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November 1, 2018

To: Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Brian Reed, Divisional Dean of Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences

From: Rebecca Aanerud, Interim Dean *Rebecca Aanerud*  
Kima Cargill, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning *Kima Cargill, Ph.D.*

RE: Review of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (2017-2018)

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's final recommendations from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures 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 (November 1, 2017)
- Self-Study (March 1, 2018)
- Site visit (April 16-17, 2018)
- Review committee report (April 30, 2018)
- Unit response to the report (May 31, 2018)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (November 1, 2018)

The review committee consisted of:

**James Clauss**, Professor, UW Department of Classics (Committee Chair)

**Carolyn Allen**, Professor, UW Department of English

**Yana Hashamova**, Professor and Chair, Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, The Ohio State University

**Justin McCabe Weir**, Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures offers the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on November 1, 2018. 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 Slavic Languages and Literatures on the strength of its programs, faculty and students.

The Council recommends the next review be conducted in 10 years (2027-2028).

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  
Michaelann Jundt, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Katarzyna Dziwirk, Chair, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures  
Becky Corriell, Director, Academic Program Review & Strategy, the Graduate School  
Academic unit Review Committee Members  
Members of the Graduate School Council  
GPSS President

## **Attachment**

### **University of Washington | Graduate Council**

***Degrees/Certificates Included in the Review:*** Bachelor of Arts with two tracks: one leading to BA in Slavic Languages and Literatures specializing in Russian Language and Literature; another, to a BA in Slavic Languages and Literatures with a specialization in Eastern European Languages, Literature, and Culture. In addition, there are three minors (two language-based, one literature-based). At the graduate level, an M.A. and PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures. Beginning Autumn Quarter '18, the Department will offer a 'professionalized terminal M.A. as well as a pre-PhD M.A. and a streamlined 5-year PhD program'. Graduate certificates are not offered, but students are encouraged to seek certificates in Second and Foreign Language Teaching, Public Humanities, etc.

### ***Program Strengths:***

1. In the face of significant obstacles and challenges (summarized below), the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures has proven to be resilient, innovative, and responsive. Partly in response to the '07-'08 review, partly in response to changes within the College of Arts & Sciences, and partly in response to societal shifts in attitude toward the humanities (and an increased emphasis on STEM education), they have 'introduced a number of interdisciplinary and cross-departmental humanities courses' and revamped the PhD program. It is clear from both the Self-Study and the Review Committee's report that the department has been working very hard to respond constructively to a number of external pressures.
2. The Review Committee report gives Slavic high marks for its 'collegial and supportive atmosphere.' As one external reviewer put it during the exit interview, the Department is a 'happy, enthusiastic place', marked by 'outstanding' language instruction (faculty, lecturers, and TAs earn consistently high scores on student evaluations, and department faculty are regularly recognized for their teaching), dedicated faculty and staff, and general satisfaction among undergraduate and graduate students alike.
3. Especially notable are the Department's connections with and outreach to local Slavic communities. The unit has, for instance, an 'advisory board' whose members include representatives from those communities. The Department is engaged in raising funds for a Polish Studies Endowment, which sponsors activities of interest to the Polish community; a similar effort is underway to create an endowment for Slovene studies.
4. As one instance of how the Department adeptly plays to existing strengths, we note its aim to 'become a strong center of Russian Jewish Studies nationally' (several faculty have significant scholarly interests in this area). The Review Committee lauded this effort, urging a still greater effort to engage the regional Russian community.
5. Both the Self-Study and the Review Committee report draw attention to the special and important place of this discipline in the current political and global climate, and most especially given the 'increased geopolitical confrontation between the US and the former Soviet Union' (Self-Study p. 28).

**Challenges & Risks:**

1. Decline in foreign language enrollments (and a concomitant decline in the number of majors). The Department's Self-Study identifies as its 'greatest challenge' the decline in enrollments in foreign language, a decline set in motion by the College of Arts & Science's reconfiguring of the foreign language requirement in 2009. For all intents and purposes this change obviated the requirement for most UW undergraduates; additional factors have exacerbated the situation (e.g., a stricter enforcement of the '210 credit' rule). Slavic's experience in this respect is by no means isolated; virtually every department at the UW that offers foreign language instruction has been severely affected by these changes. This concern is strongly echoed in the report of the Review Committee, with a call to the College to re-consider the '09 decision. The 10-year enrollment figures (e.g., 145 students enrolled in first-year language instruction in the Department in AQ '08 to 58 in AQ '16) and BAs granted (21 in '08-'09, 4 in '16-'17) speak for themselves.
2. While neither the Department Self-Study nor the Review Committee report focuses on the declining size of the faculty (one Committee member noted that the numbers were 'appropriate for current circumstances'), it should be noted that since the last review two professors have retired and have not been (and evidently are not slated to be) replaced; future retirements loom. The Department did more directly acknowledge this as a concern in the 'response' to the Review Committee report. There is currently only one assistant professor in the Department, whose appointment is split with Jewish Studies (in addition, the department has three associate professor and three professors as well as several lecturers). In addition, the decline in enrollments, combined with increased TA stipends that were *not* accompanied by an increase in TA funding, has reduced the TA cohort. This situation is merely reflective of the impact the decline in enrollments has had on the unit and underscores the fact that the unit is at a 'crossroads', as stated in their 'response'.
3. The Review Committee report drew attention to the Department's current requirement that majors must complete 4 years of language instruction, a requirement they note is 'no longer in step with many programs around the country.' The recommendation was made that the Department should revisit its requirements. In connection with this, the Committee further suggested that a reduction in the language requirement might be offset by an increase in acceptance of Jackson School courses toward the major, thus enhancing the unit's existing strengths and numbers in interdisciplinary studies. The Committee also suggested the Department would benefit if UW offered language certificates or citations similar to those offered at Harvard, Carnegie Mellon, and Stanford.
4. The Review Committee suggested that Slavic seek more opportunities for students to engage in study abroad.

**Areas of Concurrence**

There is general concurrence between the report of the Review Committee and the Department's response. While the Department acknowledges the desirability of several of the Committee's recommendations – and agrees that these recommendations should be seriously considered – they hesitate to implement some of them. They cite changing conditions faced by the Department, such as the College's planned 'direct to division' admissions (the impact of this is unclear, e.g., it may lead to the creation of division-wide majors), the challenges to expanding foreign study initiatives in the face of reduced majors and enrollments, etc. It should be noted that the Department believes 'direct to division' admissions will boost enrollments and reduce the need to implement some of the Committee's suggestions. To one of the Committee's most substantial suggestions, that the Department review its major requirements and consider

some curricular changes, the Department indicates that it will undertake such a review in the coming year. They expressed no disagreements with the Committee's findings.

***Graduate School Council Recommendations:***

The Graduate School Council recommends continuing status for the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, with the next review to take place in 10 years.