



To: Missy Alexander, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
From: Michelle L. Brown, Dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences
Date: March 18, 2022
Re: Evaluation of External Program Review of the Department of Social Sciences

The Department of Social Sciences (SS) recently concluded an external program review of its four majors: B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology; B.A. in Economics; B.A. in Political Science; and B.A. in Social Sciences. Based on my conversations with the external reviewers and examination of the attached department self-study, Reviewer Report, and subsequent departmental response, I offer the following evaluation and my recommendations.

Overview of Programs

The department consists of nine (9) full-time faculty members offering the following four (4) majors and eleven (11) minors:

Majors	Minors	
B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology	Anthropology*	Multi-cultural Studies
B.A. in Economics	Conflict Resolution	- option: African American focus
B.A. in Political Science	Cultural Resource Management	Political Science*
B.A. in Social Sciences	Economics*	Sociology*
- option: Family Studies*	Geography	Urban Studies
- option: Global Studies*	International Studies	Women's Studies
- option: Multi-cultural Studies*		

*Not listed in the department section of 2021-2022 undergraduate catalog.

The Social Sciences (SS) major is an interdisciplinary program requiring courses in the department's other majors plus cognates in history. The SS major's only proprietary requirements are a three-course research sequence required by the other department majors and which can be taught by any department member. Anthropology/Sociology (ANT/SOC), Economics (ECO), and Political Science (PS) do not otherwise overlap. ECO also requires a cognate: in mathematics.

Requirements for the three (3) SS major options and four (4) of the department's minors (anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology) are not listed in the department's section of the current

Michelle L. Brown | Dean of the Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences

181 White Street, Danbury, CT 06810 | (203) 837-9400 | BrownML@wcsu.edu

undergraduate catalog. However, those program titles are listed as active programs on the university website. The discrepancy may create student confusion about program status. The minors outlined in the department's section of the catalog do not share any requirements with either each other or the majors. Further, the International Studies, Urban Studies, and Women's Studies minors are entirely elective-driven and student-selected. The Multi-cultural Studies minor requires one (1) course and is otherwise elective-driven and student-selected. Another department coordinates the Women's Studies minor. No full-time faculty coordinate the Conflict Resolution or Geography minors.

To clarify references to the "archeology program" in the self-study report: WCSU does not offer an archeology major, option, minor, or certificate.

Programs' Strengths

Recruiting

The department has correctly recognized recruiting as a priority. I admire its collective willingness to seek creative recruitment solutions. Its 2021 Summer Social Justice Institute, a joint venture with Admissions and sponsored by my office, brought local high school students to campus to learn about and leave with advocacy toolkits to engage in their communities. This event is a fantastic recruitment tool—not only for its much-needed topic, but also because it reaches beyond the classroom already filled with WCSU students. The department plans to repeat the Social Justice Institute in collaboration with Admissions every year, and to strengthen its overall relationship with Admissions and Enrollment Management (Self-Study Report). This is a wise move since our recruiters rely on departments to supply them with current, compelling program information that will appeal to high school students and their families. Internally, the department will increase recruiting in lower level courses; increase engagement with students who have passed the major capstone but not yet graduated; and seek funding opportunities for students unable to persist for financial reasons.

The department also hosts an impressive roster of events to increase access to social justice reform initiatives and participation opportunities. These include regular brown bag research presentation lunches open to faculty and students. All these efforts enhance and reinforce an inclusive culture on campus and inure our students to participating with their faculty members in scholarship and community activism.

Challenges

Program Enrollments

Over the last five years, from Fall 2017 through Fall 2021, undergraduate enrollments declined in double digits at Western Connecticut State University (WCSU), Macricostas School of Arts and Sciences (MSAS), and Social Sciences Department levels. Table 1 compares five-year enrollments among the department's four majors, all social science disciplines, MSAS, and WCSU.

Table 1. Five-Year Undergraduate Enrollment: SS by major, All Social Sciences, MSAS and WCSU

Enrollment by Major		Fall 2017		Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021 (Current)		% Change: 2017 - 2021	
Major	Degree	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE	Heads	FTE
WCSU Undergraduate Total		5082	4413	5028	4433	4982	4407	4640	4108	4172	3678	-17.9	-16.7
MSAS Undergraduate Majors Total		1568	1385	1588	1411	1507	1282	1416	1266	1305	1145	-16.8	-17.9
Anthropology/Sociology	BA	22	18	22	20	26	23	23	20	23	21	4.5	14.5
Economics	BA	25	21	21	17	20	20	22	21	19	18	-24.0	-13.9
Political Science	BA	52	46	47	42	47	44	37	34	40	34	-23.1	-27.0
Social Sciences	BA	20	17	26	21	16	12	18	17	11	9	-45.0	-50.0
Social Sciences Department Total		119	102	116	99	109	98	100	92	93	81	-21.8	-20.8
Psychology Undergraduate Total	BA	329	282	328	286	325	290	342	302	289	259	-12.2	-8.0
All Social Sciences Disciplines Undergraduate		448	383	444	385	434	388	442	393	382	340	-14.7	-11.4
Source: WCSU Institutional Research											KEY: Increase Decrease		

Overall, the department's enrollments fell by 21.8% over the last five years, faring worse than WCSU's 17.9% drop in undergraduate enrollment, and worse than MSAS, which slightly outperformed WCSU by about a point, with a 16.8% undergraduate enrollment decrease for the same period. All social science undergraduate disciplines fared slightly better, dropping only 14.7% over five years.

ANT/SOC held the department's steadiest enrollment for the same period, up by one (1) student from 22 five years ago. This was after correcting for a slight surge in 2019. The major outperformed combined undergraduate performance for WCSU, MSAS, its department, and all social sciences disciplines. However, it is important to consider scale: ANT/SOC's gain is one (1) student for a final total of 23.

Similarly, across this department's other three majors, single-digit headcount fluctuations appear to make outsized impacts relative to sample sizes. ECO fared somewhat worse than ANT/SOC, with a consistent decline ending at 19 students from 2018's high of 25. The major's 24% loss over five years exceeded WCSU, MSAS, and all social science disciplines undergraduate losses by about a third for the same period.

PS's headcount roughly doubles those of ANT/SOC and ECO. However, it also suffered a gradual decline over the last five years, most precipitously during the 2020 COVID pandemic, ending at 40 majors, down from five years ago. This 23.1% drop is within a point of ECO's yet still significantly worse than WCSU, MSAS, and all social sciences disciplines combined.

In the department, the SS major performed the least consistently and suffered the most severe five-year drop—by nearly half, from 20 majors to 11 in five years. This 45% decline more than doubled those of MSAS and WCSU, and more than tripled that of all combined social sciences disciplines.

These five-year department trends for all four majors are consistent with those of the last ten years. Yet, as regional and national demographics continue to shrink traditional first-time full-time recruitment pools, the competition among colleges and universities for fewer potential enrollees will increase. State institutions typically fare less well against well-endowed private institutions. Thus, enrollment deficits will become increasingly probable and collaborative structural solutions more necessary.

Program Structures

The Department's program structures may contribute to enrollment challenges. First, its large number of mutually exclusive curricula necessitates offering a wide array of separate courses every semester. This lack of topical consolidation during a protracted departmental enrollment decline has resulted in cohorts

too small to populate so many sections. The Reviewer Report cites a problem caused by thinning enrollments: the SS major offers too few upper level offerings. Since course cancellation policies are contractual, my office works with the department to publish enrollment-data-based class schedules with an aim of reducing cancellations. The self-study and Reviewer Report also identify this problem. Fortunately, the department has recently streamlined topical offerings, with changes launching Fall 2022.

The Reviewer Report recommends that the four majors require each other's courses to drive enrollments in each. Cross-disciplinary requirements among ANT/SOC, ECO, and PS could work for two reasons. First, the shared SS research sequence requirement functions as a cross-disciplinary requirement. Second, all four majors in the department rely on the SS research sequence to assess individual programs. Indeed, the SS research sequence has the potential to introduce students to all the department's majors. However, since SS is a separate major that also requires courses from ANT/SOC, ECO, and PS, it effectively pulls potential enrollments from the other three department majors. The result is competition among too many departmental programs for too few students to sustain them all.

The ANT/SOC major differs from other Connecticut State Universities (CSU) and regional competitors by excluding social work and criminal justice, or Justice and Law Administration (JLA), from its curriculum. The Social Sciences Department recently further deepened this divide by rescinding all cross-listings with JLA and invalidating JLA courses as SS electives, effective Fall 2022. These developments create a missed opportunity to diversify and grow several majors through collaboration and sharing students. Since the scholarship of learning shows that interdepartmental collaborations enhance and increase the number of student learning opportunities, it is troubling that this department characterizes its relation to other departments as "cut-throat competitions" (Department Response). Equally unfortunate, since we know that most students avoid unrequired courses, severing ties with JLA could erode student exposure across the Social Sciences and JLA departments, and to rich explorations of disciplinary intersections.

As regional populations continue to decline, the university must adapt to remain competitive. Unfortunately, ANT/SOC and SS face regional and CSU saturation. Nearby, Fairfield University also has a combined ANT/SOC major of about the same size as ours and Sacred Heart University offers Sociology. In addition, the Eastern and Central CSUs offer both anthropology and sociology degrees. Southern CSU's much larger sociology program offers a master's degree, in addition to its undergraduate program in anthropology. All the other CSUs' comparable programs confer more degrees than ours does.

As the Self Study correctly notes, the SS major's multiple options replicate other department programs, and was structured as an outdated secondary education social studies content major. Eliminating the SS major could migrate those majors into the contributing disciplines to bolster those stronger enrollments; however, the department revised the SS major with changes effective Fall 2022. The Self Study reports an expected enrollment turnaround in five years. This length of time is simply too long to wait.

Finally, the department's general education output causes or exacerbates numerous problems. Despite this, the Reviewer Report recommends that the department seek general education Intercultural Competency (IC) attribution for more of its courses. The rationale is that offering even more courses may yield some additional majors from those enrolled to satisfy the IC competency. The Department agrees: its response to the Reviewer Report states its "aim to onboard as many [new IC competency-compliant courses] or more next year" as it did in 2021, which was fourteen (14). However, several mitigating factors exist:

1. The Department's adjunct ratio already exceeds the contractual limit due to the large number of non-required general elective seats it offers;
2. The Department is not required to offer a disproportionate number of general education sections;
3. While these measures may fill more seats, they have not historically driven significant numbers into the majors; and
4. The Reviewer Report and Self Study both cite the large number of general education sections offered by the Department as detrimental to its morale and student satisfaction.

Therefore, seeking IC designation to offer even more general education courses would exacerbate the staffing problem without necessarily solving the enrollment problem.

Finally, while the department has focused recently on creating new and growing existing minors, some of that energy would have more effectively spent on retention and completion for the majors. WCSU does not require students to declare minors, and the department's research has found that "very few students take advantage of them" (Department Response). At the very least, the department should consider streamlining its list of minors offered, discontinuing those without structure or full-time faculty expertise. Creating coherence in Departmental offerings will ease student advising and four-year planning.

Course scheduling

The Self Study reports that the department employs about 25 adjuncts who offer 25 to 35 introductory courses each semester. According to the appendix, the Department delivers more credit hours than any other department in the university. This practice has been consistent for the last five reporting years. As a result, the Department generates disproportionately high credit production and program delivery costs based on the size of its majors, as compared to others that serve more majors and/or provide university-wide requirements. Some departments with larger constituencies generate similar or smaller credit production and program costs. Table 2 compares the number of credits produced and consumed over the last five years, with annual delivery cost, for individual MSAS departments, MSAS, other School totals, and WCSU. For example, over the last five years, the Social Sciences Department produced far more credits than either Writing or Mathematics, both of which provide university requirements—and nearly as many credits as the entire School of Visual and Performing Arts (SVPA). This Department's program cost was nearly equal to that of Psychology, which serves almost three times as many undergraduate majors as the Social Sciences Department's four major programs combined.

Even after accounting for the cognates it provides to other programs in business, health promotion, and nursing, the Social Sciences Department's credit production and program delivery costs are higher than necessary. Table 2 also compares the credits consumed by majors and non-majors over the last five years. Like its credit production rate, the Department's credit consumption numbers and ratio are also quite imbalanced relative to others'. 87% of the Social Sciences Department's credits are consumed by non-majors. This is the fourth-highest ratio in the university despite a much narrower required audience than others at that ratio level (e.g., mathematics, languages, and Interdisciplinary Studies degree completion). Most of the Social Sciences Department's non-major consumption appears to be through introductory courses offered to non-majors fulfilling general education competencies. According to the Self Study, the Department views outsized credit production for non-majors as both a vital recruiting opportunity and evidence of understaffing. However, evidence indicates that offering more general education courses is not growing the Department's majors. Instead, offering fewer general education-only courses can reduce the Department's disproportionate adjunct ratio and program costs.

Table 2. Credit Hour Production, Cost, and Consumption: AY 2016-17 through AY 2020-21

Department/School	Produced		Consumed		
	Total Credits	\$ Annual Mean Cost	% by Non-Majors	# by Non-Majors	# by Majors
Biology	31,778	2,240,985	67.4	21,410	10,368
Chemistry	18,870	1,943,233	82.5	15,576	3,295
Communication & Media Arts	43,948	1,949,533	57.8	25,395	18,553
Computer Science	15,686	1,153,862	55.3	8,671	7,015
English	17,987	1,301,180	80.6	14,492	3,495
History & Global Studies	31,867	1,470,343	83.9	26,752	5,115
Mathematics	47,300	2,501,224	94.1	44,490	2,811
Philosophy & Humanistic Std.	18,932	735,698	92.6	17,532	1,400
Physics, Astro, & Meteorology	6,581	831,444	64.1	4,216	2,365
Psychology	53,457	2,196,014	57.1	30,548	22,909
Social Sciences	60,455	2,322,681	87.5	52,905	7,550
World Languages & Cultures	11,178	696,166	95.2	10,643	535
Writing, Linguistics & C P	30,409	1,932,188	69.6	21,178	9,231
MSAS TOTAL	388,448	21,274,549	75.6	293,807	94,641
ASB TOTAL	128,213	8,735,353	45.9	58,867	69,346
SPS TOTAL	107,321	11,608,890	21.1	22,690	84,631
SVPA TOTAL	66,943	7,170,703	22.9	15,331	51,612
WCSU Grand Total	690,925	48,789,495	56.5	390,695	300,230
Source: WCSU Institutional Research					

The Reviewer Report inaccurately states that my office cancels classes “at the last minute,” “every single semester,” thus causing significant last-minute student schedule disruption and impeding progress to the degree. Unfortunately, this misleading statement ignores three challenges which my office has been unsuccessful in helping the Department to rectify:

1. Developing data-based course rotations and schedules;
2. Planning for contractual cancellation deadlines; and
3. Supporting student degree progress.

The foregoing corrects the reported inaccuracies. First, the Department frequently submits a schedule offering more sections than enrollments can sustain, and some courses offered too frequently for new cohorts to have developed. Therefore, as previously stated, my office recommends leaner schedules based on enrollment data and program needs. We offer all schedulers support in developing and publicizing course rotations that allow both students and faculty to forecast the courses several semesters in advance. Second, the Faculty Handbook’s cancellation deadline—two weeks prior to the start of class—provides ample warning to students and faculty. My office initiates discussions with all MSAS department schedulers roughly a week prior to the cancellation deadline in order to allow enough time for students to adjust their schedules as needed. I have occasionally granted the Department’s request to delay a cancellation decision based on assurances of enrollment commitments by an agreed decision date. Third, when enrollments fail to meet cap-based minimums, we consider multiple factors in cancellation decisions. These include the course’s requirement status; rotation; number of enrolled juniors or seniors who may miss the next rotation; and availability of other courses satisfying the same requirements (usually general education). When cancellation would disrupt, impede degree progress for, or deny a unique learning opportunity to too many students, we run the course. When I do cancel a course, then I approve

commensurate Student Independent Studies (SIS) for interested students with willing faculty, where needed to maintain degree progress. Unfortunately, courses capped at 38 require at least 19 registrants to run, per university policy. To run such courses with far less than that amount would violate university policy, create faculty workload inequity, and skyrocket program costs even further.

Retention

Over the last five years, WCSU and MSAS consistently retained all full-time and transfer, part-time students roughly apace. WCSU first-time and transfer full-time undergraduates retained between 73% and 75.6% across both cohorts across five years. The same MSAS population also held steady over the same period, at 68.6% to 76.2% and in line with WCSU. First-time, part-time cohorts were inconsistent and too small to suggest meaningful conclusions. Table 3 depicts WCSU and MSAS undergraduate retention trends.

Table 3. Five-Year Retention: WCSU and MSAS

Undergraduate Program	Year 1	First Time, Full Time			First Time, Part Time			Transfer, Full Time			Transfer, Part Time		
		Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %
WCSU Undergraduate Total	2019-2020	841	635	75.5	25	10	40.0	517	391	75.6	115	77	67.0
	2018-19	891	657	73.7	24	12	50.0	502	379	75.5	130	82	63.1
	2017-18	832	611	73.4	45	15	33.3	604	460	76.2	162	104	64.2
	2016-17	849	620	73.0	18	7	38.9	579	428	73.9	166	99	59.6
	2015-16	687	505	73.5	15	13	86.7	608	455	74.8	186	122	65.6
WCSU Undergraduate Total	5 Years	4100	3028	73.9	127	57	44.9	2810	2113	75.2	759	484	63.8
MSAS Undergraduate Total	2019-2020	325	231	71.1	17	7	41.2	181	138	76.2	33	19	57.6
	2018-19	362	257	71.0	15	7	46.7	173	123	71.1	50	29	58.0
	2017-18	379	271	71.5	14	9	64.3	251	180	71.7	59	36	61.0
	2016-17	387	272	70.3	5	1	20.0	235	166	70.6	47	27	57.4
	2015-16	327	236	72.2	13	12	92.3	236	162	68.6	54	36	66.7
MSAS Undergraduate Total	5 Years	1778	1265	71.1	64	36	56.3	1078	771	71.5	243	147	60.5
Source: WCSU Institutional Research													

All four Social Sciences Department majors attracted and retained single-digit cohorts. Table 4 illustrates this finding. However, Political Science retained two thirds or better of all full-time students combined over five years, roughly consistent with MSAS and WCSU rates. Looking forward, PS recently completed a complete program overhaul to align with current disciplinary models.

Table 4. Five-Year Retention: Political Science major

Undergraduate Program	Year 1	First Time, Full Time			Transfer, Full Time			Transfer, Part Time		
		Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %
BA Political Science	2019-2020	6	5	83.3	7	5	71.4			
	2018-19	5	4	80.0	6	3	50			
	2017-18	5	3	60.0	7	4	57.1	4	3	75
	2016-17	3	3	100.0	9	6	66.7	1	0	0.0
	2015-16	7	3	42.9	7	4	57.1			
BA Political Science	5 Years	26	18	69.2	36	22	61.1	5	3	60.0
Source: WCSU Institutional Research										

All Economics full-time cohorts retained all students most of the last five years. Like Political Science, Economics retention aligned with MSAS and WCSU rates. Table 5 illustrates these findings. Also, like Political Science, Economics cohorts hovered just at or below double digits, so statistically significant conclusions about these retention trends may be difficult to draw. Lastly, even when combining all full-time students, both Anthropology/Sociology and Social Sciences cohorts rarely exceeded a half dozen. Of the small numbers starting, at least half were always retained. However, none of these sample sizes is large enough to yield statistically significant conclusions.

Table 5. Five-Year Retention: Economics, Anthropology/Sociology, and Social Science majors

Undergraduate Program	Year 1	First Time, Full Time			First Time, Part Time			Transfer, Full Time			Transfer, Part Time		
		Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %	Coh. #	Ret. #	Ret. %
BA Economics	2019-2020	3	3	100.0				5	4	80.0			
	2018-19	1	1	100.0				2	2	100			
	2017-18	3	1	33.3				5	4	80.0			
	2016-17	2	2	100.0				9	8	88.9			
	2015-16	2	2	100.0	1	1	100	4	2	50.0			
BA Economics	5 Years	11	9	81.8	1	1	100.0	25	20	80.0			
BA Anthropology/Sociology	2019-2020							2	1	50.0	2	2	100
	2018-19	4	2	50.0							1	0	0
	2017-18	1	1	100.0				2	2	100.0			
	2016-17	2	1	50.0				1	1	100.0			
	2015-16	2	1	50.0				5	3	60.0			
BA Anthropology/Sociology	5 Years	9	5	55.6				10	7	70.0	3	2	66.7
BA Social Sciences	2019-2020	1	1	100.0	1	1	100	2	1	50.0			
	2018-19	2	2	100.0	1	1	100	2	2	100	1	1	100
	2017-18	1	1	100.0				3	3	100.0			
	2016-17	3	2	66.7				4	3	75.0	3	1	33.3
	2015-16	3	3	100.0				6	4	66.7	1	1	100.0
BA Social Sciences	5 Years	10	9	90.0	2	2	100.0	17	13	76.5	5	3	60.0

Source: WCSU Institutional Research

Advising

In a department of nine faculty and 93 majors spread across four programs, the average advising load ranges from very low to average. Based on the enrollment distribution in Table 6, ECO faculty average six advisees each, and ANT/SOC faculty average nine since they advise both ANT/SOC and SS majors. The outlier is Political Science, which enjoys the Department's largest enrollment advised by the fewest full-time faculty. PS faculty carry more than twice the advising load of their colleagues, averaging 20 apiece.

Table 6. Department Advising Load Average by Major

Heads as of Fall 2021	ANT/SOC+SS	ECO	PS
Majors	34	19	40
Assigned FT Faculty	4	3	2
Average Advising Load	8.5	6.3	20.0

Source: WCSU Institutional Research

It is concerning, therefore, that student complaints about insufficient faculty advising were significant enough to warrant mention in the Reviewer Report. One student said, "we have limited advising appointments" with full-time faculty. In programs with such sharp enrollment declines, retention is doubly important. This department's faculty advisors should pay close attention to advising, which has been shown to enhance student retention and persistence to the degree. Given these reasonable advising loads, Department majors should not have noteworthy difficulty accessing their faculty advisors.

Staffing

The Self Study report correctly notes that the Department's adjunct ratio exceeds the contractually allowed 20%. In AY 2020-21, it was 29.5%, exceeding the limit by nearly half. As already discussed, offering fewer introductory sections outside those serving other programs (e.g., SOC 100) would lower that overage. Reducing the Department's over-reliance on adjunct labor could also address students' complaints that their experience with adjunct faculty "is not good. They have less expertise" (Reviewer Report).

Graduation Rates

Of the Department's four majors, only Political Science increased its number of degrees conferred over the last five years. Its 40% increase also outpaced both MSAS and WCSU degree conferrals, both of which also decreased over the same period. Table 7 illustrates these trends in comparison. For perspective, the PS boost is from 10 to 14, with a high of 19 four years ago and holding stable since then.

Table 7. Degrees Conferred: Department by Major, MSAS, and WCSU

Degree/Certificate Program	Year Ending June 30					% change '17 to '21
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
BA Anthropology/Sociology	9	8	4	6	5	-44.4
BA Economics	10	4	6	6	7	-30.0
BA Political Science	10	19	16	11	14	40.0
BA Social Sciences	12	8	6	2	5	-58.3
MSAS Undergraduate Degrees	400	342	352	355	374	-6.5
WCSU Undergraduate Degrees	1098	946	995	981	1038	-5.5

Source: WCSU Institutional Research

Economics, the department's second strongest major, dipped from 10 to 7 over five years. This 30% loss is concerning. However, this major is recovering consistently from a sharp dip in degrees conferred four years ago. Similarly, the Anthropology/Sociology major's drop from 9 to 5 represents a 44% decline over five years. Finally, the Social Sciences major's 58% loss was the Department's steepest, from 12 to 5 degrees conferred over five years.

The declines in ECO, ANT/SOC, and SS are concerning since all three significantly dropped more sharply and in greater percentage than either MSAS or WCSU. Additionally, all three programs meet the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Board of Regents (BOR) definition of "low completing." BOR policy defines low completing programs as awarding fewer than ten (10) degrees annually over the previous three-year period for bachelor-level programs.

WCSU's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs had asked that all three of the Social Sciences Department's "low completing" programs be allowed to complete scheduled external program reviews so that we could then make data-based decisions on which policy actions to initiate. The BOR Low Completing policy requires that the university initiate one of four actions for each "low completing" program: termination, suspension, consolidation, or continuation. Having now completed an external review of all four Social Sciences Department programs, I conclude this report with my recommendations.

Recommendations

As previously described in this report, adjusting curricula in individual programs has not reversed this department's persistent enrollment declines. Instead, the evidence indicates the need for an infrastructural overhaul to eliminate intra-departmental competition for fewer students, streamline overscheduling, and compete effectively for shrinking high school recruiting pools in a saturated regional market and within the CSCU System. Such an undertaking would require significant institutional investment of several years and both financial and human resources. Meanwhile, continuing to run programs with declining

enrollments while overcoming department resistance to structural revision translates into increasing opportunity cost.

Based on the evidence, I recommend that we discontinue the following degrees:

1. B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology;
2. B.A. in Social Sciences; and
3. B.A. in Economics.