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December 3rd, 2020

To: Joy Williamson-Lott, Dean
Kima Cargill, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning
David Canfield-Budde, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mayumi Willgerodt", written in a cursive style.

From: Mayumi Willgerodt, Proxy Dean of the Graduate School; Associate Professor
and Vice Chair for Education, Department of Child, Family, and Population Health Nursing,
University of Washington

RE: Review of the Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program (2019 – 2020)

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's final recommendations from the Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. academic program review. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (June 12th, 2019)
- Self-Study (September 27th, 2019)
- Site visit (October 24th-25th, 2019)
- Review committee report (November 6th, 2019)
- Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program response to the report (February 5th, 2020) (*Note: An addendum to the response was included and received on February 21st, 2020)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (December 3rd, 2020)

The review committee consisted of:

Priti Ramamurthy, Professor, UW Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies

Richard Wright, Professor and Chair, UW Department of Linguistics

Devin DeWeese, Professor, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University

Heather Sharkey, Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania

The Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program at the University of Washington (UW) offers the following degrees: Doctor of Philosophy. The Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program is located in the Graduate School at the University of Washington.

Members of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on December 3rd, 2020. A summary of this report, composed by Graduate School Council Members, is attached to this document.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. In addition, the Council emphatically agrees with the review committee recommendations for additional financial support of this program. The Council has recommended the following:

- Full academic program review in 10 years (2029 - 2030)

We concur with the Council's recommendations.

cc: Mark Richards, Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost
Cabeiri deBergh Robinson, Program Director of the Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program, Associate Professor of International Studies
Becky Corriell, Director, Academic Affairs & Planning, the Graduate School
Academic unit Review Committee Members
Members of the Graduate School Council
GPSS President

Attachment

University of Washington | Graduate Council

Summary of the review of Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program

Academic Unit Name: Interdisciplinary Near and Middle Eastern Studies Ph.D. Program

Degrees/Certificates Included in the Review: Doctor of Philosophy

Program Strengths:

This unit demonstrates several important strengths.

1. It has developed an internationally recognized interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. NMES students have won an impressive number of prestigious national awards. NMES has a high record of student placement both in academic and non-academic jobs.
2. The program has established clear faculty governance and student support through the extraordinary dedication of the Directors, Graduate Program Advisor and Program Administrator.
3. Faculty research and teaching across different departments in UW (particularly, the College of Arts and Sciences) has benefited from being closely associated with NMES students and colleagues.

Challenges and Risks:

1. **Funding for graduate students:** The most serious challenge for NMES is a lack of funding for graduate students. Because the key resource for student recruitment, five College of Arts and Sciences academic year TAs, has expired; they can only offer 1 year of guaranteed funding to prospective students. This has resulted in the best candidates matriculating at other universities, in spite of some of them having an inferior program.
 - a. The College of Arts and Sciences should fund the program with 21 quarters of TA support per year. (This is an addition of 6 quarters to the 15 quarters currently provided by the College annually.)
 - b. The Graduate School should continue to provide 3 quarters of RAships, 3 quarters of fellowship in the form of Hall-Ammerer, and 3 quarters of (Provost's) Recruitment Fellowship support for first-year funding of 3 doctoral students in NMES.
2. **Staff Support:** the review committee recommends increasing the Program Administrator and Graduate Program Advisor position from the current 33% to 50%.
3. **Director support:**
 - a. There should be more coordination between the Dean of the Graduate School and the chair/director of their department/school annually as part of their Yearly Activity Report (YAR) and merit review.
 - b. The director should be invited to attend the College of Art and Sciences Dean's quarterly chairs and directors meeting. Perhaps the Divisional Deans of Social Sciences and Humanities could also consider inviting the Director to their monthly chairs' meetings, or, the Director could receive the minutes of these meetings.
 - c. The director currently receives an Administrative stipend of \$750 per month for 12 months from the Graduate School (prior to summer 2020, the director received a stipend of \$750

per month for 9 months). The review committee recommends that the director receives a one course release/buyout per academic year in addition to the current Administrative stipend of \$750 per month for 12 months from the Graduate School.

4. Faculty support: The Divisional Deans of Social Sciences and Humanities should work with departmental chairs to ensure that faculty contributions to the NMES program are recognized for merit and promotion.
5. Branding: NMES needs to improve its branding. The review committee has several recommendations for what the program could do:
 - a. NMES needs to focus more on areas based on the strengths and research interests of faculty across the university (such as Ottoman and Turkish studies, Middle Eastern and South Asian connections; the history and culture of Jews in Islamic lands; the Indian Ocean world, including Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa; built environments; environmental studies; and legal studies)
 - b. NMES needs to create a visually appealing website to increase the visibility of the program and needs staff support to keep it updated. The Graduate School should provide the NMES program with 3 Student Assistant (SA) quarters annually to support the branding, web-presence, and outreach efforts of the program.
 - c. NMES needs to publicize and celebrate the accomplishments of its scholars (fellowships, conference talks, etc.) on social media.
6. Student Admission and Application Process:
 - a. To attract a diverse body of students, NMES should consider working more closely with the Graduate School's GO-MAP Office to attract, recruit and retain underrepresented minoritized graduate students.
 - b. The Graduate School needs to revise the application process by changing the rubrics by which applicants to the NMES program signal their interests.
 - c. The Program needs to offer incoming students 5-year packages to compete with other schools. To do so, the review committee recommends that the Graduate School provide the program with assurance of back-stop funding.

Areas of Concurrence/Disagreement:

The Department and Review Committee exhibit broad general agreement across most program strengths and challenges. On 1/28/2020 the NMES Response to the Review Committee Report described action that they had taken regarding the recommendations of the Review Committee. With regard to the most important challenges/risks (#1,2,3 above), some resolutions have already been achieved:

- The program had received an informal commitment stating that the CA&S will provide NMES with 15 quarters per academic year support for 5 years.
- It is very likely that the Graduate School will continue to offer 9 quarters of RA and Fellowship funding and will very likely guarantee a backstop of the 5-year commitment to funding.
- The Graduate School is currently not able to commit to one course release/buy-out for the program Director per academic year.
- The Graduate School is not likely to increase funding to include an additional 3 Student Assistant (SA) quarters.

Graduate School Council Recommendation:

The review committee recommends a review in 10 years (2029 – 2030).