August 9, 2011

Dr. Jonathan Anderson  
Associate Vice President  
of Academic Affairs  
University of West Georgia  
1601 Maple Street  
Carrollton, GA 30118

Dear Dr. Anderson:

Thank you for your letter of June 13, 2011, notifying the Commission on Colleges that, effective August 22, 2011, a change will be implemented in the Master of Science with a Major in Rural and Small Town Planning degree. The title of the program will be changed to Master of Urban and Regional Planning. Along with this new name, several courses associated with the program have changed. The program will require the development of five new courses.

Since the change in the program does not represent a significant departure from your approved curriculum, we accept the notification and require no additional information.

Best regards,

Belle S. Wheelan  
Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President  
BSW/LBA:efk

cc: Dr. Beheruz N. Sethna, President  
Dr. Cheryl D. Cardell
June 13, 2011

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

For many years the University of West Georgia has offered a Master of Science with a Major in Rural and Small Town Planning. Based on a recent review of this program, I am writing to notify the commission that UWG has completed a substantive change to this program.

The program is now named: Master of Urban and Regional Planning. Along with this new name, several courses associated with the program have changed. These changes will better position the program toward helping students acquire skills and knowledge in more relevant and pressing needs for communities across the country. Documents outlining the change for this program are included with this letter. The University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents approved this change at its June meeting.

The effective date of this change is August 22, 2011, the first day of fall semester.

Should you or your staff have questions about this notification, we look forward to complying with your requests.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Jonathan R. Anderson  
Associate VP For Academic Affairs  
SACS Liaison

cc: Dr. Beheruz Sethna  
Dr. Peter Hoff  
Dr. Jane McCandless  
Dr. Bob Schaefer
Proposal on Modifying the Planning Program

Prepared by Hee-Jung Jun, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor in Political Science and Planning

1. Changing the Planning Program Title

The Master of Science in Rural and Small Town Planning program is a graduate program in the Department of Political Science and Planning at UWG. This program has existed over 20 years and produced a number of planners, working in the public, non-profit, and private sectors around the state of Georgia.

However, enrollments of the program have declined over time. One of the potential reasons for declining enrolments is its name. The program’s name, Rural and Small Town Planning, is too narrowly focused to attract more students. Although Rural and small town planning is certainly a division of the planning discipline, planning activities are more active in urban areas and at the regional level. Thus, a majority of schools use urban and regional planning or city and regional planning that cover urban planning, rural and small town planning, and regional planning. According to the directory of planning schools at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) website, none of the planning schools are named with Rural and Small Town Planning. This further highlights that the narrow name has made potential students away from the program.

Currently, the Provost Office is concerned about declining enrollments in graduate programs. The planning program has a lot of potentials in increasing enrollments. In spite of the current recession, both US News and World Report and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report that planners continue to be in demand in North America. There are promising career opportunities in planning.

In Georgia, there are only three other planning programs, Georgia Institute of Technology’s City and Regional Planning, Savannah State University’s Urban Studies and Planning, and University of Georgia’s Environmental Planning programs. Thus, the planning program at UWG can attract more students if the university properly advertises the program with changing its name to, for example, Urban and Regional Planning or City and Regional Planning.

A Urban and Regional Planning (URP) name is the most commonly used name for planning programs and most new planning programs use a URP name. In addition, “Urban” is broader than “City” and thus preferable. Therefore, the Department of Political Science and Planning proposes the Master of Urban and Regional Planning as the new name for the existing planning program.

2. Adding New Courses

The Department of Political Science and Planning also proposes changing the curriculum by adding five new courses and changing the core and elective course and requirements. In planning, there are roughly six subfields, Environmental Planning, Housing and Community
Development, Land Use Planning, Planning for Transportation, Sustainable Development, and Economic Development. Except for PLAN 5701 Technology and Sustainable Economic Development, none of the courses based on these subfields is offered to students under the current curriculum. Since planners should have comprehensive knowledge to effectively work with citizens and staffs in other municipal departments, it is necessary that students at the master level take all subfields of planning. Thus, five new courses will be added as elective courses in the curriculum. The new courses are as follows:

- PLAN 5721 Housing and Community Development
- PLAN 5722 Environmental Planning
- PLAN 5723 Transportation Planning
- PLAN 5724 Sustainable Development
- PLAN 6702 Land Use Planning

As there are a planning track for undergraduate students and a public administration program for graduate students in the Department of Political Science and Planning, the department additionally requests adding the following courses:

- PLAN 4721 Housing and Community Development
- POLS 4721 Housing and Community Development
- POLS 5721 Housing and Community Development
- PLAN 4722 Environmental Planning
- POLS 4722 Environmental Planning
- POLS 5722 Environmental Planning
- PLAN 4723 Transportation Planning
- POLS 4723 Transportation Planning
- POLS 5723 Transportation Planning
- PLAN 4724 Sustainable Development
- POLS 4724 Sustainable Development
- POLS 5724 Sustainable Development
- POLS 6702 Land Use Planning

3. Changing the Core and Elective Course Requirements

The Master of Urban and Regional Planning will require the completion of 36 semester hours of graduate credit. Some of the existing core courses will become elective courses and the new curriculum will have three core courses that are core courses in the present curriculum. The core courses (9 hours) are as follows:

- PLAN 5704 Planning Theory and Practice
• POLS 6202 Research Method for Public Administration
• PLAN 5786 Capstone Project or Internship

Students are required to take seven courses (21 hours) among the listed elective courses (See the attached proposed catalog). Four courses out of the seven elective courses required must be PLAN 5000 or 6000 level courses. The remaining six hours may be selected from across the University. Students may fill the remaining six hours with courses in other disciplines such as public administration, geography, economics, sociology, and history. Students can also fill the remaining six hours with the elective courses.

Assessment Plan – Department of Political Science/Planning

Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Description of Assessment Methods*

Every Planning student will develop skills and gain knowledge consistent with the following learning objectives.

1. The theoretical foundations of public planning
2. The methods and techniques of contemporary planning practice
3. The substantive knowledge base necessary to study and practice in the field of planning
4. The ability to apply statistical methods to practical problems within the discipline
5. The ability to communicate their knowledge orally and in writing

Capstone Project or Internship: To evaluate whether the program has adequately prepared students to master these objectives, the Planning director will evaluate a sample of papers submitted in the required capstone or internship. Evaluations will take place every spring term. The director’s report, along with the Department’s response, will be updated every year on the website.

Exit Survey: In their final semester, prior to graduation, all students complete a questionnaire to determine the degree to which the program has achieved its states goals and to learn from the seniors what they believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Use of Assessment Results: The Director of Planning will analyze assessment findings each fall and make appropriate recommendations regarding improvements in the degree programs. Possible changes might include:

• Addition / deletion of courses or changes in course sequences
• Changes in degree requirements
• Use of assessment information to guide changes in degree programs
• Justification of past curriculum changes and to show program improvement resulting from those changes
• Changes in advising processes
• Development of program-based websites to provide students with academic and program information

*Procedures for assessment of student learning for the Master of Urban and Regional Planning will be developed as part of the overall program development to be undertaken by new faculty hired in this area.