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May 28, 2013

To: Robert C. Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Michael C. Shapiro, Divisional Dean for the Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Department of Comparative Literature (2012-2013)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the Department of Comparative Literature. Detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, academic unit, and administrators (April 30, 2012)
- Comparative Literature self-study (November 15, 2012)
- Site visit (February 7-8, 2013)
- Review committee report (February 27, 2013)
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate Report (February 14, 2013)
- Comparative Literature response to the review committee report (April 1, 2013)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 16, 2013)

The review committee consisted of:

Richard Karpen, Professor and Director, UW School of Music (Review Committee Chair)
Brian Reed, Associate Professor, UW Department of English
Patrice Petro, Vice Provost for International Education, Professor of English and Film Studies,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Haun Saussy, University Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, University of
Chicago

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on May 16, 2013.

The Department of Comparative Literature offers an undergraduate degree with degree options in Literature and Cinema Studies. Its graduate programs include the Master of Arts, Ph.D. (including doctoral degree options in Theory and Criticism and in Textual Studies), and a Graduate Certificate in Cinema and Media Studies.

The Graduate School Council recommended that all degree and certificate programs in Comparative Literature be continued, with an interim report to be submitted in five years (2017-2018). Contingent upon submission of the interim report, the next academic program review will occur in ten years (2022-2023).

Specific comments and recommendations regarding the department and its degree programs include the following, as articulated by the review committee:

Program Strengths

- The intellectual renown of faculty members;
- Strong graduate student placement;
- Significant growth of the Cinema Studies emphasis;
- A notable increase in morale in recent years;
- The efforts of the unit's recently appointed chair to chart a course for the department.

Challenges & Risks

- Few faculty at the mid-career level due to a hiatus in hiring;
- The growth of Cinema Studies, coupled with a Literary Studies emphasis that has seen its world hold steady, if not shrink, has generated an uneven workload and a sense of competition for scarce resources.

Specific Review Committee Recommendations

The review committee proposed changes with a stated goal of fostering a sense of common mission and shared future, aimed at removing some sources of discomfort with the status quo.

- Undergraduate program
 - Create a distinct undergraduate major in Cinema Studies and take steps to make Comparative Literature the campus hub for historical and theoretical scholarship on cinema and media;
 - Redesign the curriculum so that the unit's two major emphases (literary/textual studies and cinema/media studies) are better integrated;
 - Determine the rationale and role of comparative literary studies in the curriculum;
 - Consider offering different levels of language requirements for the BA vs. BA Honors track;
 - Consider renumbering courses so as to minimize confusion.
- Graduate Program
 - Implement strategies and coursework that would allow for greater mentorship and professional and intellectual socialization;
 - The doctoral degree option in Theory and Criticism could be phased out without a loss, with teaching hours diverted to more integrative courses;
 - Stabilize TA lines in cinema and new-media courses;
 - Obtain more space for TA offices;

- Emphasize its diversity mission and work with GOMAP to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities in its graduate programs;
- General
 - Consider renaming the department to more accurately reflect the unit's trajectory;
 - Enlarge the departmental roster and intellectual diversity by:
 - striving to make additional hires;
 - using adjunct appointments and partial faculty lines;
 - Create the position of Associate Chair, held by the Cinema Studies Director;
 - Fund administrative support dedicated to the cinema studies emphasis;
 - Consider a sound-proofed media room for screenings.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The Department of Comparative Literature concurred with most of the review committee's recommendations, noting that many of the recommendations represent initiatives either already underway in the department or that were derived from suggestions raised by departmental faculty and students. Specific comments include the following.

- The department is moving to lower or remove the undergraduate foreign-language requirement. In addition, it plans to focus on curricular redesign efforts to more fully integrate requirements in its two undergraduate tracks.
- Several initiatives and discussions already underway in the department include:
 - Creating a major in Cinema and Media Studies;
 - Renaming the unit;
 - Increasing funds to support the Cinema Studies emphasis;
 - Terminating the Theory and Criticism degree option.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

- The Council recommends continuing status for all the Comparative Literature degree programs with review in 10 years (2022-2023), pending an interim report to be presented to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Dean of the Graduate School in five years (2017-2018).
- The 2017-2018 interim report should articulate the progress the department has made in response to the review committee's recommendations, as well as to the described challenges and risks the department faces.
- The Council concurs with the recommendation, endorsed by the department, to terminate the Theory and Criticism degree option.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Ana Mari Cauce, Provost
Gerald J. Baldasty, Senior Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs
Ed Taylor, Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Miceal F. Vaughan, Chair, Department of Comparative Literature
UW Members of the Comparative Literature Review Committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President