April 8, 2013

Professor Gay Miller, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
228 English Building, MC-461
608 South Wright Street

Professor Miller,

Thank you for the opportunity to bring you up-to-date on the Department of Political Science’s revision of the Civic Leadership Program. As you know, the Department has been re-evaluating the sustainability of program in light of changes to the Program’s funding.

Faculty discussions have centered on achieving the following goals:
* Maintain the integrity of the CLP, including a coherent intellectual core, selective admission, and active promotion of the program;
* Increase the pool of pool of students interested in the program;
* Improve the quality of students engaged in the program;
* Integrate the program into the department more effectively in terms of both intellectual and budgetary resources.

Toward those ends, the faculty have been engaged in conversations that have focused on several aspects of potential revisions. First, the Department plans to develop the undergraduate portion of the program through the creation of a B.A. Concentration/Minor in Civic Leadership. The creation of such a concentration will allow students to get involved in the program without committing to a fifth year and provide them with a “transcriptable” experience. Admission to the concentration would be selective, based on the completion of certain prerequisites, and demonstration of leadership potential. While faculty are debating the exact details of the requirements for a concentration, there is consensus that it will involve completion of an internship/residency as well as other coursework.

Students in the concentration/minor will eventually provide a pool of applicants for a re-tooled M.A. program. These students would apply to the MA program in the fall of their senior years, providing another opportunity to evaluate student performance. As before, an M.A. program would involve a hands-on research practicum. In addition, the Department would require a number of courses that represent the intellectual core of the program. The timing of reestablishing the MA program depends on the achievement of benchmarks in undergraduate enrollment levels and financial viability.

The Department plans to appoint a new director of the program from the tenure-track faculty over the summer. The faculty director will be charged with restarting the program, including
moving ahead on the establishment of concentration/minor; recruiting students to the program; and applying for external funding. A leader drawn from the faculty, rather than an academic professional, will help integrate the CLP into the Department's fundamental missions. As you know, however, the exact timing of appointments often depends on a variety of factors outside of our direct control.

I hope that this information helps satisfy your curiosity about the status of the CLP. The department is very excited about the potential of a revitalized CLP to provide excellent opportunities for our students interested in public service. Thank you once again for your continued interest in the process.

William Bernhard
Professor and Head