

To: The Academic Policies Committee
From: Johnny Goldfinger, Associate Professor of Political Science
Date: August 27, 2021
Re: The proposal to delete the political science program

I will be speaking with the Academic Policies Committee this afternoon. I am submitting this response to the proposal to delete the political science major in order to supplement what I say and ensure that my complete response is on the record.

Here is the entire two-sentence rationale for deleting the political science program:

“The recommendation to delete Political Science results from program analysis and personnel changes. Based on a recent program review of Political Science, a decision by the College of Arts and Sciences to pursue a different direction for its social science programs, and the reduction from three faculty members to one, Political Science is no longer viable as a major.”

I will address each rationale separately.

1. Based on a recent program review of Political Science...

I am not sure what program review is being cited. No program review was ever discussed with anyone in the political science program. If this review refers to the program self-study, no significant concerns about the quality of the political science program were raised in my meeting with the TLC self-study sub-committee. After the self-study meeting, it was recommended by Assistant Vice Provost Osika that Dean Mirola schedule a meeting with the political science faculty members and their chair to discuss the self-study. That meeting was never scheduled, much less mentioned again.

2. A decision by the College of Arts and Sciences to pursue a different direction for its social science programs...

The new direction for the social science program was never discussed with or even mentioned to any member of the political science faculty. However, looking over the restructuring of the College of Arts and Sciences, the political science major and minors easily fit into the Applied Social Sciences department. Why were there no discussions with the political science faculty about how political science could contribute as an applied social science? If the PS faculty members had been consulted, a more dynamic and methodologically versatile Department of Applied Social Sciences could have been created.

3. The reduction from three faculty members to one...

The claim that the number of faculty has been reduced from three to one is misleading and disingenuous. Pierre Atlas “retired” but that still leaves me and Holly Gastineau-Grimes as current political science faculty. I typically teach four courses in political science and Holly teaches two political science courses. Even in Holly’s new proposed role in the restructuring, she will continue teaching the same international politics courses only under different titles. They could easily be cross listed and she could have a joint appointment.

4. Political Science is no longer viable as a major.

Our political science program typically offers two 300 level courses, one 200 level course, and a few POL102 Introduction to American Politics courses each semester. Holly and I can usually meet this course load without relying on adjuncts. This is also without the use of cross-listed

courses in philosophy, history, criminal justice, etc., which would make it even easier to offer the courses necessary for a solid and viable political science major.

Here are the questions I have:

- What review of the political science program is this proposal referring to?
- What were the substantive conclusions reached by the review?
- Why were the Political Science (PS) faculty members not involved in this review much less even informed about it?
- Why were the PS faculty members not allowed to respond to the review if it was negative?
- Why was political science not allowed to develop a plan if there were concerns about the program?
- Why were the PS faculty members not informed about much less included in discussions about the proposed Department of Applied Social Sciences given that it directly affected them?
- Why was there no discussion with the PS faculty members about how a political science program could contribute to the “applied social sciences?”
- If there was concern about only having only “one” political scientist, why was a tenure track or non-tenure track replacement for Pierre Atlas not hired?
- How come Holly Gastineau Grimes no longer counts as a political scientist even though her new teaching responsibilities involve her teaching the same international politics courses that she taught in the political science program? There is this thing called a “joint appointment.”
- If the number of faculty was a concern, why was there no discussion about joint appointments and/or using cross listed courses to buttress the political science course offerings?
- Specifically, what is not viable about the political science program?
- How come the issue of viability was never raised much less discussed with the PS faculty members?
- Do the people responsible for this proposal (whoever they happen to be) think it is not important for students to be able to study politics?

Literally every rationale for eliminating the political science program is suspect or bogus. There are no details about the program review and the PS faculty members were never given an opportunity to defend the program, address any concerns, or come up with a plan for improvement (if necessary).

The “different direction” for the social science program could have easily included political science. Both political science’s methodological approaches and substantive topics are eminently applicable to solving real world problems and for vocational training. Maybe if the decision-makers had actually spoken with members of the political science faculty, they would appreciate what political science offers.

The claim that there is only “one” political science faculty member at Marian is a contrived excuse. Holly Gastineau Grimes and I are both political scientists. Even if it were true that there was only one political scientist, a tenure track or non-tenure track instructor could be hired to replace Pierre Atlas. Moreover, the creative use of joint appointments and/or cross-listing of courses could easily alleviate any of the concerns.

Finally, the notion that political science is no longer viable is patently false. In political science, we teach around six courses each semester. Even without Pierre Atlas, that teaching load can be covered without the need to hire any additional full-time instructors. Of course, if another full-time instructor was hired, we could make political science an even more dynamic and successful program.

Currently, we have 31 political science majors with eight expected to graduate this academic year. We also have at least seven minors (possibly more). As you can see from the numbers in the chart below, there is a demonstrated steady demand by Marian students for the study of politics. This is our fifth year in a row having 25 to 31 majors. In addition, our current number of majors to faculty ratio (30/2) has to be one of the lowest in the CAS. I cannot imagine that there is a good financial reason for eliminating political science.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Major Enrollment	18	15	22	23	28	28	23	26	22	16	16	20	31	28	25	29
Minor Enrollment	NA	NA	2	3	3	3	3	5	4	5	5	2	2	2	6	8
Major Graduates	3	8	3	1	4	5	3	6	7	6	4	4		5	7	8
Minor Graduates	1	4	1	2		2	3	2	4	2	4	3	1	1		2

Compared to other majors in the College of Arts and Science, the number of political science majors is tied for ninth out of 26 total majors and only three behind both public health and social work. The number of political science majors is also tied for 19th out of 44 majors at Marian University. (See the attached lists at the end of this memo.)

There is no compelling reason to immediately eliminate the political science program. In responding directly to the rationales given for eliminating political science, I did not even address the relevance and importance of a political science program for Marian University students.

If there was ever a time for students to understand and be able to study politics, that time is now. Our previous president was impeached twice. New Supreme Court appointments mean that there will be rulings that dramatically change people’s lives. Partisanship in Congress makes it even harder for the federal government to get things done. There was an attempted insurrection at the Capitol building less than a year ago. Questions about the electoral process in the United States threaten undermine faith in our democracy. Issues concerning Immigration, climate change, social justice, poverty, public safety, COVID-19, etc. require political solutions. How can Marian University not have a political science program if it takes educating students seriously?

Marian University’s identity is based on the Franciscan sponsorship values and its vision is to create transformational leaders for service to the world. If we are to take these values and transformational leadership seriously, how can we not give our students the opportunity to study politics? One of the primary ways dignity of the individual, peace and justice, reconciliation, and responsible stewardship have been advanced on a societal level in the United States and elsewhere is through politics. Similarly, if our students are to transform our society to make it a better place, politics will typically play a key

role. Without giving our students an understanding of politics so they can advance the Franciscan sponsorship values on a societal level, our commitment to these values seems limited. Without giving our students an understanding of how to use the government to transform society, the potential of transformational leadership is not fully realized.

Finally, I want to point out the blatant disregard, at least in spirit, for APC procedures in the submission of this proposal. According to the second step in the Procedures section of the Marian University Academic Policies Committee: Procedures and Timelines: "The proposal is submitted to the faculty and chair of that department, and/or other department faculty, chairs, and Deans potentially impacted by the proposal for revision suggestions. The signed and completed form indicating faculty notification must be submitted with the proposal."

Holly Gastineau-Grimes and I are directly impacted by the proposal to eliminate the political science program. The proposal was never submitted to us for "revision suggestions." This step in the APC's procedure to notify affected faculty and ask for suggestions is a common courtesy. It is also an acknowledgement of the importance of shared governance.

I want to conclude by asking the members of the Academic Policies Committee to reject this proposal. I also request that the APC include the result of the committee's vote on the proposal when it is forwarded to the Faculty Assembly.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information. My email is jgoldfinger@marian.edu and cell number is 607-279-4428.

Thank you.

Number of Students in the Majors in the College of Arts and Sciences (current as of August 27, 2021)

Biology	148
Psychology	69
History	57
Communication	49
Mathematics	45
Spanish	40
Public Health	34
Social Work	34
Political Science	31
Chemistry	31
English	24
Sociology	23
Graphic Design	21
Philosophy	21
Catholic Studies	19
Pastoral Leadership	14
Computer Science	13
Studio Art	13
Applied Physics	12
Theology	9
Theatre	8
Religious Education	6
Instrumental Music	4
Clinical Lab Science	1
Music Education	1
Liberal Arts	0

Number of Students in the Majors at Marian University (current as of August 27, 2021)

Nursing	320
Management	158
Biology	148
Elementary Education	107
Marketing	107
Exercise Science	94
Finance	77
Psychology	69
History	57
Secondary Education	56
Communication	49
Business Analytics	47
Mathematics	45
Sports Performance	41
Accounting	40
Spanish	40
Public Health	34
Social Work	34
Political Science	31
Chemistry	31
Education P-12	25
English	24
Graphic Design	21
Philosophy	21
Catholic Studies	19
Health and Physical Education	16
Nutrition, Fitness, and Wellness	16
Physiology of Exercise	15
Pastoral Leadership	14
Computer Science	13
Studio Art	13
Applied Physics	12
Theology	9
Special Ed P-12	8
Theatre	8
Religious Education	6
Instrumental Music	4
Logistics/Supply Chain Management	4
Instrumental Music Education	2
Clinical Laboratory Science	1
Music Education	1

Vocal Music Education

1

Liberal Arts

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