

California

State

University,

Fresno

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**M E M O R A N D U M**

March 24, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Ray Hall, Chair

Academic Senate

FROM: James Mullooly, Senator 

                   Anthropology

RE:              **Bachelor of Arts in Social Science**

This memorandum will serve to inform the Academic Senate that Dr. Emma Hughes in collaboration with myself, other members of the College of Social Sciences, and in consultation with all department and program chairs in COSS is proposing a new program entitled, “Bachelor of Arts in Social Science”. The Bachelor of Arts in Social Science is designed to offer BA degree completion programs in two nearby prisons. The program will be fiscally managed by the Division of Continuing and Global Education and will not require any stateside funding.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation approached Fresno State to request degree completion programs in the two prisons in Chowchilla: Valley State Prison and Central California Women’s Facility. Since that offer, Dr. Emma Hughes (currently on sabbatical) has been building the infrastructure and personnel required to make this program a reality. The full application for this program is attached and it currently has the approval of the Deans of Undergraduate Studies, the Division of Continuing and Global Education, the College of Social Sciences. It also has the approval of the College of Social Sciences Curriculum Committee, and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

The BA in Social Science will provide students with an understanding of major theoretical perspectives in the social sciences with a focus on how the social environment, culture, inequalities, and policies shape individual experiences; knowledge about how to utilize social science concepts in the analysis of social phenomena; opportunities to develop critical thinking, written, and oral communication skills rooted in social science perspectives; an appreciation of socio-cultural diversity within and among societies; and applied quantitative and qualitative research skills.

The proposed degree program is the result of collaboration with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) which seeks to expand access to higher education in prison. Following the passage of SB 1391 in 2014, California offers state-funded Associate Degree programs provided by local community colleges in 33 out of 34 of the state’s prisons. Given the research that demonstrates the effectiveness of higher education programs in prison in terms of reducing reoffending and promoting positive reentry post-release (see, for example, Davis, 2019) the state is seeking to advance educational offerings in prisons via partnership with universities such as the CSU in order to offer BA degree completion programs.

The proposed degree program will seamlessly integrate the curricular foundation of the (in-hand) Associate Degree to build an integrated, rigorous and interdisciplinary approach to higher education focused in social science. Our degree will establish connections among multiple disciplines to develop student competence in understanding of social systems, social institutions, and social behavior. While drawing major courses from primarily social science departments, the degree will offer General Education courses that also draw from all relevant disciplines.

Attached: BA-in-SS-new-degree-proposal-2-25-22