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January 31, 2018

To: Jill Purdy
Interim Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Office of the Chancellor, UW Tacoma

From: David L. Eaton

Vice Provost and Dean

Rebecca Aanerud

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning

Re: School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences 2017-2018 Review

This memorandum outlines the recommendations from the review of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Detailed comments are in the documents that were a part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, school, and administrators (March 31, 2017)
- Department's self-study (April 28, 2017)
- Site visit (May 22-23, 2017)
- Review committee report (July 19, 2017)
- School's response to the review committee report (December 15, 2017)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (January 18, 2018)

The review committee included the following faculty:

Christine Harold, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, UW Seattle
(Committee Chair)

Kari Lerum, Associate Professor, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences,
UW Bothell

Sukhwant Jhaj, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Success,
Academic Affairs, Portland State University, Portland, OR

Louis Mendoza, Professor and Director, School of Humanities, Arts and Cultural
Studies, Arizona State University, West Campus, Phoenix, AZ

A representative of the Graduate School Council presented the Review Committee's findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on January 18, 2018. Specific comments and recommendations on the review of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences undergraduate and graduate degree programs are in the attached summary.

We concur with the comments and recommendations of the Graduate School Council.

cc: Gerald Baldasty, Provost and Executive Vice President, Office of the Provost
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs,
Office of the Provost
Anne Clark Bartlett, Dean, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, UW Tacoma
School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Review Committee
Christopher Knaus, Professor, School of Education, UW Tacoma, and
Graduate School Council Representative
Valerie Manusov, Professor, Department of Communication, and Graduate School
Council Representative
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, Academic Affairs
and Planning, The Graduate School

Attachment

**Report to the Graduate School Council
Academic Program Review
January 18, 2018**

Academic Unit Name: School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at University of Washington Tacoma

Graduate School Representatives: Valerie Manusov, Professor, Department of Communication and Christopher Knaus, Professor, School of Education, UW Tacoma

Degrees/Certificates Included in the Review: 14 Bachelor of Arts, 3 Bachelor of Science, 21 minors and certificates, and 1 graduate program (Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies).

Review Summary: UW Tacoma, and the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (herein SIAS) specifically, fills an important niche in the state, serving an interdisciplinary education to a diverse urban population – many of whom are first generation, students of color, and non-traditionally aged students. It is evident that students, faculty, and the larger community all recognize its niche and value. The SIAS administration, faculty, and staff appear genuinely committed to providing a robust interdisciplinary curriculum to their diverse student body. UWT and SIAS have experienced dramatic change and expansion in recent years. The review committee’s impression was that SIAS is comprised of a dynamic and vibrant community of scholars and student advocates who very much want to make the most of the opportunities this growth affords. At the same time, rapidly escalating growth has brought significant challenges that demand concerted and immediate attention. SIAS administrators, faculty, and staff seem to share a common understanding of many of these challenges, yet appear to remain at an impasse as to how to address them. Faculty and staff almost uniformly identified morale as a central issue impeding their effectiveness. Faculty also commented that they were concerned with the perceived lack of support for the MAIS program from SIAS administration. MAIS students expressed that they struggled to develop a cohort or community among their peers.

Previous reviews are included to clarify that while some progress has been made over the past two review cycles, some stubborn issues remain.

Previous Review I (2006): The review committee noted that IAS (which was not a School in 2006) was a strong and innovative program that had accomplished a lot in its young history and with limited resources. Leadership and administration was commended, students appeared satisfied, and the curriculum was innovative, albeit with limited staffing (the faculty included 45 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 5 full-time Lecturers, and a dozen plus part-time Lecturers). Recommendations included a 5-year interim report; More efficient and inspiring governance and decision making structures; Diversification of faculty and staff to increase interdisciplinarity; Integration of merit, promotion, and tenure processes with IAS mission; Thematic alignment to support interdisciplinarity (rather than disciplinary-based divisions); Addition of staff, faculty, and resources to accommodate increasing student demand; and better representation of natural and environmental sciences.

Previous Review II (2011): A 5-year Interim Progress Report clarified administrative re-organization, IAS-specific promotion and tenure guidelines, and an updated draft of a ten-year strategic plan were presented (though a new plan was recommended due in part to plans for growing into a School). Created an Advisory Board of stakeholders, alums, and leaders from local businesses, government, nonprofits, and community. A new Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs started in 2011 (both with faculty appointments in IAS) as new funding models increased resources (faculty grew to 49 tenured or tenure-track faculty, with 5 more coming in the Fall, 3 full-time Senior Lecturers, 27 full-time Lecturers, and more than two dozen part-time Lecturers). A five-year administrative review was recommended.

Current Review: The current review site visit was conducted in May 2017. The self-study and committee report addressed previous reviews in several ways. IAS attained school status, leading to re-organization into five divisions: Culture, Art and Communication (CAC); Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs (PPPA); Science and Mathematics (SAM); Social, Behavioral and Human Sciences (SBHS); and Social and Historical Studies (SHS). The restructuring was intended to foster academic community, streamline communication, and support interdisciplinary research and teaching. A new governing structure included a Dean, Associate Dean for Curriculum & Academic Initiatives, Associate Dean for Faculty & Student Affairs, Director of Administration and Operations, Shared Leadership council, Faculty Council, graduate Steering committee, and the Committee of Division Chairs. In addition, Divisions have their own internal governing structures including Division Chairs and (in some cases) Major Coordinators, tasked with curriculum, scheduling, and hiring priorities (but with no budgetary control).

Program Strengths:

- 1) SIAS fills an essential niche, serving an extremely diverse student population, including first generation students, students of color, and non-traditionally aged-populations.
- 2) The faculty has maintained its growth (SIAS now has a faculty comprising 127 members and 19 staff; with 10 additional faculty hired in the fall), and recent hires add diversity to the faculty.
- 3) The focus on interdisciplinarity reflects and reinforces UWT's mission and values, and provides students with a range of curricular opportunities.

Challenges and Risks:

The report identifies three central sets of challenges and recommendations: 1) School vision & organizational structure, 2) Faculty & staff experiences, and 3) Student experiences. The overwhelming tone of the report is one of shared frustration, overburdened workloads, lack of faith in leadership, a hostile racial climate for faculty, and lack of clear support structures for students.

- 1) School Vision and Organizational Structure
 - a. The divisional structure has not addressed ongoing concerns about faculty workload, faculty governance participation, or organizational clarity, resulting in low faculty morale. There is widespread frustration amongst the faculty, Division Chairs have no budgetary authority and feel excluded from decision making

processes, and divisions appear to compete for resources, rather than collaborate for the common good.

- b. Most faculty feel the current structure is dysfunctional, with faculty governance limited to workgroups where recommendations are not acted upon by administrators. Faculty take on substantial administrative roles within each division, and many faculty noted that the mandate that they vote on personnel matters (up to 200 a year) far outside their areas of expertise does not make sense, is inappropriate, and ultimately diminishes the authority of faculty experts. The “lack of efficiency for utilizing faculty-governance” leads to “widespread frustration and alienation.”
 - c. The perception of centralized decision making, coupled with the lack of effective organization, is exacerbated by communication issues between administration and faculty/staff. (NOTE: The timing of the hiring of the inaugural dean complicated, and perhaps exacerbated, these issues as this study was rushed to meet the Graduate School deadline).
- 2) Faculty and Staff Experiences
- a. Faculty and staff almost uniformly identified morale as a central issue impeding their effectiveness.
 - b. Faculty is comprised largely of Associate and Assistant professors with inordinate workloads, impeding tenure/promotion expectations. Relatedly, lack of support or clear pathways for faculty advancement.
 - c. Lack of shared understanding or attention to meaning, significance, and practice of interdisciplinarity.
 - d. While some progress has been made in terms of faculty diversity, the faculty does not resemble the student population. Faculty note a general hostility in discussions about faculty of color, with abusive faculty meetings, differential service expectations for faculty of color, and lack of respect for mentoring diverse students. The report highlights UW and UWT practices, but it is not clear how these are being followed.
 - e. Limited clarity on faculty leadership of the MAIS, resulting in confusion over faculty roles and processes. Relatedly, faculty report feeling unsupported in teaching MAIS courses and there exists a perception amongst some faculty that the program is being phased out.
- 3) Student Experiences
- a. Most faculty teach undergraduate courses within their disciplines and there is a need to provide supports for interdisciplinarity. Faculty interest in teaching in the graduate program is limited and there are very few interdisciplinary offerings. Outside of core courses, MAIS students take undergraduate courses for graduate credit as there is insufficient coursework at the graduate level. Graduate students report limited faculty support and advising.
 - b. Undergraduate students seek more advising, research opportunities, and graduate school information. Relatedly, undergraduates do not always feel prepared for disciplinary upper division due to interdisciplinary preparation.

Areas of Concurrence:

There is concurrence between the report of the Review Committee and the School's response, and SIAS offers substantive clarification of current efforts and organizational structures. The impact of these clarifications, however, is not clear as many are reported to be implemented in Fall 2017 or Winter 2018.

- 1) The Structure Task Force has an official charge to "assess the organizational structure of SIAS" and to propose and evaluate models for the school's structure. Their charge includes investigating changes to the division of labor between the division and school levels in SIAS that may be possible if the SIAS structure remains the same. Results of the study will be brought to Faculty Council in Winter quarter of 2018, and will result in changes that will be discussed and voted on by the SIAS faculty in Spring 2018.
- 2) A faculty conversation about service workload, initiated at a Fall 2017 faculty retreat, provided a baseline for changes that are currently being addressed jointly by SIAS Faculty Council and the Associate Dean of Faculty Development and Academic Initiatives. Over the coming academic year, SIAS Faculty Council will be clarifying the definition and norms for service.
- 3) The SIAS Dean's Diversity Advisory Council began meeting in November 2017 and includes 12 members with representation from each division and staff. Part of their charge stems from a "moral obligation" to their students, faculty, and staff to provide equity and inclusion on our campus and in our learning environments. Reports of hostility and intolerance in faculty meetings tied to faculty and staff experiences and morale will be addressed by the Council to "enhance awareness and redress of micro-aggressions, inequities, bias."
- 4) This year the Director of MAIS is leading a collaborative assessment of the program, which includes attention to budgetary issues and consideration of alternative curricular models as SIAS develops an Academic Plan. A cohort of MAIS faculty will be cultivated and faculty mentors will be assigned "to every new graduate student in MAIS for their first year" and "by the end of their first year, graduate students should choose/be assigned a Capstone advisor" so as not to be on their own navigating the program.
- 5) SIAS is working on communication and morale issues for faculty and staff and better connection for their undergraduate students.

Graduate School Council Recommendations:

- 1) There is a need to re-engage faculty through a coordinated, transparent, and strategic planning process that addresses the structural inefficiencies of the School. We agree with the Review Committee's suggestion to "strongly encourage SIAS administration to make addressing the school's structural constraints its top priority..." by fully supporting the recently established "structure task force." Prioritize a collaborative effort to reconsider the current divisional structure based on its findings.
- 2) Address the pervasive perception that communication and decision making in SIAS is overly administrative and opaque by practicing transparent, respectful communication at all levels. This includes prioritizing SAIS core values in all school level decisions, regular opportunities for faculty and staff to reflect on, affirm, and be rewarded for enhancing the School's core values, and community building within and across SIAS divisions.

- 3) Take immediate steps to address the climate for faculty and staff, including offering professional development for related staff and faculty, leadership training for faculty, formal mentoring for junior faculty. This also includes immediately addressing the climate of racial hostility, in meetings, workload expectations, and in service to students of color and first generation students.
- 4) Institute student support measures, investigate geographic inclusion of advisors into the School, and increase advising supports, including pathways to graduate school, expansion of graduate student supports, provision of faculty mentorship, advising, and assessment mechanisms for graduate student outcomes. Create transparent, supportive structures for faculty leadership of MAIS.
- 5) Implement assessment mechanisms to measure and improve student experience.
- 6) Prioritize diversity and inclusion in all SIAS practices and decisions. Incorporate a strategic School-wide plan for increasing diversity at all levels, and ensure transparency of processes for such a plan to reflect UW and UWT mission and values.
- 7) The Council agreed with the Review Committee recommendation for a five-year full interim review (2023-2024). In addition, SIAS must provide a one-year update report that addresses faculty engagement, structural reorganization, transparency of decision-making, steps towards addressing racial hostility, MAIS interdisciplinary supports and alignments, including faculty mentoring of graduate students (2018-2019). The report in one year may be helpful for the faculty in preparing for the 5-year review.

The Council highlighted the Review Committee recommendation regarding the need for the faculty to address the School's structural organization in light of the challenges it presents on faculty governance and the School's overall educational mission. The Council further noted the absolute necessity of the faculty to address the existing racial hostility and its impact on faculty, staff and students.