

# UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

*Undergraduate Academic Affairs*

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*The Graduate School*

June 30, 2010

To: Phyllis M. Wise, Provost and Executive Vice President  
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning

From: Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean  
James S. Antony, Associate Dean and Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Law, Societies and Justice (LSJ) Program and Comparative Law and Society Studies (CLASS) Graduate Certificate Program.

This memorandum outlines recommendations on the review of the Law, Societies and Justice Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree program and the Comparative Law and Society Studies Graduate Certificate Program. More detailed comments on the programs can be found in the documents referred to below. The review included the following milestones and documentation:

- LSJ and CLASS self-study (October 19, 2009)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (July 14, 2009)
- Site visit (November 5-6, 2009)
- Review committee report (December 7, 2009)
- Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Report (December 3, 2009)
- LSJ/CLASS response to the report (January 25, 2010)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (March 18, 2010)

The review committee consisted of:

Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Professor and Chair, UW Department of Philosophy (Committee Chair)

Elizabeth Pettit, Associate Professor, UW Department of Sociology

Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science,

University of Hawai'i

Mona Lynch, Professor, Department of Criminology, Law and Society,

University of California, Irvine

## **Program Strengths**

- The LSJ and CLASS programs are virtually unparalleled in the interdisciplinary strengths and productivity of their faculty relative to law, society, and justice.
- The curricula of both programs are regarded as superior—one of the leading programs in America, engaging and intellectually rigorous, and producing superlative graduates.
- The future vision and growth potential for graduate training is very strong.
- Students report high regard for the program courses, faculty, and program overall.
- The faculty are productive and have risen through the professorial ranks. Strong faculty cooperation has led to advancement.

- These accomplishments have been achieved with comparatively fewer resources than other major centers for training in socio-legal studies which have larger faculty groups and Ph.D. programs.
- CLASS students have attained good placements at top universities; they have won major dissertation prizes and competitive post-doctoral appointments.

### **Risks and Challenges to the Programs**

- The programs are at a critical point of development. Achievements have been accomplished with limited resources, and future resources are likely to be highly restrictive. The major leadership change under way will have significant impact on program resources and will require considerable faculty time to bridge the transition.
- University-wide fiscal stress threatens stability of program administration, with both the existing administrator and loss of GSA funding. Added to the budgetary retrenchment is the fact that faculty time is becoming scarcer and cohesiveness is threatened.
- Funding for Jonathan Wender, a popular and effective instructor with very close and long-standing commitments to the core vision of LSJ, has been compromised with recent budget cuts. Funding for the position should be stabilized at full-time. It provides a high level of stability in courses offered, in continuity of the criminal justice track—a key part of socio-legal studies, and in several vital advising and program cohesion activities.
- Outreach to other units to initiate or rethink prior programmatic collaboration is advisable.

### **Areas of Tension**

Both the review committee and the program agreed that the interdisciplinary LSJ program is under fiscal stress. They disagreed, however, about the impact of these diminished resources on program management and curricula.

- The review committee recommended continued faculty discussion about long-term goals, outreach to other units on campus, particularly the School of Law, the Seattle community, and a focus on pedagogy in the revision of the undergraduate curriculum.
  - The program responded that community outreach is under way in various forms. The new director will be advised about outreach to other units, including the School of Law.
  - The program felt the committee report does not acknowledge how productive the program has been with only 3.0 (now 3.5) FTE, loyal adjuncts, one staff member, and a small budget.
  - The report undervalued the dilemma of how to adapt the program to a “radical change in resources,” which includes balancing the erosion of the criminal justice track, the inability to offer alternative methods courses, and limited staff for the base courses.
- Maintaining Criminal Justice Track Given Dwindling Resources
  - The committee and the program agreed about the desire to retain the program, but some courses were cut. The program considered eliminating the Social Control and Criminal Justice track, but not the criminal justice content in the curriculum. The committee suggested the changes were due to resources, while the program attributed them also to a change in faculty intellectual foci and to a redesigned curriculum.
  - The program is concerned ABB may limit tenure track faculty’s participation to strengthen this area. Given the inability to depend on other units for the basic curriculum, the latter was redesigned to rely on LSJ’s core faculty teaching core courses and secondary classes that are marginal to the program. Substantive areas were configured, including criminal justice.
- Eliminating Methods Requirement
  - The committee reported the program had eliminated the LSJ methods requirement.

- The program argued that the course was inherited from the old Society and Justice program and did not fit LSJ criteria. While creating an appropriate course is ideal, it is not feasible due to the instability of faculty resources.
- **Explicit Place for Race in the Program**
  - The review committee commented that, while many LSJ courses contain discussions of race, it is not explicitly articulated in the overall curriculum.
  - The program countered that race is integrated in each course and its commitment to critical race, class, and gender components are important methodologies. Furthermore, the program is committed to diversity and reducing criminal justice course offerings may not necessarily reduce the number of students of color in the program.
  - The program noted the committee report misrepresents its committee structure by not distinguishing between standing and ad hoc committees. Two permanent committees exist—the Undergraduate Program Committee and the Graduate Program Committee.

### **Graduate School Council Recommendations**

The Council made the following recommendations on the LSJ undergraduate program and CLASS graduate certificate program.

- The continuing status of the Law, Societies and Justice undergraduate program should be affirmed, and the status of the Comparative Law and Societies Studies graduate certificate program be changed from provisional to continuing.
- The next review of the LSJ and CLASS programs should occur in five years—specifically in the 2015-2016 academic year. This recommendation was made not out of concern for the programs' quality but due to the economic constraints and critical strategic planning decisions that are likely to occur in the next few years.
- The programs are lauded for their highly meritorious educational achievements in the context of very limited economic resources. The commitment and innovation of faculty, students and staff are significant educational assets.
- A Graduate Student Adviser position is vital to the future of the CLASS graduate certificate program. The GSA serves communication and infrastructure roles, helps sustain advising linkages with home departments, and plays an important function in sustaining a sense of community among students. Serious consideration should be given to fund this position. Alternatively, the program suggests compensating the GPC to assume some of this workload.
- The College of Arts and Science administration is encouraged to give serious consideration to retaining Jonathan Wender by funding his position at full-time.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

- c: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
 Judith Howard, Divisional Dean, Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences  
 Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Janice Decosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Michael McCann, Professor and Acting Chair, Department of Political Science  
 Steven Herbert, Professor, Department of Geography  
 Mark Weitzenkamp, Academic Adviser, Law, Societies and Justice Program  
 LSJ/CLASS Review Committee  
 Members of the Graduate School Council  
 Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School