TO: Tih-Fen Ting  
Chair, Campus Senate

FROM: James Hall  
Graduate Council (Sharron LaFollette, Chair)

DATE: April 5, 2011

RE: Proposal to Suspend Two Concentrations in Political Science Master’s Degree and to add a New Graduate Certificate in Practical Politics

The Department of Political Science (PSC) has requested to suspend the Academic Politics and the Practical Politics concentrations in the PSC master’s degree and to add a Graduate Certificate in Practical Politics. The Graduate Council (GC) carefully reviewed and discussed this proposal on March 7, 2011. GC subsequently met with Dr. Jason Pierceson from the Political Science Department on March 21, 2011, to discuss the proposals further.

GC commends the Political Science Department for its efforts to improve the curriculum to better fit the needs of students and the expertise of faculty. PSC submitted a carefully constructed proposal to create a single M.A. degree in political science with a common core curriculum combined with elective groupings allowing specialization. This proposal includes the suspension of the Academic Politics and the Practical Politics concentrations. There are no changes to the required number of hours or for the closure process for the degree.

PSC has developed specific course offerings so that students can pursue coursework in prominent political science subfields: American and state politics, political theory, international and comparative politics, and public law. PSC indicated that they would internally track completion of individual students in these “areas of interest.”

In addition, the Political Science Department has proposed adding a Graduate Certificate in Practical Politics. The department has provided a sound academic basis with a well-defined program of study. The individual courses are integrated into the overall curriculum for the master’s degree. The demand for this certificate appears high as either a stand-alone certificate or as part of a larger degree program. GC notes that PSC will offer the certificate on campus and there are no plans for online delivery.

The Political Science Department has given careful thought to the issue of the resources needed to support the curriculum changes and the addition of the certificate. The department believes it has sufficient faculty to offer the courses to meet the needs of the certificate and the courses for the specific “areas of interest.” The department plans to implement the new curriculum beginning in Fall 2012.