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July 6, 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 UW Tacoma Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Program

At its meeting of April 19, 2007, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the UW Tacoma Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Program (David G. Allen, Professor and Chair, Department of Women Studies (Committee Chair); Marcy Stein, Professor, Education Program, UW Tacoma; Jamie Mayerfeld, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, unable to attend), and with Cheryl Greengrove, Interim Director and Associate Professor, UW Tacoma Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program, Michael Kalton, Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, UW Tacoma, and Alan Wood, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW Tacoma.

The undergraduate program began in 1990 as the Liberal Studies program, and was transformed into Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS) in 1998. With the move to the permanent UW Tacoma campus, the B.S. in Environmental Studies was created. At the time of this review, both of the programs were upper division studies, although UW Tacoma became a 4-year institution in Autumn, 2006. The M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies degree was approved with provisional (5 year) status in 2000. The Program had not previously been reviewed. The current Review Committee, including its external members (Will Focht, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science; Director, Environmental Institute and Environmental Science Graduate Program, Oklahoma State University; and Daniel Lerner, Professor, Fairhaven College, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA) held its formal on-site review on February 16-17, 2006.

The Review Committee Chair reported that IAS has implemented a beautifully designed curriculum with appreciation for the interdisciplinarity of their focus. The Program offers strong interdisciplinary studies and environmental sciences programs. Overall, the Committee was excited about the academic culture, but had concerns for the political culture of the Program. Specifically, the senior faculty are concerned about the Program's future because the initial success of the developmental years has outstripped current operational realities. The Review Committee encouraged IAS to increase the transparency and accountability of their organizational structure, including promotion and tenure. The Committee acknowledged interactions within the UWT campus overall are a factor, and that some of the faculty tensions within the Program are the result of rapid growth experienced at the UWT campus. Please see a summary of the Review Committee recommendations on the attached page.

The Program representatives noted that in addition to expansion of the UWT campus, IAS itself has experienced significant change in that there is now a new Interim Director. In order to build morale, as well as create an intellectual place to get together, the Interim Director has already taken several specific steps. For example, the IAS retreat was taken to an off-site location, and included discussions on common values. Each monthly faculty meeting now includes a research presentation, and is followed by a reception. The Interim director has also worked on improving the organization of the Program's systems and policies. A task force has been formed to consider a future IAS structure, without forfeiting the interdisciplinarity that the Program thrives on and highly values, and in the context of the future of the UWT campus as a whole. It was noted that the first freshman class entered this academic year, requiring improvements to the curriculum. A founding faculty member stated the Review Committee report was welcomed by the IAS faculty. He noted that the concept of marketing interdisciplinarity is challenging and that the success of this concept is tempered by pressures to account for FTEs and other disciplinary-bound constraints. Finally, the Interim Director noted that based on staffing ratios, IAS has been identified as the most understaffed unit on the UWT campus. Thus, requests for more staff advisors and lab personnel have been submitted.

During the discussion, the Council considered topics including the expected continued growth of the campus, and the possibility of creating colleges or schools within the UWT campus. It was noted however, that the IAS curriculum does not fit into traditional humanities, sciences, and social sciences disciplines. Any structural changes will impact the search for a new director since the current Interim Director is only in place for one year. In response to a question about student mentoring, the Program responded that although there are no written guidelines, graduate students have good access to faculty. In addition, the master's program is still supported by original faculty, while undergraduates obtain advising from a staff advisor and a faculty advisor. Finally, it was noted that graduate students in the Program do not teach since there are no TAs, both because there is no funding and because the interdisciplinary model does not have a traditional undergraduate disciplinary structure.

The Graduate School Council agreed with the Review Committee recommendation that the degrees offered by the UWT IAS Program be given continuing status, and that the Program be reviewed again in 10 years, during the 2016-2017 academic year. The Council also recommended that the Program submit an interim report in 5 years, during the 2011-2012 academic year, with an administrative review. The form of this report should be an update on the status of the Program, responding to specific recommendations in the Review Committee report. We concur with these recommendations.

#### Attachment

c: Patricia Spakes, Chancellor, Office of the Chancellor, UW Tacoma  
 Beth Rushing, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Office of the Chancellor, UW Tacoma  
 Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Janice M. DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
 Cheryl Greengrove, Interim Director and Associate Professor, UW Tacoma  
 Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program  
 Kimberly Friese, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
 Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, Academic Programs,  
 The Graduate School  
 UW Tacoma Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Review Committee  
 Graduate School Council

UW Tacoma Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences Program Review  
*Summary of Review Committee Recommendations*  
April 19, 2007

*Recommendation for Continuation*

We recommend that all three programs be continued for ten years. Because their success hinges on critical organizational and governance factors, we recommend an administrative review be conducted in five years.

- Clarifying and strengthening governance, decision making and communication are critical to securing the current gains of this remarkable program and positioning it for the future.
- The reward system (merit, promotion, tenure) needs to be more individualized, more collaborative, more transparent and better tailored to the actual demands of a growing, innovative and interdisciplinary program.
- Implementing a more coherent and state-of-the-art recruitment process that sustains the focus on diversity and interdisciplinarity.
- More reflection on the meaning of and commitment to interdisciplinarity should be encouraged to reach a shared vision; this vision then should be carefully articulated, reinforced and marketed
- While the reorganization of IAS into divisions is justified, the reorganization should not occur along disciplinary lines but rather along thematic or problem lines
- More should be done to incorporate natural science, social science, humanities, and fine arts into more courses throughout the curriculum
- Faculty and Staff resources should be increased to accommodate increasing student and faculty demands