

Graduate Program Review Appeals Committee
Informational Session: June 26, 2006

Elementary School Teaching and Learning M.A.*
Teaching at the Middle Level M.A.*
Socio-Cultural Foundations M.A.

* Concentrations within Education and Professional Development M.A.

Program representatives: Carol Crumbaugh (assistant professor, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership), Katharine Cummings (associate dean), Paul Farber (professor, Educational Studies), Paula Kohler (interim chair, Educational Studies), Thomas Ray (associate professor, Educational Studies), Gary Wegenke (dean)

Program's Appeal Summary:
Elementary School Teaching and Learning M.A.

- Teacher Education and Teacher Leadership have a rich history at WMU as evidenced by:
 - WMU's origins as a Normal School
 - University's Mission Statement
 - Strategic Academic Priorities(p. 1 of TEL Appeal)
- Flaw in the GPR Process: Anticipating the COE reorganization, EPD M.A. was under revision; however, the GPR process did not allow for discussion of said revisions. Therefore, the TLL (not TLES) EPD M.A. was reviewed in the GPR process. (p. 3 of TEL Appeal)
- Flaw in data used for preparation of "Our First Fifty Years": Migration of data from ISIS to Banner resulted in incorrect coding of virtually all of students in the TEL concentration of the EPD M.A. (pp. 4-5 of TEL Appeal)
- The TEL EPD M.A. clearly contributes to the University's Strategic Decision Construct. (pp. 2-3 of TEL Appeal)
- "Our First Fifty Years" misinterprets and misrepresents Teacher Education. (pp. 4-7 of TEL Appeal)
- Closure of the TEL (and TML) concentrations of the EPD M.A. would leave teachers of grades 3-8 (at minimum) with no viable M.A. (p. 7 of TEL Appeal)
- Elementary teaching and learning is a recognized discipline. (pp. 7-8 of TEL Appeal)
- Teacher certification, quality of programs, numbers of graduate students, and income generated by TEL students cannot be ignored. (pp. 8-10 of TEL Appeal)

Program's Appeal Summary:
Teaching at the Middle Level M.A.

The TML concentration is of superior quality.

- Core courses were recently redesigned and approved by the Michigan Department of Education.
- Graduates achieve the No Child Left Behind "highly qualified teacher" status.
- Over 90% of graduates pass the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification on first attempt, well above the state average.

There is a constant and large market for the TML concentration.

- There are several thousand middle-level teachers in southwest Michigan.
- These teachers have major incentives and requirements regarding professional development and achieving master's degrees.
- Many elementary and high school teachers also find this concentration attractive as it extends their employability.

The TML concentration fills a vitally important national, state and regional need.

- It is one of only two middle level endorsement programs in Michigan, and it is the only graduate program in curriculum and instruction specifically targeted to this age group (middle-level) in southwest Michigan.

The TML concentration is a fiscally sound moneymaker for WMU.

- It has a consistent and strong enrollment (currently about 88 active students), with 21 new enrollees in the last 12 months.
- Concentration has low instructional costs (per student credit hour).

A note regarding the number of students: The data transfer from ISIS to Banner resulted in no students placed in the TML curriculum code. The only students listed under this code were the seven newly admitted to the program during a recent 6-month period.

Program's Appeal Summary: Socio-Cultural Foundations M.A.

The appeal is based on three contentions:

1. The provost's report may have relied on inaccurate information supplied by the graduate review team in its report.
 - Two concerns were the raised by the review team: that there appeared to be difficulties attracting new students to the program, and difficulties offering the necessary electives. Both of these concerns are unfounded; the program has readily attained the size that was intended and all of the key electives are offered on a regularly scheduled basis.
2. The notion expressed in the provost's report that resources for the program be applied to interdisciplinary efforts in the College of Arts and Sciences is fundamentally flawed
 - This involves the substitution of a viable and valued program for an idea that has no standing in the minds of any faculty who would be necessary to make it happen, and has no clear benefit for students currently attracted to the existing program.
3. The recommendation to close the program contradicts the university's strategic academic priority of "maintain[ing] strength in ... teacher education."
 - The existing program has a clear and important value as part of the compelling mission to advance meaningful forms of continuing teacher education for practicing teachers; there is a strong record of demonstrated quality in student accomplishments in line with key Strategic Decision Constructs; its elimination represents a serious and inexplicable rejection of the strategic academic priority in question.

Committee's Questions *

1. Imagining a worst-case scenario in which you received no new resources, no new or replacement faculty hires, and no additional support for TAs, and had to self-fund 100 percent of your growth, what would these programs look like three to five years from now?

Socio-Cultural Foundations' core courses were already on the books. We're already operating on a bare-bones budget that requires no new resources. Over the last 18 months, we've been looking at a combined five-year plan to cycle our graduate courses in clusters, so that we're not cannibalizing ourselves. The plan is progressing well.

2. You've said that much of the data are erroneous. Please explain.
All the Banner figures except those from the last six months were coded to Early Childhood, making that program look disproportionately large. Socio-Cultural Foundations used to be a concentration, and then we established it as standalone program within Educational Studies. It was incorrectly coded during that reorganization—even before the mistakes in Banner.
3. Can you give us an example?
The figures say that there were 87 graduates during 2004-2005 for one course. That's wrong. The problem is how to evaluate or aggregate. Many of those students are part-time.
4. Regarding the September 20, 2005 tag, why didn't the departments correct that inaccurate data?
It's the parameters that were incorrect. We were told that we could put the information into appendices to explain the various concentrations, and we did. But yes, the teams used the September information.
5. Socio-Cultural Foundations sounds like a very sociological discipline. What kind of connections are you making with Arts and Sciences?
Some Ph.D. Sociology students take master's courses at the College of Education, sociology being one of the disciplines in SCF. In terms of the connections, all of those concentrations have core courses that are offered by SCF faculty. Also, other students will take elective courses in such areas as class, gender, and ethnicity. But it's important that we don't lose the focus on education. We cater to practicing teachers who want to engage in rigorous academic study.
6. Down the line, then, SCF won't be a standalone degree but revert to being a concentration within teacher education?
We're in the middle of the reorganization, so it's too early to tell.
7. If we were to recommend continuation, how long would you need to sort things out?
We're already underway. It wouldn't be a five-year process.
8. So the reorganization has been approved?
The EPD degree has been approved, just not the individual master's programs. There's a possibility that only one course will be added. We've examined all the names, how they're related, what they'll be called, and what their course numbers are. In short, there are two different reviews, namely the structure and the curriculum.
9. Please elaborate.
There were four tracks/concentrations in the EPD program once SCF became its own degree. During the review process, two were retained and two dropped. The latter action essentially reduced the number of students available to do the EPD degree. The diploma remains a "Master of Arts in Education and Professional Development." It's the transcript that specifies the concentrations. So we've been reorganized structurally. The faculty in the remaining concentrations' new departmental homes have been discussing those concentrations, but nothing has proceeded yet.
10. So the provost was essentially recommending the elimination of two concentrations?
Yes, but without recognizing the effect on total enrollment or curriculum.
11. You're accredited at the undergraduate and graduate level. What effect would elimination have on your overall accreditation?
We have program approval/review at each of those levels. The bigger issue is that NCATE accreditation is for a unit (undergraduate and graduate). They look at governance standards: we'd have trouble meeting those standards because we wouldn't be in charge of our own curriculum, and at the program level we wouldn't be able to maintain our contact with the public schools.
12. Did the Teaching at the Middle Level M.A. not have sufficient documentation to reach NCATE standards?
Because these programs are in the EPD degree, NCATE looks at the unit. The Middle Level students were not disaggregated in terms of their results. We didn't have the time to supply those figures.

13. What would be a reasonable time to come back and reassess these programs?

We need to get the numbers straight and to evaluate the curriculum. That means one year to get external feedback, and a second year to incorporate that feedback into the curriculum process. The NCATE team visits in November this year. Six months after that, we'll receive the team's decision and comments, which will definitely be part of our curricular review.

** Q&A text is not verbatim*