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Dear Hal,

Thank you for sharing with me the MENG Program's reply to the Board of Regents Evaluation Team Report from September 2014. My sense is that: you and Genevieve Bates did a marvelous job orchestrating the Evaluation Team's visit; the Team wrote a very positive report on the program; and that your response to their report addresses all major concerns. In general, my response to your response is one of overall agreement. I will address specifics, below.

Section I: Concerns that the program can address on its own.

P 10, B.a. Curriculum: GRE. The Team recommends that the MENG Program reinstate the GRE.

I agree with the Program's reply to the Review Committee's recommendation. MA programs across the country are struggling with the GRE question. In my experience, many programs doubt the validity of the GRE as a predictive test of success in graduate school; these programs recognize that often this requirement is put in place simply AS a requirement, a hoop, an indicator that the program has standards. From my perspective, those possible "benefits" of requiring the GRE do not outweigh the deficits: cost of the exam; the likelihood that some students will never apply because of the requirement; and the signal to applicants that we rely on standardized scores rather than on a broader representation of their talents. As the Program reply notes, one of WSU's missions is "access." Requiring the GRE is not in keeping with the spirit of that mission.

P 11, B.6. The Team expresses some concerns about dual-designated classes.

Like the Review Team, I too have worried about whether all dual-designated classes meet a level of rigor that we would like to see in MA coursework. I am pleased with the Program's reply to the Team that the MENG Director is going to draft guidelines about expected workloads, contact in addition to class time, and meeting MENG learning outcomes. These measures should address the Team's concern.

P 12, B.3. Allocation of Resources: Faculty Travel Support.

Currently, many faculty do not use travel funds available from the Dean's office, perhaps because those funds come with an expectation of refereed publication or presentation. I don't think such an expectation is unreasonable, and would not encourage MENG to fund faculty travel without some stipulation that the travel result in benefits for the program. I also don't think MENG needs to get into the travel funding business; given that some faculty are not using Dean's Office funds, we may be able to increase the amount available to those faculty who DO use the funds.

P 13 (1st), C.c. The Team would like course syllabi to be linked to the curriculum grid.

I agree with the Program response: while this suggestion sounds good, I would guess that implementing it would take more time and effort than the implementation is worth.

Section II: Concerns the program might address with help of the Dean's Office

P 12, B.c. The heavy teaching load is a concern.

I wish I had a solution to this concern, but I don't. According to Utah's Board of Regents, the teaching load for faculty at Weber State University is 12 sch's per semester. We might increase the credit hours associated with graduate-level classes, but doing so would mean students would have to register for those additional hours, driving up their costs.

Perhaps one possibility would be for MENG to set up a schedule according to which it would occasionally "buy out" one course for faculty members who repeatedly teach in the MENG program. The MENG Program Director and I will discuss this possibility.

P 12, B.c. Allocation of resources: TA salaries.

I too encourage the Program to do some research into TA salaries in this region.

If TA salaries were to be exceed salaries of adjuncts, I imagine we would run into some fairly significant adjunct morale problems. Rightly, adjuncts can claim they have more experience than TAs.

P 14 (2nd), D.a. Advising

We are working on appropriate compensation for the MENG Program Assistant, but are constrained by grade levels set by Human Resources. The Program Director is thinking creatively about ways to restructure the position so as to allow for increases in salary.

P 15 (2nd), E.F. Workload.

Please see response above, immediately under the Section II heading.

Section III: Upper Administration concerns

P 12, B.c. Resources: Library collection

If WSU were offering a research Ph.D. degree, I would be concerned about library resources. That's not the degree we are offering; I believe that the library, supported by electronic databases and Interlibrary Loan, is sufficient for our students' needs.

Thanks again, Hal, for all that you and Genevieve have done to make this Program Review such a positive experience for all concerned.

Sincerely,

Madonne Miner, Dean