

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO TERMINATE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN  
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to terminate the Master of Arts Program in Comparative Literature in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The request to terminate the Program is due to the fact that there has been little demand for the program during the past five years and that it is redundant with other programs offered in the department. This request was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact.”

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of department.** The Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature presents film, literature, translation, and relations with the other arts as subjects of international and interdisciplinary study. It provides a basis for intensive work in literature, literary theory, critical methods, film studies, and the production of literary translations and film, video, and digital arts. Graduate programs in Cinema and Comparative Literature are grouped under four program headings: comparative literature (M.A. and Ph.D.), film studies (M.A. and Ph.D.), literary translation (MFA), and film and video production (MFA).
- ◇ **Description of program.** The Master of Arts degree in Comparative Literature is an advanced degree for students who wish to study literature in an international context. The degree may serve purposes of general literary education or prepare for teaching in two or more literatures. Alternatively, it may lead to further graduate work in Comparative Literature, English or foreign literature, or other related fields. Candidates for the Master of Arts in Comparative Literature study two literatures (one of which may be English or American) within a chosen area of specialization. All literature(s) chosen must be studied in its original language.
- ◇ **Reason for proposed termination.** The Graduate Education Task Force determined that the Master of Arts Program in Comparative Literature attracts few students and is somewhat redundant with the department’s Ph.D. program in Comparative Literature and the Master of Fine Arts program in Literary Translation. Furthermore, the faculty place greater emphasis on these two degree programs and they concurred that the proposed termination would allow the department to focus on the more attractive and viable MFA and doctoral degrees.
- ◇ **Impact on resources.** There will be no immediate cost savings as a result of the proposed program termination; however, it will allow the program faculty and staff to dedicate their efforts on the MFA and Ph.D. students. No reductions in faculty, staff, facilities, or funding are anticipated.
- ◇ **Impact on workforce.** The proposed program termination is not expected to affect the workforce needs of the state. Few students have graduated with the degree; most continued their education in doctoral programs at Iowa or another institution.

- ◇ Alternative programming. There are no other MA programs in Comparative Literature in Iowa. The University of Iowa will continue to offer the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. Similarly, the University of Michigan offers only the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. Future students who are interested in a graduate program in comparative literature will be advised to consider either the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature or the Master of Fine Arts Program in Literary Translation.
- ◇ Effect on current students. Currently, there are three students enrolled in the Master of Arts Program in Comparative Literature. One student graduated in December 2010; two who were admitted in Fall 2010 will be able to continue in the program and are expected to graduate in 2-3 years. Currently enrolled students can also elect to transfer to the MFA Program in Literary Translation or the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature.
- ◇ Student data. Between 2005 and 2010, there was an average of eight annual applications to the program. The average annual enrollment in the program during that period was 3.5 students. There have been a total of 10 graduates from that program during the past five years.
- ◇ Effective date of termination. If the proposed program termination is approved by the Board, suspension of new admissions to the program will become effective immediately. Termination of the program will become effective upon the completion of the program by the remaining students. All coursework and resources will be available to those students to allow them to complete their program.