The Political Science Department proposes changes to the PSC Master's degree curriculum. Specifically, we propose to eliminate the distinction between the academic and practical concentration in the degree, to be replaced by one degree with the addition of a certificate in practical politics.

The academic and practical concentrations were designed to allow the department to serve both students who were considering a career in higher education teaching and students with an interest in applied politics. The practical politics concentration was designed to take advantage of our location in the state capital. However, this concentration was never designed nor intended to be a mostly applied degree, but a combination between academic and applied approaches, with a significant component of academic political science.

The current curriculum also assumes that students will mostly be interested in studying American national and state politics. This reflected the predominant expertise of the faculty in the past. However, the department has developed faculty strength and student interest in political theory, international and comparative politics, and public law.

Over the past several years, department faculty and students have questioned the seemingly arbitrary distinction between academic and practical politics. In reality, the distinction between course sequences in the two concentrations was minimal. The significant overlap between the curricula caused confusion for students and caused faculty to question the pedagogical reason for the separate concentrations.

As result of deliberations throughout the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years, the department decided on the following changes:

- Create one MA degree in political science with a common core curriculum combined with elective groupings allowing specialization in prominent political science subfields: American and state politics, political theory, international and comparative politics, and public law. This involves the elimination of the academic and practical politics concentrations.
• Create a certificate in practical politics that can be pursued as a part of the MA degree or separately. The rationale for this new certificate is explained in the attached certificate proposal.

The number of hours required for the degree will remain the same (40 hours), and we are not proposing any changes to the closure process for the degree. These changes will make the degree more in line with other degrees in the state (a common core with subfield specialization) and the desired approach of the faculty, while continuing to take advantage of our location and appreciation for practical politics through the proposed certificate.

Approval College Curriculum Committee:

Chair: [Signature]  
Date: 1-20-16

Reviewed by Dean:

Dean: [Signature]  
Date: 21 Jan 11