

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO SUSPEND ADMISSIONS TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM IN
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to suspend admissions for three years to the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature in the Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Executive Summary: The request to suspend admissions to the Program resulted from a need to complete the review and revisions of the curriculum and from the limited availability of faculty during the 2012-2013 academic year. 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.” It also addresses Goal #8 of the Board’s Strategic Plan – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

Background:

- ◇ Description of program. Students in the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature are involved in research and critical study of literature in an international context. The areas of study include the history, theory and criticism of literature, the theory and practice of translation, and interdisciplinary work involving literature. Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 72 semester hours of coursework in addition to at least four semester hours of dissertation credit. Doctoral candidates must be able to work in at least three literatures – each in the original language – as well as in literary theory and criticism.
- ◇ Reason for proposed termination. In February 2011 (Agenda Item 6k), the Board of Regents approved the termination of the Master of Arts Program in Comparative Literature at the University of Iowa. This action was requested by the Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature to allow faculty to focus on the Master of Fine Arts Program in Translation and the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature for the purpose of achieving greater efficiency in recruitment and faculty effort and to review its remaining programs. Under the leadership of an interim department executive officer since January 2012, the department underwent a full review of undergraduate and graduate curricula and requirements. The review identified the need for curricular revision. During the three-year period of suspension, the department will be allowed to complete the revisions of the curriculum.

Furthermore, two program faculty members¹ received prestigious fellowships and will be on leave for the 2012-2013 academic year. Suspending admissions to the Ph.D. Program will allow the department to adequately cover all graduate classes and provide mentoring for current students. The suspension will ensure that the faculty absences will have little or no effect on the progress of current students.

¹ Professor Steve Ungar – Guggenheim Fellowship; Associate Professor Sabine Golz – Resident Director, Academic Year in Freiburg, Germany.

- ◇ Effect of proposed suspension on current students. Current students will continue to be served by the department and their faculty advisors. The faculty members on leave have agreed to continue to mentor their Ph.D. students and to continue their involvement with their student's research and dissertation work. However, the department felt it could not enroll new students in the absence of the two faculty members nor before the revised curriculum is in place.
- ◇ Impact on instructional staff. The proposed suspension of admissions will allow the instructional staff to dedicate time to the activities involved in the review and revision of the curriculum.
- ◇ Impact of proposed suspension on programming. New students who desire to enroll in a Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature while admissions are suspended will need to enroll elsewhere. The department anticipates that the reputation of the program, the return of the faculty on leave, and the conclusion of the curriculum revisions will encourage student interest in the program for 2015-2016.
- ◇ Five-year trend of enrollments and graduations. Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2011, there was an average of nine students enrolled each year. Between 2006-2007 and 2010-2011, there were five graduates. Currently, there are seven students enrolled in the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature.
- ◇ Impact on resources. Suspension of admissions to the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature is proposed primarily to ensure that current student progress continues while the department completes the curriculum revision and while the two faculty members are on leave. However, the department will realize some cost savings related to student recruitment and funding of new doctoral students. There will be a temporary reduction in faculty. There is a possibility that an adjunct faculty member will need to be hired to assist with some of the program's teaching needs.
- ◇ Impact on workforce. The proposed suspension of admissions is not expected to affect the workforce needs of the state.
- ◇ Alternative programming. There are no other Iowa post-secondary institutions that offer this program. The University of Iowa is one of eight CIC² institutions that offer the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. The other institutions are the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Penn State University, Indiana University – Bloomington, University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, University of Illinois – Urbana/Champaign, and Northwestern University.
- ◇ Proposed period of suspension. The proposed suspension of admissions will be for a three-year period: 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015.
- ◇ Effective date of termination. If the proposed suspension of admissions is approved by the Board, it will become effective immediately.

² Committee on Institutional Cooperation.