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June 7, 2007

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost  
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost  
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean  
Melissa Austin, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

RE: Review of the Department of Scandinavian Studies

At its meeting of March 1, 2007, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the Department of Scandinavian Studies (Albert J. Sbragia, Associate Professor, Division of French & Italian Studies, and James D. West, Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures; Naomi B. Sokoloff, Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization and Review Committee Chair, was unable to attend) and with Ellen Kaisse, Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences; Terje Leiren, Department Chair; Ann-Charlotte (Lotta) Gavel Adams, Acting Department Chair; and Marianne Stecher-Hansen, Graduate Program Coordinator.

The Department was founded in 1909, and offered only undergraduate degrees until 1948. In that year, the M.A. degree was approved, followed by the Ph.D. degree in 1966. Until 1990, instruction in the Department focused on Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, when a Finnish position was added. Baltic studies also became an integral part of the Department in 1994 with the addition of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages and literatures to the curriculum, funded initially by the College of Arts and Sciences, but now supported primarily by a Baltic Studies Endowment. The current review committee, including its external members (Michael F. Metcalf, Professor and Executive Director, Croft Institute for International Studies, University of Mississippi, and Rose-Marie Oster, Professor, Department of Germanic Studies, University of Maryland, College Park) held its formal on-site review on April 24-25, 2006.

The committee reported finding a small, complex, and outstanding Department that covers many bases, with a devoted faculty and appreciative, enthusiastic students. It has moved to a position of national strength in pioneering an area studies approach within the Humanities Division of UW, and has been run with great skill and equilibrium. Overall, Scandinavian Studies at UW is

thriving. The Department has overcome a number of adversities since the last 10-year status report. The Review Committee encouraged the University to help Scandinavian continue to build strength. Above all, it is important to keep nurturing the outstanding community relationships and the partnerships with foreign governments that Scandinavian Studies has developed. The supporters who have built up endowments and other kinds of contributions have made strong commitments to the Department, which implies that UW should be committed to them and to continuation of the positive interactions that have been established until now. The Advisory Board and other friends of the Department have invested heavily – both in financial terms and in terms of time, effort, and moral support. Therefore it was the Review Committee’s strong recommendation that UW should also keep supporting the Department; it is important not to shift the burden of support onto private sources, but to build on the strong foundations that have been laid through joint university-community endeavors. The Review Committee identified several specific actions that could strengthen what is already a very good, hard-working, and enterprising department:

- 1) Urge the administration to look into ways to ease the space constraints.
- 2) Find a way for the University to redirect students taking elementary language classes from more-commonly-taught to less-commonly-taught languages. This would ease the burden on over-subscribed languages and raise enrollments for languages taught by units such as Scandinavian Studies.
- 3) Consider requiring a third year level language course (that is, one of the advanced text classes) for students majoring in area studies.
- 4) Find ways to engage Central Development more in fundraising.
- 5) Identify potential affiliate faculty overseas, especially in the Baltic countries, to serve on MA and PhD committees.
- 6) Respond to the pressing need for more TAs in the large lecture courses.

The Department appreciated the work of the review committee, the Graduate School, and the opportunity to look at themselves with the benefit of feedback from the committee. The Department Chair noted that he is proud of the unit’s collegiality and academic strength, as well as its service record to the campus and community. The Department’s success in promoting faculty is an indication of these strengths. Commenting on the issue of multiculturalism and the Department’s role in diversity, the chair explained that diversity is not only defined on issues of color. Specifically, the Department offers nine languages with only 8 full-time faculty, two full-time lecturers, and three visiting lecturers. Each faculty member has specialties that contribute to a carefully crafted balance and representation of these languages, reflecting that the Department cares about the diversity issues that are important to the UW. The Department Chair also reported that since the time of the site visit, fundraising efforts have provided two new endowed professorships and that the Department is working aggressively to build these and other endowments, especially for supporting cultural exchanges. Two new developments in this regard are: 1) A foundation has been created by 2 Danish donors that provides support for the Department’s cultural exchanges, including for student and faculty exchanges with Denmark, evening class offerings, visiting graduate students, and a Term Professorship at UW; and 2) Support has been obtained from the Jonsson Family Fund to offer support through the Department, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Office of International Programs and Exchanges for study in Scandinavian Studies, European Studies, Bioengineering, and

Nanotechnology. The College of Arts & Sciences Divisional Dean commented that the Department has done a marvelous job and is a model for working with the community.

During the discussion, the Council suggested that the Department recognize and encourage graduate student participation in departmental governance as part of their professional development. It was also noted that the Department averages one doctorate per year and has a strong record of placing in academia.

The Graduate School Council agreed with the Review Committee recommendation that the degrees offered by the Department should have continuing status, and that the Department of Scandinavian Studies be reviewed again in 10 years, during the 2016-20017 academic year. We concur with this recommendation.

cc: Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Ron Irving, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Ellen M. Kaisse, Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences  
Kimberly Friese, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
Terje I. Leiren, Professor and Chair, Department of Scandinavian Studies  
Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams, Professor and Acting Chair, Department of Scandinavian Studies  
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
Department of Scandinavian Studies Review Committee  
Graduate School Council