Dear Dean Adamson,

It is my pleasure to submit to you the Self-Study Report of the Department of Political Science, endorsed unanimously by the faculty at its November 20, 2006 meeting. Under the expert leadership of Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown, the self-study committee has produced a document that (1) effectively details the Department's significant progress since its last program review, (2) thoughtfully evaluates the Department's current strengths and weaknesses, and (3) systematically provides a foundation for future growth and increased prominence. I have been impressed during the Department's yearlong process of introspection by the care and energy with which my colleagues have embraced this study, and I believe the final product is reflective of that professional dedication.

The trajectory mapped by this Self-Study is quite clear. Indeed, the narrative demonstrates that scholarly output and impact have both increased considerably in the past decade. Such increases have received external validation in published rankings of Political Science departments, in the growing recognition of faculty expertise by professional associations, as well as in a highly successful rate of promotions and tenure cases. Faculty accomplishments reveal a Department that is serious about its commitment to being a research-intensive program at a leading research university; however, the study shows also that gains in research have not come at a cost in the classroom. Indeed, the evidence clearly depicts a Department that is both passionate about--and committed to--excellence in instruction. Political Science is home to recent recipients of the University System of Georgia Regents' Teaching Excellence Award, the GSU College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award, the GSU International Education Excellence Award, and the Provost's 2006 Instructional Effectiveness Award.

The Self-Study Report describes a department that benefited substantially from its previous review and action plan. Investments made in Political Science over the past ten years have increased the program's centrality to the mission of the College and of the University. As it looks to the future, the 2006-07 Self-Study details areas of focus where the faculty seek to secure further progress. The Report documents the dramatic growth in undergraduate majors and student demand for Political Science courses, and it makes the case that the Department now genuinely needs a commensurate growth in faculty size and supporting resources. The Report prioritizes enhancement of the PhD program in Political Science as a central element in the Department's plan for increased prominence. An additional vision emerging from the Report is the need to cultivate a culture of external grant seeking; while progress has indeed been made in this regard, the faculty recognize this as an area for concentrated effort in the future.
As should be evident in this Report, the Political Science faculty members are united in their desire to move the Department "to the next level." The self-study process has produced spirited debate over what constitutes the "next level" and over the appropriate path to its achievement. Our scholar-teachers are ambitious about wanting to build Political Science at Georgia State University into an even more widely recognized program of excellence. We are excited about what we can contribute to our discipline and to the strategic mission of the University.

We thank you for your continued support.

With warm regards,

Dr. William M. Downs
Chair