

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation
Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: 23 March 2021

FROM: Undergraduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Minor Program Adjustment – Sustainability Studies Minor

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with Section 1. b) of the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) Terms of Reference, USC has the responsibility “to approve minor program adjustments and report them to Academic Council for information.”

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The Faculty proposed to add SOCI 1000U as a core course choice in the program. Other Faculties have had difficulties accommodating their students in taking the minor due to course schedule issues. There is also a concern that the current format of core courses may place excessive pressure for increased enrollment in Political Science courses should enrollment in the minor increase. The addition of SOCI 1000U Introductory Sociology as a core course choice helps mediate both of these problems.

Also, POSC 3800U will be excluded from the Sustainability Studies minor core course options to allow the course to be taught at a higher level, more exclusively aimed at students with more political science background than Sustainability Studies minor students would have. It should be noted that the prerequisites of POSC 3800U already effectively preclude non POSC students from taking the course, so it is not a realistic inclusion in the Sustainability Studies core course options list.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

A possible slight increase in enrollment for SOCI 1000U, although most Sustainability Studies students currently take the course as part of other requirements from their Faculties. SOCI 1000U currently has excess capacity to absorb this level on increase. Possible reduction in enrollment on POSC 3300 (which is currently over-enrolled).

It is possible that easier scheduling for the Sustainability Studies minor will inspire increased enrollment in that program and result in increased demand for other core course options in FSSH and elective course options as well.

TRANSITION PLAN:

Students who have taken POSC 3800U Principles of Economics and Political Economy before Fall 2021 will be allowed to use it to satisfy their Sustainability Studies core course requirements.

Students who have taken SOCI 1000U Introductory Sociology before Fall 2021 will be allowed to use that as a core Sustainability Studies course.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL:

USC: 16 February 2021

Faculty Council: January 19, 2021

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: December 8th, 2020

A meeting on proposed solutions to the scheduling problem was held with concerned faculty from the FESNS and the Faculty of Science, and with the academic advisors from FESNS and FSSH (Patricia MacMillan). These suggested changes emerged from this meeting and were endorsed by all present.

All members of the Political Science program were consulted and responses/concerns incorporated into proposed changes. (The most important concern was to avoid sacrificing availability and quality of POSC courses in attempts to accommodate Sustainability Studies students).

A meeting was held with Peter Stoett, Aaron Mitchell, Patricia MacMillan and Timothy MacNeill. These changes were discussed and endorsed by those present

NEXT STEPS:

This change will be included in the 2021-2022 Academic Calendar.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- [Minor Program Adjustment Proposal](#)