



Date: November 5, 2021

To: Hossein Saiedian, University Senate President
Faculty in the Department
Barbara A. Bichelmeyer, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

From: Karen Moeller, Chair Academic Policies and Procedure committee

Re: Program Discontinuance in Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

In Accordance with University Senate Rules and Regulations USRR 8.2, the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee (AP&P) has reviewed the documentation and held an open public hearing on October 6, 2021, regarding the recommendation to discontinue the following active programs in the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas:

- BA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- BSG in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies

In the submitted documentation titled "Recommendations for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program," the College recommends the majors for LACS to merge with Global and International Studies (GIST) and offer a BA and MA degree in GIST with a concentration in LACS. Once approved, students can enroll in the new GIST MA concentration in Spring/Summer 2022 and the new GIST BA concentration in Fall 2022.

At the public hearing on October 6, 2021, approximately 12 faculty members spoke in opposition to the program's discontinuance. Six written statements were provided to the committee prior to the hearing, all in opposition of program discontinuance. No representatives from GIST spoke regarding how LACS would be integrated in their program.

A significant concern that faculty voiced was prematurely discontinuing majors in LACS without a clear transition plan with GIST. The faculty suggested a postponement to allow the Director, Executive Committee, and faculty affiliates to review and formally approve the proposed changes. Several faculty members also voiced a concern that a concentration in LACS in GIST would not offer the same qualifications to students and hinder their ability to enter graduate programs, seek employment and be recognized as experts in the field of LACS.

Potential loss of Title VI funding (US Department of Education) was another concern voiced by faculty. LACS has been very successful in obtaining Title VI funding throughout its existence. Their current Title VI grant totals \$1.7 million for the years 2018-2022. This grant money counts for the University's AAU status for federal funding. In addition, a concern was raised that if the Title VI funding is lost, KU will be unable to complete for additional federal and foundation funding which supports international education. Title VI funding helps support instruction, faculty and graduate research, tuition and stipends to undergraduate and graduate students, study abroad costs, and outreach and training to minorities

institutions and community colleges to create programs to promote LACS. This funding also provides critical support for teaching understudied languages, a key component of KU's commitment to diversity at the curriculum level. Faculty are concerned that moving the program into GIST will jeopardize future Title VI funding.

Affiliated faculty with the program continually spoke about its strength and the diverse student population and faculty it brings to KU. Faculty indicated how this program works with and promotes students of color into pursuing graduate programs and success in starting their careers. Title VI funding also helps minorities with tuition scholarships and fellowships. This program adds to KU's commitment to diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging (DEIB).

Lastly, faculty questioned the rationale for discontinuance as one does not see any cost savings. The Center for LACS has no faculty lines as it is interdisciplinary and works with affiliated faculty in other areas of study (e.g., humanities, social science, natural science). There is only one 0.5 FTE for the Center's director, which will be continued in the GIST merger.

On October 29, 2021, the AP&P committee met to discuss the submitted documentation and the statements expressed at the hearing. AP&P recommends that the BA/BSG/MA and Graduate Certificate in LACS be continued. The committee concluded that the above arguments all had merit and were not in either the university's best interest or the students'. The committee was concerned with the potential loss of Title VI funding and its consequences to both the university and students. Loss of funding will significantly impact the university's AAU status and affect future undergraduate and graduate students by losing tuition scholarships and fellowship programs. The committee additionally was concerned with the merger to GIST and the loss of the credentials for students seeking employment, graduate programs and the ability to represent themselves as experts in LACS. The committee was unable to determine any cost savings to the university by discontinuing the major. The committee saw a greater financial loss with the loss of Title VI funding and the ability to train experts in LACS and enhance the university's commitment to DEIB. For these reasons, the AP&P Committee recommends for the programs to continue or, at the minimum, wait until detailed plans are outlined with GIST to ensure Title VI funding can be maintained, and a high-quality curriculum will be established within GIST.

Documentation Reviewed by the Committee:

1. Recommendation for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program, September 2021
2. Program Review submitted to KBOR, February 2021
3. Written Statements (available on governance.ku.edu webpage) from Birch, Britton, Hoopes, MacGongle, Pierotti, Garibotto

C: John Colombo, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences