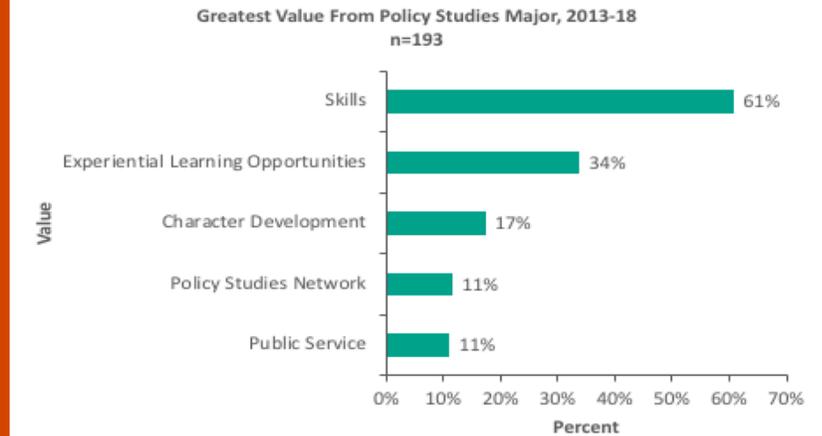
## Findings

Strengths of the Program	Weaknesses of the Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills-based learning</li> <li>Real-life applicability</li> <li>Community service and citizenship</li> <li>Many students win awards, such as Remembrance Scholarships</li> <li>Students are comfortable being in the PST office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment</li> <li>Communicating the full range of opportunities available to students</li> <li>Insufficient networking between students and with alumni</li> </ul>

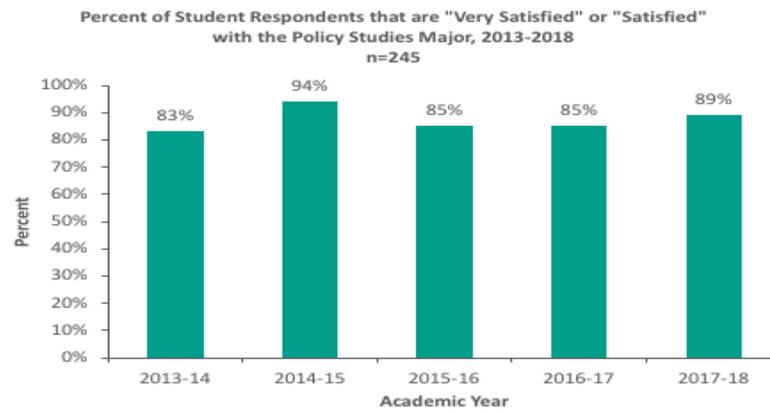
## Benchmarks



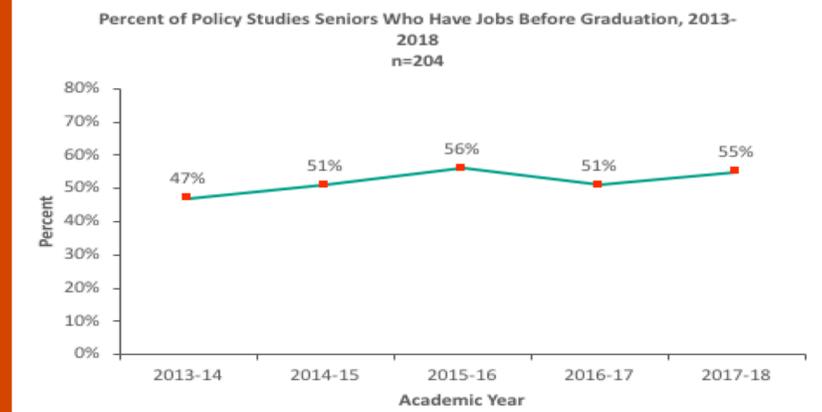
Source: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2018



Source: Public Affairs Exit Survey, 2018



Source: Public Affairs Exit Survey, 2018



Source: Public Affairs Exit Survey, 2018

## Program Improvement

Based on findings, undergraduate students in Spring 2018's Benchmarking course are taking action to further improve the program. This includes writing a Strategic Plan that:

- Create a database to institutionalizes community partner relationships
- Develop new courses to meet student needs
- Promote more off-campus experiential learning
- Offer more support opportunities to students

## Generalizability

Other departments should implement a similar approach to using undergraduate students to help write their Program Reviews and improve their programs, but would they?

The biggest barrier is trusting students with this responsibility. However, our program shows that students are up to the task if they are given proper oversight and iterative feedback on their work.

Another potential barrier is collecting and gathering the data necessary for writing the report. Our program was able to overcome this with satisfactory recordkeeping and support from program administrators.