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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Ben Lowe, Chair, College of Arts and Letters Graduate Programs
Committee

FROM: Dr. Tim Lenz, Chair, Department of Political Science

SUBJECT: Political Science Graduate Program Changes

DATE: December 1, 2010

The Department of Political Science is proposing the following four changes in its graduate program.

Proposal One is to eliminate the requirement that all students complete 6 credits outside Political Science. Proposal Two is to create three required seminars. Proposal Three is to admit students as non-thesis students and then require students who want the thesis option to apply for it. Proposal Four is to replace the requirement that non-thesis students take six credits of reading with the requirement that they pass six credits of electives.

These changes will improve the quality of the graduate program. Students will still be able to take six credits outside Political Science, with the permission of the Graduate Director. Requiring students to complete three core seminars will strengthen research skills and introduce students to two subfields, which will allow seminars to build toward a coherent program of study. The proposal to have the department approve students for the thesis option will ensure that the students who are academically strongest will be selected for that option. For non-thesis students, replacing the reading option will strengthen the program by allowing students to take two elective seminars in their areas of interest. After reviewing the graduate program, the faculty concluded that the reading and comprehensive exam were not serving the students very well.

Attached, please find a description of how these changes affect the Political Science Graduate Program.

Proposed Curriculum Changes in Master's in Political Science

Submitted to Graduate Program Committee – Fall Semester 2010

Current Curriculum:

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Students choose a broad field of study. The department encourages students to develop their course of study in accordance with the program emphasis they select. There are two options for meeting the requirements of the degree, depending upon

Thesis Option

The department has an excellent track record of placing highly qualified M.A. graduates in Ph.D. programs at leading academic institutions. Students build a strong foundation in Political Science research and methodology skills through seminars. Supervised thesis research prepares students for doctoral work.

Requirements for M.A., Thesis (30 credits)

Graduate seminar credits in Political Science	18
Minor / electives outside Political Science	6
Thesis	6

Non-Thesis(Exam)Option

Students seeking to develop a particularly strong background in theoretical readings in their chosen field may elect to sit for an eight hour computer-assisted written exam after completing their course work.

Requirements for M.A., Non-Thesis (30 credits)

Graduate seminar credits in Political Science	18
Minor / electives outside Political Science	6
Readings in Political Science [POS 6904]	6

Proposal 1:

Eliminate requirement that all students complete 6 credits of minor/electives outside Political Science.

Add: "With the approval of the Graduate Director, a student may take a maximum of 6 credit hours outside the Department of Political Science."

Explanation: This change recognizes that the academic and career goals of some students are better served if they complete the required 30 credits within the Department of Political Science.

Proposal 2:

Add the following requirements to the curriculum:

Required Courses (9 credits)

POS 6XXX Research Design
POS 6045 Seminar in American National Government
CPO 6007 Seminar in Comparative Political Processes

Explanation: This requirement is pretty much standard in Political Science Departments in Florida and elsewhere. The Research Design course serves as a basic introduction to both qualitative and quantitative methods. The other courses are designed to introduce students to at least two of the broad fields in political science.

Proposal 3:

Students may currently choose either a thesis track or a non-thesis track. In the proposed curriculum, students must apply for admission to the thesis track.

Proposed Change:

The Masters of Arts in Political Science has both a thesis and a non-thesis track. All students are admitted as non-thesis students. After the completion of at least nine but not more than fifteen graduate credits, a student may apply for admission to the thesis track. The application is submitted to the Graduate Director. If the Graduate Committee grants thesis track status, the student must work with the Graduate Director to create a thesis committee.

Explanation: This change will permit the Graduate Committee to approve those students they believe to be capable of completing a thesis.

Proposal 4:

The Department is proposing the following change in the non-thesis option track.

Current Requirement: **Non-Thesis (Exam) Option**

Students seeking to develop a particularly strong background in theoretical readings in their chosen field may elect to sit for an eight hour computer-assisted written exam after completing their course work.

Students who select this option complete 6 credits of Readings in Political Science (POS 6904)

Proposed Non-Thesis Curriculum:

Students will complete 6 hours of electives rather than the 6 credits of Readings. There is no exam requirement.

Explanation: The faculty has concluded that our students will be better served by substituting 6 seminar credits for the 6 credits of readings.

If proposed changes are approved, the curriculum for the Master's in Political Science will be as follows:

Master of Arts (M.A.)

The Masters of Arts in Political Science has both a thesis track and a non-thesis track. All students are admitted as non-thesis students. After the completion of at least nine but not more than fifteen graduate credits, a student may apply for admission to the thesis track. The application is submitted to the Graduate Director. If the Graduate Committee grants thesis track status, the student must work with the Graduate Director to create a thesis committee.

Degree Requirements

The course of study for the Masters of Arts in Political Science requires 30 credits hours.

Required Courses (9 credits)

- POS 6XXX Research Design
- POS 6045 Seminar in American National Government
- CPO 6007 Seminar in Comparative Political Processes

Thesis Credits

A thesis track students must complete 6 credits of POS 6971 Thesis. The thesis must be approved by a student's thesis committee.

Electives

A thesis track student must complete 15 elective credits. A non-thesis student must complete 21 credits. With the approval of the Graduate Director, a student may take a maximum of 6 credit hours outside the Department of Political Science.

SIGNATURES

Approved by: Department Chair: _____ College GPC Chair: _____ College Dean: _____ UGPC Chair: _____ Dean of the Graduate College: _____	Date: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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