

December 11, 2024

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Anne D'Alleva, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



RE: Program Closure: Master of Arts in Politics and Popular Culture

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the closure of the Master of Arts in Politics and Popular Culture.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2019 the Board of Trustees approved a new Master of Arts Degree in Politics and Popular Culture. The degree was designed to provide students with, “the skills, concepts, and the vocabulary to move fluidly between in-depth study of political science, with all the rigor and specialist knowledge that entails, and popular culture, with all the analytic, creative and communicative possibilities that come with a mass medium.”

The program was expected to enroll a cohort of approximately 10 students per year. However, only one student is currently enrolled in the program, and recruitment has been far from the initial projection. This program was offered in person at the Storrs campus, and was open for students to enroll from fall 2020 onward. The initial launch of the program was during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was a challenging period for recruitment to specialist programs.

The low student demand in this program reflects wider trends in the field of political science. Between 2012 and 2023, master’s degree completions in political science reduced by over 20%, from a little over 2,500 completions nationwide in 2012, to fewer than 2,000 completions nationwide in 2023.

The only student currently enrolled is projected to complete the program in May 2025. No teach out plan is therefore needed, as there will be no students completing the program. Applications to the program had already been suspended. The closure will be effective in the fall 2025 term.