Graduate Program Review – Response Form
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed: Classical and Modern Languages and Literature

Onsite Review Dates: April 28-20, 2016

Name of Reviewers:

Internal: (Please include Name, Title and Department)

External: (Please include Name, Title, Department, and Institution)
Kimberly L. Geeslin, Professor & Interim Chair, Department of Spanish & Portuguese, Indiana University

I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan
Please evaluate the following departmental factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Vision, Mission and Goals: Very Good

Strategic Plan: Very Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The department has done an excellent job of identifying common goals across disciplines and languages, while at the same time supporting programmatic goals that may be different from one field to another. There is clear evidence of a commitment across programs to providing outstanding undergraduate and graduate (where applicable) education, recruiting excellent faculty, maintaining active research agendas in the face of increasing service demands and responding to changing enrollment and job market trends. Additionally, within programs faculty are aware of discipline-specific trends and have identified appropriate goals. For example, the MA in Classics fills a specific need for programs that prepare students (language proficiency and field-specific knowledge) for the top doctoral programs in the country and by focusing on this particular goal they have clear, demonstrable, positive outcomes. A second example, the newly added PhD in Spanish Linguistics focuses on the areas of Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism. This matches the faculty strengths with the fastest growing research area and will lead to successful preparation and job placement of doctoral students. It also avoids direct competition with some of the other programs at peer institutions which have strengths in other areas of linguistics. In both cases, there is evidence of cross-programmatic and cross-disciplinary collaboration to attract good students, prepare them well and place them in an ever-changing job market.
II. Program Curriculum

Please evaluate the following program curriculum factors for the masters and doctoral programs by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Alignment of the program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes:
- Masters degree: Excellent
- Doctoral degree: Excellent

Curriculum development coordination and delivery:
- Masters degree: Very Good
- Doctoral degree: Very Good

Program learning outcomes assessment:
- Masters degree: Excellent
- Doctoral degree: Excellent

Program curriculum compared to peer programs:
- Masters degree: Very Good
- Doctoral degree: Very Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The graduate programs in CMLL have distinct and clearly differentiated goals, but often within an umbrella degree that provides access to shared resources and support. One particularly positive outcome of the site visit meeting with graduate students was the unanimous agreement among students that they understood their individual curricular plans and had access to curriculum and faculty that prepared them to meet their own goals. This is especially noteworthy in the context of a graduate student body with diverse professional aspirations. For example, some students were preparing for careers in tenure-track positions while others hoped to teach the various languages they study at the secondary level. Equally positive was the apparent flexibility within the curriculum that allowed faculty to offer topics-based courses, cover different sub-areas of study and simultaneously ensure good time to degree for students. This flexibility is coupled with very careful mentoring and advising and my own opinion is that the individualized attention in those areas far exceeds that of peer institutions and programs. There was no indication of particular requirements or courses that were leading to slower time to degree or that did not appear to serve students well. The faculty were also very clear in their assessment of strengths and weaknesses and there was apparent agreement about the areas that were most in need of additional faculty for appropriate coverage. One area of need that surfaced in meeting with graduate students was the lack of an annual methods course (outside of Spanish). It is not clear whether this resulted from one-time, unusual circumstances. Some students also mentioned an interest in taking courses outside the department, but my own evaluation was that the department had several examples of excellent collaboration and was providing support for students who were bridging disciplinary boundaries through advising and collaboration with faculty across campus. Importantly, students were taking relevant, specific courses outside the department while simultaneously balancing the need to take a majority of classes in the language of
study so that appropriate proficiency in that language (or languages) was achieved by graduation.

III. Faculty Productivity
Please evaluate the following faculty productivity factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

- **Qualifications**: Excellent
- **Publications/Creative Works**: Very Good
- **Teaching Load**: Needs Improvement
- **External Grants**: Very Good
- **Teaching Evaluations**: Professional Service: Very Good
- **Community Service**: Very Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The most noticeable strength of CMLL is its faculty. This is identified in the self-study and it is an accurate evaluation. The faculty in CMLL hail from the very best programs in the US and there are several mid and early career faculty who are active researchers, publishing in the very top venues in their respective sub-fields. Many have national and international reputations for their scholarly work. Additionally, there are a few very significant external grants, and in the languages and humanities, this is especially commendable. There are some faculty who are less active but this diversity in output is not unusual for departments of this size. Having said this, the rate of productivity of the faculty in CMLL is especially strong when taken in the context of the teaching and service loads they carry. Faculty in CMLL are solely responsible for graduate-level instruction, recruiting, advising and, for some language programs, for the curriculum design and direction of lower-level undergraduate language courses. This coordination appears to fall most heavily on untenured faculty when it is not assigned to full-time non-tenure-track faculty (continuing appointments) and, thus, poses a threat to the future of the department. Although much of the service conducted by faculty would constitute reasonable grounds for a reduction in course load, there were several instances where faculty noted that further reductions would make it impossible to provide the courses needed by students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. There may be ways to better support faculty through additional continuing appointments who could manage the daily demands of coordinating language programs or teaching. However, there is also a very real need for additional tenured or tenure-track faculty. At present, one of the greatest strengths of the graduate programs in CMLL - the quality of individual attention and mentoring that students receive - is at odds with the amount of scholarly publication that can be produced simultaneously.
IV. Students and Graduates
Please evaluate the following student- and graduate-related factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

*Time to degree:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Retention:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Graduate Rates:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Enrollment:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

*Demographics:*
  - Masters degree: Good
  - Doctoral degree: Good

*Number of Degrees Conferred Annually:*
  - Masters degree: Good
  - Doctoral degree: Good

*Support Services:*
  - Masters degree: Needs Improvement
  - Doctoral degree: Good

*Job Placement:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Good

*Student/Faculty Ratio:*
  - Masters degree: Very Good
  - Doctoral degree: Very Good

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

Student factors internal to CMLL are very strong. Students have access to individual advising and meaningful curriculum, as well as additional activities to prepare them for their chosen career and make the programs at Texas Tech unique. For example, students who seek
doctoral work in archaeology are encouraged to participate in digs over the summer, doctoral students in Spanish participate in professionalization workshops that cover all aspects of the job-seeking process, and students in the French track of the MA in Romance Languages receive practical classroom teaching experience that is not possible in their home country. In the face of very real budget constraints, faculty in CMLL provide good support to students. However, this is perhaps the area where most improvement could be made. Graduate stipends are lower than at peer institutions but this is made worse through requirements that foreign students pay for university-provided health care, that foreign students attend a summer training workshop that extends their time on campus prior to their first paycheck, and for all students that fees and tuition are relatively higher than at peer institutions. The end result is that an astonishing portion of the already low stipend must be returned to the university. Because of the importance of having native speakers in these graduate language programs, the programs in CMLL are hit disproportionately hard by requirements such as the health care costs for foreign nationals.

V. Facilities and Resources

Please evaluate the following facilities and resources factors by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

Facilities: Excellent

Facility Support Resources: Excellent

Financial Resources: Very Good

Staff Resources: Excellent

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

It is important to state that even with access to faculty and student feedback and an on-site tour, there are fewer objective measures of the level of support provided to these facilities than there are of other characteristics, such as faculty productivity. In fact, support is often most visible when something is not functioning properly. However, with this qualification in mind, I was very impressed with the quality of the facilities and also with the level of activity. In the language lab, the library spaces, the digital humanities lab and so on, there was clear evidence of active engagement on the part of staff, faculty and students (both graduate and undergraduate). The space and equipment were maximally employed in nearly every case. The two exceptions might be the space where digital humanities will be expanded with the incoming endowed chair (and, thus, will be fully used as soon as fall 2016) and the linguistics research space (which was vacated by a former tenured faculty member). Uneven use of facilities such as the linguistics research lab space can be ameliorated with additional hires and this makes programmatic sense as well. Continued investment in these spaces and facilities is important because they represent both pedagogical and research strengths and provide a common space where cross-programmatic interaction is fostered.
VI. Overall Ranking
Please provide an overall rating of the masters and doctoral degree programs by clicking and selecting the appropriate rating descriptor:

*Overall Rating:*
- Masters degree: Very Good
- Doctoral degree: Very Good

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

The research profiles and reputation of the faculty in combination with the demonstrated commitment to mentoring and carrying out programmatic goals are the strengths of the various graduate degree programs in CMLL. The breadth in the curriculum, goals for learning and student placement after graduation are also an asset as they demonstrate that individual groups of faculty are cognizant of discipline-specific norms, needs in their respective fields of study and the assessment of the way in which CMLL may leverage its strengths to compete with peer programs. Given the diversity of interests in CMLL there is an especially high degree of collegiality and collaboration across units and together, these units serve the wider university population in important ways. CMLL has identified areas of weakness and desired growth and this matches their stated priorities for future hires. These are difficult times for the humanities but CMLL has realistic and achievable goals and with proper support there is clear potential to achieve these objectives.

Please provide summative recommendations based on the overall review.

There are three areas where attention is needed. Firstly, faculty are not able to achieve their full research potential because they carry a very heavy service load. In some cases, this burden appeared to fall very heavily on Assistant Professors and may impede their ability to achieve tenure. The second area of need is graduate student support. Because foreign nationals are an integral part of the vitality of language programs, the health insurance that foreign students are required to purchase places a disproportionate burden on CMLL and must be addressed. Although substantially higher stipends may be impossible, providing subsidies to address specific needs (e.g., funding to cover health insurance costs, a "conference travel fund" fellowship, funding to cover an archaeological dig, etc.) in creative ways may offset the impact of these economic strains until the time when stipends can be made universally more competitive. In many states there is a requirement that no state funded institution compete with others in that same state. The graduate programs in CMLL are a shining example of identifying key markets, excelling at specific outcomes and complementing existing state funded offerings. To the extent possible, CMLL should continue to exploit these specific strengths and to identify these where possible. The third recommendation reported here but identified by the committee is that the multiple identities and names of degree programs, while not at all confusing to students inside the program, was not presented as clearly as it might be on-line. The strengths we identified for each program are great marketing tools and should be included in materials viewed by prospective students.