24 October 2017

TO: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost
FROM: John Karl Scholz, Dean
RE: Request to Suspend Admissions to Academic Programs in the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies
CC: Ernesto Livorni, Professor of Italian and Chair, Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies
Marty Gustafson, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
Elaine M. Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning
Sarah Kuba, Academic Planning & Institutional Research
Lisa Martin, Associate Dean, Graduate School
Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Scott Owczarek, Registrar
Parmesh Ramanathan, Associate Dean, Graduate School
Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities

On October 17, 2017, the L&S Academic Planning Council met to discuss request submitted by the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, seeking to suspend admission to the following academic programs in the department:

a. Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science (MAJ 225, AMAJ 225) “Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies”

b. Master of Arts – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies” (MA 225L&S)

c. Doctor of Philosophy – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies” (PHD 225L&S)

d. Doctoral Minor in Comparative Literature (GMIN225)

e. Doctoral Minor in Folklore (GMIN423)

f. Undergraduate Certificate in Folklore (CRT 424)

You will recall from my previous correspondence with the department that this request arises from the recently completed program review; in addition, changes in the faculty profile (retirements and departures) make it very difficult to field the array of programs in Folklore in particular. As a result, the L&S APC determined that the merger of Comparative Literature and
Folklore faculty and programs has not achieved the outcomes intended at the time of merger. The council instructed the department to submit a request to suspend admissions to the programs, which will afford each group of faculty time to focus on preparing proposals for restructuring (including relocating the Folklore Certificate), to discontinue the named options at the graduate level, and to rename all of the CLFS programs to remove the reference to Folklore Studies.

During this period, the faculty in CLFS will continue to teach required courses and to provide guidance and advising to serve students enrolled in the programs.

- At this time, there are three students enrolled in the CLFS undergraduate major.
- There are no students in the MA-CLFS or in the doctoral minor programs.
- There are 23 students in the CLFS doctoral program (13 are not declared in an option; there are 5 students in each of the CL and FS options). The department faculty met with graduate students on September 26, 2017 to discuss the outcome of the academic program review, including the review committee report, departmental response, and my memo summarizing the L&S APC’s instructions. Our colleagues have reassured students that they will be able to complete the programs of study to which they were admitted. In addition, Associate Deans Zaeske and Klein have offered to meet with students to discuss academic program restructuring; they will coordinate any such meetings with the Graduate School, of course.

- Five students are declared in the Folklore Certificate. In a recent meeting with the Folklore Studies leadership, the faculty expressed their intention to reach out to students who may be working toward completing requirements but who have not yet declared, to encourage them to do so at the earliest opportunity.

The L&S Academic Planning Council unanimously approved this request to suspend admission to these programs during the restructuring process.
Dear Dean Scholz,

Upon your request on Monday, October 9, 2017, the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies met for a special meeting of both Department and Executive Committee to complete the task that the department had already started in September in response to the measures to be taken in the current Fall 2017 semester.

At its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, the CLFS Departmental Committee voted unanimously "to submit a request to restructure the Department of CLFS to the College of Letters and Science." Later that day, the CLFS Executive Committee then voted unanimously "to accept and approve the motion by the Departmental Committee to restructure."

On Tuesday, October 10, 2017, the CLFS Departmental Committee convened again in an Extraordinary Meeting, and voted unanimously "to request the suspension of graduate and undergraduate admissions to CLFS academic programs, in accordance with the memorandum of July 24, 2017, from Dean Karl Scholz." Shortly afterwards, the CLFS Executive Committee also voted unanimously "to accept and approve the Departmental Committee’s motion to request suspension of graduate and undergraduate admissions to CLFS academic programs."

Please let me know whether you need further information regarding the concern you raised after the October GFEC meeting regarding admission to the graduate program for the next academic year (hence, the need not to accept applications in the current Fall semester).

Sincerely,

Ernesto Livorni
Chair, Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies

Cc: Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean
Elaine Klein, Associate Dean
24 July 2017

TO: Thomas DuBois, Chair, Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies (Fall 2016)  
Mary Layoun, Chair, Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies (Spring/Summer 2017)  
Ernesto Livorni, Incoming Chair, Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies (2017-18)

FROM: John Karl Scholz, Dean

RE: Review of Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies programs, including:

- Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies
- Master of Arts – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies”
- Doctor of Philosophy – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies”
- Undergraduate Certificate in Folklore

XC: Marty Gustafson, Assistant Dean, Graduate School  
Elaine M. Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning, L&S  
Sarah Kuba, Academic Planner, Academic Planning and Institutional Research  
Lisa Martin, Associate Dean, Graduate School  
Jocelyn Milner, Associate Provost and Director, Academic Planning and Institutional Research  
Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities, L&S

On May 2, 2017, the L&S Academic Planning Council considered the review of academic programs overseen by the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies. Associate Dean Susan Zaeske led discussion of the department’s self-study, the review committee report, and of the corrections and comments offered about the committee report. This review of the programs was conducted for several reasons, most of which relate to the timing of prior reviews: the last “regular, ten-year” review of the Comparative Literature Department was completed in 1999, a specially convened departmental review was completed in 2002-03, and the certificate programs in Folklore have never before been reviewed. In addition, it has been four years since the department was restructured to become the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, and it is important for the college and faculty to evaluate carefully academic programs in departments that have been restructured, so we may consider program function and purpose and whether and how faculty reconfigurations serve our students.

Before summarizing the L&S Academic Planning Council’s discussion of the program review and its recommendations, I want to assure you that we understand that the review process is time-consuming as well as intellectually and emotionally challenging. Our hope is that the
process adds value to the work you and your colleagues do and provides an opportunity to think carefully about how to configure academic programs to best serve our students.

Dean Zaeske’s presentation began with the observation that Comparative Literature will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in the coming year. This celebration comes on the heels of several years of significant change, including the merger of Comparative Literature with Folklore, a number of faculty retirements, and a notable number of new faculty hires. We appreciate the effort you and your colleagues have invested in the review process, as well as the work invested for the past several years, working on the new departmental entity. We also greatly appreciate the efforts of the review committee to offer thoughtful, though challenging, recommendations about the future.

The L&S APC had a wide ranging discussion on the self-study and review committee reports. Members were particularly struck by the review committee’s observations that “almost everyone in CLFS agrees that Folklore Studies faculty have not been fully integrated into the merged department,” and that there are substantial disagreements between the faculty in areas ranging from instruction, graduate training and TA allocation, to governance. The review committee expressed concern about disagreements regarding Graduate program requirements, as well as the difficulty the faculty has had to articulate a common undergraduate program of study (within the constraints of the L&S baccalaureate degree requirements) that integrates both Comparative Literature and Folklore. More seriously, the committee offered comment on the department’s capacity to offer the nominally integrated programs for which it is responsible, with serious concern expressed about whether there are sufficient Folklore faculty to offer courses at levels to serve that array of programs (certificate, undergraduate major, graduate minor and degrees). The report suggests that program development and renovation that was anticipated at the time of merger has failed to come to fruition, and that in addition to the Folklore Program not being well integrated into the Comparative Literature program, Folklore retirements and departures have eroded the ability of CLFS to offer an integrated curriculum.

The evaluation of the committee suggests, and the L&S APC concurs, that the attempt to merge these academic areas has failed. To remediate the situation, the council has asked the department to consider reconceptualizing the merger of these programs, with the following recommended sequence of actions:

- By the end of Fall 2017, CLFS should submit a request to restructure.
- By the end of Fall 2017, CLFS should submit a request to suspend admission to CLFS program(s) during reconceptualization. Suspension of program admissions beginning in Fall 2018 will afford the faculty time to plan for the future. CLFS programs include:
  - Undergraduate major (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science) – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies
  - Master of Arts – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies”
  - Doctor of Philosophy – Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies, with named options in “Comparative Literature” and in “Folklore Studies”
  - Undergraduate Certificate in Folklore
  - Doctoral Minor in Comparative Literature
- Doctoral Minor in Folklore
  - By end of Spring 2018, Folklore faculty (expanded to include folklorists beyond the department) should submit a proposal to relocate the existing Folklore Certificate.
  - By end of Fall 2017, the Comparative Literature faculty and interested affiliates should submit a plan for engaging in efforts to reconceptualize the programs (perhaps convening a “Future of CL Task Force,” similar to the “Future of Asian Studies” task force)? Our hope is to see a broadly configured committee that will be able to engage in discussion of the future of CL as highly connected, interdisciplinary program with comparative literary (and other) study at its core.
  - By end of Fall 2018, CLFS should ask to revise the CLFS program names, update program requirements (and, if necessary, discontinue the named options), and request permission to reopen admissions.

Finally, with respect to the programs as they currently exist, the APC also spent some time considering CLFS’ assessment strategy, and how this process can be used to inform discussions of student learning and program design. Members noted that while it is useful to have a sense of student satisfaction with programs and students’ perceptions of learning in them, this type of indirect assessment often is not useful to programs with very small student numbers. (And indeed, the CLFS self-study also expressed concern about how generalizable survey results may be.) APC members suggest that as the faculty in Comparative Literature and in Folklore discuss program redesign, they give serious consideration to revisiting the survey approach for assessing student learning. Also, since Comparative Literature courses serve students in other programs, it is worth considering, how to assess and improve learning at the course level, to ensure that the discipline’s contributions to other areas of study is secure and strong. Council members encourage you also to consider methods of more directly assessing student learning, and to use what is found to guide program improvement in both areas.

The L&S Academic Planning Council approved a motion to accept this review as complete, with the understanding that there is a considerable amount of work to be done and several steps to be taken to address concerns raised in the report, to protect students enrolled in CLFS programs, and to ensure that there is a future for the discipline at UW-Madison.

This report, and the department’s response to it, signals a beginning of a much longer conversation about the future of CLFS, which will involve faculty from Comparative Literature and Folklore as well as the input from colleagues from other units. I want to commend the review committee for its work and for making what were certainly difficult recommendations. This review, and the seriousness with which it was undertaken by all parties, reminds us that academic program review affords us all an opportunity to identify strengths as well as areas needing improvement: it is a process that keeps a great university great. Please accept my thanks for embracing this opportunity.