

College of Liberal Arts
Office of the Dean

January 7, 2009

Anders Linde-Laursen, Chair
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Marshall University
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

Dear Dr. Linde-Laursen:

I have reviewed the many changes you propose making for the Sociology/Anthropology programs. Clearly, you and your colleagues have put much thought into how best to revise an academic program that has, regrettably, suffered from a lack of leadership for the past several years. As such, I wholeheartedly endorse your proposed changes.

I am pleased to see that you are revising the Sociology major by removing those components of the program that are no longer relevant or contemporary in the discipline. Although this pruning can often be a painful task, especially to those who have grown accustomed to the course structure, it is essential that your academic programs reflect the current status of the discipline. Also, I believe it is appropriate for you to add a major in Anthropology. While Sociology and Anthropology have cognate interests, there is much between the disciplines that make them separate and distinct programs. I believe we can justify the new major as the program is housed within the much larger Sociology-Anthropology program. I am confident that under the guidance of your faculty, many students will find Anthropology to be a rewarding venue to pursue their baccalaureate degree.

You and your colleagues are to be complemented for the development of the Junior Seminar for the majors in the department. This offering anticipates my request that all department in the college offer a similar course. Courses such as these are a considerable resource to students as the course helps them develop a better understanding of the major and career options available after graduation. Moreover, these courses tend to improve student satisfactions and retention.

Again, I thank you and your colleagues for developing a very sensible and systematic revision of your academic programming.

Regards,



David J. Pittenger, Dean

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