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To: Susan Jeffords, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW Bothell  
Bruce Burgett, Dean, School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, UW Bothell

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean *David L. Eaton*  
Gino Aisenberg, Associate Dean for Diversity & Student Affairs *Gino Aisenberg*

RE: Review of the Master of Arts in Cultural Studies and Master of Arts in Policy Studies  
(2014-2015)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS) and Master of Arts in Policy Studies (MAPS) in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (IAS) at UW Bothell. 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, programs, and administrators (June 11, 2014)
- Program self-study (November 18, 2014)
- Site visit (February 26-27, 2015)
- Review committee report (April 16, 2015)
- Response to the review committee report (June 10, 2015)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (January 21, 2015)

The review committee consisted of:

José Antonio Lucero, Associate Professor, UW Jackson School of International Studies  
(Committee Chair)

Mary Kay Gugerty, Professor, UW Evans School of Public Affairs

Handel Kashope Wright, Professor, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia

The School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (IAS) was previously reviewed in 2007-2008. At that time, the Master of Arts in Policy Studies was given continuing status with recommendation for interim report in three years and program review in five years. The Master

of Arts in Cultural Studies started as a new degree program in 2008, undergoing review in 2014-2015 for the first time.

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on January 21, 2016. After discussion, the Council recommended continuing status for the new Master of Arts in Cultural Studies program. Both the MACS and the MAPS programs will be included in the next review of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (2018-2019). Specific observations and recommendations regarding each program were called out by the Council as described below.

### **Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS)**

#### **MACS Program Strengths**

The MACS program is clearly ambitious, distinctive, and outstanding both nationally and internationally as a model of cultural studies as praxis. Strengths include the following:

- Success of the program is characterized by being:
  - simultaneously theory driven and practice oriented;
  - locally focused yet informed by national and global theorization;
  - committed to addressing sociocultural representation in textual terms and in the diversity of students and faculty;
  - interdisciplinary while respecting disciplinary focus;
  - aimed at producing both reflexive cultural workers and academics.
- Faculty, staff, and students alike are invested in and excited about the way critical interdisciplinarity is practiced in the program.
- Excellence of faculty members' pedagogical and scholarly talents as well as their accessibility and flexibility.
- Rigorous curriculum, with an emphasis on a wide-ranging array of theoretical figures, texts and frameworks as curricular foundations.
- Distinctive in the emphasis on the local and the undertaking and examining of cultural work and cultural workers.
- Successful according to current students and alumni.

#### **MACS Program Challenges & Risks**

The Review Committee identified major challenges:

- Lack of financial support for students.
- Junior faculty may be stretched too thin by the combination of teaching and advising across the masters' programs as well as within undergraduate programs that require teaching and administrative labor.
- Some students find program requirements to be too heavy.
- Unevenness of student expectations and experiences arising from the program serving two distinct sets of student needs.
- Diversity is present in the curriculum and in the socio-culturally diverse student body, but the faculty and administration remain relatively homogenous.
- The local focus on the Puget Sound area makes the program distinctive, but the broader regional, national, and international dimensions and reputation are thereby restricted.

- Not enough specific and long-term connections with community partners for students in spite of the program focus on community-based learning and research.

### MACS Review Committee Recommendations

The review committee made specific suggestions about possible paths that MACS might consider to address the challenges it faces. These are articulated in the review committee report.

### MACS Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The program response largely concurred with the review committee's findings, noting that both MACS and MAPS are located within a larger academic unit, the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, adding a level of complexity in addressing changes at the program level.

- The program is addressing student funding in various ways, including exploring existing institutional avenues as well as beginning work on advancement support.
- MACS is exploring curriculum changes to address program pace and workload for junior faculty.
- The program notes that students' differing career trajectories as "academics" and as "culture workers" is a core -- and necessary -- tension in the program, which aims to enrich the practice of both through dialogue between the two. Students' post-graduation career pathways often include work as both.
- The committee's recommendations regarding diversity echo and support efforts already underway in MACS, IAS, and across campus.
- MACS is confident that as junior faculty advance their careers, the visibility of the program will rise accordingly.
- The program is considering faculty-led research clusters/institutes with a series of themed courses built around a shared community partnership. A pilot project has been initiated.

## **Master of Arts in Policy Studies (MAPS)**

### MAPS Program Strengths

- A rigorous set of core courses and excellent connections with local and regional organizations and a growing alumni network.
- Strengthened capstone requirement with rigorous, substantive applied projects.
- Faculty hires made since 2008 have strengthened the program and resulted in a strong set of core courses and electives.

### MAPS Program Challenges

The program faces the challenge of integrating the vertically structured professional scaffolding required of a professional policy program with the more horizontal and open structure characterizing the MACS program and IAS more generally. This includes following challenges:

- Leveraging concentrations and building synergies with other undergraduate and graduate programs within IAS.
- Tension between the demand for greater program autonomy in the hiring process and the fact that this is not part of the IAS model.
- A call within the program for more selective admissions criteria and more rigor in

coursework, entailing even stronger scaffolding in core courses, makes integrating electives with other programs more challenging.

- The cohort model, while an important part of the program and generally successful, needs continual attention to work well on an ongoing basis.
- The articulated need for stronger recruiting and clearer admissions standards.

### MAPS Review Committee Recommendations

The review committee made specific suggestions about possible paths that MAPS might consider to address the challenges it faces. These are articulated in the review committee report.

### MAPS Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The MAPS program largely concurred with the Review's findings. They planned a retreat to develop a strategic plan to address and act on the recommendations and intend to work closely with the Director of Graduate Studies, a new campus leadership position, to explore opportunities for cross-school elective offerings and cross-campus certificate or concurrent degree programs.

- MAPS will explore specific strategies for addressing the curricular challenges, including further developing curricular offerings with the MACS program and other campus units.
- The program will explore the two suggestions for approaching program integration, connecting more explicitly with MACS and other campus units with policy offerings and building on current strengths to offer more policy electives that would be of interest to graduate students outside the program.
- The program will further explore clinic models in coordination with campus-wide discussions about the strategic priority of community engagement.

### MACS and MACS Linkages

In addition to program-specific recommendations, the committee explored ways in which the MAPS and MACS programs may develop stronger linkages. The committee noted that collaborations between the programs requires a prior step of garnering full support of both programs, or failing that, not being undertaken. Although the willingness for collaboration and linkage may not be strongly present at this time, the committee feels there are several possible avenues and levels of collaboration between the two graduate programs. These are described in the review committee report.

## **Graduate School Council Recommendations**

The Graduate School Council endorsed the review committee's comments and recommendations. Both the Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS) and the Master of Arts in Policy Studies (MAPS) will be reviewed again as part of the next School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences program review (2018-2019). The MACS and MAPS programs should be given special attention in 2018-2019 with regard to the review committee's recommendations.

In addition, the 2018-2019 review should include special focus on the following:

- Demonstrated progress the MACS and MAPS programs have made integrating with each

other and with IAS programs more broadly.

- How MACS and MAPS faculty have worked to achieve greater consensus around integration within IAS and with the UW Bothell campus as a whole.
- That the programs and IAS have addressed concerns about junior faculty being overstretched.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost  
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