



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

*Undergraduate Academic Affairs
&
The Graduate School*

November 9, 2009

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 Department of Germanics

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's recommendations on the ten-year review of the Department of Germanics in the College of Arts and Sciences. More detailed comments on the department can be found in the documents referred to below. The review included the following milestones and documentation:

- Germanics self-study (August, 2008)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (October 23 , 2008)
- Site visit (November 17-18, 2008)
- Review committee report (December 17, 2008)
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Report (January 5, 2009)
- Department response to the report (January 27, 2009)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 21, 2009)

The review committee consisted of:

James J. Clauss, Professor and Director, Honors Program, Department of Classics,
(Committee Chair)
Scott B. Noegel, Professor and Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages
and Civilization
Cynthia Steele, Professor and Chair, Department of Comparative Literature
Benjamin K. Bennett, Professor, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures,
University of Virginia
Sabine Hake, Professor, Department of Germanic Studies, University of Texas at Austin

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented the following findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on May 21, 2009.

Program Strengths

The scholarly excellence of the Germanics faculty is well respected nationally and internationally, which places it among the top ten in the nation. The department Chair has provided strong leadership. Faculty is collegial and productive, and each contributes to both teaching and research. The department remains competitive nationally for graduate students and the placements of recent doctoral program graduates have been primarily at colleges and major research institutions. The Max Kade Foundation funding is significant to the department's national ranking. The Max Kade fellowship, supplemented with tuition waivers and Graduate School Top Scholar awards, provides 2-3 first-year graduate students funding at \$20,000. The language program remains strong and continues to draw students campus-wide. The department attracts a significant number of undergraduate majors despite a decline in majors over the past decades, a trend that has occurred nationally. Merging the 'language and literature' and 'cultural studies' tracks was an efficient and intellectually wise faculty decision. Undergraduate and graduate students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their programs of study. The department staff is considered very effective.

Challenges and Risks

The decline in the number of tenure-track faculty due to retirements in recent years presents a challenge for the department. Rebuilding the faculty to its previous 9-10 FTE would help the department fulfill its core mission. The graduate program is hampered by financially by uncompetitive teaching assistant salaries. Funding packages that the department offers are not comparable with peers nationally. The department has an atypical high rate of attrition at the M.A. level with 20-25% of the students denied permission to proceed to the doctoral program. While the 7.5 years for the time to doctoral degree completion is comparable to other Humanities programs, it could be shortened. To address these issues, the department might consider clarifying successful pathways from the M.A. to the Ph.D. and facilitating faster progress to graduation. The timeline of the Graduate School's decisions on the GO-MAP two-year fellowship impacts graduate student recruitment. Notification to the department was made well after offers were made to doctoral program candidates by competing programs and is too close to the students' April decision deadline.

Areas of Concurrence

The department expressed overall satisfaction with the review committee's assessment of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Regarding attrition at the M.A. level, the department noted its 'conscious decision' to admit only the academically top students to the doctoral program. The attrition rate included students who were deliberately terminal at the M.A. level and those that were denied admission to the Ph.D. program.

Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council recommends the following to augment the review committee's recommendations and comments on pages 9-10 of the review committee report.

- The department is commended for its work; it should be continued and supported.
- The next review of the degree programs should occur in ten years (2018-2019).
- The current number of tenure-track faculty is insufficient. The administration is strongly urged to maintain the size of, and eventually rebuild the faculty.
- The diminishing instruction of the German language in secondary schools is short-sighted and the University is urged to continue its support of the department's language program.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

c: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Robert Stacey, Divisional Dean, Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences
Ed Taylor, Dean and Vice Provost, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Sabine Wilke, Professor and Chair, Department of Germanics
Germanics Review Committee
Graduate School Council
Jacob Faleschini, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School