

An open letter to the administrative officers and trustees of Marquette University

As Marquette University moves forward with plans to potentially change the composition of the faculty of the University, we, the faculty in STEM disciplines, would like to express our support for a continued investment in the humanities and social sciences, and solidarity with our colleagues in those fields.

**First, our students' success requires broad training across disciplines.** The nation and the world face a pandemic coupled with economic crisis, the ever-increasing threat of global climate change, growing ethical and cyber security implications of public/data surveillances, and the inequities and disparities of public healthcare access and outcomes. In this time of crisis, the education of the next generation of scientists is dependent on a true partnership with a vibrant intellectual community of humanities and social science scholars. This is not the moment, at this critical juncture for humanity, to weaken or to divest the sciences from crucial partnerships with the humanities and social sciences disciplines. Scientists graduating from Marquette need to be effective communicators, humanistic-oriented, ethical and compassionate leaders; they must have a deep understanding of the human condition, dynamics of complex communities, and the environment. Without exception, this is relevant for graduates from all of our science majors from engineering to the life and physical sciences, as well as to data and computer sciences. Our majors can only gain these critical skills if Marquette maintains its commitments to both teaching and research excellence in the humanities and social sciences. To reduce and undermine these strengths is not only a betrayal of Marquette's Jesuit mission, but a betrayal of the students who chose to study the sciences in the context of a Jesuit commitment to liberal arts education.

**Second, our commitment to Jesuit traditions and ideals requires investments in humanities and social sciences.** A Jesuit liberal arts education is manifested most clearly in the Marquette Core Curriculum (MCC), but not exclusively. The high-impact educational experiences that are fundamental to the excellence of the MCC are best, and sometimes only, deliverable by teachers who are also successful scholars in their fields. To be most impactful, the intellectual traditions and communities of scholars in the humanities and social sciences need to be valued and maintained both within and outside the MCC. All Marquette students need to understand themselves in relation to the wider world culturally, geopolitically, and socially. To undercut the humanities and the social sciences is to surrender the Jesuit ideal of forming young men and women *for others*. These disciplines are what teach our students that assertion is not argument and opinion is not evidence—matters of discernment that are sorely needed in these times. To adequately serve students, Marquette requires humanities and social sciences departments filled with scholars who are leaders in their fields, who model and embody the quest for human understanding in all its complexity and pluriformity. We cannot expect students to value our goal of helping them become people who go forth into the world seeking justice, faith, and care for God's creation if we do not value these disciplines ourselves.

**Finally, our ability to remain competitive among our peer institutions requires continued excellence in humanities and social sciences.** Divestment from the humanities and social sciences at this time of change is short sighted. Preserving and growing a vibrant intellectual community of scholars in the humanities and social sciences is imperative for Marquette's ability to pivot and respond to the changing expectations of prospective students and their future employers. Employers are seeking to recruit well-rounded graduates, who in addition to possessing skills in a specific discipline, can apply both systematic and contextual approaches to their problem solving. This is the time for Marquette to think strategically and creatively to develop innovative multi-disciplinary programs that capitalize on the unique strengths of the humanities and social sciences. To lose a strong grounding in these critical academic disciplines will disadvantage Marquette's ability to evolve and to remain relevant. Most importantly, this will be a disservice to our students as it will limit their competitiveness and ability to adapt, thrive and be agents of change in an increasingly uncertain world.

At this time of critical change, we the faculty of STEM disciplines stand in solidarity and respect for our colleagues in the humanities and social sciences. We look forward to continuing our work together to serve our students and to help Marquette build on its strengths to emerge from this current crisis as a stronger and more unified campus.

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