

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.73-83

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Subject

Date JUNE 26, 1973

MOTION 1: "That Senate approve, and recommend approval to the Board of Governors, as set forth in S.73-83, that the Department of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology be reconstituted as two Departments, effective September 1, 1973, with the responsibility for the present curriculum being divided appropriately between a Department of Political Science and a Department of Sociology and Anthropology."

MOTION 2: "That Senate approve that detailed program and curriculum presentations of the two new Departments be developed for recommendation to Senate not later than the December 1973 meeting for projected implementation on September 1, 1974."

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.73-83

MEMORANDUM

To: Secretary of Senate

From: K. Strand

K. Strand

President

Subject:

Date: June 27, 1973

I have received recommendations from the Academic Planning Committee and wish the attached motions and papers to be placed on the July agenda of Senate.

K. Strand

Enclosure

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

BACKGROUND

On October 3, 1972, the Department of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology passed the following resolution unanimously:

"That the Department make representations to the Academic Planning body of the University that the P.S.A. Department be split into a Political Science and Anthropology/Sociology Department....."

On November 3 the question of splitting the Department of P.S.A. formally came before the Academic Planning Committee in the form of a charge from the President that the Academic Planning Committee

- (a) consider briefs from the various faculty members within the P.S.A. Department proposing that two separate departments be established and
- (b) discuss these briefs with the view to the formulation of recommendations to the Senate.

The P.S.A. Student Union had earlier submitted to the Vice-President Academic a memorandum on the 'proposed split of the P.S.A. Department'.

At the November 6 Senate meeting, the Academic Planning Committee was charged by Senate to consider the questions raised. These were

- (a) the vote of the P.S.A. faculty to separate into two departments, and
- (b) the student opposition to this proposal.

At its meeting on November 11, the Academic Planning Committee decided that it could not make any recommendations (even in principle) nor begin proper discussion of the merits and demerits of the proposal until it had studied the relevant information and so reported to Senate at its December meeting. Accordingly, in an advertisement placed in The Peak of November 15 the Academic Planning Committee invited all interested persons to submit briefs, or make other representations, "so that the Committee can proceed to consider the question with all due care and deliberation". The advertisement indicated that briefs and any inquiries should be addressed to the Chairman of the Academic Planning Committee, Dr. R.D. Bradley.

The mechanism through which the proposal would be evaluated had been described to representatives of the P.S.A. faculty by the Dean of Arts and the Vice-President Academic and, in a full page advertisement on November 8, an "open letter to P.S.A. students from the Vice-President Academic had indicated the appropriate procedure through which Senate would be advised. A further solicitation of briefs was made in The Peak of 24 January, 1973, by the Chairman of the Academic Planning Committee.

The Academic Planning Committee received only two brief submissions by the January 31, 1973 deadline. Both of these came from faculty members in the P.S.A. Department, supporting the proposed split.

At a January departmental meeting of the P.S.A., a vote to rescind the proposal to split the Department was approved. Various members of the Department, however, reaffirmed their request for a separate political science department and continued developing a new curriculum.

Because of the clear evidence of division within the Department, the Academic Planning Committee continued its evaluation of the proposal to split the Department. The President provided the A.P.C. with a more detailed specification of his and Senate's earlier charge.

The Academic Planning Committee, in seeking to fulfil its various charges, had received preliminary submissions from the two groups within P.S.A. related to proposed new curricula. It had requested submissions from all interested parties and it had undertaken an examination of the administrative structures in other universities in Canada and elsewhere to be examined.

After careful consideration of these matters, the Academic Planning Committee declared itself on March 29 in favour of the principle of providing separate administrative structures through which the basic disciplines would be taught. In all its discussions, however, the Academic Planning Committee had maintained that any separation of the units composing the Department of P.S.A. must not be allowed to affect the programs of students already enrolled as majors and who would wish to continue proceeding towards degrees. The Academic Vice-President also indicated to faculty that the restructuring of the Department would not affect the contractual positions of current full-time faculty since these positions, whether probationary or with tenure, are in either Anthropology, Political Science or Sociology.

After coming to its decision in principle, the Academic Planning Committee directed the Dean of Arts and the Vice-President Academic to discuss with the P.S.A. Department faculty the implementation of the above proposal.

The decision was first discussed by the Dean and Vice-President with Drs. Rush and Whitworth, Acting Chairmen of P.S.A. during 73-1 and 73-2 respectively. The Academic Vice-President then wrote a letter to all P.S.A. faculty informing them of the status of the proposal and subsequently the Dean of Arts and the Vice-President Academic had a three hour meeting with twelve members of the faculty on the 14th of May. A letter was written to P.S.A. majors on May 17 informing students of the developments. At the meeting with faculty, only two members indicated opposition to the split of the Department with the majority favouring the proposal. It was indeed suggested that the likelihood of the split had already had a beneficial effect on personal interactions within the Department.

Subsequently the Academic Vice-President called a meeting on June 6 to provide information to students and others interested about the developments. This meeting was boycotted by the P.S.A. Student Union. Subsequently an "open forum" was sponsored by the P.S.A. Student Union on June 22.

The Academic Planning Committee considered the reports of the Dean and the Academic Vice-President regarding the May 14 meeting with P.S.A. faculty and arguments presented at the June 22 forum at its meeting on June 25. The Committee voted to recommend that the P.S.A. Department be split into two departments, Political Science and Sociology & Anthropology.

RATIONALE

The Academic Planning Committee believes that the proposed split will alleviate many of the existing tensions within the P.S.A. Department, will lead to the development of more effective disciplinary programs in the Social Sciences and, through inter-departmental contacts either within the Faculty of Arts or using the mechanisms which now exist within the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, will lead to more effective development of true interdisciplinary programs. The Committee is also convinced that the variety of offerings available to students will be increased, that the opportunities to undertake disciplinary studies in depth will be enhanced while a variety of interdisciplinary courses should inevitably follow if the expressed interest in such work exists or can be stimulated.

In formulating its recommendation, the Academic Planning Committee has considered the advantages and disadvantages associated with the current administrative grouping of the disciplines of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology. Through its actions over the past three years, the Academic Planning Committee has indicated a concern for the effective development of interdisciplinary studies at Simon Fraser, through the development of the Division of General Studies and the new Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies.

The Department of P.S.A. was originally set up as an interdisciplinary department and consequently the present recommendation to split the Department into two separate entities may appear somewhat inconsistent with the Committee's previous recommendations. However, in the view of the Academic Planning Committee, the success of interdisciplinary programs depends not only on the commitment of individuals to such programs, but also on a consensus among the faculty involved about the philosophy on which the interdisciplinary cluster of subjects is based, and about the practical implications of this philosophy. Such a consensus, in order to form the foundation of a viable program, must be the result of a profound agreement and not a mere compromise among conflicting opinions.

The Committee feels that such a consensus does not exist within the P.S.A. Department and thus it has not been successful in developing genuinely interdisciplinary programs, either at the undergraduate or at the graduate level. Further, while the walls have in theory been struck down between Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, virtually no interdepartmental activity with the other social sciences and Philosophy has existed, hindering the development of integrated social science curricula. More important, however, the present undergraduate programs in P.S.A. do not provide, in many core areas, the basic curriculum material appropriate for students majoring in each specific discipline. Consequently, in many cases, there is an inadequate preparation for graduate work at other universities.

It is the view of the Academic Planning Committee that the basic disciplines now joined in the P.S.A. Department would best be developed within new administrative structures. At the same time the Committee believes that effective interdisciplinary work in the Social Sciences can better be facilitated by appropriately qualified and sincerely interested faculty members working in specific Faculty programs or through the administrative arrangements offered within the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies.

B.G. Wilson
Vice-President Academic

27 June, 1973

PSA Student Union
Room 5053 A2
Simon Fraser University

July 4, 1973

Dear Senator;

During the past year, the PSA Student Union has taken a position opposing the proposed split of the PSA Department and supporting the re-establishment of a truly Interdisciplinary Social Science at Simon Fraser University. This position, which is consistent with our continued support of the CAUT censure, has been stated publicly on several occasions including the 1972 November Teach-In and more recently at the 1973 June Open Forum. Since this important issue will be appearing before Senate, we would like to summarize for you the major points underlying our stand.

Interdisciplinary Social Science means the creation of a new methodology for the study of human societies. It is premised on a strong paradigmatic belief that the apriori separation or splitting of human activity into political, social, and cultural aspects is no longer the most fruitful way in which to expand our understanding of the acts of man. In one sense, it is a call for a return to the holistic approach of the social philosophy that preceded the establishment of the separate disciplines of political science, sociology, and anthropology. But, it is definitely more than a reactionary desire to recreate the social speculation of that time, the excesses of which gave rise to the need for a more systematic approach. PSA clearly means social science in that it hopes to build upon the advances in factual knowledge, theory and technique that have been produced during the past seventy - five years by reweaving the currently disparate and overly specialized disciplines into a new holistic framework.

The first step in the creation of an Interdisciplinary Social Science can be the juxtaposition of factual material, theories, and investigative approaches from two or more disciplines in dealing with a relatively small range of problems. This

is a course restructuring known at SFU as Interdisciplinary Studies. To the extent that it helps break down departmental and intellectual boundaries, it can certainly be an important development toward more holistic and less narrowly visioned approaches to the study of any phenomena.

However, Interdisciplinary Studies, as presently constituted presupposes the indefinite existence of currently separated fields of inquiry. Political Science, Sociology, and Anthropology have already passed through this stage of reconstruction. The establishment of a combined PSA department in 1965 signified this fact and initiated the creation of a new holistic social science. This stage, which clearly requires the full support of all faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates was seriously disrupted with the firing of 8 - 12 faculty members from the department between 1969 and 1971.

Since that time there has been no strong commitment on the part of the remaining faculty members to develop joint courses and programs necessary for the re-integration of their disciplines. Instead, many have allowed themselves to become sidetracked by participating in a series of counterproductive personal squabbles. Now several of these same professors, who have failed during the last four years to produce even one faculty/student seminar series on how to go about the difficult innovative task of re-integrating their disciplines, come to you by way of Vice President Wilson and the Academic Planning Committee with a proposal to split the department. And what are their reasons? Are they based on the experience of serious intellectual efforts? No, these faculty members claim that political scientists cannot get along with sociologists and anthropologists. On what is this universal law of social science based? A sample of less than twenty, during the years 1969 to 1972 at Simon Fraser University. And what inference do they draw from this interdisciplinary study? Dis-mantle PSA. Split it apart as an administrative unit. And do this even before an acceptable curriculum has been drawn up describing exactly what the new departments hope to achieve. Clearly this is not science; it is non-science.

The current faculty members, like those who were fired, were hired not to the Department of Political Science or to the Department of Sociology or to the Department

of Anthropology. They signed contracts agreeing to work in the Interdisciplinary Social Science of PSA. Those who call for the segregation of disciplines and the establishment of separate departments clearly admit that they are incapable of fulfilling the conditions of those contracts. The PSA Student Union strongly recommends that along with the rehiring of the fired faculty, additional professors be hired who believe in the concept of PSA to replace those who have signed their own admissions of incompetence.

During the past three years, despite the lack of faculty leadership, many PSA graduate and undergraduate students have remained committed to the concept of an integrated approach to social science. We have written many articles for the PEAK, sent letters and held meetings with various members of the faculty, administration, and Provincial government, and have sponsored open forums at which discussion of this and related issues could take place. Our position has been clear and consistent from the outset. The faculty, which first supported and then opposed the split seems now to condone it. They have clearly not shown adequate leadership. Too many members seem to bend with the winds of "lets be realistic" as blown by Brian Wilson and the administration. This is the same administration responsible for illegally firing twelve faculty members since 1969. It is the same administration that has repeatedly vetoed full departmental approval of the permanent hiring of Frank Cassidy and Ken O'Brien, two popular lecturers who have made serious attempts at formulating an integrated methodology. And now it is the same administration that recommends the splitting of the department because (1) the faculty members it has allowed to remain in the department cannot get along with one another and (2) because by some twist of logic, the existence of PSA as an Interdisciplinary Social Science will somehow interfere rather than stimulate the active development of Interdisciplinary Studies.

The PSA Student Union is a voluntary organization consisting of graduate and undergraduate students at SFU who are working toward the development of a truly Interdisciplinary Social Science. Beyond this common goal, we represent a wide range of political

philosophies, life styles and intellectual interests. A great deal has been stated during the past few months concerning the non-existence of Interdisciplinary work in the PSA department. Such a view overlooks the fact of our existence. We are the students upon whose education, presumably, the funds for this department are primarily justified. Despite the irresponsibility of many faculty members in meeting the primary condition of their contracts: to teach PSA, we have been able to take a much wider variety of courses and come into closer contact with one another than would realistically be possible under separated departments. This fall we have decided to initiate a series of speakers, films, and discussion groups to begin a more widespread and serious intellectual attempt to reintegrate the methodologies of political science, sociology, and anthropology. We invite the faculty of PSA and other departments to join us in this effort and to share with us their experience.

We sincerely believe that the basic problems of the PSA department originate with the general decision making process of the university. After our experience in attempting to break through what Dr. Wilson has entitled, "the perceived lack of communication" between students, faculty, and administration, we are again convinced that this as well as many other problems facing the SFU community can be solved on through greater student participation on all departmental and university committees. This is one of our objectives in a reformulated PSA department. This, we believe, is the direction which points to the eventual solution of many of the problems facing the university; when faculty, students, and staff can all share their experience and take responsibility to work for a stimulating academic environment.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

PSA Student Union