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Dear Faculty Council members,

I am writing concerning the Poverty Studies minor proposal that is currently before Faculty Council and CAP. I have been in conversation with Peggy about the proposal for a few weeks now, and I want to share with you my thoughts on it for your consideration.

I very much support the intent and content of the proposal. Poverty Studies is a worthy subject that is certainly in keeping with our mission. I am especially enthusiastic about how the minor will provide students with an opportunity to learn about a social justice issue "through coursework, experiential community-based learning and applied research." I applaud the mission-central work encouraged by the proposal and its intentional linking of curricular and co-curricular experiences.

But part of my responsibility as dean is fiduciary, and I cannot support the proposal on those grounds at this time.

I want to be clear: the revised budget that Dr. Finucane submitted for the proposal is reasonable. But it is still a significant annual expense -- particularly for two course releases-- that I cannot authorize right now. The budget situation is too tenuous this year for me to approve any new program that doesn't offer a reasonable assurance of attracting new students.

Once I have a better sense that the budget situation has been stabilized, and when we have a strategic plan in place that can help us prioritize some of these expenses, I will be happy to re-evaluate the feasibility of the program and the course releases associated with it.

I know that this is frustrating to those who worked on the proposal. I communicated my intentions regarding the proposal earlier this week, and I understand that frustration. As I told them, trust me when I say that it is frustrating for me, too, because I don't like saying "no" any more than anyone else. I am happy to talk with you about the proposal or about my decision if that would be helpful. I want to be as clear as possible about the reasons for my decision and always welcome the opportunity to talk with you about matters that concern us all.

Thank you for the work that you've done and are doing to further enhance student learning opportunities at John Carroll. I'm sorry that I cannot fully endorse this proposal at this time.

Sincerely,

Margaret Farrar