

Feb. 23, 2010

To: Faculty Senate

From: Program Creation and Reorganization Review Committee (PCRRC)

Subject: **Report to the Faculty Senate regarding the PCRRC Review of the Proposal for a PhD Degree Program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy**

Background and Committee Process

The established procedure for proposing a new academic degree program involves fifteen stages and is set forth in *Chapter 2* of the *Policy and Procedures Manual* of the Faculty Senate which may be found at the top of the page at <http://www.umaine.edu/facultysenate/PCRRC/>.

Further, the Program Creation and Reorganization Review Committee (PCRRC) of the Faculty Senate has established its own procedures within the framework of those fifteen stages. These procedures are set forth in *PCRRC Appendix to Chapter 2* Fifteen Stage Process for Approval of New Academic Degree Programs which may be downloaded at the above link.

The Proposal for a *PhD Degree Program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy* is at stage 8 in the formal review process; the review of a full proposal. The proposal was posted on the PCRRC web site at <http://www.umaine.edu/facultysenate/PCRRC/AnthroAndEnviroPolicy.pdf> and the link for the proposal was circulated to all members of the Faculty Senate.

Initial Meeting with Proposal Proponents

In accordance with our established process, the PCRRC met with the proponents of the academic degree program proposal to ask questions and discuss the proposal. That meeting occurred on Friday January 22 at 11:00 in Boardman Hall. As a result of that meeting several questions were placed in writing by the committee and forwarded to the proposal proponents. The questions included the following:

Questions Raised During the PCRRC Committee Meeting

1. Programs to which potential PhD students might be drawn in competition nationally with the proposed PhD program at the University of Maine include the Anthropology PhD programs at the University of Georgia and the University of Washington as mentioned in your proposal. How many PhD students have graduated from these programs on average over the past five years? What percentage of the PhD graduates were funded on grants on what percentage funded themselves?
2. You mention the kinds of potential employment opportunities in a single sentence on page 3. Can you please be more explicit about any evidence you have that the graduates would be sought after in these sectors? Perhaps you could describe where graduates of other Anthropology PhD programs focused on environmental issues are currently employed.
3. You mention that this will be a small PhD program and you expect to have an average of approximately one PhD recipient per year after the program is up and running after a period of years. The UMS administration is requesting the scrutiny for viability of all those PhD programs that graduate fewer than two PhDs per year. We assume that you placed a conservative number in your proposal to not over promise. Is this true? If true, what would be the number of graduate you would hope to aspire to each year without requiring new faculty resources?

4. In most disciplines students pass through a master's degree program before proceeding to the PhD degree. To what extent are Anthropology professors advising currently Master's degree candidates at the University of Maine? Because Anthropology does not have its own master's degree program, from which master's degree programs at the University of Maine would you hope to attract students for this PhD program?

5. You are proposing several new courses to be offered within the proposed PhD program. Graduate courses require a minimum of five enrolled students in order to be offered. If you expect under five PhD students to enter your program per year and you have no other graduate students, please explain how you expect to be able to consistently meet minimum course enrollment numbers.

6. Because of split appointments with other academic programs for most of the anthropology faculty it is difficult to assess faculty teaching and advising burdens. How many full-time equivalent positions are in the department? How many undergraduate majors in anthropology have graduated each year over the past five years? Do you contemplate any difficulty in sustaining continued course support for these students and for any campus-wide service courses you may offer while increasing the graduate student body of PhD students?

7. What is the minimum number of course credits that a student entering the PhD degree from an undergraduate program must take to complete the PhD degree (not including thesis credits)? What is the minimum number of course credits that a student entering the PhD degree from a master's degree program must take to complete the PhD degree (not including thesis credits)?

8. Are there any prerequisites that will need to be fulfilled prior to taking any of the newly proposed graduate courses? Will any of the new graduate courses listed be offered using distance technologies?

Public Hearing

In accordance with the PCRRC published procedures, a campus-wide hearing was scheduled and widely advertised for Friday, 29 January 2010 from 11:00 am - 12:00 noon in the Bangor Room of Memorial Union. The purpose of such a hearing at stage 8 is to provide a substantive opportunity for all in the campus community to raise comments of concern and to speak out in favor or in opposition to a proposal.

Persons in attendance at the hearing included Harlan Onsrud, Rodney Bushway, Debbie Killam, Kristin Sobolik, James Acheson, Paul Roscoe, George Jacobson, Ali Abedi, Constanza Ocampo-Raeder, Stephen Hornsby. No students attended the meeting nor was the campus student newspaper represented even though notified.

The session began with a presentation by Dr. Paul Roscoe that focused on the intellectual problem domain and addressed the scholarly merit of offering a PhD program in Anthropology and Environmental Policy. The questions submitted by the PCRRC to the proponents were not addressed in the presentation with the explanation that responses to the questions would be submitted in writing. Following the presentation several questions were asked that were essentially the same as those listed in the request by the PCRRC for more documentation and therefore are not restated here. George Jacobson spoke strongly in support of the proposed PhD program providing some history for the initiative. There were no objections raised to moving forward with the proposal and there were no student opinions expressed one way or the other.

The responses to the questions of the PCRRC were received shortly after the hearing from the Proponents and are enclosed as an attachment.

Post Public Hearing Process of the PCRRC

The PCRRC met on Friday February 12 to discuss the proposal. A debate ensued about the obligations and responsibilities of the committee. Opinions varied. It was argued by some that the committee's role should be merely to facilitate a process and document opinions and concerns raised through that process. Members themselves should offer no opinions themselves on the substantive merits of a proposal. Others argued that as elected members of our colleges and units we have a strong obligation to provide substantive advice to the rest of the senate and the administration regarding our joint and/or individual interpretations of the comments and evidence exposed through the formal review process. Our role is designated as advisory and as such we should expect to provide advice.

It was decided in the current instance that the PCRRC would let the full proposal and the proponents responses to the questions asked by the PCRRC to speak for themselves. It was further agreed that two concerns raised in the process should be explicitly highlighted in this letter. These concerns are as follows:

1. The proponents state that they will offer a small PhD program with an average of approximately one PhD recipient per year after the program is up and running after a period of years. The UMS administration is requesting the scrutiny for viability of all those PhD programs that graduate fewer than two PhDs per year. The University of Maine is proposing its own counter proposal. In a time of financial austerity, some PCRRC members believe that such a program could be better advertised and the one student per year could be better accommodated through the existing individualized PhD program.
2. The proposed program requires few mandatory courses (21 credits) beyond the bachelor's degree to acquire a PhD and no formal prerequisites are envisioned for those courses. Due to the small number of potential PhD applicants to be accepted, only a small number of mandatory specialty domain courses to be imposed, and an ample supply of qualified students with master's degrees, there appears to be no need to accept students with only a bachelor's degree. Some PCRRC members believe that such a PhD program would be much better served by accepting only students that already have a master's degree and to impose the 21 credits of mandatory specialty domain formal course work on those students.

The members of the PCRRC all concur that the problem domain addressed by the PhD proposal is extremely important and the PCRRC members believe the proponents did an admirable job in answering all questions forthrightly and with professionalism.

The PCRRC distributed this letter to the proponents prior to this submission to the full senate providing the proponents with the opportunity to alter the proposal in order to allow the PCRRC to drop the listing of the above two concerns.

The PCRRC provides no explicit advice to the administration concerning the proposal.

MOTION: The PCRRC recommends and moves that this letter and its attachment be forwarded to the administration for its consideration in assessing the merits of the proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

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