

Appendices for “Faculty Perceptions of Political Science PhD Career Outcomes”

Appendix A: Methodology

To examine our research questions, we conducted an original online survey of Canadian political science faculty members. The online survey format is appropriate for the exploratory, theory-building nature of our research as it is highly accessible to the respondents and the ability to incorporate a mix of closed and open ended questions facilitates issue identification. The research ethics boards of each co-investigator’s university approved the study.

Population

Our population of study is tenure-stream faculty working in Canada’s 17 political science departments offering PhD programs in the English language (see Appendix A Table 1). We do not look at French-language only programs given the distinctive organizational cultures of French-language Quebec universities and the additional complexities that language barriers may present to transferable career skills and career paths for graduates of French-language programs. Tenure-stream faculty include assistant, associate, and full professors, and are the appropriate population of study as they are the individuals who serve as PhD supervisors and on PhD supervisory committees. Faculty members play a critical role in establishing prevailing attitudes within programs.

We constructed the sampling frame by identifying faculty and their email addresses on department webpages. The sampling frame was constructed in the months immediately prior to the survey. In total, 566 faculty were included in our sampling frame.

Survey Fielding

We individually emailed department chairs at the start of the survey and asked them to encourage their faculty to complete the study. We sent faculty in the database a survey invitation on Wednesday, September 19, 2018, with two reminder emails to non-responders (Wednesday, October 10; Monday, October 21). We closed the survey on Friday, October 26, 2018.

Sample

A total of 167 faculty responded to the survey for a response rate of 29.5%. The sample is broadly reflective of the population of study. Each institution’s share of the sample is within +/- 4 percentage points of its share of the population (see Table 1), with the largest over-representation being the University of British Columbia (3.4 percentage points above population share) and largest under-representation being the University of Toronto (3.6 percentage points below population share). Each rank’s share of the sample is within +/- 5 percentage points of its share of the population (see Table 2), with the largest over-representation being full professors (4.8 percentage points above population share) and largest under-representation being assistant professors (4.7 percentage points below population share). As with any survey, a limitation of our study is the potential for respondent selection bias, as it is possible that faculty with a particular interest in graduate supervision were more likely to respond, and respondents’ opinions do not necessarily reflect those of other faculty members.

Table 1: Respondent Response Rate by Institution

University (Province)	Invited	Responded	Response Rate	% of study population	% of sample
Victoria (BC)	22	8	36%	3.9	4.8
British Columbia (BC)	35	16	45%	6.2	9.6
Simon Fraser (BC)	20	5	25%	3.5	3.0
Calgary (AB)	23	7	30%	4.1	4.2
Alberta (AB)	27	7	26%	4.8	4.2
Western (ON)	26	10	38%	4.6	6.0
McMaster (ON)	21	5	24%	3.7	3.0
Guelph (ON)	24	11	46%	4.2	6.6
York (ON)	52	12	23%	9.1	7.2
Toronto (ON)	109	26	24%	19.2	15.6
Ryerson (ON)	30	5	17%	5.3	3.0
Queen's (ON)	20	8	40%	3.5	4.8
Carleton (ON)	33	11	33%	5.8	6.6
Ottawa (ON)	46	17	37%	8.1	10.2
McGill (QU)	36	7	19%	6.3	4.2
Concordia (QU)	29	6	20%	5.1	3.6
Dalhousie (NS)	14	6	43%	2.5	3.6

Table 2: Respondent Response Rate by Academic Rank

Rank	Invited	Responded	Response Rate	% of study population	% of sample
Assistant	106	39	37%	18.7	23.4
Associate	232	72	31%	40.9	43.1
Full	207	53	26%	36.5	31.7
Other	22	3	14%	3.9	1.8

Other includes tenure stream teaching faculty with titles separate from assistant, associate, full; department chairs/heads without a clearly specified rank available on the departmental website; research chair faculty without a clearly specified rank available on the departmental website.

Measures

The survey design replicated some questions from previous research of department chair attitudes towards doctoral career development (Berdahl and Malloy 2019). The full survey instrument is presented in Appendix B. The survey took respondents approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey on career development and mentorship for political science PhD students in Canada. This survey is being sent to all tenure-stream faculty of Canadian political science departments that offer PhD programs partly or exclusively in the English language. Your responses will help inform upcoming presentations to political science department chairs and to the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference and will be used in published research. This research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. We request your response by Friday, October 26, 2018.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact Loleen Berdahl, University of Saskatchewan, at loleen.berdahl@usask.ca and/or Jonathan Malloy, Carleton University, at jonathan.malloy@carleton.ca and/or Lisa Young, University of Calgary, at youngl@ucalgary.ca.

Ethics

Participation in this research is voluntary, and you can stop the survey at any time. Please note that the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB), the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (CUREB), and the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) have examined and approved this study. Your rights as a participant and the anonymity of your data are ensured, and you will not be personally identified based on the data we collect. Responses to incomplete surveys will be deleted from the dataset. As your data are anonymous, once the survey is submitted it is not possible to withdraw your data. The Principal Investigator, Loleen Berdahl, will keep the electronic dataset on her University of Saskatchewan server file indefinitely. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of Saskatchewan ethics office at ethics.office@usask.ca or toll free (888) 966-2975. If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-6289/220-4283; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. This survey is hosted by Voxco, a Canadian-owned and managed company whose data is securely stored in Canada. Please consider printing this page for your records. By completing and submitting the questionnaire, YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

- I consent

A. Doctoral Supervisory Experience

To begin, please give us a sense of your own experience as a PhD supervisor. Please consider all students, including students with programs in progress, students who have completed their programs, and students who have discontinued their programs.

A1. Have you ever served as a PhD supervisor or co-supervisor?

- Yes
- No [skip to A3]

A2. How many PhD students have you personally supervised or co-supervised (including current supervisions) since starting your academic career?

[enter number 1 - 1000]

A3. Have you ever served in a non-supervisory role on a PhD supervisory committee?

- Yes
- No [skip to B1]

A4. For how many PhD students have you served as a supervisory committee member (but not direct supervisor/co-supervisor) since starting your academic career?

[enter number 1 - 1000]

B. Perceptions of PhD Student Expectations

The next questions focus exclusively on PhD students in your program, based on your own observations. For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

PhD students in our program....

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
B1. are primarily interested in pursuing academic careers.	•	•	•	•	•
B2. measure their own success in terms of whether or not they successfully attain an academic position.	•	•	•	•	•

B3. were aware of limited academic job prospects before they begin their doctoral program.	•	•	•	•	•
B4. are convinced that they will be successful in the academic job market.	•	•	•	•	•
B5. feel they cannot quit their programs given the amount of time and money they have invested.	•	•	•	•	•
B6. feel they cannot quit their programs due to potential embarrassment.	•	•	•	•	•
B7. feel safe discussing non-academic career options with their supervisors.	•	•	•	•	•
B8. would like more training for non-academic careers.	•	•	•	•	•

B9. If you could tell students in Canadian political science PhD programs one thing about preparing for future careers, what would it be? [open ended textbox.]

C. Thoughts on PhD Programs

C1. Which of the following statements best describes your thoughts of the purpose of a political science PhD?

- The primary purpose of the Political Science PhD is to train researchers, some of whom will go on to academic careers.
- The primary purpose of the Political Science PhD is to train the next cohort of tenure stream university/college professors.

For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
C2. Academic jobs should be 'plan A' for PhD students; other jobs are 'plan B'.	•	•	•	•	•
C3. If PhDs in Political Science aren't getting academic jobs, we should reduce the number of students we accept into our PhD programs.	•	•	•	•	•
C4. It is hard for me to see a link between PhD research and non-academic career paths for PhD students.	•	•	•	•	•

D. Thoughts on PhD Supervision

D1. Which of the following best describes your approach to PhD career mentorship?

- I primarily mentor my students to pursue academic careers.
- I mentor my students for both academic and non-academic careers.
- I primarily mentor my students to pursue non-academic careers.
- My role as supervisor is to focus on a student’s scholarly abilities; I’m not a career counsellor.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
D2. I measure a PhD student’s success in terms of whether or not the student successfully attains an academic position.	•	•	•	•	•
D3. I think supervisors should invest more time in students who plan to pursue an academic career.	•	•	•	•	•
D4. I feel less motivated to supervise students who do not plan to pursue an academic career.	•	•	•	•	•
D5. I feel well-equipped to help PhD students pursue non-academic career paths.	•	•	•	•	•

D6. Departments should explicitly build the development of skills transferable to non-academic careers, such as professional writing and project management, into the PhD curriculum.	•	•	•	•	•
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D7. If you could tell supervisors in Canadian political science PhD programs one thing about helping PhD students prepare for future careers, what would it be? [open ended textbox.]

D8. What information, if any, would help supervisors improve PhD career mentorship? [open ended textbox.]

E. Thoughts on PhD Career Mentorship

Please indicate the percentage of responsibility that you feel each of the following units and groups should assume to help PhD students develop skills that can be used in non-academic careers.

- E1. Graduate faculties [percentage 0-100%]
- E2. University career centres [percentage 0-100%]
- E3. Political science departments [percentage 0-100%]
- E4. PhD supervisors [percentage 0-100%]
- E5. PhD students individually [percentage 0-100%]

E6. Please share any additional comments about the role of the above units and groups, along with any other actors, in helping students prepare for future careers. [open ended textbox.]

F. Career Mentorship Opportunities and Practices

Please evaluate the availability of career support programming for students in your program:

	Too little	About right	Too much	Not sure
F1. Academic career support programming offered by your university's graduate faculty and/or career centre	•	•	•	•

F2. Academic career support programming offered by your department	•	•	•	•
F3. Non-academic career support programming offered by your university's graduate faculty and/or career centre	•	•	•	•
F4. Non-academic career support programming offered by your department	•	•	•	•

G. Supervisory Practices

Individual faculty members engage in one-on-one PhD career training in a number of ways. Please indicate the frequency with which you have engaged in each of the following activities over the course of your academic career. For all questions, include both PhD students you have supervised and other PhD students.

	Never	1-5 times	6-10 times	Over 10 times
G1. Co-authoring with a PhD student	•	•	•	•
G2. Formally including a PhD student as a co-investigator/collaborator on a grant application	•	•	•	•
G3. Consulting a PhD student for input on a grant application	•	•	•	•
G4. Employing a PhD student as a research assistant	•	•	•	•
G5. Funding a PhD student to attend a conference	•	•	•	•

G6. Encouraging a PhD student to attend non-academic events (e.g., policy forums)	•	•	•	•
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Thinking back to when you were a PhD student, please indicate whether or not your supervisor(s) and/or other faculty have engaged in each of the following activities over the course of your own career training.

	Did not occur	Did occur
G7. Co-authoring with you as a PhD student	•	•
G8. Formally including you as a PhD student as a co-investigator /collaborator on a grant application	•	•
G9. Consulting you as a PhD student for input on a grant application	•	•
G10. Employing you as a PhD student as a research assistant	•	•
G11. Funding you as a PhD student to attend a conference	•	•
G12. Encouraging you as a PhD student to attend non-academic events (e.g., policy forums)	•	•

H. PhD Career Outcomes

For this set of questions, please consider students who entered your department’s doctoral program in or after 2000. As we are interested in perceptions of outcomes rather than actual outcome data, please answer all questions to the best of your knowledge.

H1. Approximately what percentage of students in your department’s doctoral program do you estimate successfully complete their PhD degree within eight years of starting?

- Less than 25%
- 25%-49%
- 50%-74%
- 75%-100%
- No idea

In your estimation, in what positions do graduates of your department’s doctoral program end up employed within five years of graduation? [set coding so that the total cannot exceed 100%]

	estimated percentage of PhD graduates since 2000 who are currently working in this capacity
H2. Tenure stream academia (e.g., Assistant Professor, tenure stream teaching positions)	% enter Don’t know
H3. Non-tenure stream academia (e.g., sessional instruction, limited term appointment, post-doctoral fellowships)	% enter Don’t know
H4. Government (municipal, provincial, federal, First Nations)	% enter Don’t know
H5. Other (including but not limited to private sector, non-profit sector, non-academic post-secondary positions, self-employment, not in workforce)	% enter Don’t know

H6. Do you have any additional thoughts about PhD career mentorship that you’d like to share?

Y. Program Information

Y1. Approximately how many PhD students does your program admit per year?

- Under 5
- 6-10

11+

Y2. Approximately how many PhD students are enrolled in your program at this time?

0-10

11-30

31+

Z. Respondent Demographics

Z1. Have you ever served as graduate chair?

- No
- Yes, in the past
- Yes, at present

Z2. When did you complete your PhD?

2006-2016

1996-2005

1986-1995

Before 1985

Z3. Where did you complete your PhD?

Canada

USA

Other

Z4. Which political science subfield best describes your primary area of expertise?

- Political theory/philosophy
- International relations
- Canadian politics
- Comparative politics
- Public policy/administration

Z4. For how long have you worked in a tenure-stream academic position?

- Less than 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-19 years
- 20 years or more

Z5. Do you identify as a:

Man

Woman

neither of those options apply to me

Final Screen

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses have been recorded.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact Loleen Berdahl, University of Saskatchewan, at loleen.berdahl@usask.ca and/or Jonathan Malloy, Carleton University, at jonathan.malloy@carleton.ca and/or Lisa Young, University of Calgary, at youngl@ucalgary.ca