



# MUSEOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

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Mia Tuan  
Dean, College of Education  
Proxy Dean, Museology Graduate Program Review

December 16, 2016

Dear Dean Tuan,

Thank you so much for the Committee's collective expertise, insight, and support throughout our Ten Year Review process. The final report is a tremendously useful roadmap for our program over the next decade. It provides detailed reflections on our strengths and challenges, in particular the structural barriers we face within the UW, and it offers strategic recommendations that will guide our future directions.

In the next decade, I am committed to achieving as many of these recommendations as is possible, in a phased fashion. To start, I've identified 5 key recommendations that I believe are critical to the program's continued success. Over the next 3-5 years, we will prioritize these recommendations:

1. **The Committee recommended that we make a strategic decision about our program's location on campus.** I agree that this is a pivotal decision. While I appreciate the Committee's invitation to consider multiple options, I feel that Museology faculty and staff have issued a clear mandate that our current location within the Graduate School is the best place for us to achieve our program goals. This location allows us to maintain significant autonomy over our program vision, goals, structure, and budget in ways that likely would be out of our control within a single academic unit. In addition, we have made significant progress in the last year to align with the Graduate School Interdisciplinary Program model - our core and affiliate faculty have academic appointments across 7 units, and we are in the process of drafting governance documents that will clarify our operational procedures within the Graduate School. It seems impractical to abandon this progress. Instead, I propose that we fully integrate ourselves within the Graduate School community, and work with them and the other Interdisciplinary Programs to try to mitigate some of the structural barriers we face within the university. I propose that we use the 5-year check-in as an opportunity to evaluate this model, soliciting feedback from a full range of stakeholders and making an informed decision about the affordances and constraints of being within the Graduate School after this considered trial period.

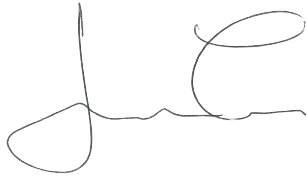
2. **The Committee encouraged us to fortify our relationships with academic units on campus.** I too appreciate the critical importance of these relationships if we are to thrive within the Graduate School and within UW more broadly. In the coming years, we will work to increase our visibility on campus, to identify units with whom there is value in developing new or reaffirmed relationships (for example, College of Education), and to further cultivate our existing relationships. Key to these efforts will be moving beyond a focus on faculty academic appointments to conversations about substantive partnerships. The desired outcomes of these conversations will be clearer to us after we engage in strategic planning and identification of program priorities (see #5).
3. **The Committee suggested that we clarify our optimum program size and the necessary faculty capacity as we anticipate the next decade.** I agree that this is a foundational decision for us moving forward. As we build our program budgets in the coming years, we will engage in ongoing cost benefit analyses to further refine and articulate our thinking around the optimum number of students and faculty for a sustainable program. Several factors will influence these analyses, including the ways in which we leverage relationships with other academic units in our course offerings and our thesis model (see #4).
4. **The Committee recommended that we revisit our current thesis model, considering for example both capstone and studio alternatives.** Our current thesis model poses sustainability issues for the program and capacity issues for our faculty. It's also possible that our current thesis model may not emphasize the research skills that are most needed by students who are largely moving into practice-based positions. In the coming years, I will lead an active investigation into alternative thesis model options, and articulate a plan for experimenting with and evaluating alternatives. It's my belief that exploring new, more collaborative thesis models may help to address faculty capacity issues while simultaneously offering an opportunity for the program to provide leadership in the evolving role of research within the museum field.
5. **Finally, the Committee encouraged us to clearly identify a limited set of strategic priorities that will inform the program's future directions.** I am very much looking forward to leading strategic planning efforts, after having spent the last year focused on securing faculty appointments and the ten year review itself. In particular, I'm intrigued by the Committee's suggestion to organize a Museology Summit with invited outside experts working alongside faculty to identify issues and topics central to the future of museum studies. I am actively exploring the possibility of such a Summit in the coming years, and I am committed to the development of a strategic plan that will clearly inform our efforts over the next 3-5 years.

For me, these 5 recommendations address critical issues of capacity and resources within our program. Our program is stronger if we can address these issues, and that will be my goal in the short-term. What excites all of us most is the opportunity to think about the changing nature of the museum field and the role that our program can play in training students to work in museums of the future. This advice from the Committee will inform all that we do in the coming years, and will serve as a useful indicator of our program success in the next decade.

One note of correction within the Committee's final report. On page 4, there are two references to faculty potentially retiring and/or reducing to part-time. One of our faculty respectfully requests that these references be removed, as no faculty have expressed an intention to retire or reduce to part-time.

Again, my thanks to Committee members for your thoughtful reflections and guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Luke', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jessica J. Luke, Ph.D.  
Program Director