19 February 2015

TO: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost
FROM: John Karl Scholz, Dean
RE: Request to Rename and L&S Center, from the Center for the Study of Politics to the “Elections Research Center”

CC: Greg Downey, Associate Dean for Social Science
Anne Gunther, Associate Dean for Budget and Finance
Elaine Klein, Assistant Dean for Academic Planning
Jocelyn Milner, Associate Provost and Director, Academic Planning and Analysis
James Montgomery, Associate Dean for Fiscal Initiatives

On February 17, 2015, the L&S Academic Planning Council considered the attached request to rename an L&S center in a way that better reflects the work it will do, and update its organizational structure to allow for more effective governance.

The Center for the Study of Politics was established in 2004. Affiliated with the Department of Political Science, its work focused on campaign advertising and news coverage of elections. The center was active for several years, but fell dormant when the original director left the university. Of course, a considerable amount of work related to the study of elections is continued in the department, and today the faculty finds itself wishing to reinvigorate the center, narrowing the focus and streamlining the administrative structure. This model (which requires a less substantial time commitment for administration) should make it easier for faculty to participate, and for faculty to be drawn from a wider range of departments.

The L&S APC approved this request unanimously.
February 3, 2015

Associate Dean Greg Downey
College of Letters & Science
105 South Hall

Dear Greg:

This is a formal request to rename and restructure an existing center housed within the Department of Political Science. Our Executive Committee unanimously approved this proposal at our meeting on November 26, 2014.

The renaming is designed to convey more accurately the substantive focus of the center. The restructuring is designed to scale the center’s organization more appropriately to the people and activities involved, and to comply with the UAPC guidelines adopted in 2011.

Background

In 2004 the Center for the Study of Politics was established within the Department of Political Science. Under the direction of Professor Kenneth Goldstein, the center focused on research analyzing campaign advertising and news coverage with hopes to expand to additional areas of study. These activities continued successfully through the 2008 election. Soon afterwards the center’s director left the university, the campaign ad project moved to another university, and the news coverage operation ceased entirely. The center has been dormant for several years.

In the meantime, faculty and students in the Department of Political Science have continued a long tradition of scholarship that has marked UW-Madison as a leader in the study of American elections. Over the years the Department has been home to such notable elections scholars as Leon Epstein, Jack Dennis, Austin Ranney, Diana Mutz, Charles Franklin, John Coleman, and Kenneth Goldstein. That excellent tradition continues today with faculty such as David Canon, Katherine Cramer, Barry Burden, Kenneth Mayer, Dhavan Shah, Byron Shafer, Michael Wagner, and recent addition Eleanor Powell. In recent years several current faculty have developed additional expertise and collaborations around the study of election administration and have been involved in public policy debates around elections.

Plan

We wish to reinvigorate the center and reorient it to align with a defined set of activities. Renamed the Elections Research Center, it will establish UW-Madison as the preeminent institution for the study of U.S. elections. The center will support cutting edge academic analysis of national and state elections to further the scholarly understanding of factors that influence election outcomes and voter decision-making. These factors include candidates, parties, media,
money, advertising, field activities, election laws, and demographic and attitudinal characteristics of the electorate itself. UW-Madison will be the hot spot for nonpartisan and transparent analytic techniques to dissect contemporary elections, a magnet for the best and brightest elections scholars in the country. As it develops the center is expected to provide support for graduate students doing elections research, host a biennial election symposium, and maintain a web presence for elections-related research and teaching activities on campus.

The existing center benefitted from some early grants, and the new center will facilitate further grant activity. More immediately, the center is poised to receive individual gifts to establish its viability. Jeffrey Lyons, a member of both the Department and the College Boards of Visitors is an enthusiastic supporter of the renewed center. To re-launch the center, Mr. Lyons has pledged up to $100,000 to match any donations made to the ERC over the 2016 calendar year. Other Department BOV members have already pledged $42,000 towards the match. The center intends to offer funds to help recruit graduate students in the next admissions cycle and to host its first biennial symposium following the 2016 general elections. The Department’s BOV recently committed to ongoing development activities to support the center and we are optimistic about receiving a major contribution to endow a chair (with the assistance of the Morgridge match). We hope to build on this enthusiasm by reestablishing the center with new personnel and a more tailored focus.

**Specific Proposal**

Our proposal involves both renaming the center to convey a more coherent substantive focus and restructuring the center to harmonize it with the people and facilities likely to be involved as well as the UAPC guidelines.

What follows is summary of the changes being made to the center. A more complete account can be found the proposal template that accompanies this letter.

**Renaming:**
- Rename the Center for the Study of Politics to the Elections Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The new name is a more accurate summary of the center’s emphasis and does not overlap substantively with any other units on campus (see the accompanying endorsements from the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication).

**Restructuring:**
- Reduce the size of the steering committee from nine members to three members. The smaller size allows for regular rotation of faculty members. The Director remains a member of the committee. The department chair continues to serve as an ex officio member of the committee.
- Reduce mandated meetings of the Steering Committee from twice per year to once per year. Steering committee members and other affiliates are anticipated to be active participants in center activities throughout the academic year. Faculty are almost all housed in the same department and building, and thus interact regularly. One mandated committee meeting per year should be sufficient. The Director will continue to provide annual reports to the steering committee, department chair, and Dean.
- Allow that the center “may” have an administrative director rather than that it “shall” have an administrative director. Although an administrative director could be hired in the future, the amount of initial funds, availability of physical space, and sporadic nature of
activities might not justify the employment of a regular staff person. Early activities such as establishing an Internet presence and facilitating the first symposium in 2016 will be supported by a hired graduate student assistant.

- The center no longer uses physical space in Ingraham Hall. The center might pursue office space in North Hall or other locations on campus in the future.

The Department of Political Science faculty, students, and Board of Visitors eagerly anticipate the re-launch of the Elections Research Center and appreciate your support of this renaming and restructuring proposal to make it possible.

Sincerely,

David T. Canon  
Chair, Department of Political Science  
Leon Epstein Faculty Fellow

Attachments: Center for the Study of Politics proposal (2004), Center proposal template, endorsements from the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
Proposal to Establish the Elections Research Center

Refer to the UW-Madison Guidelines for Establishing, Evaluating, and Changing Centers, Institutes, and Center-like Units for detailed information. 
http://www.apa.wisc.edu/UAPC/uapccenters.html

Please keep the body of your proposal to under 10 pages. Use appendices if needed. All of the topics below must be covered. Additional information may be provided if necessary.

Center Name: Elections Research Center

Home Department(s) or Unit(s): Department of Political Science

Home College(s)/School(s): College of Letters & Science

Primary Contact Person: David Canon, Chair, Department of Political Science

Timetable for Initiation: Immediate

Overview/Summary: Provide a summary paragraph of what is being proposed and the motivations for making the proposal.

This proposal renames and restructures the Center for the Study of Politics to become the Elections Research Center. The new center name is more reflective of the department’s strengths and activities. Adjustments made to the center’s structure simplify the organization and allow it to focus on core activities emanating largely from within the Department of Political Science.

Purpose and Mission. What is the proposed purpose and mission for the new center? Explain why this activity could not be as successfully carried out in an existing department or center.

The Elections Research Center will establish UW-Madison as the preeminent institution for the study of U.S. elections. It reflects a long tradition of expertise in elections and will serve as a catalyst for continuing research in the area. The center will support cutting edge academic analysis of national and state elections to further the scholarly understanding of factors that influence election outcomes and voter decision-making. UW-Madison will be the hot spot for nonpartisan and transparent analytic techniques to dissect contemporary elections, a magnet for the best and brightest elections scholars in the country. As it develops the center is expected to provide support for graduate students doing elections research, sponsor a postdoctoral researcher, host a biennial election symposium, and maintain a web presence for elections-related research and teaching activities on campus. No existing center on campus is able to serve this purpose. The dormant Center for the Study of Politics had a much broader
mission than elections and a more cumbersome administrative structure than is necessary for a focused center housed largely within a single academic department.

**Name.** Comment on any issues associated with the center name. The center’s name should convey the center’s focus clearly, even to those outside the field. If the proposed name is similar to that of another unit (an existing school, college, department, academic program, or center), a letter of endorsement from the existing unit with the similar name should be appended to the proposal and the center should be listed in Table 1.

The new name is a more accurate summary of the center’s activities and focus.

**Organizational Structure and Governance.** How will the center be organized? Will it operate within a department, within a school or college, as a unit of the Graduate School, or across multiple schools and colleges? If it is interdisciplinary, how will interactions among departments and schools/colleges be managed? What will be its governance and administrative structure? How will its leadership be identified and to whom will its leadership report? What are the proposed responsibilities of the director? By what process is the director appointed, evaluated, and/or reappointed? If appropriate, append a list of faculty and staff who will participate at implementation and their roles.

The Elections Research Center will be housed in the Department of Political Science. The center will be led by a faculty Director. The Director will establish goals for the center, engage in development and promotional activities, coordinate research, and manage staff working for the center. The Director must be a tenured faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Director shall by chosen by the Dean of the College of Letters and Science upon recommendation of the Chair of the Department of Political Science. The Director serves for a three-year term and may be reappointed. The Director reports to the Chair of the Department of Political Science. This will include at least one written report about the center’s activities to the Chair and Dean each academic year.

A three-member Steering Committee will provide policy direction, planning guidance, and budgetary oversight. The Director shall be one of three members of the Steering Committee. The other two members will be selected by the Director. Steering Committee members serve staggered three-year terms and may be reappointed. The department Chair serves as ex officio members of the Steering Committee. The Director will convene the Steering Committee at least once per academic year. Additional meetings may be called by the Director, Chair, or any member of the Steering Committee.

Faculty and graduate students from across campus will also be invited to affiliate with the center.

**Financial Support.** What kind of funding is needed for the center and what will be its source? If the identified support is lost, what are the prospects for continuation of the center? Note if state funds, particularly new state funds, will support the center.

To help in re-launching the center, Jeff Lyons, a member of the Department of Political Science Board of Visitors, has pledged $100,000 to match other donations made before the end of 2015. Other Board of Visitors members have already pledged at least $42,000 towards the match. Jeff Lyons and the Board of Visitors have committed to ongoing development activities to support the center. Center leaders will actively pursue funding opportunities in concert with the Board of Visitors, the department chair, and
the department’s Budget and Development Committee. The Center is not requesting any new state funds and will be entirely supported by private contributions.

**Administration of Grants.** If grants run through the center will they be administered by the center or the PIs home department? What process will be used to assign or share credit for extramural funding between the center and the Primary Investigator’s department?

The center is housed in the Department of Political Science. Existing staff should be sufficient to administer any grant funds flowing through the center. Credit for extramural funding will be assigned to the center and the overhead generated by the center will be passed through to the Department of Political Science.

**Staffing.** By what mechanism is the participation of new members/participants solicited? How are activities of participants (faculty and staff) allocated or credited among participants’ various units? What procedures are in place to support such discussions? How will administrative support be provided? Is staffing adequate? If an existing unit will provide such support, explain and make sure that support is specifically endorsed in a letter of support.

The center will have an active Internet presence and will invite members of the campus community to participate in the center’s activities. The center’s web site will promote events and offer directions for faculty and graduate students who wish to affiliate with the center. All grant opportunities offered by the center will be promoted on the web site, by email, and via social media. The Director and Steering Committee positions will become open every three years and would be opportunities to install new leaders. Historically the department Chair has been replaced every three years as well, so a Director who is reappointed will need to be acceptable to multiple Chairs.

At least initially the center will be administered by the Director using existing resources. He or she will be assisted by a graduate student employee. All other functions should be possible with existing departmental staff and resources.

**Space.** Where will the center’s staff and activities be housed? Is the space adequate? If there is a need for more space, what plans exist to accommodate this need? Have the departmental/sponsoring unit and school/college facilities staff been consulted? If an existing campus unit or an academic department will provide such space, include this information in the letters of endorsement. Has the Office of Space Management been consulted and informed of the space to be used by the Center?

There are no immediate plans for the center to occupy additional space. Early activities such as establishing an Internet presence and facilitating the first biennial election symposium in 2016 will be supported by a hired graduate student assistant. Occasional events will take place in classrooms and meeting spaces generally available to faculty members in the Department of Political Science.

**Life Cycle: Growth or Discontinuation.** Under what circumstances might the unit evolve into a department? Under what circumstances should it cease to exist? For example, centers should be closed when faculty cease to participate or when new leaders cannot be identified or when external resources that support the center are no longer available. The proposal must include specific “sunset” provisions appropriate to the center being proposed.

Due its limited focus, the center will not evolve into its own department.
The center will cease to exist when a Director and Steering Committee cannot be identified.

**Evaluation.** What is the proposed evaluation process for the center? The process should reflect the size and breadth of the center’s activities. Evaluation plans must include plans to provide a brief annual report to the responsible dean and must describe a periodic review process that includes evaluators external to the center. Central questions should include whether or not the center is fulfilling its mission, if improvements are needed, and if the center should persist. Refer to Center Guidelines for details.

The Director will provide a written report at least once per year to the department Chair and college Dean. Every three years the Director will provide a written report to the faculty in the Department of Political Science for evaluation.

**Consultation, Endorsements, and Approval**

The cover memo/letter from the lead dean(s) is to summarize the need for the center, the center’s contribution to the mission of the school or college, and the fiscal or other resources (if any) that the school or college will provide. The proposal should provide evidence that all interested units are aware of plans for establishing the center and were afforded an opportunity to comment on the plan to establish the new entity. Early communication may help in discovering units with overlapping interests and in fostering their participation. Consider if a center’s function or organization overlaps the efforts of departments, schools, colleges, or other centers at the university and seek supporting letters from those units. If a center will draw on the resources of another unit, those units should be asked to provide a memo of support and to articulate a shared understanding of their contribution to the center.

Use Table 1 to indicate if a unit has been consulted. For the lead unit(s) insert the date of school/college Academic Planning Council approval. For supporting units or no-overlap units insert an “X” as appropriate. Provide explanatory notes if necessary.

**Table 1. Consultation and Letters of Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/College/ Academic Unit</th>
<th>Lead School/College, or Unit; cover memo from the dean or director is attached</th>
<th>Is a School/College/ Unit with shared interest; letter of support attached</th>
<th>No overlap or shared interest; no supporting documentation</th>
<th>Comments or Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Life Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Institute for Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters &amp; Science</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Public Health</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Studies</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[add additional rows as needed]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposal includes endorsements from the directors of the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The initial proposal of the center in 2004 also had letters of support from those units as well as others.
Endorsement from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication:

Dear David,

Sorry for the delay.

The name change for the center is fine with SJMC.

Best,

Hemant

On Jan 16, 2015, at 3:45 PM, David Canon <dtcanon@wisc.edu> wrote:

Dear Professor Shah,

Back in November our Executive Committee voted to approve the renaming of Ken Goldstein's Center for the Study of Politics to the Elections Research Center. Our BOV is in the process of raising money for the new ERC (we are about half-way to our 200k goal), but we still need to get the name change approved by South Hall (and the APC). I have received some feedback on our request: they suggest that we follow up with the two units that wrote letters of support for the original proposal. The SJMC was one of those supporters. The new Center will have a more narrow focus -- elections research rather than all of American politics.

Elaine Klein said a simple email that says, "Sure, this looks fine" is all we need (rather than having to rewrite the letter).

I have attached copies of the original proposal and the letter I sent to Dean Scholz.

Thanks and please let me know if you have any questions.

sincerely,

David
Endorsement from the La Follette School of Public Affairs

Hi David,
From the LFS perspective: sure, this looks fine.

Good luck! [Personally, I think that this is a great idea.]

Thanks! Susan

From: David Canon <dtcanon@wisc.edu>
Date: Friday, January 16, 2015 at 3:40 PM
To: Susan Yackee <syackee@lafollette.wisc.edu>
Subject: Elections Research Center

Dear Susan,

Back in November our Executive Committee voted to approve the renaming of Ken Goldstein's Center for the Study of Politics to the Elections Research Center. Our BOV is in the process of raising money for the new ERC (we are about half-way to our 200k goal), but we still need to get the name change approved by South Hall (and the APC). I have received some feedback on our request: they suggest that we follow up with the two units that wrote letters of support for the original proposal. La Follette was one of those supporters. The new Center will have a more narrow focus -- elections research rather than all of American politics.

Elaine Klein said a simple email that says, "Sure, this looks fine" is all we need (rather than having to rewrite the letter).

I have attached copies of the original proposal and the letter I sent to Dean Scholz.

Thanks and please let me know if you have any questions.

sincerely,

David
Addendum to the Election Research Center proposal

Please include this additional information the Political Science Department’s proposal to rename the Center for the Study of Politics to the “Elections Research Center.” The newly named center will have the following affiliates. More affiliates may be added in the future.

Political Science: Barry Burden (director) David Canon, Kathy Cramer, Kenneth Mayer, Eleanor Powell, Byron Shafer

Law School: Robert Yablon

LaFollette School of Public Affairs: Don Moynihan

Journalism and Mass Communications: Young Kim, Dhavan Shah, Michael Wagner