



UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON | BOTHELL

SCHOOL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS AND SCIENCES

To: Vice Provost and Graduate Dean, David L. Eaton
From: Dean Bruce Burgett and the Faculty of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, UW Bothell
Re: 2015 Program review of Master of Arts in Cultural Studies and Master of Arts in Policy Studies
Date: 10 June 2015

Introduction

The faculty and staff of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS) at UW Bothell would like to acknowledge and thank committee chair, José Antonio Lucero (UW), and committee members Mary Kay Gugerty (UW) and Handel Kashope Wright (UBC) for their thorough and thoughtful review of our Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS) and Master of Arts in Policy Studies (MAPS) programs. We very much appreciate the time and effort it takes to prepare for and conduct the site visit and write the report that provides us with ideas and suggestions for the future of these two graduate programs.

We are gratified to hear the many positive assessments of our two programs by current students and alumni alike. We are also delighted to hear the committee's very positive assessment of both degrees. Looking forward, our goal is to build on the strengths identified in the program review and work to improve both programs on the basis of recommendations and suggestions from the review committee.

We will respond to the report and recommendations in the order presented in the report, addressing recommendations for MACS first, then recommendations for MAPS, and then recommendations for both degrees.

MACS and MAPS, as is true with most degree programs, are located within a larger academic unit, the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. We recognize that many of the recommendations, while somewhat unique to these two graduate programs, are also linked in important ways to this larger academic context. We will signal in our response when this is the case.

MACS

MACS is planning to take up the recommendations as detailed below in a retreat planned for Fall 2015. This retreat will allow us to explore how these recommendations, particularly those pertaining to praxis, diversity, professional development, and student support, might be integrated and possibly supported by seeking outside grants.

Support Students Financially

The committee noted common concerns regarding student funding challenges. We concur and place high priority on developing further means to support IAS graduate students. IAS has been working on this in several ways, including:

- researching Graduate School funding opportunities;
- negotiating an additional 50% GSA position as part of its agreement to administer the graduate Certificate in Public Scholarship;
- developing a strategic plan for distribution of 1% merit funds, which can provide tuition assistance for state residents, for use in recruitment and retention; and
- laying groundwork for private fundraising and the UW comprehensive campaign.

Research has been and will continue to be important to this development. While the Graduate School sponsors funding opportunities such as Top Scholar and Graduate Opportunity Program awards, structural factors like our unit's lack of TA/RA quarters and separate campus distributions of merit funds block our ability to access and leverage these resources. In the short term, our research has focused us on optimizing the strategic use of current 1% funds. We are also in the process of laying groundwork for the UW comprehensive campaign, with one of the key priorities being the need to raise funds to support graduate students, including graduate student scholarships.

In the medium term, we are interested in deepening work already begun with the Career Center to identify on- and off-campus opportunities for students, including paid internships, and to build out the kinds of supports we can offer to alumni. As we gain clarity on how we want to further develop community-based learning and research (CBLR) within and across our graduate programs, in lab/clinic and/or praxis models, we anticipate that we may have grant opportunities to create a limited number of graduate student assistantships that further this program development while also supporting students financially.

We should also note that these are beginning stages of long term work. The question of how we can best support students financially in MACS has program implications, in terms of focus, profile building, recruitment, and impact on the field vs. impact on the region. MACS (and MAPS) are state-funded programs, which means that WA residents pay \$15k/year, while out-of-state residents pay twice as much and are not eligible for our state-based merit funds. These financial realities limit our ability to recruit out of state students. For MAPS, which has largely focused its recruitment regionally, this is less of an issue than it is for MACS, which aspires to shape a national and international conversation about the field. Keeping the program affordable to students could counsel a more local strategy of working with regional organizations to promote the efficacy of the kinds of cultural knowledge, intervention, and praxis taught in the program.

Program pace and workload issues for junior faculty and graduate students

We appreciate the attention to workload issues for junior faculty in MACS. Because MACS faculty members teach across the whole IAS curriculum, we are committed to looking at workload concerns for

all faculty and have begun this work in spring of 2015. Part of this work will be to establish clearer expectations for norms for faculty at all ranks. We have also initiated a curriculum change for the first-year MACS students. The introductory course BCULST 500 has been a 10-credit class, which has proven to be unwieldy for both students and faculty alike. This coming fall (2015), BCULTS 500 will be revised to a 5-credit class with students taking another 5-credit elective within the MACS program. We see this revision as easing program pace and workload issues for both students and faculty. It will also enable students to explore areas of interest through the elective and take classes with second-year MACS, and possibly MAPS, students.

Addressing student “unevenness”

This item references potential tensions between students who aspire to an “academic” career track via further graduate education and those who see themselves as “culture workers” outside of the faculty track in higher education. MACS was designed to bridge these two aspirations. While we prefer to characterize these diverse (rather than uneven) student interests as integral to the program’s learning objectives and learning community, we agree with and will follow up on the report’s recommendations with regard to being more intentional in linking “academic” and “non-academic” pathways, and to building more opportunities for students to learn from peers and alum about career trajectories beyond the MA. We have already begun partnerships with the Career Center, and have explored mentoring options with alumni, and will build upon these initiatives.

Diversity

We very much appreciate the review committee’s acknowledgement of our efforts with regard to the diversity of the student body, while making several good recommendations concerning faculty and leadership diversity, bringing more diverse voices into the classroom from community and artistic organizations, and creating intentional bridges to tribal colleges, along with historically Black and Latino/a institutions. These recommendations echo and support efforts underway in MACS, IAS, and across campus to implement strategies with regard to the recruitment and retention of diverse students, staff, and faculty. These efforts have resulted in the hiring of four faculty of color (assistant professors) who will likely contribute to MACS (and other areas of IAS) in our 2014-15 hiring season. As of June 2, IAS has approved a unit Diversity Plan, with plans for first-stage implementation in fall of 2015. In addition, the UW Bothell Diversity Council has been engaged with the campus community in developing a campus-wide Diversity Action Plan. This is a multi-year plan that prioritizes implementing and assessing practices supportive of diversity and inclusion in recruitment, retention, climate, and curriculum for faculty, staff, and students, undergraduate and graduate.

Program Impact

The committee makes several very useful suggestions with regard to heightening program impact, both regionally and nationally. The regional suggestions are excellent and aligned with discussions in MACS about program build-out (see section on praxis, below). The suggestions for national visibility are also good, with a focus on strategies that disseminate the MACS curricular model inter/nationally. We agree and note that we started MACS by hiring assistant professors. As those faculty members advance their

careers, the visibility of MACS will rise accordingly. In addition, we also seek to strike a balance between the local and regional interest of our students, who seek to remain in the Puget Sound area, even as we further our national visibility and reputation. We also note that one of the challenges with an interdisciplinary graduate program is that many of the rubrics and metrics by which impact is typically charted are disciplinary and don't capture accurately the strengths and impacts of interdisciplinary units and programs.

Address Praxis

As a program we are very much interested in increasing our capacities to undertake praxis-oriented community-based learning and research (CBLR) work within the program; at the same time, we want to ensure that this development is sustainable for faculty, students, and community partners. Towards this end, a number of MACS faculty have proposed creating faculty-led 'research clusters/institutes' that would let students take a series of themed courses built around a shared community partnership. The model would share and distribute responsibility for sustaining the partnership, and would promote engaged, collaborative faculty research, as well as student learning and mentorship. One pilot for this effort is a community economies research network that will link courses and community partnership efforts of multiple faculty members, starting with Professor Charusheela's course on postcapitalist futures and alternative economies, extending through Professor Anderson's course on the politics of gentrification and urban development in the Lake City neighborhood, and possibly to others.

As noted in the self-study and the report, there are also possibilities to pursue this development with and across programs, such as MAPS and undergraduate programs in IAS and across UW Bothell. UW Bothell has engaged a campus-wide task force on community engagement to catalyze a strategic planning process intended to be integrative of community engagement efforts across academic departments, including the Offices of CBLR, Diversity, Career Services, and Advancement/External Relations. We anticipate that the outcomes of this process will be to focus attention and resources on community partnerships, and will help us map strategic directions for our own programmatic development within this broader institutional context.

MAPS

Fundamentally, the recommendations outlined for MAPS in the report address curriculum planning and models. As a result, MAPS and IAS leadership propose a one-day retreat in summer or early fall, intended to develop a strategic plan to address and act on the recommendations. In addition, we will 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.

Curricular Strategies:

We find the three suggestions for the development of new curricular strategies productive to explore. In the first, increasing our number of offerings at the 400/500 level offers the potential for connecting more seamlessly with current undergraduate minors (Law, Economics, and Public Policy: Society, Ethic,

and Human Behavior; and Environmental Studies, for instance). The second, acting on synergies with other professional degree-granting programs at UW Bothell (Business; Nursing and Health Studies; Educational Studies) is one we have considered. As noted above, UW Bothell is in the process of hiring a Director of Graduate Studies whose charge will be to foster such connections for graduate education growth. We are interested in exploring opportunities to work with programs on the UW Seattle campus, either in the form of offering a certificate as suggested in the recommendation or in offering a concurrent degree as is being developed by the School of Business with School of Pharmacy. Finally, the further development of curricular offerings with the MACS program holds appeal as it draws on faculty already in IAS and connects students across the two degree programs. (See Potential Linkages, below).

Policy Studies in Liberal Arts

The review committee offered two suggestions for approaching this particular integration, noting that there are undoubtedly more. The first would be to connect more explicitly with MACS, which currently occurs to a limited degree through elective offerings. The committee suggests that the strongest version of this would create an “alternative” to traditional policy studies in the form of a critical policy studies program. As the committee suggests, we would need to explore the feasibility of this recommendation, both in terms of faculty interest and curricular changes. We will need to have significant conversation among ourselves to clarify in what ways we currently are “critical” and what ways we are not, and what would be gained or lost in this reformulation. Given the high satisfaction rate of our students and alumni, we want to undertake this suggestion with great consideration. The second suggestion focused more on building on our current strengths to offer more policy electives that would be of interest to graduate students in other schools at UW Bothell. It maps well on to the second suggestion above of building on connections with other degree-granting programs on the campus. As the committee noted, this is the less “radical” of the two suggestions and certainly would enable us to develop our current curriculum further with strong relevance for students in other programs. We see the opportunity for our students to work with students in business and health studies and their students with ours as having many strengths.

Community-Based Learning and Research and Clinic Model

We very much appreciate the encouragement of the committee for us to continue to explore clinic models. As noted, this approach is one employed by a number of excellent policy programs. As also noted, the clinic model will take considerable time resources that need to be measured against the development of electives and other curricular developments. As noted in the discussion of praxis in the MACS program, we anticipate that campus-wide discussions about the strategic priority of community engagement will result in the development of further campus infrastructure for supporting long-term partnerships that could provide these kinds of learning experiences.

MACS/MAPS Potential Collaborations and Linkages

The report makes several suggestions for potential collaboration and linkages, noting that decisions about which suggestions to operationalize are up to MACS and MAPS faculty members. We expect to

proceed on this point by having retreats for both programs, with specific activities and a possible half-day joint MAPS/MACS retreat to be determined.