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Bridget Lawrence
Seattle University

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The Creation of ANSO, Seattle U's Newest Major

Bridget Lawrence, Staff Reporter

Starting next fall, students will lose the option to get a degree in just anthropology or sociology. Instead, a new major and minor called ANSO, short for anthropology and sociology, will be offered.

Marc Cohen, professor of philosophy, headed this project and helped come up with the new curriculum, creating something that encompasses both disciplines. Current students can either stay in their original discipline or they can switch to ANSO. Students who start in Fall of 2024 will not have this option and will get a degree in ANSO.

Charles Lawrence, professor of sociology and current acting chair of the department, thinks that despite all the work that has gone into creating the new curriculum, they will not fully know how the major will look until they start teaching the new classes.

"I feel that this is an exciting intellectual challenge because in some ways they're separate disciplines and in other ways they are related," C. Lawrence said.

C. Lawrence also expressed that incoming students have the unique opportunity to encounter both disciplines, likely for the first time, together.

"I think it's fair to say that both of these majors tend to be majors for many students that are discovered once they're here," C. Lawrence said.

The combination of the two separate programs was a lengthy process, but C. Lawrence expressed that the faculty were pleased with the end result. On the other hand, some current students are not as excited about this change even absent a direct impact.

Ethan Lawrence, a fourth-year sociology major, believes that there is a significant difference in the two fields and combining them is contradictory in some ways.

"There were a lot of us that were upset about this change because the history of anthropology does not sit well with sociologists, it can appear Eurocentric," E. Lawrence said. "We're being forced together with a group we don't see eye to eye, perspective-wise."

When he first found out about this change, he did not feel like he was included in the conversation before the decision was made, even though he did attend some of the weekly Zoom meetings about the merger.



Kay McHugh

"My perspective from being in the program in 2020 and 2021 when it was all happening without really any student input was a, 'behind the scenes we're going to do this, what do you think' perspective," E. Lawrence said.

He understands why the university is making this change, but it is not ideal in his mind.

"It is what it is, and I understand from the university's perspective why they're doing it for the budget but I also think that they are just excuses to cut funding for programs that aren't profitable and education shouldn't be for profit," E. Lawrence said.

Other students are not quite as opposed to the merger, including Gina Parker, a third-year sociology major. She went into Seattle U knowing that she wanted to major in sociology because of a class in high school that nurtured her interest.

"It doesn't really affect me a ton, but I like the idea of them combining it. Right now, especially with picking electives, I can look into all the anthropology and sociology classes which is really cool because there are so many options," Parker said.

Parker is also excited at the possibility of increased class sizes.

"My classes are pretty small and you do have classes with all the same people which is nice because you get to know them and have a sense of community but in some ways, you want to hear new voices and opinions as well," Parker said.

She also thinks it's helpful to have both majors on your degree when you graduate so you have more opportunities if you decide to change what you originally thought you wanted to do.

"A lot of people also don't understand the difference between anthropology and sociology so the combination of the two leads to students not having to decide which one to study before even being introduced to the field," Parker said.

There are overall mixed feelings about the combination of the major but it does not affect any current students at Seattle University. The new ANSO curriculum will be put into place in the fall.