

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD0520F
Date of Senate Approval 11/05/2020

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 4 (POLS): Adding a Dual Degree Option with the University of Essex to the Political Science Major

Effective Date: Fall 2021

- 1. Add:** On page 266, below the “Minor in Political Science” section, a new section for and a description of a dual degree program for Political Science majors.

Dual Degree Option with the University of Essex, United Kingdom

Political Science majors at UNC Asheville have the option of pursuing a joint degree with the University of Essex to earn both a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Political Science from UNC Asheville and a Master of Arts (M.A.) or a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree in Human Rights from the University of Essex in roughly 4.5 years. Students pursuing this option pay tuition and fees to UNC Asheville while enrolled here for the beginning of the program, and then pay tuition and fees to Essex where they enroll for the remainder of the program.

To be eligible, students must complete the Liberal Arts Core and at least 28 credits of required and elective courses for the Political Science major with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students would then complete the remainder of their major (at least 10 credits), as well as 35 additional elective credits, at the University of Essex, earning an M.A. or LL.M. in Human Rights in the process. The 12 month (October-October) “dissertation” module completed at Essex will fulfill the student’s senior competency in Political Science (the equivalent of POLS 490), with the approval of faculty from both institutions.

Students must complete a minimum of 30 hours at UNC Asheville to be eligible for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Upon receipt of the final transcript from the University of Essex showing the awarding of the Master’s degree, transfer credit will be added to the student’s UNC Asheville record, and the Bachelor of Arts degree awarded at the next conferral date. Contact the Political Science department chair for additional information.

Impact Statement: The potential resource impact we foresee is the loss tuition and fees for the fourth year for students pursuing this degree; but we anticipate that very few students will be able to avail themselves of this option each year and we hope those losses might be offset if the program attracts additional students to UNC Asheville and potentially funders as well.

Essentially, the Essex program would function as a fourth-year study abroad for UNCA political science majors, with waiver of UNCA’s requirement of residency during their final 30 credit hours (the waiver of the residency requirement is already sufficiently common to have an established procedure in the registrar’s office). Students would be completing the entirety of the LAC requirements and the majority of their major requirements at UNC

Asheville (please see the attached plan of study in the appendix for more detail). Students would complete their last 10 credit hours for the political science major (including the senior thesis requirement) at Essex, as well as an additional 35 elective credits. Essex's rigorous 12-month "dissertation" module would substitute for UNC Asheville's senior thesis class (POLS 490) and would count toward the demonstration of competency for the major, with the approval of faculty from both University programs. Given the repute of the Essex program, we believe the rigor of their dissertation process would be more than sufficient for students to demonstrate competency in Political Science; however, we will still review and approve of all theses. At the completion of the program (roughly 4.5 years), students will have earned a BA in Political Science from UNC Asheville and an MA or LLM in Human Rights from the University of Essex.

As proposed, the dual degree program would only be available to Political Science majors, and the UNC Asheville Political Science faculty members will have responsibility for advertising the program, advising students seeking information and guidance, and reviewing the final "dissertation" for demonstration of competency in the major. In the fourth year, the University of Essex provides all the instructional staff and physical facilities to run the Human Rights MA and LLM programs. As such, this should not impose a burden on other departments or university offices here at UNC Asheville.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in the fourth year, UNC Asheville would lose the tuition dollars from those students completing the program. However, we expect that few students will be able to avail themselves of this option, at least initially, because of the 12-month time commitment and the financial costs (of course, the costs present their own equity and inclusion challenge, and it behooves us to aggressively seek scholarship monies for interested students).

Among the positive impacts we hope will come from this is the possibility that more students will be attracted to UNC Asheville because of this unique dual degree opportunity and that it will increase the prestige of the department and the University. It will also save students pursuing degrees in both programs time and money, since they would otherwise have to pursue each degree consecutively rather than simultaneously.

Appendix: Hypothetical Schedule to Complete All UNCA and Essex Requirements for Dual Degree program

Rationale: UNC Asheville, and the political science department in particular, has become a leader in undergraduate human rights education and scholarship:

- We are home to the new Human Rights Studies minor on campus.
- We produce two highly respected human rights measures (i.e., the Political Terror Scale (PTS) and Societal Violence Scale (SVS), which employ numerous students each year in their production).
- We have strong and abiding (if informal) partnerships with local human rights organizations, such as Inclusive Development International (IDI) and Pisgah Legal Services, which routinely employ or provide internships for students.
- We have cultivated strong regional academic partnerships: we are members of the Georgia Area Human Rights Network (along with Emory, UGA, Georgia Tech, etc.) and have a strong connection with the Center for Global Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill.
- We are developing a new multi-disciplinary undergraduate human rights journal, to be produced by students and faculty in partnership.

- We have a dedicated group of students and faculty - across the campus as well as within political science - with a deep commitment to human rights scholarship and advocacy locally, nationally, and globally.
- We have sent a dozen or more students (many studying human rights) to top-rated US graduate programs, as well as to the University of Essex, over the last decade.

It is a testament to the quality of our academic programs and our students that the University of Essex's Human Rights Centre *approached us* to suggest this dual degree program. Essex is commonly recognized to have one of the oldest and most prestigious human rights programs and professional communities in the world. Essex describes its human rights program as "collaborative and transformational education in the theory and practice of human rights within disciplines and from an interdisciplinary perspective. Our education provides students with a deep and critical knowledge of human rights and their application in practice, providing them with unparalleled preparation for entry or return to human rights academia or practice" (<https://www.essex.ac.uk/centres-and-institutes/human-rights>). The program's focus on critical thinking, interdisciplinarity, and multiculturalism both reflects and adds to our own educational priorities.

We believe this dual degree program would create a stronger partnership between UNCA and the University of Essex and would facilitate our students' ability to complete their undergraduate and graduate degrees in a timelier and financially responsible manner. Interested students who meet the 3.0 GPA requirement and have completed the requisite course work at UNCA would be automatically accepted into the Essex program, further easing the process for students interested in pursuing these degrees.

Year One

Fall	
First Year Seminar/178	4
LANG 120	4
Scientific Perspectives	3-4
Foreign Language	4
	15-16

Spring	
HUM 124	4
STAT 185 (Q)	4
POLS 200-level (except 290)	3-4
(Foreign Language if needed)	(4)
	15-16

Total Credit Hours
~30

Year Two

Fall	
HUM 214	4
POLS 200-level	3-4
POLS 290	4
Elective	4
	15-16

Spring	
Lab Science	4
HUM 324	4
POLS 300-level	3-4
POLS 300-level	3-4
	14-16

Total Credit Hours
~30

Year Three

Fall	
POLS 300/400-level	3-4
POLS 300/400-level	3-4
Arts & Ideas	4
Elective	4
	14-16

Spring	
LA 478 or HUM 414	4
POLS 300/400-level	3-4
POLS 300/400-level	3-4
Elective	4
	14-16

Total Credit Hours
~30

Year Four - Essex

Fall	
Elective Module	15
Essex Module 1 (required)	15
Essex Module 2 (required)	15
Dissertation (Pols 490)	30
Elective Module	15

Spring	
Essex Module 1	15
Essex Module 2	15
Elective Module	15
Elective Module	15
Dissertation	30

Total Credit Hours
At least 30

