January 25, 2005

To: Members of the University Senate

From: Kenneth P. Ruscio, Dean
       J. Thomas Wren, Associate Professor and Chair, Curriculum Committee
       Jepson School of Leadership Studies

Re: Approval of Change to the B.A. in Leadership Studies

In May, 2004, the Jepson faculty approved several changes to the leadership studies major. These changes reflect advances in the field of leadership studies, new faculty appointments, and a clarified commitment to a liberal arts approach to the study of leadership. One of the changes—the decision to drop the requirement of a second major or minor—was interpreted to be a change to the degree requirement, requiring approval of the University Senate.

The primary reason for dropping the requirement of a second major or minor is that, given the development of our curriculum in the direction of the liberal arts and well-established university practice, we can no longer see the need for it. Although we are a separate school within the University, our explicit liberal arts approach to the study of leadership makes us no different in this respect from other stand-alone, interdisciplinary majors such as American Studies, Environmental Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. None of these other majors or minors requires an additional one for receiving the degree.

Secondarily, we want to encourage students to explore the breadth of the University’s curriculum. We do not wish to contribute to the credentialing trend so much in evidence in higher education by actually requiring the accumulation of a string of majors and minors on a transcript, often from the most overburdened majors and minors on campus.

Despite this change in the formal requirements, we doubt that future patterns of student choice will be very different from current patterns. By making the change, however, we intend to send an important signal about the purpose and intent of a liberal arts education.