

**Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC) Meeting**

April 3, 2014; 12:30-2:00 pm; Pinkerton 212

**Attendees:** *Doug Wills (Chair); Alexis Wilson; Patrick Pow, ex-officio; Luther Adams; Kathy Beaudoin; Lauren Montgomery; Jenny Sheng; Linda Ishem; Andrea Coker-Anderson, ex-officio (Registrar); Lynda West, ex-officio (Advising); and Jennifer Sundheim, ex-officio (Library).*

**Absent:** *Janice Laakso (substitute: Alissa Ackerman).*

**Visitors:** *Ali Modarres (Urban Studies), Matt Kelley (Urban Studies), and Ginger MacDonald (Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs)*

**1. Introduction to the process: Ginger MacDonald**

- Ginger stated this proposal is the first graduate school program on the Tacoma campus.
- APCC's role is to:
  - think about if the proposal is well-developed and fits UWT's mission and standards,
  - think globally about the impact of this program on the campus, and
  - verify that Urban Studies has responded to the external reviewers.
- Ginger expounded that this proposal already met Graduate School's requirements for a degree program of the University of Washington. When presented at the Graduate Council, the dean or associate dean serves as a representative from the Graduate School monitoring or participating in the discussion; Ginger fulfills that role as a Vice Chancellor and a representative of the administration.
- The committee asked to the Graduate School's comments. Ginger responded that is was mostly an informal review through phone calls and emails.

**2. Introduction to the proposal: Ali Modarres, Ph.D., Director; Matthew Kelley, Ph.D. Asst. Professor**

- Ali introduced the one-year Master's of Science program, studying Geospatial Technologies with a focus on mobile technology and critical aspects. Ali continued that the world has trusted technology developers and computer programmers who have the user avoid certain parts of neighborhoods. Urbanists are concerned with the environmental issues, social sciences, and humanities.
- Ali explained that Urban studies prides itself on this program because it:
  - is a four-quarter, intensive program allowing working students to do the equivalent of a two-year program,
  - is a cohort-based program with a 1:5 student-to-instructor ratio for close-mentoring,
  - concludes with a capstone project done with local agencies,
  - caters to local veterans who have been exposed with geospatial technologies,
  - is typically only available at ivy-league schools, in the high-tech areas. Having this program available at UWT allows access for a population not typically exposed to it, and
  - is one of the top 14 growing jobs nationally. It is unique to have this level of expertise; it is quite marketable and high-paying.
- Ali responded to external reviewers regarding assessment. In the summer of 2015, Urban Studies will look at course outcomes and the cohort to fine-tune the program in content and delivery. In the fall of 2016, it could expand, if the resources are available. Doug requested that APCC see the one-year assessment to help with future programs. Ali agreed. Ginger

said that the Graduate School and the Graduate Council review every new graduate program after its initial five years.

- Matt commented that because this is an applied program, the newness is taking software in urban and environmental planning applications relevant to private, non-profit, and public sectors. Pierce County, the Department of Ecology, NOAA, the Center of Urban Waters, Microsoft, Amazon, and Starbucks have shown interest, to drive people to their businesses.

### **3. Questions and answers by members and the proposers**

- Alexis asked how Urban Studies will assess applicants' undergraduate preparation. Matt answered that
  - half of graduates will come out of a GIS certification program at UWT.
  - The other half will come from a minimum of two years of professional experience using geospatial technologies, such as GPS's and mobile phones.

Ali added the review is similar to those at architectural schools, looking at each portfolio, letters and supplemental files, not just a transcript. It is based on what the person knows. He also said that there is no room for remedial work. Patrick asked if the people helping to build the campus map and the distress message program could enter into the master's program; they don't know the human aspect of it, but that they have the technical knowledge and skills of building mobile apps and familiarity of JavaScript. Matt replied that they are two different disciplines. Google maps and JavaScript are cartography or making maps. Geographic Information Systems is spatial analytics and analysis.

- The committee clarified that 20 students would be admitted the first year. Ali and Matt agreed saying that there could build for more in the future, possibly 20-25 in the second year, depending on assessment and resources. Matt added that the hope is to double the program by a second cohort in the third or fourth year. Doug asked if they thought the ratio of 1:5 is optimal and how high the ratio could go. Matt said that about 100 students would be their maximum.
- Doug asked how vulnerable this program could be to competing online education and wondered what this program has that others do not. Matt reasoned that, in the last three years, UWT graduates have been doing online master's programs and are dissatisfied by their experience. An applied-technology program is more successful with personal interactions. Also students would have access to the facilities, lab with the tools, tablets, software, and server that they can touch versus emailing and reading a manual. Matt argued that part of the GIS program was online and the value of education was lost. Ali added that this experience goes beyond the classroom in work with the faculty and peers.
- Doug asked about the two new hires and if they were teaching for this program. Ali responded that the caveat is they are teaching other courses as well. If these people are siloed, there is difficulty getting tenured; they are urbanists with the same background as current faculty, but with more of a technical side. Doug clarified that the current faculty will be taking a leadership position of acclimating them. Matt agreed in keeping them integrated and avoiding making them simply technicians.
- Patrick said UWT can support the technology, but the space needs to be looked at. Ali said that in the fall of 2016 Urban Studies would look to increase.
- Laruen asked about the external reviewers having issues with assessments: self-assessment of program and assessment of students. They asked how the students' assessment is going to be run. Ali stated that the graduation expectation is lower than the student population. He doesn't expect everyone to finish. Next summer, Urban Studies, will review, course-by-course, in assessing the program.
- Lauren asked what the picture of success would be. Ali identified

- a) Placement of students: fundamentally to have recognition locally, regionally, and nationally for placement. Urban Studies plans to reach out to non-for-profits, companies and municipalities for placement,
  - b) Assessment of individual courses: all students must be working, and
  - c) Recognition: In a few years, Ali would like to see national attention.
- Lauren asked for a picture of the knowledge and skills in what the graduates can do. Matt mentioned the learning outcomes. There is a set of evolving technical and critical skills; he wants graduates also to understand how to apply their technologies and understand the implications on communities and people. Matt replied that the capstone project would reflect what they learn. Ali added the capstone project would lead them to getting a job.
  - Doug asked what would happen if someone failed a class and if they are out of the program for a year. Matt responded they may return, but a year later.

#### **4. Discussion by members of APCC**

- APCC asked why there were only two letters from outside reviews, but there are four different names listed. Ginger answered that the Graduate School chooses only two of the names submitted.
- Doug asked the committee if this program can withstand online programs. To survive in an evolving market, a program needs to add something that the competition lacks. The committee responded that it is in Urban Studies' best interest to make sure that all the numbers measure out.
- The committee inquired about the funding. Ginger said that Jan Rutledge helped with the budget and it is tuition-based. Patrick added that they will collect fees to buy tablets, but the campus has to supply other components and campus space. Ginger said that Ross wrote a letter of accommodation.
- Patrick responded that MCL is based mostly out of military; he sees the same for the GIS certificate; people drop out sometimes and Urban Studies should recruit nationally.
- A member commented that the two presenters are competent and that the proposal looks like a great thing for the UWT campus. They are bringing something that is elite and making it available to UWT students.

#### **5. Vote by members of APCC**

- A motion to accept the proposal was made by Lauren and seconded by Kathleen. None opposed or abstained; all were in favor.
- Ginger said the next step is to meet the Board of Regents' approval on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### **8. Meeting adjourned**