

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST TO SUSPEND THE MASTER OF ARTS IN SPANISH AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

Action Requested: Approve the request by the University of Northern Iowa to suspend admissions to the Master of Arts in Spanish in the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

The Council of Provosts and the Board office staff reviewed the proposal and recommend approval.

Background:

Description of program. The M.A. in Spanish (with optional Spanish Teaching Emphasis) provides multidisciplinary training in the fields of Literature, Culture, and Linguistics. The Spanish Teaching Emphasis within this M.A. major provides additional training in educational research and educational psychology. Spanish also previously housed the M.A. Spanish program called UNISSIST, a program that was primarily conducted abroad. Although UNISSIST last accepted new applicants in 2010, the Spanish program has continued to support students through the completion of course credits and requirements for graduation. A graduate degree in Spanish can open many career doors. Some students decide to follow a teaching track at the high school or college level, in which they teach a range of courses in language, culture and literature. Others pursue paths in fields including international business and communication, medical fields, translation, law enforcement and social work.

Reason for proposed suspension. A short suspension is requested while the department makes a plan to improve recruitment/interest and revise the curriculum for this program. The Spanish Section of the Department of Languages & Literatures plans to redevelop and reinvigorate the M.A. program in Spanish. These changes will likely include moving to an on-line program, or offering a blended version of the program and offering a graduate certificate in Spanish. Additionally, with departmental staffing changes coming within the next two years, we anticipate hiring a new faculty member in Spanish to assist with the M.A. Spanish program redesign. The requested time will allow for these revisions to occur and allow UNI to offer a stronger M.A. in Spanish program.

Five-year trend in enrollments and graduations.

	Applications	Admitted	Total Enrollment	Graduations
2013	1	1	16	0
2014	5	5	11	1
2015	5	5	10	6
2016	1	1	8	4
2017	0	0	4	7

Effect on current students. Students who are currently in the Spanish program (2 students) have completed all the necessary course requirements at the 6000-level. These two students are scheduled to graduate in Summer 2017 after completing their research papers.

The majority of students in the M.A. have historically been international students, U.S. minorities, and/or women. Because University of Iowa is the only other institution in the state that grants an

M.A. in Spanish, in the future students will be more geographically limited in their options for the completion of a master's degree in Spanish.

Impact on resources. During the program suspension, no 6000-level courses in Spanish will be offered. This can free up faculty to teach undergraduate courses that otherwise would have been taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants, thus achieving a cost savings for the courses teaching assistants were teaching at the undergraduate level. There are typically three to four courses at the 6000-level each academic year for students in the M.A. program.

There is no anticipated reduction in full-time faculty, but the suspension of admissions may increase the number of courses that adjuncts teach and decrease in the number of courses graduate students teach, thus a cost-savings can occur in the short term. This will depend on the number of graduate students in the TESOL/Spanish program with the necessary language skills to serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants in Spanish.

Impact on workforce. Minimal impact to workforce needs is expected as current enrollment in the program is low. This change may impact Iowa teachers who would like to complete the M.A. program or others who seek out the M.A. degree in Spanish and are planning to go on to work in areas such as social services, translation, or higher education.

Alternative programs. There are M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Spanish at the University of Iowa. These programs are different from our program in that they do not provide the interdisciplinary curriculum as our program does. Students choose to focus on literature or linguistics. The UNI program blends coursework in both of these programs in addition to cultural studies. The University of Iowa offers a MAT program in Foreign Language Education. Iowa State University has a graduate level minor in Spanish. Thus, a student could get a M.A. in TESOL with a Minor in Spanish, but ISU does not offer a full M.A. program in Spanish.

Effective date of suspension. Program suspension is effective upon Board approval. If the faculty believes that the curriculum revisions as well as the recruitment plan are not moving forward at an adequate pace, then program termination will be requested.