



May 18, 2017

To: Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Michael Shapiro, Divisional Dean of 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 Scandinavian Studies (2016-2017)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the academic program review of the Department of Scandinavian Studies. Detailed comments and findings can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (November 30, 2016)
- Department self-study (January 17, 2017)
- Site visit (January 30-31, 2017)
- Review committee report (February 21, 2017)
- Department response to the review committee report (April 25, 2017)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 18, 2017)

The review committee consisted of:

Sabine Wilke, Professor, UW Department of Germanics (Committee Chair)
Gary Handwerk, Professor, UW Department of English
Jason Lavery, Professor, History, Oklahoma State University
Tim Tangherlini, Professor, Scandinavian Section, University of California, Los Angeles

The Department of Scandinavian Studies offers Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

The Graduate School Council considered findings and recommendations from the review at its meeting on May 18, 2017. 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 the Department of Scandinavian Studies on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. After discussion regarding the attached general recommendations, the Council recommended the following action items:

- Full academic program review in 10 years (2026-2027)
- Continue to work with the College of Arts and Sciences to support students' ability to pursue Scandinavian Studies as one of their double majors.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Gerald Baldasty, Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the
Provost
Michaelann Jundt, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Andrew Nestingen, Professor & Chair, Department of Scandinavian Studies
UW Members of the academic program review committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
Wesley Henry, Associate Director, Academic Affairs and Planning, The Graduate School
President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate

Attachment

Summary of Graduate Program Review

Academic unit name: Department of Scandinavian Studies

Degrees offered: BA in Scandinavian Area Studies, Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish, M.A. in Scandinavian Language and Literature, M.A. in Scandinavian Area Studies, Ph.D. in Scandinavian Language and Literature

Site visit dates: January 30-31, 2017

Summary of the review:

The department of Scandinavian Studies currently has seven tenure track faculty responsible for the instruction and mentoring in their undergraduate minor, undergraduate major, and in graduate programs. The review noted the excellent atmosphere in the department and the outstanding team spirit. The department has a successful, inclusive climate at all levels from undergraduate students to faculty members. The classes offered by the department are popular, and enrollment has grown steadily: by 30%, over recent years. The review noted that the department faculty has received outstanding teaching evaluations, and the mentoring provided by the department is appreciated broadly by students, who were very enthusiastic about the program. The department strengths have solidified over the 10-year review period, and new areas of strength have emerged. The department has been very successful in securing endowments and in fundraising, and the review noted the outstanding leadership in this area. The department is engaged with the community and has been active in reaching outside the department. The research profile of the department is strong and continues to grow with new hires and new research directions. The review committee noted especially the forward-looking approach of the department to extend to Baltic studies. The review recommended that the department consider targeting and strategizing the use of department endowments to support the strategic vision for the department, capitalize on the opportunities for new directions with the generational shift in the department, and set clear priorities and strategies for future and ongoing hires.

Strengths:

- The program is very strong academically
- Inclusive collaborative climate with entrepreneurial spirit, the faculty is strongly supportive and happy with department leadership and noted the ability to “think outside the box.” This has led to high morale and team spirit in the department
- The department has a strength in Baltic studies, libraries, and collections
- Students at all levels are extremely pleased with the program; the program contributes strongly to degrees in other majors
- Continued growth on research; the department is considered a flagship in this area
- The value of student experience is currently very high with unique career preparation and networking opportunities including alumni.

Challenges and opportunities:

- The field and department are shifting to a regional Nordic-Baltic perspective instead of focusing on specific countries. This generates an opportunity for outward looking collaborations with other units
- There is a need to think strategically for future hiring. A potential need to fulfill a position in Old Norse was suggested to provide courses in the Viking era, which would further increase enrollment
- Enrollment in language courses had declined during the review period. The department has already proactively made efforts to increase enrollment, and it appears to be on a stable level currently, but will need continued support from CAS and cooperation with other language departments
- The department is somewhat dependent on double majors. This is an important offering for students but may be vulnerable and needs support
- The graduate students are well supported and advised, and they seem to be thriving. There is a need to emphasize diversity to avoid Scandinavian studies being a “heritage” degree
- Some concern was expressed on support in teaching and sustainability. Attention is needed to make recruitment packages competitive and focus on multi-year commitments instead of short term lecturers. An additional vulnerability was identified with decreased TA lines and how this may impact the quality of teaching. A potential solution to this may rely on evaluating how to distribute resources for TAs. It was also suggested that the administrative help be increased to a full time administrative assistant with a classified position

Graduate School Council Recommendation: 10-year full review