



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

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April 9, 2009

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

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

RE: Review of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

This memo outlines the Graduate School's recommendations on the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures program review. More detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents referred to below. The review included the following milestones and documentation:

- Slavic Languages and Literatures self-study (February 2008)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (April 9, 2008)
- Site visit (May 15-16, 2008)
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Report (May, 2008)
- Review committee report (October 27, 2008)
- Slavic Languages and Literatures response to the report (January 15, 2009)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (March 19, 2009)

The review committee consisted of:

Terje I. Leiren, Professor, UW Scandinavian Studies (Committee Chair)
James R. Felak, Associate Professor, UW History
Ellen M. Kaisse, Professor, UW Linguistics
Katerina Clark, Professor, Comparative Literature and Slavic Languages & Literatures,
Yale University
Steven L. Franks, Professor, Slavic Languages & Literatures and Linguistics, Indiana
University

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting March 19, 2009. After discussion, Council recommended continuing

status for the program, with the next review in the 2017-2018 academic year. The Council noted that this is a small, vibrant, and high quality department with strong collegiality among faculty, students, and staff. Specific comments regarding the unit and its B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. programs include the following:

Degrees Offered

- B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.

Program Strengths

- The review committee commented “the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures is a jewel” that “has regained much of its former luster for [UW]” after the prospect of elimination in the early 1990s.
- Slavic Languages and Literatures is a vibrant department with strong collegiality among faculty, students and staff.
- The department’s literature, culture, and film courses have high enrollments and strong teaching evaluations. Enrollments in first-year Russian are the highest of any university in the US.
- The unit maintains strong community ties as well as strong connections across campus, e.g. to the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies in the Jackson School. It has successful development and fundraising efforts.

Challenges and Risks

- The small program size limits flexibility and course offerings for graduate students.
- The linguistics component is difficult to adequately support through resources internal to the department.
- Achieving student diversity in state-defined categories is a challenge for this program where diversity exists according to other cultural and ethnic definitions.

Areas of Concurrence

- The department expressed hearty agreement with the review committee and has begun to address the committee’s recommendations.

Council Recommendations

- The department should continue to explore increased coordination with the Department of Linguistics in offering a linguistics program.
- The department might use peer programs as benchmarks in assessing its success in supporting a diverse student population.
- Curricular reforms for the PhD program should be pursued, including an attempt to increase course offerings and allowing junior faculty to teach more graduate courses.

We concur with the Council’s comments and recommendations.

cc: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Robert C. Stacey, Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences
John D. Sahr, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Galya Diment, Chair, Slavic Languages and Literatures
Slavic Languages & Literatures Review Committee
Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
Jake Faleschini, President, GPSS