DePaul University Academic Program Review

Cycle 5: Spring 2002--Spring 2003

Memorandum of Agreement -- September 2003

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program

As a result of the fifth cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 5), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

University Commitments to Cycle Five Units:

1. Academic and Career Advising:
   a. The University will look into providing institutional assistance for graduate/professional school preparation in terms of publicizing and making certain that standardized test preparation programs are available.
   b. The University will look into implementing advising alerts through Campus Connect that encourage students to contact their advisors prior to enrolling in courses.

2. Diversity:

   Consistent with the University’s mission, DePaul University remains strongly committed to promoting the diversity of faculty, students, and staff. Academic Affairs will support a variety of strategies developed by departments and programs to enhance such diversity.

University Commitments to Interdisciplinary Studies Programs:

1. Cross Referencing Courses:

   The University will look into having ARC (the Advising Resource Center) identify departmental courses that count for credit in various interdisciplinary studies programs and cross-referencing those courses in Campus Connect under interdisciplinary program headings to increase student awareness of course options in the Interdisciplinary Studies Programs.

Actions agreed upon for the coming academic year:

1. Data Collection

   With the assistance of OIPR and using methodologies of the program’s own creation data will be obtained to identify students active within the MALS program, students who have become inactive, and other characteristics of interest regarding MALS’ students.

2. Student Initiatives
   a. Recruitment

   The progress of the part-time recruiter hired by the program will be monitored and evaluated. Additionally, the identification of additional ways to improve enrollment and market the program’s distinctiveness will be carried out. The Dean of the College of
Liberal Arts and Sciences agrees to assist by making inquiries with David Justice, to determine if a MAL\textit{S} link can be established in the advising section of the Lifelong Learning website. The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences also agrees to assist by making inquiries with the Office of Alumni Relations, so that the MLS/IDS Program may have access to alumni contact information among likely audiences for its programs.

b. Retention

Current retention rates and degree progress at time of drop out will be determined. The program will investigate reasons for non-retention and, where possible, plans to assist students past these obstacles will be enhanced or created. The impact of the thesis requirement and the possibility of creating a non-thesis integrating project will be explored.

c. Student Support

MAL\textit{S} will examine its student population for changes in the demographics and skills of entering students. The program will look into required advising and additional advising as a way to ground students in the program and provide them assistance where necessary. It has been suggested that rather than encouraging students to meet with their advisors once a year, quarterly meetings or communications may be more appropriate.

d. Student Progress and Success

The creation of program tracks, possibly around skill themes; such as, creative leadership, communication/writing, and organizational management concentrations, will be explored as a way to provide students' with the structure they may need to progress through the program in a timely manner. Additionally, the restructuring of the program to encourage the completion of core courses early on and to have a mid-point portfolio that focuses students on their goals will be investigated. Finally, the creation of a culminating experience with a capstone style course as an alternative to the integrating project/thesis requirement will be looked into.

3. Curriculum

The relationship between the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program and the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies will be defined, and the existing distinctions and commonalities between these sister programs will be preserved. When appropriate, students will be encouraged to move toward the program most appropriate for their goals.

4. Faculty

a. Current

The MAL\textit{S} program will determine the current demographic characteristics of its faculty and determine if an emphasis on diversity in recruiting is necessary.

b. Orientation

The program will create and formalize procedures to ensure that faculty are aware of the program's mission and learning goals and that new faculty teaching courses listed or cross-listed with the program are properly oriented.
Signed:

_____________________________  _____________________________  
Chair of Unit Review Committee    Department Chair/Program Director

_____________________________  _____________________________  
APRC Subcommittee                 Chair of APRC

______________________________  ______________________________  
Dean of the College

______________________________  ______________________________  
Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs  Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs