

Policy 1: Advocacy Framework

The Problem

For many political science students and students of related disciplines across the world, education is an investment towards a fulfilling and financially sustainable career. However, in many cases, this education is very expensive and a significant number of students upon graduating experience difficulty finding jobs in their field. Succeeding in political science in the 21st century is more than a matter of grades; it also requires networking, publication, soft skills, and the privilege of having free time on top of curricular activities to develop in these areas. Given these realities, for many students who can afford a political science education, the investment is a precarious risk.

Political science students' tenuous situation does not benefit the field. Growing economic disparities, environmental challenges, and the rise of authoritarian regimes and populist movements threaten contemporary democracy and well-being. More research than ever is required in order to understand why these trends have developed and how they can be prevented in the future. We need to challenge old approaches, broaden our scopes, and bring all hands on deck to provide quality policy recommendations and start working toward solutions. It is therefore important that more students have access to a quality political science education that allows them to contribute to expanding the limits of knowledge and be a part of the change on a practical level.

How IAPSS Can Help

To address these challenges political science students face, we need to have a say in how political science education is designed and administered, which will require us to use our collective voice to establish a dialogue with academics and policymakers. We need to share best practices so those in countries with better political science opportunities can help those who are struggling. Furthermore, until favourable policy and curriculum changes are implemented, we need to organize professional development opportunities to help each other meet the demands of an increasingly competitive academic and professional job market. In other words, we need a global organization that advocates for political science students.

The International Association for Political Science Students (IAPSS) is poised to be this organization, as it has been developing opportunities for political science students across the world since 1998 while maintaining political independence and democratic decision-making. It also has developed positive relations with a number of prominent political science organizations including the International Political Science Association and the International Studies Association. IAPSS has the capacity to bring the world's political science students into a united network that channels information about current problems and ideas by region into comprehensive advocacy strategies while also providing resources to empower local political science student associations to implement high quality events and professional development initiatives on their campuses.

Declaration of the Political Science Student

While IAPSS is constantly learning more about what life is like for political science students and those in related fields in various parts of the world and across all levels of

education, we have created the following advocacy points based on what we have gathered up to the current time. We welcome any additions or feedback you have to make the following advocacy points stronger and more elaborate.

1. Political science education should be accessible to all.
 - 1.1. All students should be able to afford a quality political science education.
 - 1.2. All students should be able to freely choose to study political science and have an education experience free of discrimination.
 - 1.3. Political science students should have access to the academic databases and works necessary for them to complete the research required for their program, prepare relevant research and dissemination outputs including but not limited to academic publishing, and continuously advance their knowledge in the field.
 - 1.4. Political science students should have access to current academic discourse in the field and should have opportunities to contribute to said discourse.
 - 1.5. Political science students should have the opportunity to apply to and attend academic conferences and other events relevant to their studies without having to endure financial hardship.
 - 1.6. Political science students should have opportunities to publish in the field independently and collaboratively while avoiding predatory publishing.
 - 1.7. Political science students should have access to the technology necessary to complete their program and continuously advance their knowledge in the field.
 - 1.8. Political science students should have access to instruction on all research methods relevant to the field and should have opportunities to apply these methods in their research.
 - 1.9. Political science students should have adequate networking opportunities with academics and professionals in the field.
 - 1.10. Political science students should have access to the global political science student community.

2. Political science students should have options for gaining experience relevant to the field and its practical applications in different sectors, including but not limited to academia, government, the private sector, and civil society.
 - 2.1. These work experiences should merit a living wage.
 - 2.2. These work experiences should foster skill development that will be useful for a career in the field.
 - 2.3. Political science students should not have to choose between these work experiences and fulfilling curricular requirements.

3. Political science education should be relevant and engaging.
 - 3.1. Assignments should contribute to the development of useful research skills and/or publishable works as opposed to being mere summaries of content.
 - 3.2. Political science students should be able to contribute to curriculum design and provide feedback on their classes and other course-related activities.
 - 3.3. Curriculum content should be comprehensive and up to date.

4. Political science students should have opportunities to gain experience as political actors.
- 4.1. Political science students should have a fair, democratic, campus-wide student government that allows them full political participation and the capacity to advocate for a better quality of education.
- 4.2. Political science students should have a fair, democratic student association within their department or faculty that allows them full political participation and the capacity to advocate for a better quality of education.
- 4.3. Political science students, along with all students, should have opportunities to engage in political activities at all levels of government.
- 4.4. Political science students should have extracurricular autonomy.
- 4.5. Political science students should not have to choose between political and/or extracurricular activities and fulfilling curricular requirements.

Commitment to a Global Community

IAPSS self-identifies as the organization that represents all the political science students in the world. In understanding that not all political science students have access to an affordable, quality political science education and often face major challenges when it comes to finding employment after graduation, IAPSS recognizes that it must represent the needs of marginalized political science students and advocate for advancing their interests. IAPSS acknowledges that in order to effectively achieve this goal, all political science students must be counted among its membership. IAPSS further acknowledges that not actively pursuing this goal denies marginalized political science students opportunities and a voice, which would render such inaction to be understood as discrimination against marginalized political science students. Any action or inaction that leads to denying political science students access to IAPSS or the knowledge that IAPSS exists, apart from where permitted in the IAPSS Legal Framework, is in direct contravention to what IAPSS stands for.

How Individuals and Associations Can Get Involved

Individuals and associations can become a part of the global political science student movement by maintaining communications with IAPSS and its regional teams on their continents. IAPSS can promote their events and initiatives to political science students and academics around the world while also offering resources and branding to help with implementation. Similarly, individuals and organizations can share IAPSS opportunities with political science students at their education institutions, including IAPSS conferences, publications, and volunteer positions. Most importantly, individuals and associations can tell IAPSS about issues political science students are currently facing or ideas on how to make political science education better. While IAPSS offers individual student memberships for those who can afford them, this is optional, as IAPSS' main concern is bringing political science students together and advocating for their interests. In other words, individuals and associations do not have to pay anything for IAPSS support.