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. 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.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Keffrelyn Brown, Professor and Maxine Foreman Zarrow Endowed Faculty Fellow, University of Texas at Austin
Lynn Paine, Associate Dean and Professor, Michigan State University
Noah Sobe, Professor and Center Director, Loyola University Chicago
Earlise Ward, Associate Professor, School of Nursing; Faculty Director, Morgridge Center for Public Service, UW-Madison, Graduate Faculty Executive Committee representative
Lynda Stone, Samuel M. Holton Distinguished Professor at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chair

Dr. Lynda Stone
RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT 2021

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The department of Curriculum and Instruction is grateful for the studious insights provided by the external review committee Chair, Professor Lynda Stone, and the committee members Professors Keffrelyn Brown, Noah Sobe, Lynne Paine and Earlise Ward. The report summarizes strengths and challenges of the past decade and recommendations for future action. Our response is organized around these three sections of the report.

Strengths

We appreciate the committee’s recognition of how our multiple strengths have contributed to our number one ranking in graduate education (US News & World Report) for 19 of the last 20 years. We agree with the committee’s assessment that lauds our unique intellectual reputation in the competitive national and global landscape of education. Our department’s signature of outstanding interdisciplinary research, extremely strong mentoring of graduate students who succeed on the world stage, and innovative and creative teaching underscores what becomes possible when excellence and equity are seen as mutually constitutive. The review has highlighted that for the Master’s and Ph.D. degrees our department’s emphasis on social justice, along with high quality research, teaching and service, have produced a vibrant, exciting and forward-thinking intellectual and social milieu in which epistemological and demographic diversity are foregrounded in ways that benefit the student body, the faculty, the UW and the state of Wisconsin.

Challenges

Three main domains within which the committee observed challenges were related to how areas function in different departmental tasks, the workload for faculty, and the ways in which different assistantship opportunities can be offered to graduate students.

Areas and department functions. We recognize the challenges that the new admissions policy for full funding of all admitted students presents to a department that has built its distinctiveness and reputation on more decentralized academic excellence and admissions. The centralization of the process represents integrating difficult intellectual, ethical and organizational tasks. It requires a new departmental organization with new responsibilities and obligations of faculty in decision-making. Among the latter are comparing department-wide candidates for admission who have extremely different epistemological commitments, backgrounds and fields, disciplines that are not reducible to each other, and a wide range of intended research projects. While faculty are clearly able to discern strong candidates in their respective areas, the intellectual and programmatic diversity make it not possible to set criteria in advance that would genuinely embrace or honor such differences equally across the department or that could account a priori for all variables applicants present. Even with this complexity, however, in the two years of new admissions that the faculty has engaged, the department has voted unanimously for the pool of candidates put forward and we have
successfully recruited an excellent student cohort, the majority of whom are students of color. The issue of admissions is not one of departmental areas of study per se but rather the requirement that links admission to full funding which in turn requires centralization of decisions about who should receive that funding.

While we applaud the move to full funding and support having our students receive admissions offers competitive with our peer institutions, we also realize that different tasks require different solutions. Our new approaches to hiring, for example, make use of the area strengths and the faculty crossover between areas to suggest creative and imaginative ways of recruiting outstanding faculty who then draw outstanding graduate students. The new admissions process requires a different kind of creative solution. The areas still have an important role to play in drawing strong applications and faculty review prospective applicants in their areas with deep knowledge of the specificity of content. We believe that the manner in which the area structure of the department has and will evolve in the coming years, and that the very real intellectual and community value of the areas (see Recommendations section below) offer compelling reasons for its continued evolution. The current situation provides a functional inflection point that should be permitted to grow and change in ways that preserve what is good about the area’s flexible structure and that adjust to the different kinds of tasks required.

**Faculty workload.** The external review committee noted the issue of faculty workload and asked whether there were creative solutions for acknowledging this load in different ways: “Are there possibilities, for instance, in currently informal practices becoming venues for credit and expertise?” We concur with the committee’s assessment of the extensive nature of our mentoring and non-course-based time commitment to students. Faculty regularly engage in giving extra time to mentoring for such things as anti-racist pedagogy, addressing xenophobia, building connections with disadvantaged communities beyond campus, running weekly reading groups in addition to set seminars, teaching writing and publication skills, practicing interviews and public presentations with students, and more. This goes beyond simply advising students how to do a research thesis or dissertation and constitutes a large unspoken, informal and time-heavy commitment to the department’s principles of social justice and excellence in teaching. These informal practices are essential to the department’s graduate mission. They reflect a mature workforce who understands the holism of graduate mentoring and takes responsibility for addressing structural issues within increasingly time-poor institutional circumstances. We appreciate the suggestion to more creatively explore ways of acknowledging how these non-formalized contributions can be recognized and legitimated beyond word of mouth or intangible understandings. We will explore these positive possibilities going forward.

**Range of student assistantships.** The external review report considered the balance and weight of different kinds of assistantships that our graduate students could take up. The report noted that “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.” Faculty remain cognizant of the wide array of possibilities for mentoring that occurs through different kinds of assistantship. To respond to the complexities and balances of assistantships, we have created a specific committee devoted to assistantship
allocation in the department that operates in tandem with the new funding model. That committee gathers pertinent information before allocations are made, balancing departmental instructional needs with graduate student strengths and experience and state-mandated licensing requirements in teacher education.

While we are working toward a vision that would enable all students to experience a variety of assistantships that offer opportunities across teaching and research there is a cost to this process that requires campus attention. Currently, project assistantships cost significantly more than teaching assistantships due to the departments having to carry the burden of a differential scale for tuition remission. We cannot afford to organize assistantships across such a variety of possibilities at this point, and the difference cannot be made up by simply appealing to external funding. External funding bodies typically privilege certain kinds of subject matters over other kinds (e.g., STEM), meaning that not all areas of the department have genuine access to funding bodies dedicated to their area. We remain hopeful, however, that our vision of parity across assistantships can be realized in the future.

**Minors.** The department offers four minors: Curriculum and Instruction, Qualitative Research Methods, International Education, and Science Education. The review team did not comment on these minors, and per the instructions given to the review team, we interpret that to indicate that they did not have concerns about or see challenges in regard to the minors. While we will be maintaining the courses listed in our minors, we would like to work with XXXX and the marketing office to make students across campus more aware that these minors exist. We expect that with new certificates potentially coming on board, more attention may be drawn to what our department offers and anticipate further demand for these minors in the future.

**Recommendations**

The three concluding recommendations addressed issues of funding, faculty areas, and new Master’s degrees and Graduate/Professional Certificates.

1. **Funding**

The external review report noted that increased funding is the central issue for current and future efforts of our graduate programs and that this included in particular issues pertaining to students beyond their fourth year of study in the doctorate, in addition to the need for a long term plan for retaining a robust cohort of international students. The department of Curriculum and Instruction draws on a variety of funding sources to support new and existing graduate students. These include the four fellowships earned through the former Graduate School Support Competition that offer two-years funding, two EDGRs/AOF fellowships offered by the School of Education, university-wide fellowships that our students compete in (e.g., Kemper-Knapp fellowship), and allocated funds from the department budget. With the transition to the full funding model the department was faced with blunt decisions that impacted the number of students we could admit relative to the past and how long we could fund them for. For equity reasons, the department made the move to full funding for all existing Ph.D. students within their first four years of study. This meant in practice that instead of ‘grandfathering in’ the
change in funding model across time, we gave funding to all Ph.D. students simultaneously in their first four years of study. This was introduced in the academic year of 2019/2020 and generated a very positive response from existing students in that category.

Our budget models demonstrated that to fund into the fifth and sixth years would have resulted in no more than 2 or 3 new admits. In a department of 30 professors, currently holding the number one ranking in the nation, and being the third largest Ph.D. program on campus this was judged as deleterious to the existence of the program and its national and international reputations. Given the available resources we chose to maintain the integrity of the graduate program by funding incoming students for four years. The department has, however, subsequently developed several models of support. We have a new endowment for graduate students pursuing dissertation research in their fifth and sixth years in the area of mathematics education (the Romberg fellowships). We have endowments for students studying in the area of science education available to students in their fifth and sixth years (the Pella awards). We have additional fellowships for all existing students that graduate students at any dissertator stage compete for. We have also worked with procuring for our senior graduate students teaching assistantships and project assistantships in units within and outside the School of Education, such as in WCER, computer science, teaching languages, and the Graduate School. Last, we have used grant budgets to fund advanced students in their later years of study.

We recognize that this range may not cover every case and propose several pathways based on the recommendations. First, we need to develop a longer-range plan with the School of Education for endowments that ensure gifts for these purposes. Second, we recognize the potential of new Master’s degrees and certificate programs to generate revenue and provide employment opportunities for our advanced students. And third, while the external review noted our excellence in median time to completion for the Ph.D. and the outstanding quality of our graduates’ work, at both the point of orientation and in one-on-one advising we can underscore the differences that would be faced if doctoral study took more than four years. This would be enhanced by a new tracking system developed by our Graduate Program Coordinator to identify in the fourth year of study any doctoral students who had not completed their program and who had simultaneously not procured funding for a fifth year of study. This situation that could then be communicated to the department committee responsible for allocating assistantships.

The department has recognized its commitments to diversity and to equality in its admissions practices. International students are admitted via the same processes as our domestic students and the pools are not separated. International applicants compete for the same fellowships as domestic students, except for the EdGr/AOF fellowships. In addition to having a student-led organization for international students in the department we have worked with international students to procure grants for holding events and workshops that are meaningful to students. Two challenges remain. The first are the challenges presented by a new full funding admissions model and which pertain to the practice of provisional admission and parity in regard to how waivers are administered. The department recognizes the equity issues that arose this year around domestic applicants who are working full time in the Madison area and seeking
admission to the Ph.D. program relative to full time employees in other domestic locations and to international applicants. Domestic applicants working full time, such as teachers or applicants working in IT, elect not to accept departmental funding and to pay tuition out of private means. Domestic students not in the Madison area and/or international students who are restricted from full time employment by immigration and visa policies, may have similar desires to not participate in the assistantship structure and to fund their own study at the UW out of private means. This may especially be the case for more mature age applicants who have already had a long and robust career in an educational system. Seeking consistent solutions with the Graduate School regarding students paying for credits once they have equally gone through the approval process and are deemed admissible would enable us to retain our good standing in national and international education and underscore our concern for equitable pathways to completion. The second challenge pertains to social integration of international students. Over the last two years the department has hired a greater number of international faculty and indeed the current Director of Graduate Programs has been an international student in the US. Despite this representation, we agree with the review that a longer term plan that addresses attitudinal, linguistic and epistemic barriers to full inclusion and the power dynamics among domestic and international students and faculty would be helpful in addressing more subtle social issues that can arise and would sustain our very high ratings from graduate students for their satisfaction with overall program quality.

2. Organization of areas

The external review report recommended delimiting the number of areas through which the faculty affiliate and then allowing cross-affiliation between areas. The external review committee was right to note that “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.” The report also noted that our website lists five general areas and that faculty researched and taught within groupings that exceeded what the website portrays.

While the previous design of five areas was mentioned in the self-study, underscored as now non-functional, and its genesis explained in meetings, the committee was not aware that the five areas listed on our website (Curriculum and Global Studies; Disciplinary Studies; Multicultural Education, Teacher Education, and Childhood Studies; Digital Media; and Languages and Literacies) were a function of a request from a previous Dean to reorganize for the purposes of hiring. They have no practical purposes within the instructional program or graduate student course or research interests. They are not used for hiring or recruitment, did not generate the desired clarity, and should be removed.

The values of the current departmental organization are multiple.

**Hiring:** The departmental areas our faculty work within and across enable our department to recruit excellent hires who then attract excellent graduate students. The current area titles match the demarcations in the field, the research lines of faculty, the teaching and programmatic commitments of the department and job market classifications. The areas in
alphabetical order are: Bilingual/ESL/World Language Education; Curriculum Studies and Global Studies; Design, Informal and Creative Education (DICE); Early Childhood Education; Literacy; Mathematics Education; Multicultural Education; Science Education; Social Studies Education; and Teacher Education. Many faculty cross-affiliate with two or more areas and participate in search committees and admissions decisions for our graduate students in multiple areas.

Allowing Flexibility and Responsiveness to Changing Intellectual Movements and External Educational Priorities: The area arrangement structures both stability and innovation. The areas align with yearly teaching assignments, intellectual practices, and communities and cohorts of students, and they allow cutting edge research and innovations to evolve into new formations (e.g., the redefinition of the old Educational Technology area now as DICE). The epistemological diversity that the department is renowned for has been supported in part by this flexible structure. The stability of intellectual communities permits national and international visibility and recognition of their contributions e.g., in mathematics education, science education, literacy, etc., and aligns well with professional organizations, journals, intellectual communities, and funding agencies. As new social and intellectual movements arise and epistemologies evolve, the area structure permits their introduction and is flexible enough to allow morphing into new domains, such as the introduction of a multicultural education area, the addition of global studies to the curriculum studies area, and the expansion of ESL into world languages and bilingual education.

Mentoring of Graduate Students: The area arrangement generates and maintains an intellectual vibrancy that operates to attract the most outstanding graduate students domestically and internationally. Prospective students are drawn to the robust cohorts studying in the areas and these affiliations often end up in lifelong networks of alumni and influence. In addition, because so many faculty work across more than one area our intellectual and professional mentoring of students delivers a breadth and depth that has become the hallmark of our department. Thesis and dissertation committees are typically cross-area which also gives our graduates the opportunity to compete for multiple positions upon completion.

To that end, we recognize the areas are more than administrative conveniences. They allow our students and faculty to forge social and intellectual connections within and across interests which constitute our department’s signature and its reputation for a kind of interdisciplinary focus that remains robust. These connections are communicated in our required class C&I 712 Introduction to Research in Curriculum and Instruction in which faculty from all areas present their research to new students and in the methodology requirements of our doctoral program. There is also a tremendous amount of cross-fertilization already occurring, reflected in the topics and titles of theses and dissertations and joint grant applications. The department, therefore, has to weigh the multiple functions and dimensions that areas fulfill alongside the most effective and efficient ways for implementing its mission. We recognize the challenges that a new centralized admissions process layered over the top of departmental areas has posed in the last two years and we are working through the process to refine it for upcoming rounds.
3. **New Master’s degrees and graduate/professional certificates**

We are appreciative of the questions and challenges raised by the committee in regard to potentially developing a new Master’s degree and/or Graduate/Professional certificates. The report captured the difficulties of implementing such projects in a time of transition and uncertainty and we are appreciative of the external review committee’s recognition of the complexities of both structure and timing. As a department, we have already taken steps to consider what and how such innovations could be developed. In the last several years, two committees, the Graduate Program Committee and the Curriculum Committee, took up the responsibility of examining different possibilities for redesign and the impact that the addition of new certificates and a new Master’s degree would have on our existing graduate programs, on faculty workload in the context of other duties, and on the wider community need for such programs.

**Master’s Degree:** The Master’s degree has been a vital component of professional upskilling and a rich intellectual program, historically recruiting largely from Wisconsin-based teachers who received financial compensation for obtaining advanced degrees. Since this state law has changed and only a small number of school districts now offer this incentive we have started to recruit from a more diverse pool of Master’s candidates. We recognize the potential revenue stream that a new kind of Master’s degree may generate and the need for faculty and administrative support to both develop and sustain such programs. The external review committee noted “The general impression is that faculty members are not opposed to these directions but are not highly invested at this time.” We believe that faculty have and do display energetic interest in developing new programs and that we are in the learning stages of what this process requires. Over the last several years faculty have met with excitement around these new possibilities. Multiple departmental committees, repeated faculty meetings, meetings with the Dean’s office, with Continuing Studies, and with other departments within and outside the School of Education who have successfully generated such programs have taken place. The faculty also have recognized that undergraduate certificates can foster opportunities for on-ramps into a Master’s degree, for our graduate students’ teaching experience, and as revenue for our department. Our existing undergraduate certificate in Games-based Design generates a large number of teaching assistantships for our graduates in the summer months, as well as significant revenue for the department as a whole. We also have two new undergraduate certificates in different stages of the program approval process whose relevance here is related to generating opportunities for our graduate students in their future teaching assignments and for recruiting Master’s students. The multiple meetings and efforts in these regards have also been accompanied by an uncertainty in regard to time commitments, to the ethics of creating a Master’s degree online for an inherently social discipline steeped in holism and affective labor, to the overall impact on our existing in-person programs, and in regard to sustainability.

**Graduate/Professional Certificates:** In the years prior to the review, the department developed a list of potential Graduate/Professional certificates that we shared with the external review committee in the spirit of seeking guidance regarding their potential impact on the Ph.D.
program. These certificate development ideas have been previously presented to the Dean’s office, discussed with PLACE, and with Continuing Studies. Such Graduate/Professional Certificate programs could be generated in time, but we remain uncertain about both the possibility for significant direct revenue to the department from them, about the intellectual benefit to our C&I graduate students of such certificate programs, about the logistics of marketing and maintenance of robust enrolment, and about the general impact, positive or negative, on the existing Ph.D. program. Overall, we agree that the external review report represents an appropriate reflection on the questions of balance between administrative burdens, revenue generation, intellectual interests, and institutional capacity.

Conclusion

The department of Curriculum and Instruction is a rarity on the UW campus and globally for all of the right reasons. Despite changing external circumstances, significant faculty attrition over the last two decades, the highly competitive landscape of a large and broad discipline, and the Covid-19 pandemic context, we are the only department that we know of that has sustained the number one ranking in graduate education for nearly two decades. This is not just a rare feat in regard to the University of Wisconsin, but in terms of our ranking and reputation domestically and internationally. It is testimony to the dedication of different and ongoing generations of faculty and staff who create conditions that generate the respect the department has accrued and that remains attractive to graduate applicants. We are grateful to the review committee for recognizing the outstanding quality in our programs and the quality, time and dedication our faculty and staff give to research, mentoring, teaching and service. We are also grateful to the review committee for striking a balance between identifying the unique strengths of our graduate programs and pointing to the real and ongoing challenges that we face. As the committee has observed, the most important of those challenges arise at the intersection of shifting external conditions and long-standing norms of the department – norms that also contribute to our strengths. These challenges, such as the challenge of graduate admissions and the challenge of departmental area structure, require thoughtful long-term solutions that respond to a shifting resource context and build on, rather than seek to replace, constructive departmental norms and traditions related to autonomy, interdisciplinarity, and intellectual and demographic diversity. In many cases our proposed responses are already underway. These responses underscore the excellence of our graduate programs, our faculty’s research, mentoring, teaching and service commitments, and the inherent creativity we bring to sustaining our position at the very forefront of the field.
April 14, 2021

TO: Karl Scholz, Provost
FROM: Diana Hess, Dean, School of Education
RE: Program Review - Curriculum and Instruction: PhD, MS-Research named option, and doctoral minors

Attached please find the self-study from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction for the ten-year program review of the MS in Curriculum and Instruction Research named option and the PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. This memo highlights key strengths and weakness of the program as identified in the self-study and the Review Committee’s report and provides a summary of the Review Committee’s recommendations.

Program Strengths:

- The program continues to rank number one in graduate education per US News & World Report for 19 of the last 20 years.
- Students and faculty report feeling part of a community that shares a common mission. The Review Committee noted that students “express admiration for contributions and interests of peers.” Faculty and students also develop strong, long-lasting mentoring relationships.
- The program demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and social justice issues. Faculty and students understand diversity in its multiple forms.
- The recent and on-going internal program reorganization has strengthened communications with students and evaluation of their academic progress. Notable examples including the updated student handbook and the Rating Sheets for the Preliminary Exam and the PhD Proposal Feedback.
- The Review Committee did not comment on the doctoral minors, suggesting that they did not have any questions or concerns.
Program Challenges:

- The Review Committee noted the challenge of securing funding for PhD students who continue to pursue their degree beyond four years. Faculty are currently in the process of pulling together multiple funding sources in order to ensure equity across program areas.
- The emergence of a centralized admissions process presents a challenge. All applicants are considered as a whole, regardless of student demographics and/or areas of interest. This poses potential difficulties related to recruiting and placing international students.
- The Review Committee commented that the structure of faculty interests within the program is unclear. The Review Committee was scheduled to meet with nine program areas but found that faculty frequently referenced ten or eleven areas. The Department clarified that there are currently ten focus areas. Faculty are encouraged to cross-affiliate between areas in an effort to promote the stability of the learning communities while encouraging innovation as the field evolves.

Recommendations:

- The advising demands on faculty are substantial, as they are committed to providing extensive support to students. The Department should consider creative ways of acknowledging this additional load. The Department appreciates the recommendation to recognize the demands of advising and plans to explore potential ways to do so.
- The Review Committee recommended that the Department develop a long-term plan for recruiting, admitting, and placing their international student applicants. The Department currently supports student-led organizations and events for international students but has found that the full funding admissions model is a barrier to both international and domestic students who would prefer to opt out of assistantship roles. The Department has also hired more international faculty to increase representation but recognizes the need to continue to expand on existing efforts.
- The Department should continue to explore opportunities to develop new master’s degrees and graduate/professional certificates. These efforts should be based on faculty interest. Faculty in the Department are currently exploring opportunities to develop master’s degrees and graduate/professional certificates. Efforts include meeting with the SoE Dean’s Office, the Division of Continuing Studies, and PLACE to discuss administrative processes, revenue generation, intellectual interests, and institutional capacity.

On behalf of the School of Education, I want to thank the Review Committee and the Curriculum and Instruction graduate program for all the hard work it took to prepare the report and complete the program review.

Sincerely,

Diana Hess, PhD
Dean
Karen A. Falk Distinguished Chair of Education

CC: Carolyn Kelley, Senior Associate Dean, School of Education
    Elizabeth Jach, Policy and Planning Analyst, School of Education
Maddie Sychta, Academic Planner, School of Education
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Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and Director, APIR
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