

Kathleen Moore

From: Kathleen Moore [kmoore@oakland.edu]
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2010 2:46 PM
To: 'Gwendolyn McMillon'
Cc: machmutj@oakland.edu; 'Ronald Sudol'
Subject: RE: Bachelor of Liberal Studies Proposal
Attachments: ucuireponse.doc; balsrevucuisprc030210.doc

Gwendolyn,

I will do my best to answer the questions, although many of them seem somewhat unclear and would be better addressed in a face-to-face meeting as requested in early February. Please see the responses below. Also, to facilitate review, I am attaching again the comprehensive document that was constructed for UCUI. In addition, I am attaching a partial proposal (a word document) with highlighted segments that reflect the consensus reached with UCUI and SPRC.

Again, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with the committee. That process was very helpful with UCUI and SPRC. Thank you for your consideration.

Kathy

From: Gwendolyn McMillon [mailto:mcmillon@oakland.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2010 6:44 AM
To: Kathleen Moore
Cc: Tamara Machmut-Jhashi
Subject: Bachelor of Liberal Studies Proposal

Kathleen,

This is just a reminder that the Senate Budget Review Committee needs to receive a written response to the concerns listed below before making any recommendations to the Senate.

The SBRC has significant concerns with the Bachelor of Liberal Studies proposal.

Portions of the proposal that are missing include: signatures signifying that affected units have been consulted, benchmarks of other programs both internal and external to OU, and detailed statement of unique features of the program as compared to others, both internal and external to OU. There is no statement from the dean expressing a plan to fund (or not to fund) the program should it fall into financial difficulty.

Our proposals do not come through with "signatures". We don't know what is meant by affected units. As noted in the proposal (page 6), there is not a monolithic model for liberal studies programs; hence, one cannot do rational "benchmarking". We did include in the proposal (page 6) a summary of similarly labeled programs from across the state. In addition, appendix D (page 31) contains the direct links to programs reviewed by the BALS faculty group. On page 7 of the proposal is the comparison with other OU programs (BIS and Independent Major). [It is not clear why benchmarking would be a concern of SBRC; it was not an issue with more relevant committees (UCUI and SPRC).]

Finally, as you know, Dean Sudol does not do letters of support. This program resonates with his vision for the College; he brought it to the CAS Assembly for approval; he will present it to the Senate. Like all new programs, BALS will have the benefit of its own budget. That budget will be adjusted annually by the BALS director with the assistance of Assistant Dean Steve Meyer; adjustments are based on current/projected enrollment as well as program needs. All

budgets go forward to Academic Affairs for actual funding. All new CAS programs are being successfully funded in this manner. BALS will be no different.

The proposed program seems to be a duplication of existing programs, most notably that of the BIS program and to a lesser extent the Honors College, and the SBRC wonders why minor changes cannot be simply added to the BIS. There is no discussion of the budget implications of this duplication, or of shifting faculty from their current departments to teach the new courses in this program.

Please refer to the attached UCUI responses for a detailed tabular comparison of BALS and BIS. There is no duplication. BALS is an intentionally interdisciplinary four year program designed for FTIAC students and grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. The BIS program does not serve FTIACs per its design and mission. Again, this issue has been worked through with UCUI and SPRC. The Honors College is not a degree program; however, we think students interested in BALS would also likely participate in HC. This is a win-win situation. BIS does not run its own courses, hence there is no budget implication. Faculty involvement with BALS will mirror the successful support of our MALS program. To date, 18 faculty from 10 CAS departments have taught in the MALS program. Like the MALS program (and all other interdisciplinary programs), the budget includes funding to provide replacement faculty and/or overload (see page 17, paragraph 2).

With respect to the proforma budget, the SBRC finds the student headcounts unrealistic, the assumptions of no tuition or salary increases over 5 years unrealistic, no description of the unit of primary appointment of the new faculty member, the number of proposed sections of the new proposed courses do not fit with the rest of the proposal, and the amounts listed for professional development seem far out of line.

We don't know why the rather minimal headcount would be viewed as unrealistic. Enrollment in the MALS program represents over 4% of CAS graduate students; interest in the MALS program (documented by reservations for grad open house) was most recently running at 9.2% among those looking at CAS programs. In any case, budgets are adjusted annually based on actual enrollment, so the headcount is just a good faith projection. It has been CAS practice to not project tuition/salary increases; again, those are adjusted annually as the program runs. The unit of primary appointment of a new faculty member would be based on best fit with the candidate's background. For example, the most recent CAS interdisciplinary hire was for a quantitative biology person; Dr Libin Rong was placed in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. Candidates further down the list would have been placed in a different department.

With respect to the number of sections, again this is just an estimate that may be overly ambitious. In any case, I believe the budget is built to more than adequately support the number of sections if needed.

The amount of money allocated for faculty development was a purposeful decision. This program is about breaking down disciplinary silos and moving across boundaries. Many faculty are already facile at this; many others are challenged and fearful. The opportunity to fund some high quality faculty development in this area is an important focus of this program.

We look forward to receiving your written response. If you send the response to me, I can forward it the rest of the Committee.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn McMillon, Chair
Senate Budget Review Committee