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March 27, 2006

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
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Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean
Melissa Austin, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
The Graduate School

RE: Department of Political Science Program Review 10-Year Review

At its meeting of January 5, 2006, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the Department of Political Science, Judith Howard, (Divisional Dean for Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences), Stephen Majeski (Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science), and UW Review Committee members— Charles Nelson (Department of Economics) and William Beyers (Department of Geography).

The last comprehensive review of the Department of Political Sciences was completed in 1995. At that time, continuing status was reaffirmed for the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees with a subsequent review to be conducted in 10 years. The review site visit was conducted on May 16-17, 2005, at which time the review committee met with Department faculty, students, and staff.

The review committee reported that the Department of Political Science is strong academically. Many of the faculty have attained national visibility and are well respected in the field. Its research and scholarship activities are excellent and overall, the department faculty is very productive. Resources allocated by the College of Arts and Sciences Dean were well used by the department to retain some of the high quality and productive faculty.

The review committee noted the faculty's successful entrepreneurial efforts in establishing five new research centers in the past ten years, and their impressive record in securing grants and contracts to support the centers. Success of the centers is reflected in the high quality research faculty and the leadership they provide for the centers. The centers are a catalyst for new ideas in research and curriculum, and benefit both undergraduate and graduate students with the resources they accrue.

The review committee recognized the faculty's commitment to excellence and its success with both undergraduate and graduate instructional programs. They were concerned, however, about the disparity between the more than 900 undergraduate majors and the number of faculty FTEs, and the resulting impact on faculty work load. The committee noted that in spite of the department having a large number of majors, it provides students a quality learning experience "by balancing large lectures with the use of TAs in discussion sessions." Although the committee urged the department to consider alternatives, the department indicated that a decrease in the number of majors would hinder efforts to maintain diversity, and would decrease the number of teaching assistantships for graduate students.

Teaching assistants instruct large introductory classes with quiz sections as well as some upper division courses. Most teaching assistants are instructors at the 200 course level, allowing faculty members time for teaching capstone courses and seminars. The review committee and Graduate School Council encouraged the department to seek ways to diversify the types of funding used to recruit and support graduate students. The committee acknowledged the importance of preparing graduate students as teachers, but noted that their training as researchers is important, as well. The GPSS expressed the need to improve teaching assistants' basic support mechanisms, including space and equipment. The department reported that TAs have been given access to additional space in Smith Hall.

The review committee noted the success of the department's strategic hiring at the senior level. This builds on existing strengths of the department, and they were encouraged to continue in this direction. In particular, the committee was impressed with the department's successful hires in the area of Race and Ethnicity and its intent to strengthen this area. They emphasized the importance of additional faculty hires to help raise the department's visibility and to increase its national ranking, noting that the department is "poised to break into the top 20." The department also made a recent hire in American Politics. Consistent with its 2005 hiring plan, the department will pursue a faculty hire in Political Theory, one of four major areas of political science. The Council was supportive of this plan.

The College of Arts and Sciences Dean's office acknowledged the department Chair's extraordinary leadership and his efforts in building more sense of community. He has advocated well, and has been successful in securing resources for the department.

For more detailed information on the review of this department, please see the Review Committee's written report, submitted in June, 2005.

The Graduate School recommends that the continuing status be reaffirmed for the B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degree programs offered by the Department of Political Science, with the next review to be conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year.

c: Mark A. Emmert, President, Office of the President
David C. Hodge, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Judith A. Howard, Divisional Dean, Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences
Stephen J. Majeski, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
Adam Grupp, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
Members of the Department of Political Science Review Committee
Graduate School Council