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From: Wilson E. O'Donnell, Interim Director, Museology Graduate Program

Re: Response to Museology Program Review Committee Report

On behalf of the Museology Graduate Program (the Program), we would like to thank the members of the Program Review Committee (the Committee): Susan P. Casteras, Kenneth Hafertepe, Carlo M. Lamagna, and Joel T. Walker under the chairmanship of Brad Portin for their thorough and thoughtful Program Review Report (the Report). We would also like to acknowledge the faculty and staff of the Graduate School for their guidance and facilitation of the Program Review process. As a general premise, we are in agreement with and supportive of the recommendations of the Committee. Where differences of opinion exist, they are minor in nature and are highlighted in the following narrative.

The Report, submitted on January 8<sup>th</sup>, proposed a total of 25 recommendations that will effectively serve as parameters for Program planning over the next ten years. This response addresses those recommendations within broad planning categories that may be addressed as immediate, short, and long term priorities. It should be noted that a number of the recommendations included in the Report target issues that are not within the Program's authority to resolve and that will require the guidance, commitment, and action of the University to implement.

In the context of a long term planning process, the identification of strengths and weaknesses are coequal in setting the context for future activity and success. While the Committee's Report focused primarily on proposals for improvements, it also highlighted a number of strengths that distinguish the Museology Graduate Program, including:

- The ability to attract students on the local, regional, and international levels
- The Program's close and synergistic collaboration with the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture and other University of Washington units
- The significant impact students and alumni have had on the major and smaller regional museums in the Pacific Northwest, especially tribal museums
- The strong and ongoing support of regional and local museums
- The high job placement rate of Program graduates
- The support that the Program receives from the University of Washington

- The focus on interdisciplinarity as a controlling philosophy for the Program.

For the purposes of this report, immediate priorities will be addressed within a year, short term solutions will be implemented within three years, and long term plans will be initiated within five years.

## Immediate Priorities

### Faculty Development Recommendations

- Add a second faculty member supported from the self-sustaining budget (Recommendation #1).
- Director position description should indicate opportunity for either Ph.D. or appropriate terminal degree in the field of museology (Recommendation #20).
- Position description should clarify reporting relationships, length of initial contact (multi-year preferred), and contract renewal options (Recommendation #21).
- A second faculty position (supported by the Program budget) should be prioritized (Recommendation #22).
- Establish a larger cluster of faculty, in addition to the Program Director, who are actively involved in student mentoring (Recommendation #9).

It is clear from the Program Review Report and the Self-Study that the Program requires at least two full-time dedicated faculty members. Current thinking has also suggested a third part-time faculty position at .25 FTE to coordinate the involvement of the Museology Interdisciplinary Faculty Group (MIFG), to assist with curriculum oversight, and to advise students. The Report appropriately focused on the development of the Director's position in terms of qualifications, responsibilities, contract guidelines and reporting relationships, and provided the necessary context upon which a search can be based.

The recommendations that relate to this issue are critical to the success of the Program in both the short and long term. However, this position should not be considered in isolation from the second dedicated faculty position (Senior Lecturer?) and the part-time faculty position (Associate Academic Director?). Job descriptions should be developed for all three positions and a comprehensive staffing strategy should be resolved before moving forward. The search for the Program Director should begin as soon as possible with the hopes of appointment in fall of 2007.

As noted in the Report, student advising is recognized as a critical issue. Given the size of the current student cohort, a larger faculty advising group is necessary and the recommendation to enlarge the MIFG is fully supported by the Program. Indeed, the process of cultivation and development should be and is ongoing. Since the completion of the Program Review Site Visit, two new faculty members have been appointed to the MIFG. In addition to increasing the size of the MIFG, the Program will endeavor to increase faculty participation in student advising and mentoring. One of the strategies that the Program has adopted to address this issue is to introduce potential student advisees to MIFG members through the 2007 admissions process.

## Governance Recommendations

- Clarify the Program's administrative and reporting position within the University (Recommendation #2)
- We recommend that the Museology Program remain under the UW Graduate School, with the following clarification (Recommendation #19):
  - The Graduate School continues to be the degree-granting unit.
  - Move operational and administrative oversight of the program to the Director of the Burke Museum.
  - Recruit the new director on a multi-year, WOT faculty appointment. Once selected, the appropriate academic affiliation (departmental or unit home) for the director would be approached to accept the director on a WOT appointment without prejudice for faculty lines.
  - Evaluating the director for merit and potential promotion would fall jointly to the Steering Committee and faculty in the home department of the director.
- Create a steering committee that will plan an active role in supporting the Program's core faculty in many aspects of the Program's operation and planning (Recommendation #3).
- Establish a Museology Steering Committee. The committee could consist of 5-8 members drawn from the MIFG who would make a two-year commitment. The Steering Committee would assist the Program Director in program planning and operations including admissions advising of students, mentoring the AFG, and graduate placement. (Recommendation #14)
- Revise the lists of the Auxiliary Faculty Group to reflect the UW Academic Human Resources job descriptions (many of those currently listed in the AFG are lecturers and teaching associates). This revision would clarify the program staff and faculty roles for students and build better communication between the groups (Recommendation #13).

Governance is recognized as one of the most problematic areas of concern for the Program and was addressed by both the Program Review Report and the Self-Study. The Program's reporting and administrative position within the University must be resolved through a collaborative effort by the Graduate School, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Educational Outreach. The Program strongly approves the recommendation that the Museology Graduate Program remain under the Graduate School with operational and administrative oversight through the Burke Museum. However, if the Program received status as an academic unit, the issue of academic affiliation with other departments or home units, and the search for the Program's permanent Director would be greatly expedited. These governance issues must be resolved before a search for any new faculty member can be appropriately concluded.

The Program fully endorses the recommendation to develop a Steering Committee to assist in Program planning, operations, admissions, advising of students, mentoring of the Auxiliary Faculty Group (AFG), and graduate placement. This recommendation has been communicated to the MIFG with hopes of resolution before the end of winter quarter 2007. Once the Committee has been formed, we anticipate that it will meet on a quarterly basis with the first

term dedicated to developing Committee and MIFG responsibilities, authorities, and expectations as well as clarifying the AFG's role and responsibilities as addressed in recommendation #13.

## **Student Support/Curriculum Recommendations**

- Develop a student evaluation and/or report of the internship (Recommendation #5).
- Develop and expand opportunities for student internships with area art museums (Recommendation #23).

In response to the Committee's recommendation to develop a student internship report and a recent mandate by the Provost to elevate 400 level graduate courses to 500 level, the Program is currently in the process of submitting a series of course changes that will be implemented in Spring Quarter 2007. Among these changes is included the request to renumber all internship and practicum offerings and formalize a critical paper/report requirement as recommended by the Program Review Report.

The development and expansion of student internship opportunities with area art museums has been an active focus for the Program over the past year. Although not fully recognized in the Self-Study or Program Review Report, partnerships with local art museums have been developed over the past year, resulting in a regular Collections Practicum at the Henry Art Gallery and a Special Topics course with the Frye Art Museum. We hope to expand upon these partnerships and extend our reach both regionally and nationally.

## **Short Term Priorities**

### **Curriculum Recommendations**

- Develop an overview course on technology issues in museology (Recommendation #4)
- Develop a course or workshop series to provide greater guidance and consistency in the thesis or thesis project process (Recommendation #6).

In the short term, the lack of focus on technology in the curriculum will be addressed by introducing a special topics course. In the long term, we expect to incorporate technology into the core curriculum through a curriculum development process vetted by the MIFG. The development of a course in technology in museums will require an appropriate course of research and discussion with colleagues in the field, MIFG, UW faculty, and museology students, but we hope to implement this recommendation for the 2007-2008 academic year.

The issue of thesis and thesis project guidance will be a focus of significant attention as recommended by the Review Committee over the next academic year. It is anticipated that the Steering Committee will provide guidance in this area. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the Program scheduled and coordinated two Human Subjects workshops to assist students in gaining approval for research involving surveys and interviews. We hope to continue these efforts to provide guidance through advising and a methodology workshop.

## Faculty Development and Support Recommendations

- The Program should be allowed to use self-sustaining funds to compensate the units of University faculty who teach classes (either elective or required) in the Program on a rotating basis (Recommendation #7).
- Develop strategies for orienting teaching associates in the institutional practices and procedures for teaching graduate courses at the University of Washington (Recommendation #8).
- Design and establish an orientation and mentoring process for members of the Auxiliary Faculty Group to ensure curricular coherence and support of instructors in course design (Recommendation #15).

The Program fully supports the recommendation to utilize University faculty to teach elective and required courses. We anticipate that this will be one of the various topics considered by the Steering Committee. However, this issue involves university-wide institutional support and incentives and is beyond the authority of the Program to implement. It is our opinion that it will require a concerted effort on the part of the Graduate School and interdisciplinary faculty supporters over the short term to enable the Program to successfully implement this recommendation.

We anticipate that the development of an effective orientation process for the AFG will be possible within one to two years. It is significant to note that utilization of the AFG will be impacted by the potential use of MIFG and the appointment of a second dedicated faculty member. Therefore, this issue may not be as significant as it now appears. Regardless, mentoring of AFG by MIFG is an excellent idea and will be pursued, but will require input and collaboration by both groups.

## Development/Marketing Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive and maintained alumni database for both development purposes and to nurture internship opportunities for Program students (Recommendation #25).
- Develop further marketing strategies for the Program, particularly in international markets (Recommendation #24).

The Program currently uses the Office of Alumni Relations and Development's database "Advance." While we agree that more time should be spent in alumni outreach and maintenance, developing a new database would be redundant. However, we have initiated a newsletter that is designed as a communication and development vehicle for alumni, faculty, and students. The first issue will be distributed during Winter Quarter 2007.

We also agree that the Program should explore new marketing strategies and will work with the marketing department of the Educational Outreach to achieve this goal.

# Long Term Priorities

## Student Support/Registration Recommendations

- Opportunities for student support through assistantships need to be addressed. This is particularly pertinent to the Program's (and UW's) goals to support a diverse student community (Recommendation #11).
- The Program (and UWEO) should consider options for providing student assistantships to Program students. The growing debt loads carried by students is a major source for concern, not least because it also impedes recruitment and retention (Recommendation #17).
- The Program, UWEO, and the larger University administration should attempt to find a solution to allow greater access to courses by Museology students into courses in state-supported units and programs (Recommendation #10).
- The UW and UWEO should continue to address options for streamlining equitable access to non-Museology courses for Program students (Recommendation #18).

The Program is in complete agreement with the recommendations offered in regards to student support, but we anticipate that this will require a long term development and fundraising initiative with the backing and support of both the Graduate School and Educational Outreach.

We also recognize that registration issues related to taking elective courses outside of the Program are frequently cited by students as an impediment to their studies and a cause for considerable frustration and anxiety. However, the solution to this problem must be approached on an institutional level and is beyond the Program's ability to resolve.

## Facilities Recommendations

- Any plans for the expansion of the Burke Museum should include augmented space for the Museology Program (Recommendation #12).
- Explore the option of housing the UWEO staff member supporting the Museology Program in the Burke Museum (Recommendation #16)

Both the Self-Study and Program Review Report site the close and mutually beneficial and synergistic relationship between the Burke Museum and the Program. There is no question that this relationship should be cultivated and strengthened. To that end, the Program is very strongly in favor of the recommendation to be included in the Burke's long-term expansion plans. Implementation obviously requires the interest, support, and commitment of the Burke Museum. Given the current and short term facility realities at the Burke Museum, the option of housing the Program Administrator at the Burke is moot.

At the time of this response, the Burke Museum, the Henry Art Gallery and the Museology Program have submitted requests for shared and or complimentary space in the UW Tower. If granted, we hope that the UW Tower will serve as space for collaboration among these units, as well as encouraging student teamwork and innovation.



## Conclusion

Once again, we would like to thank the Review Committee for their outstanding effort in evaluating our Program and providing concrete recommendations to move forward. While we concur with the Committee on nearly every point, we believe that the Self-Study and Program Review Report may have underestimated the Henry Art Gallery's involvement with the Program. Although the Henry's participation is much smaller in scope than the Burke Museum's, the relationship is close, cordial, and supportive. Many of our students obtain practicum experience at the Henry and are employed as work-study students. Furthermore, professional staff members frequently teach or guest lecture and occasionally participate on supervisory committees. The Henry has repeatedly indicated that they would like to be more involved with the Program, but currently have resource and space limitations.

While the Program Review Process was intended to prepare the Program to look forward, the advancement of a long term vision remains to be considered. Most of the recommendations proposed in the Report speak to "who we are and what we do" as a Program rather than "who we want to be and what we want to do." In this regard, we suggest a broader context for the Program over the next decade leading to a more significant leadership position within the field of museums and museology. In the future, the Program might be envisioned within the construct of an institute for museum studies and practice that would pursue several core objectives including:

1. The MA degree in Museology with emphasis on the practical training of museum professionals
2. The first doctoral program in museology in the United States
3. An international program initiative
4. A mid-career training program for museum professionals
5. A training and advising program for tribal, ethnic, and rural museums

Obviously, these core objectives would be assessed within the framework of coordinated planning efforts over the next year or so under the auspices of the new Program Director, Steering Committee, and interested stakeholder groups. It is hoped that this vision in concert with the findings of the Program Review Report and the Program Self-Study will provide a dynamic basis for a concerted strategic planning process for success.

Respectfully submitted:



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