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May 19, 2016

To: Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Eaton".

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Aanerud".

RE: Review of the Department of French & Italian Studies (2015-2016)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the Department of French & Italian Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. 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, department, and administrators (May 12, 2015)
- Self-study (September 21, 2015)
- Site visit (November 2 – 3, 2015)
- Review committee report (December 3, 2015)
- Departmental response to the review committee report (April 1, 2016)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 5, 2016)

The review committee consisted of:

Julia Herschensohn, Professor and Chair, UW Department of Linguistics (Committee Chair)
Terje Leiren, Professor, UW Department of Scandinavian Studies
Clorinda Donato, Professor of French and Italian, California State University, Long Beach
Panivong Norindr, Associate Professor of French & Comparative Literature; Chair, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Southern California

The Department of French & Italian Studies offers the Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Council considered recommendations at its meeting on May 5, 2016. After discussion, the Council recommended the department submit an interim report to the Graduate School Dean and

Council in three years to address changes concerning graduate programs. The Council recommends the next review be conducted in ten years (2025-2026).

Specific observations and recommendations regarding the program that were called out by the Council include the following.

Program Strengths

The Review Committee detailed several notable strengths of The Department of French & Italian Studies:

- The department has strong leadership and a research-active faculty involved in up-to-date research projects. Since the 2006 review, they have had a number of promotions, and they have a full professor, which they did not previously.
- Their language instruction, 200-level teaching, and pedagogy in general are quite strong, and they are making commendable efforts at outreach to non-majors, such as a 200-level course on fairytales.
- The Rome study abroad program is well run and popular.

Program Challenges & Risks

The Review Committee identified several challenges and risks in its review:

- Enrollment in language courses has fallen, especially in Italian. Italian 101 is down by 72% since Autumn 2008. This has a number of negative effects, for example fostering conflict between lecturers and MA students over relatively scarce teaching opportunities. According to the review committee's report: "The Italian wing needs to work systematically to create a welcoming environment for grad students and provide them with work. There can be no delay in this imperative."
- The graduate programs in both French and Italian could be streamlined and simplified, with particular attention to increasing opportunities for coursework outside the program and collaboration across institutional disciplinary divides.
- There is a general sense of a lack of transparency regarding resource allotment between the French and Italian wings of the department.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The Department of French & Italian Studies agreed with many of the review committee recommendations. Specific responses included:

- The department agrees with streamlining and simplifying requirements for the MA in French, the MA in Italian, and the Ph.D. in French.
- One goal is to rethink the MA in French as a terminal degree program that could lead in many possible directions, including commercial, governmental, and non-profit-oriented. It could still lead to the Ph.D. in French, but that would not be imagined as its primary purpose.
- The faculty in French and Italian Studies could participate more actively in both cross-departmental collaboration and collaboration between the French and the Italian wings.
- All the above would feature in a concerted effort to “rebrand” the MA and Ph.D. programs and engage in a new, more active recruiting push, especially in Italian.
- Declining enrollments in undergraduate language courses is agreed to be a serious concern, with the department already working to implement changes.
- Significant divisions exist (1) between the faculty in the French and Italian wings of the department and (2) between the tenure-line faculty and lecturers in both wings.
- FIS needs to fundraise more aggressively and effectively, and it proposes to do so by raising its community profile through public lecture series; involvement in film festivals and relevant cultural events; the creation of internships; and increased contact with government agencies.

The Department of French & Italian Studies disagreed with several of the review committee recommendations. Specific responses included:

- While not disagreements per se, the department believes that the review committee did not praise its faculty sufficiently for their high level of research and publication; did not sufficiently highlight its upper-division offerings for BAs and the amount of work already undertaken to streamline BA requirements; did not attend carefully to the value of minors in French and Italian as a tool to combat declining enrollments.
- The review committee recommends an immediate increase in enrollment in the graduate programs. The department responds that the precipitous enrollment declines in Italian 101 make it virtually impossible to fund an increase in the number of MAs in Italian, and while

there remains robust demand for introductory French language courses it is not entirely clear whether (1) the College would fund more sections and (2) any enrollment increase ought to proceed revision and streamlining of the requirements for the Ph.D.

- The review committee believes that there are too many staff working in the area of student advising, and they recommend reducing the undergraduate advisor staff position to 50% time. The department strongly disagrees.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends the Department of French & Italian Studies on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. After discussion, the Council recommended the department submit an interim report to the Graduate School Dean and Council in three years to address changes concerning graduate programs. The interim report should describe how the department has worked to streamline requirements for the graduate programs and to emphasize interdisciplinary opportunities for graduate students. In addition, the interim report should address the issue of funding for graduate students. The Council recommends the next review be conducted in ten years (2025-2026).

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Gerald Baldasty, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost
Michael Shapiro, Divisional Dean of Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences
Richard Watts, Chair, Department of French & Italian Studies
Members of the Graduate School Council
Wesley Henry, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President