February 18, 2004

To: Betty Schmitz, Director of Center for Curriculum Transformation
From: Stephen Majeski, Chair Political Science
Re: Appraisal of Diversity Activities in Political Science

The department of Political Science has a longstanding commitment to diversity. In our recent strategic planning efforts of 2000 in a section core department values, we stated the following:

“Finally we strongly emphasize the importance of understanding and appreciating the diversity among peoples, histories, cultures, and ideas that thrive within and beyond our own society. The department’s internal practice of valuing intellectual pluralism is but one expression and confirmation of its commitment to diversity. In sum, we believe that the modern university is a critical institutional resource for the study and practice of citizenship generally, and that the Department of Political Science should lead the way in that endeavor.”

From that same planning document in a section on improving Graduate education, we stated the following:

“A diverse graduate student community benefits both faculty and students in myriad ways, allowing for the expression and exploration of multiple and often marginalized perspectives on local, national, and global politics. In the environment created by the passage of Initiative 200 in Washington State, the fostering of such a diverse student body has become even more challenging than before. Our department must find creative ways to continue our long tradition of promoting diversity in all its forms in our doctoral program. In order to address the challenge of maintaining and expanding diversity within the graduate program, the department will undertake an effort to assess our current practices concerning recruitment, retention, and placement of students from nontraditional backgrounds. The results of such an assessment will be utilized to devise specific initiatives to promote the continued recruitment and mentoring of top doctoral students with a wide range of personal experiences and backgrounds. The development of new graduate research opportunities, as described above, should also contribute to the goal of encouraging a diverse doctoral program.

Finally, in 2001 the department assessed the cultural and ethnic diversity of its curriculum and that report is attached as Appendix 1.
Our long-term commitment has produced some positive results but we have had some setbacks and not progressed significantly in some areas, as we would have liked. Along the way we have learned some lessons about recruiting and retaining female faculty and faculty of color, about recruiting and retaining a diverse graduate student body, and about providing a diverse curriculum for our undergraduates.

This appraisal has three sections. The first concerns efforts to create and maintain a diverse faculty. As will be clear, we are moving very aggressively in this area and in our view it is the key to success in creating and maintaining diversity in our graduate and undergraduate program and in maintaining a diverse curriculum. The second and third sections are reports on diversity activities at the graduate and undergraduate level. A brief summary of those two sections follows before taking up the faculty efforts. At the graduate level, we have had considerable success in recruiting a large number of international students of high quality and very limited success at recruiting graduate students of color. We have two fundamental problems. The first is a resource problem. Recruiting students of color is extremely competitive (minorities on the job market in political science constituted 12% of the applicants on the job market [4% African American, 4% Latino, and 3% Asian-American] and the most qualified have a large number of great opportunities) and we lack sufficient financial resources to compete even when we offer our own fellowships or GO-MAP fellowships. The second is that we do not have a critical mass of either faculty of color or graduate students of color to successfully recruit. Some of our competitors have an advantage because they do have that critical mass and thus a more welcoming environment. We are working on this problem now and it is one we will solve. At the undergraduate level, we have developed a significant array of courses (see Appendix 2) addressing questions of diversity. With outstanding faculty it is not surprising that we have attracted a significant number of students of color. Data reported by the Academic Advancement Group in a report entitled “Descriptive and Longitudinal Analyses of Enrollment, Graduation & Retention Data for UW-Seattle support this point. Between 1992 and 2000, the Political Science department graduated 551 underrepresented minorities: the third highest total in the University In addition, in the 2001-2002 academic year political science enrolled the second largest number of African American students, fourth highest number of Native American students, third highest number of Hispanic students, and the forth-highest number of Hawaiian/Pacific Islander & Filipino in the University. This positive trend will continue only if at least maintain and more realistically increase the diversity of our faculty.

The department has had a longstanding effort to recruit and retain both female faculty and faculty of color. For at least ten years women have comprised about 25% of the faculty and faculty of color have comprised about 7-9% of the faculty. These percentages are consistent with percentages of the political science profession but they are not adequate. We learned several valuable lessons from failed retention efforts in the department, and we have engaged in an aggressive recruitment effort to increase the number of faculty of color and to build a community that will make retaining them more likely. The first lesson is that it is essential to have a critical mass of faculty of color. Recruiting one or two faculty of color is not sufficient. They tend to feel isolated and disconnected from
the department and climate related problems are more likely to emerge and become an issue. The second lesson is that it is essential to recruit faculty of color who connect in important intellectual ways with the research and scholarship of several other faculty. It is not helpful to bring in a faculty of color who has no intellectual connections with faculty or graduate students. For instance, to hire one faculty of color whose research interests are in race and ethnicity politics without either a group in the department doing work in that area or without that individual having other important research interests that connect with a group of faculty, is likely to lead to isolation, distancing from the department and a perception that the topic of research is undervalued by the department. The third lesson is that having a critical mass of faculty of color not only helps alleviate the first two problems but also makes recruitment much easier. It is very hard to recruit when you have a very small number of faculty of color.

The department, with terrific support from the Deans, has embarked on an effort to rethink how we can build a diverse faculty. We have done several things and, while we are in the midst of this process, it has already had several important benefits. First, we started by establishing that it was our top priority to hire in Race and Ethnicity politics. We did so for several reasons; 1) the largest pool of qualified scholars of color do research in this area, 2) it establishes our commitment to the importance of this aspect of political science; 3) will help us maintain and build our undergraduate curriculum in this crucial area; 4) build a presence in this area that will make our department an attractive and competitive place for graduate students studying in this area. Second, key faculty worked hard to demonstrate to important scholars in the area of race and ethnicity politics that we were serious about our commitment. Third, we contacted and invited to campus important senior scholars of color in the discipline to meet with us, talk about the research ongoing in this area, find out about what the department was doing in this area, and to provide good contacts to outstanding junior faculty whose scholarship would connect well with our faculty. Third, again with the tremendous help of our Deans, we aggressively pursued very talented scholars of color engaged in Race and Ethnicity politics. At one point, we had offers out to four people engaged in research on Race and Ethnicity Politics (three of them people of color). Our success in recruiting these highly talented scholars rests on a standard factors but our interactions with them leave no doubt that a key aspect of our success rested on the fact that we were recruiting a number of scholars in this area (the network is small and tight and they knew all about the recruitment efforts by all the institutions of all the scholars of color). This demonstrated to them our seriousness and commitment to this area and it demonstrated that we were going to build a community that they could be a part of. I am convinced that if we had no had the success we have enjoyed if we made one offer. We would also not be successful in our recruitment efforts if these candidates did not feel that they fit, in a number of different ways, into a set of scholarly communities we have already established. One last point is crucial. Each one of these people cares about the decisions of the others and wants to know about our future commitment to this area. We will retain them only if we do not say, “well we’ve taken care of that problem and now lets move on to something else. Of course we will hire in other areas and focus on building other areas but the connections new scholars we recruit have to the Race and Ethnicity politics group should have equal weight as other established research groups.
Political Science Undergraduate Program Diversity Efforts

Political Science Undergraduate Curriculum

Political science is a discipline that engages politically significant domestic and international issues that are key to the study of diversity. Political concepts such as equality, freedom, citizenship, participation, civil rights, human rights, nationalism, development and their impacts on social and political relationships and institutions are inextricably bound to issues of race, gender, class, sexual identity/orientation, religion, ethnicity, culture, region/geography and indigenous status.

The location of the discipline within the larger culture is reflected in our curriculum. At the introductory level, courses in political theory, American politics, international relations and comparative politics contribute to diversity education by exposing students to many of the foundational issues that underlie current political debates. For many students this is their first introduction to critical thought and analysis as opposed to the assertion of opinion that often passes for political debate.

At the upper-division level, students have the opportunity for in-depth study, and more than fifty percent of courses in the political science curriculum explicitly meet the broadly conceived definition of diversity (for example, courses on feminist philosophy; the politics of race; labor studies; political culture; specific countries such as Russia, China and Japan, or regions such as Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Latin America). While other courses may not reflect diversity content in their titles or course descriptions, related issues may contribute significantly to instruction (for example, constitutional issues of race or privacy, the agendas and political impacts of interest groups, the effects of nationalism on issues of war and peace).

In terms of demand, Political Science is a highly impacted major. For courses with explicit diversity content, denies range from less than ten to over sixty per course.

Political Science Major

Compared to other majors, the political science major has minimal admission requirements: 45 credits completed with a UW cumulative GPA of at least 2.0, including 15 credits of introductory political science courses with a grade of at least 2.0 in each course. The political science major is therefore within reach of students whose grades may not fully reflect their potential to learn, to achieve, and to lead.

With respect to ethnic diversity, the undergraduate ethnic demographic in Political Science in autumn 2002 compares favorably with the overall 2002 ethnic group percentages for the university’s general undergraduate population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>*726 Pol S Majors, 2002</th>
<th>Pol S %, 2002</th>
<th>**UW Undergrad %, 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of encouraging access, Political Science advisers participate in all university-organized forums for students, including the UW Options Fair for transfer students, the Native American Transfer Fair, the Essence of Success Program for African-American high school seniors, and the Office of Minority Affairs event for minority pre-business majors so they can learn about other major options related to their career interests. We also participated in the three years of GEAR UP activities that included academic departments.

Graduate Program Diversity Efforts

The Department

The Department of Political Science has long been committed to promoting diversity in all its forms within the doctoral program. By the very nature of its discipline, the department programmatically incorporates the exploration of multiple and diverse views of our country and of the world. Our graduate student population (104 students both registered and on-leave) is comprised of 40% international students. This substantial portion of our community contributes to a diverse culture that serves the mission of the department. Our student population is also presently 45% women. Though the department has enjoyed a successful graduation and placement rate for our minority students, the percentage of minority and underrepresented students has dropped in the last five years and remains low. Currently, 8% of our graduate students from the United States are minority students.

Admissions

The Political Science Department is committed to admit and financially support as many minority students as we can successfully recruit. Our activities include application for GOP Research Assistantships, which we financially match with four additional years of funding; participation in the American Political Science Association’s minority applicant name exchanges, and the GO-MAP Western and National Name Exchange program; inclusion of additional personal statements in our graduate application materials;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano/Mexican American</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**From “University of Washington Aggregate Student Enrollment Changes by Ethnic Group, Autumn 1998 Through Autumn 2002”.

assigning faculty caseworkers for all competitive minority graduate applicants; and funded campus visits for competitive minority applicants.

Though we target the competitive minority candidates with our top financial offers (usually a combination of fellowship, RAship, and TAship), we experience difficulties recruiting these students. Last year’s admission cycle illustrates the challenges facing the department: Five applicants were highly competitive and were offered funded trips to visit the campus and our top financial packages. Of these, three declined to visit because they had already accepted offers elsewhere, and of the two who came to the campus, only one accepted our offer. Over the last three years, surveys of the admitted students showed:

1) All were heavily recruited by top institutions.
2) The stipends at UW are lower when compared to other institutions, even those with substantially lower rankings.
3) Applicants received multi-year fellowship offers from other institutions that we could not match.
4) Competition for minority students is increasingly against elite institutions. In several cases the UW program was a better fit for the applicant, but the allure of a “name” institution was too persuasive.

The Political Science department will continue to diversify our program. We are pleased with our retention and placement rate, but without more financial support it will be difficult to improve our minority recruitment numbers. As noted earlier, we are having success in recruiting faculty of color and we know that having established faculty of color with active research agendas will greatly enhance the appeal of our department and help in our recruitment efforts.