Memorandum of Agreement -- 6/9/99

International Studies Program

As a result of the first cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle I), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Academic Program Review Committee and members of the subcommittee wish to thank the International Studies program director and the faculty members who participated in the self-study process and in subsequent discussions. The APRC realizes that the program review process caught the IS program at an awkward time: the program was in the middle of a revision of its faculty governance process, and several of the faculty were engaged in reviews of other social science departments. However, in the fall of 1998 and winter of 1999, the program faculty produced an entirely new governance document for the unit, which establishes undergraduate, graduate, and personnel committees, outlines personnel policies, and outlines responsibilities of all parties. Working with the APRC subcommittee members as part of the review process, the faculty were then able to discuss some of the major issues identified for review. The IS faculty concluded the review process by discussing and identifying plans and priorities on several key issues facing the program, as outlined below.

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.
4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.
In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.

**Issues and actions agreed upon**

**Faculty Involvement**

1. The program and the dean agree to clarify the involvement of faculty in the IS program. They also agree to identify short-term arrangements and long-term strategies that would be appropriate for formalizing the responsibilities of faculty in other departments to the IS program

   - These strategies should be designed to relieve the stress that arises from the cross-department "sharing" of appointments.
   - These strategies should be designed to maintain the high level of involvement in IS by members of other departments that is vital to the discipline.
   - These strategies should be designed to give faculty the time to invest in the program beyond teaching courses, in such issues as advising, governance, etc.

2. The program and dean agree to explore the possibility of joint appointments to the IS program.

**Mission**

3. Recognizing that there is a creative tension in debates about program mission, the program and the dean agree that there should be a process established through which the program's faculty can discuss the orientation of the program and the mission of the curriculum.

**Efforts to Stabilize the Curriculum**

4. Acknowledging the exceptional rate of change in the curriculum over the past five years, the program faculty agree to continue their efforts to stabilize the curriculum. Within the goal of developing a cohesive curriculum, the program agrees to continue to discuss whether the concentration requirement is meeting the curricular goals of the program.

**Appropriate Class Size for the Program**

5. Recognizing that there is no set formula or specific guideline for setting class size for any specific program, the program faculty, director, and dean agree that the program's average class size, which ranges between 17 and 20, is acceptable.

   - The program director agrees to work within the parameters set by the dean each quarter to schedule courses.

**Plan of Action**

6. In response to the APRC subcommittee's recommendation that the program develop a clear plan of action for the next year, the program director and faculty created a list which the APRC subcommittee agrees is an acceptable agenda of issues to be considered in the future.

   - This plan includes issues related to advising, teaching, program morale, the graduate program, spatial issues for faculty/student interaction, and support for foreign language learning by undergraduates.
The program director and faculty agree to continue discussing these matters in the coming year.

**Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and continue conversations**

**Joint faculty appointments**

1. The program, dean, and Executive Vice President recognize that there is a possibility of cross-college collaboration and joint appointments that could strengthen interdisciplinary programs. The Executive Vice President agrees to consider policies that will make this possible on a regular basis.

**Efforts to Stabilize the Curriculum**

2. The program might consider analyzing the existing course-taking patterns of students in the IS curriculum as it continues to evolve a more coherent curriculum.

**Spatial planning**

3. The program has identified the issue of spatial planning as especially important to its future direction: the program needs informal, quiet spaces which are conducive to faculty-student interaction. As the university makes plans for building space on Lincoln Park Campus, the program would like to be included in the discussions. The Executive Vice President agrees to continue the conversation broadly on matters of spatial planning, especially in relation to the proposed Campus Learning Communities for undergraduate students.

**Areas of discussion in which further work is needed, as yet unspecified**

**Advising**

1. The program's highly individualized curriculum requires a sophisticated advising process. The program would like to develop an advising database that would allow faculty to have a better advisory relationship with the students that goes beyond picking classes and reviewing progress toward graduation.

   - The program may want to consider working with university offices (OIPR, EM) to explore the possibilities of sharing existing information on students or developing common database platforms through which to do so.
   - The program may also want to consider sharing information with the Advising Project, which is doing advanced thinking on how to improve advising at the university, college, and department level.
   - The program may want to consider simplifying and regularizing the curriculum so that faculty and students will understand what is expected of students.

**Teaching**

2. The program would like to find ways to foster faculty-to-faculty conversations about teaching and academic issues, such as technology, community-based service learning, internships, diversity, etc.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee and Department Chair: Robert Rotenberg
APRC Subcommittee members: Roger Jones and Peter Pereira

Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.