

January 15, 2021

**REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION PHD AND MS (RESEARCH OPTION)
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

To: Diana Hess, Dean, School of Education
Erica Halverson, Department Chair, Curriculum and Instruction
Bernadette Baker, Graduate Programs Director, Curriculum and Instruction

CHARGE

In the letter of invitation to members of the review committee, these are the topics to be included in the report:

- A summary of the activities of the review committee and materials reviewed
- An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Recommendations for future directions
- A consideration of the following items examined specifically in the self-study:
Quality and depth/breadth of graduate training, including an examination of the doctoral student experience with research and teaching. How well are students prepared for their future roles after graduation?
Doctoral students funding and prospects for multi-year funding commitments

In addition, several related issues, elaborations and evolving concerns, were raised for the committee to consider:

- Building on unique strengths in intellectual and program area diversity, autonomy and flexibility
- Mentoring of graduate students, in multiple occupational paths
- Equitable distribution of funding resources across areas, advisors, and students
- Revitalization of the Master's of Science program
- Commitment to a Certificates program, its purposes, needs and complexities

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ACTIVITIES OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Review Committee participated in a two-day visit with Administration, Faculty, and Students of the Curriculum and Instruction PhD and MS (research option) program, rescheduled and virtual on November 19-20, 2020. Prior to the visit, members of the committee had reviewed the very thorough self-study materials prepared under the direction of Professor Bernadette Baker, Graduate Programs

Director. These materials served as useful guidelines by the committee throughout the visit. Throughout all arrangements including internet needs had been coordinated by Tom Tegart, Student Services Coordinator.

The meeting schedule included sessions at the beginning and end of the visit with Dean Diana Hess and one session with Department Chair, Erica Halverson. It included two meetings with the Graduate Executive Committee, and two sessions of faculty area representatives. Finally, it included three sets of graduate students including Graduate Student Representatives of the GEC, Student Organizations and Coursework students. It also included a session with Tom Tegart, a couple of meetings for instructions and follow-up with Bernadette Baker and among themselves for discussion.

The Committee attended sessions as a committee of the whole, each member contributing unique interests, skills, and background experiences to discussion and ultimately to the report. In the writing phase of the report, members were contacted for feedback, any clarifications and corrections.

GENERAL STRENGTHS

The review of the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program is taking place within a period of university transition. This transition is incorporating trends toward standardization and collectivity in times of a changing academic culture, processes of organization, and decreased resources. This context is recognized by department administration and faculty who are making on-going program adjustments.

The Committee identified a set of general strengths that have continued and are evolving in the history of the Graduate Program. These are (a) Reputation and ranking, (b) Sense of common mission and community, (c) Presence of strong diversity, (d) Faculty membership and area development, (e) Sustained faculty and student relationships, (f) Mutually beneficial communication between administration and faculty, and (g) Internal program organization, administration, and student communication.

A. Reputation and Ranking

Across the program there is a shared pride in its national and international reputation for excellence in research and scholarship, in the education of outstanding graduates, and in continuous attraction for admission among the most qualified applicants across the nation. In many fields, C&I has ranked at the top of US graduate programs; historic examples of these include mathematics research and curriculum studies.

B. Sense of Common Mission and Community

Pride of program contributes to a common sense of mission and creation of community. This is exemplified in on-going seminars and research projects, and in peer support among graduate students. For example, in student meetings they know each other and express admiration for contributions and interests of peers. Another example is a recent innovation of secondary advisers building student allied skills and specialties. Community is also evident among faculty.

C. Presence of Strong Diversity

A strong presence of multiple forms of diversity is apparent, tied to the program history, and a continuing program goal to which there has been direct attention. Diversity is understood by the program faculty and students in multiple forms, in healthy differences in demographic and

epistemological formulations. Replacing large faculty attrition, recent minority faculty hires are a significant focus as is attracting diverse domestic and international students. One need expressed by faculty concerned the continued recruitment of senior minority faculty to assume leadership positions. The general result of diversity in all forms is multiple scholarly and research interests, a backbone of the program.

D. Faculty Membership and Area Development

Recent attention has been to the rebuilding of targeted research and teaching areas, needed for a new generation of the program. Hiring has been undertaken for specific areas, both in their traditional membership and in innovative evolutions. Two examples are the hiring of four minority women in mathematics education and in a transformation of technology education into Design, Informal, and Creative education. Across areas another emphasis has been on course offerings based in the latest theoretical and pedagogical advances.

E. Sustained Faculty and Student Relationships

Maintenance of faculty and student relationships based in a principle of autonomy is another strength. Faculty and students approve of a history of individualized course programs. Mentoring appears very strong, undertaken in faculty commitment to continual access and opportunity. Faculty model membership in the academy, write with students, and oversee students' own work. Specific students cite unique opportunities, for instance in an internship sponsored by the Spencer Foundation.

F. Mutually Beneficial Communication between Administration and Faculty

There also appears a strong bond and mutually supportive communication between administration and faculty. Faculty appreciate the efforts of a relatively new department chair and a close association with the dean who is a past member of the department. Each recognizes challenges toward a new, shared university climate and operation.

G. Internal Program Organization, Administration, and Student Communication

In the last few years and on-going is special attention to internal program organization led by the Program Director and Program Coordinator. Examples of internal organization are these: An update of the student handbook now available on line and especially the creation of individual student progress spreadsheets. Standard rating sheets are now used by faculty for student progress; these include Rating Sheets for the Preliminary Exam and the PhD Proposal Feedback. Examples of student communication include an annual student survey for existing Master's and PhD students with feedback following, and special events beginning with an extensive orientation and continuing with regular communiques.

CHALLENGES, DISCUSSION, AND TRANSITION RESPONSES

The Committee identified a set of challenges occurring during the recent period of University, School, and Department transition. These are issues of (a) funding, (b) admissions, (c) program areas, (d) courses proliferation, (e) student progress, (f) faculty development and workload, and (g) revenue. generation programs. Just as strengths are interrelated so are challenges.

The Committee recognizes that in maintaining, evolving, and developing a world-class graduate program, strengths carry their own challenges. In offering insights during the review visit, faculty

expressed a strong desire to uphold a basic commitment within their program to intellectual vibrancy, autonomy, and flexibility across all matters of program concern. These include faculty governance and program area maintenance.

A. Funding

Student funding is on the minds of each faculty member especially as it concerns admissions. The issue is how to employ the new university policy of admitting with four years of funding guarantee. One of the reasons for the policy is to alleviate student uncertainty and anxiety and, perhaps, to move students to faster degree completion. A major issue is that most students take at least five years to completion—and the department has a very good record in this regard. Overall the challenge is to increase funding given sentiment expressed that this is required in order to respond to student admission demands and support. Without increased funding, a competitive climate might emerge that harms the general, positive cohesiveness of the program.

During the review visit, the one group of students expressing dissatisfaction was comprised of senior graduate students in their fifth years and beyond. Noted were matters of family, of having to work multiple jobs, and of complications with their research. It seemed obvious to the committee that prior processes relating jobs to hours—and many students working more than 100% was surely in need of reform.

The faculty is currently responding to the funding challenge in 2021 admissions and everyone is aware that kinks in the system will need to be worked out. Issues include pulling together multiple funding sources and equity across program areas and individual faculty. A major concern for equity exists across diverse program areas in terms of faculty numbers, application demands, and course offerings.

B. Admissions

The faculty is aware that a time of renowned faculty having large numbers of students is probably part of history. The faculty is working through a common admissions process, part of the standardization and centralization trend. Here are questions identified by the Committee: Might there be a yearly or multiple year formula for individual student admissions for faculty? Is there special attention to tenure-track faculty? Might admissions be targeted to specific program areas that rare then rotated? Is there incentive for co-advising and other forms of faculty collaboration and an emphasis on multi-area or inner-area specialties? Might there be a process for admissions appeals? Since all student applicants, including targeted minorities and international students, are considered as a whole, how might these student demographic strengths be maintained?

C. Program Areas

The number and relationships of program areas was one area in need of attention. The Self-Study lists five research areas: Curriculum and Global Studies, Disciplinary Studies, Multicultural Education, Teacher Education, and Childhood Studies, Digital Media, and Languages and Literacies. During the visit, more than once ten or eleven areas were referenced and the visit schedule listed nine. An answer to this issue was that areas are tied to jobs. The Committee is unclear what this means since faculty recruiting and hiring and the future careers of graduate students typically is not a matter of 'area' membership. Rather these are tied to research, and to background and experiences. The major questions are these: Why must a faculty numbering

around thirty have so many areas? How are the areas currently operating—relationship of five areas to eleven? What is the relationship of recent intellectual innovations identified by the faculty to areas? What is the relationship of a large number of courses listed and area needs?

The Committee acknowledges that this issue may be a matter of communication and the brevity of the visit; however, synthesis of program area organization appears a strong need to aid in faculty hiring and student recruitment.

D. Courses Proliferation

The Committee is certainly in sympathy with a faculty known for its intellectual and academic leadership who want to retain this historic strength. The Committee also recognizes that the autonomy of student choice and development be maintained. A new challenge has emerged as the university graduate school has instituted an eight-student minimum for a course. The Issues here include faculty workload and student advisement. The challenge is to consider ways to maintain work of faculty and students of the highest quality, with evolution and development of cutting-edge interests and productivity. Are there possibilities, for instance, in currently informal practices becoming venues for credit and expertise?

E. Student Progress

Attention to keeping track of student progress in general has been identified as a strength. An additional issue, raised by the faculty, concerns the quality of a student's graduate preparation. What can each student demonstrate in terms of research assistantships, teaching assistantships and program or project assistantships? The program has established a Graduate Student Support Committee to aid in this effort. The issue is a balance across these experiences. Some students appear to spend time teaching; others working with advisers who have grants, spend time in research but have little teaching opportunities. One group in need of special focus is international students.

F. Faculty Development and Workload

In many institutions faculty development and workload is a challenge. In the review process, the Committee was very impressed with faculty time commitment to students, for many weekly meetings. What was not raised was the issue of preparation for tenure, thus as per review directions, it was assumed that this is not a program challenge. Still, given a need for new revenue sources, and renewal or new program offerings, faculty development and workload might become an issue.

G. Revenue Generation, Renewal and Establishment of Masters and Certificate Offerings

Given the importance of this need and possible directions, the Committee did not learn as much as they might have. The general impression is that faculty members are not opposed to these directions but are not highly invested at this time. This depends on the C and I program area and its mission. The Committee asked for and received some documentation about the two directions including requirements for the current Masters and steps taken to date about certificates. The Committee briefly raised the issue of working with existing relationships in undergraduate and professional education rather than having to 'begin again.' Another issue concerns the relationship of each of these innovations to each other and to doctoral study. Might there also be opportunities for graduate teaching and program assistance?

SUMMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summation

1. The Program Review Committee for PhD Curriculum and Instruction and MS Curriculum and Instruction suggests that the program in transition is making excellent progress. Wisconsin participants in the review process are readily aware of current era changes in University and School of Education needs and resources and are responding in a positive manner.
2. The program is committed to continuing the reputation and realization of past excellence and highest recognition nationally and internationally. A basic principle persists that values a strong autonomy in faculty and student academic life and professional choice, given understanding that the present and future does dictate some degree of standardization and collectivity. Rather than think of this as a negative tension, perhaps it portends positive opportunities for accommodation.
3. Emphasis on diversity is reflected across the program especially in recent faculty hires and in graduate student admissions. Participants in the review expressed pride in these endeavors and the highest quality of all involved. Commitment to diversity, to a multiplicity and minority presence, helps build and insure an academic, professional, and personal culture that benefits everyone. Support, other diversity
4. In the period of transition, program efforts have focused on faculty recruitment and thus future student admissions in specific program areas. These include mathematics and science, rebuilding of former areas of recognized research prominence. The presence of four minority women faculty now in mathematics education and of unique research and course directions in DICE are especially noted.
5. A very significant area of concern in program development has been student funding. A most significant change in graduate education is to admit every student with a guarantee of four years funding. The department, along with others in the School, is working as well as can be expected with the complexity of this change. Evidence demonstrates a working out of the 'kinks,' with efforts toward faculty cooperation and program organization.
6. There appears a positive relationship between faculty and administration. Faculty express feeling supported by the School of Education, Dean Diana Hess, the Curriculum and Instruction Department Chair, Erica Halverson, and the Graduate Programs Director, Bernadette Baker. As well, the Graduate Education Committee appears to be working well across complex times for faculty and student benefit. Relatively recent improvements in tracking student progress are noted.
7. Graduate students expressed strong approval of the program in general and of their individual support. Efforts for 'Domestic Targeted Minorities' (not their language) were especially apparent. Students supported a mixing of doctoral and masters' students in courses and seminars and, while less evident, in their aims of graduate work in non-future-faculty occupation. A very positive climate across the School was also expressed.

8. The Review Committee was asked specifically to assess possibilities of change and reinvigoration of the Master's Program and in development of a Certificates Program. A general assessment is that faculty are not opposed to either but perhaps only for those 'interested.' This interest relates in no small part to faculty workload and to the tenure requirements of recent hires. Interestingly no one mentioned the latter tension, usually present as a faculty rebuilds as a new generation. Questions thus are these: (1) What will be the academic/professional focus of either? (2) What will be student interest and how might this be determined? (3) Who will plan, implement, administrate, teach and advise in either program? (4) How will full-time and part-time Masters operate? (5) In terms of requirements, what are possibilities for closer relationship of the two degrees? (6) What are possible developments with professional advancement, as subject specialists? Or for working professionals who desire intellectual growth and stimulation?

It is the understanding of the Review Committee that faculty groups are working on these issues that will be continued post-COVID. This is significant given both the need for increased revenue streams and the goal of innovative program offerings.

Recommendations

1. Increased funding is the central issue for current and future efforts of the C & I graduate program. Two issues in student funding are prescient. The one student group expressing dissatisfaction and anxiety were doctoral students in their 5-6th years, especially those with family obligations. The committee notes that most doctoral studies take five years—and they did recognize that the department times to completion are excellent. The recommendations are several: (1) Establish a long-term plan for this eventual funding need across the program, (2) Communicate at times of recruitment of realistic changes in family life with graduate study (who believes this!), (3) Track this need as a special concern by the Graduate Program Coordinator

One route was to seek additional fellowships from the graduate school, especially in terms of the senior students but also to sustain and grow specific program areas. There could also be the creation of fellowships for instance of dissertation completion. Endowments were not mentioned in the review; in one institution known to a committee member, a family fellowship program includes named multiple-year student fellowships during coursework. Why not during senior research years?

The other issue concerns international students, recognizing that currently all students domestic and international are considered as one admissions group. One of the greatest strengths of C and I has been the recruitment, presence, and graduate placement of international students. Some of present difficulties may be mitigated under a new US administration. In order to maintain and enhance this historic strength, there needs to be the creation of a long-term plan for international students.

2. One area of concern raised by the Committee is the number and organization of academic areas. It seemed unusual that a faculty of thirty is organized as eleven areas. The self-study names five areas that no review participant mentioned. This relates not only to future faculty hires as well as to the large number of courses, especially 975s. In order to maintain and enhance intellectual diversity and quality, autonomy and flexibility is significant.

However, the recommendation is to develop an area synthesis organization for faculty operation and multiple forms of advertisement and recruitment. What about a web-organization with a small number of greater areas, multiple specialties within and faculty membership. Faculty could belong across areas; student recruitment could continue largely as is but incorporate faculty assistance with centralized admissions. This could also accommodate issues of funding allotment and equity with maintenance of strong governance.

3. In answer to the questions regarding Masters and Certificate programs, the only recommendation is to continue deliberation to assess possible negative consequences for taking on new programs in this general time of transition and uncertainty. To aid revenue needs, one suggestion is to consider a couple of Master's Degree types: a general masters in educational studies, a specialized degree in advanced mathematics pedagogy, a multi-disciplinary masters for graduate students across the academy interested in education for their research and professional preparation. One interesting idea from a Committee member was to stack a set of graduate certificates as a Master's degree core.

Faculty interest, easy alignment with program emphasis, workload and incentive issues need be part of continued deliberation of Certificates. One suggestion is to start small and determine future viability

The Review Committee concludes that the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Program retains the highest quality program. It was impressed with current efforts to create a new generation program, with a very hardworking faculty, excellent quality graduate students, and a committed administration. Many efforts are well underway in meeting new challenges in this time of university transition. The Committee was grateful for all assistance in meeting its charge, knowing that in a brief visit, it may have missed some issues or misunderstood program specifics. We assume that program faculty will have opportunity to respond to the report. Enjoying the review experience, the Committee wishes everyone well.

As Chair, I sign this report below in the name of the Graduate Review Committee members. I am available if questions, clarifications, or omissions have occurred that can be rectified.

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