



Kum-Kum Bhavnani
Telephone: (510) 987-9303
Email: kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

January 14, 2020

**MICHAEL T. BROWN
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Approval of Master of English SSGPDP Conversion at UCI

Dear Michael,

In accordance with the *Universitywide Review Processes For Academic Programs, Units, and Research Units* (the "Compendium"), and on the recommendation of CCGA, the Academic Council has approved UC Irvine's proposal to convert its M.A. in English to a self-supporting graduate and professional degree program (SSGPDP).

Because this is a new degree title, and the Assembly of the Academic Senate is not meeting within 30 days of CCGA's approval, Council must approve the program per Senate Bylaw 125.B.7.

I am enclosing CCGA's report on its review of the new program, and respectfully request that your office complete the process of obtaining the President's approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani".

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair
Academic Council

cc: Academic Council
UCI Assistant Senate Director Anzivino
IRAP Analyst Procello
CCGA Analyst Harms



COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE AFFAIRS (CCGA)

Ramesh Balasubramaniam, Chair
ramesh@ucmerced.edu

ACADEMIC SENATE

University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

December 12, 2019

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, ACADEMIC SENATE CHAIR

Dear Dr. Kum-Kum,

At its December 4 meeting, the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) voted 6-1-3 to approve the conversion of an existing program to a new Master of English self-supporting graduate degree program on the Irvine campus.

For several decades the Master of English degree aimed mainly but not exclusively at local primary and secondary school teachers. Since 2001, this degree has effectively been a self-supporting program. The program has been offered in the summertime, with a normative time to completion encompassing three summers (each summer divided into two sessions). Primarily because of contractions in local school teacher's summer breaks, it has become increasingly difficult for traditional clientele to undertake the program exclusively in the summer and for two sessions. In recent cycles, this has led to a drop-off in enrollments and eventually to a suspension of admissions in 2017, when it became clear that the program would be running the program at a loss. The proposal is to move the Master of English to a year-round schedule aimed at part-time enrollment. Normative time to degree would be slightly shorter, with students completing work over six quarters (one course per quarter) and a single intervening summer session of three courses. The proposers believe, and market analysis strongly suggests, that the proposed change in schedule will attract and enroll sufficient students for the program to run in the black and to generate modest revenues that will be used to supplement the state-supported programs. The proposers are not proposing to modify the requirements or nature of the program. They are proposing an increase in tuition, necessary to bring the budget in line with current University policies governing self-supporting graduate professional degree programs.

CCGA review of the program was performed by a CCGA member with assistance by a second CCGA member after the member initially handling the review rotated off CCGA. The proposal was also reviewed by UCPB, which endorsed the proposal but raised questions about the absence of dedicated return-to-aid and access for low-income students.

The review uncovered a number of areas of concern, as noted in the Lead Reviewer's report. (Please see attached report, which includes the areas of concern and the response from the campus.) On balance, the Lead Reviewer recommended that the proposal be approved. However, he also recommended 1) that the proposers be required to revisit their resistance to including any student return-to-aid into their financial model; and 2) the program, if approved, should undergo a rigorous third year review to assess quality and viability, since an external review of the current State program has not been conducted within the five year window prior to conversion as expected by UC policy.

As you know, CCGA's approval is the last stop of the Academic Senate side of the Systemwide review and approval process except when the new degree title must be approved by the President, under delegated authority from The Board of Regents. I submit this for your review and have enclosed the Lead Reviewer's report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions regarding the proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Balasubramaniam', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ramesh Balasubramaniam
CCGA Chair

cc: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Academic Council Chair
Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Vice Chair
CCGA Members
Hilary Baxter, Academic Senate Executive Director
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Associate Director
Chris Procello, Academic Planning and Research Analyst
Gillian Hayes, UC Irvine Graduate Dean
Gina Anzivino, UCI Senate Assistant Director
Thao Nguyen, UCI Senate Analyst
James A. Steintrager Professor, Department of English
Michael Szalay Professor, Department of English



MICROBIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGY DEPARTMENT
Division of Physical and Biological Sciences
Telephone: (831) 459-5041
Web: <http://www.metx.ucsc.edu/>

12 December 2019

December 10, 2019

Draft report for the UC Irvine Proposal to Convert an Existing State-Supported Masters of English Program into a Self-Supporting Master of English Program

Donald Smith, CCGA Reviewer

Program Overview

This proposal seeks to convert an existing State-supported Master of English (ME) program into a ME Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Program (SSGPDP) within the Department of English at UC Irvine (UCI). The UCI English Department faculty voted unanimously in favor of conversion. The converted SSGPDP will retain the same curricula and nine-course requirements of the current State-supported program, with the primary difference to be that the converted SSGPDP will be delivered to part-time students taking one evening course per academic quarter for six academic quarters over two years, plus the intervening summer session (three courses). The current State-supported program is delivered over three consecutive summer sessions; thus the normative time to completion will be somewhat shorter for the converted SSGPDP. The rationale for proposing conversion of the ME program is based largely on the declining enrollments in the State program, which the proposers attribute to contractions in the duration of local school teachers' summer breaks, precluding the ability of students to enroll in both summer sessions. The primary clientele for the program historically has been primarily local K-12 school teachers seeking to advance their professional standing (and income) by earning a graduate degree.

As with the current State-supported ME program, the converted SSGPDP will be a Plan I (thesis-based) Master's program requiring nine courses (36 credits). Of the nine courses, eight are content-oriented seminars and one is a writing-intensive seminar designed for students to revise one seminar paper into their ME thesis. The thesis will be read and approved by the program director/thesis advisor and a second faculty reader. The program proposes and expects a typical size of 20 students per cohort, and a minimal threshold for sustainability of 16 students.

With the proposed conversion the cost of the ME program will increase from \$9,600 to \$27,300. The proposers justify this cost increase by noting i) the current State-supported program has been operating essentially as a 'self-supporting' program because it was delivered exclusively through summer session in what appears to be cost of delivery model; ii) fees for the current program have long been stagnant, with the most recent increase to the current \$3,200 per summer occurring in 2001; and iii) the cost of the proposed SSGPDP (\$3,900 per part-time academic quarter plus summer session, \$27,300 total) is below the price point recommended in the market survey (\$29,500), and below the cost for a comparable program at Chapman University (\$33,120), the UCI ME program's nearest private competitor. The program anticipates generating net revenue of \$6,000 per enrolled student, which will be used to support graduate academic activities in the department's State-supported graduate programs.

The UCI English Department currently has 42 senate faculty, though only about half of these are likely to be interested in teaching in the SSGPDP. During the academic year, faculty who teach in the SSGPDP will have the choice of teaching a seminar as part of their regular course load or as an overload. Faculty who choose to teach in the program on-load will be “bought out” of their State program course with revenues from the ME program. For faculty who teach in the program as an overload, they will receive a set per-course amount (\$12,500 per course in year one). For courses taught in the summer, faculty will also receive a set per-course amount. The proposers expect that ladder-rank faculty will teach at a minimum two thirds of the courses offered in the program. In addition to faculty teaching in the program, an English Department faculty member will serve as program director, receiving one course release during the academic year and an additional 1/9th in the form of summer salary (both paid out of the program). The director will be responsible for admissions, curriculum, and has right of approval for all master's theses.

Students enrolling in the program will be expected to pay full tuition and fees, and the program proposes no student return-to-aid. Rather, the proposer argue that the program is designed to be affordable for those holding full-time positions in the teaching profession, such that the cost of the degree will be mitigated and eventually recouped through tax deductions for education expenses and salary enhancements.

The proposed SSGPDP will promote student diversity by i) relying on the historical make-up of the program's applicant pool, and by engaging targeted yield activities such as making sure that admissions and recruitment information emphasizes inclusiveness, and by reaching out to potential applicant pools teaching in largely Hispanic-serving public school districts in Orange County.

CCGA review

CCGA review of the program was performed by a CCGA member with assistance by a second CCGA member after the member initially handling the review rotated off CCGA. The proposal was also reviewed by UCPB (letter dated May 13, 2019), which endorsed the proposal but raised questions about the absence of dedicated return-to-aid and access for low-income students.

Below are the questions raised in CCGA review (normal font), as communicated to the proposers (letter dated November 27, 2019), followed by their responses in *italics*.

CCGA re: Program quality. It is not possible to assess from any of the materials that were submitted where the program stands in terms of UC quality. Clearly the UCI English Department is top notch, but I would like to be able to address ME program quality to CCGA. Also, as you note in the program proposal, it is UC policy that a State supported program seeking conversion to self-supporting program must have undergone and received a meritorious academic review within the previous 5 years in order to have the conversion proposal reviewed system-wide. I recognize the rationale for why this was not done (program was in effect functioning as a self-supporting program already in the current form and was overlooked in the regular review cycle process), but since the ERC report from the last external review in 2013 did not even mention the ME program, and the department self-study that preceded the external review had only one paragraph that focused on enrollment trends, there is little or no evidence to point to in making this case.

Also, the prior CCGA reviewer, who I think is qualified to assess the quality of the program, noted to me that it is not clear from the program description whether the ME program curriculum reflects the broader evolution of the English discipline that could also benefit future high school teachers enrolled in the ME program that come from diverse environments. This could include developments in digital humanities, work on popular culture, media, film theory, etc. that deploy literary methods, global English (work on areas outside Europe and North America where English is a literary language and is changing English itself), rethinking periodization (e.g., how European literature sets norms for literary history, etc.), and feminist, queer, and other approaches that teach gender through reimagining literary history, to name a few.

Can you comment on this?

Response: We feel as if we are in a catch-22 in this regard. The last school-wide review that would have captured the Master of English took place prior to the stipulated five-year maximum. Moreover, the ME got little mention in the self-study and no mention by external reviewers. This is unsurprising: in a school with thirteen departments, as many PhD programs, more undergraduate majors, etc., the ME was never going to receive much attention from reviewers. Further, it is not even clear that it should have been reviewed at this time, as it was already operating as a self-supporting program (a change that had been approved at the campus level but had not been passed up to UCOP). It was only with the most recent UCOP policy on SSGPDPs that such programs have been required to undergo a third-year review and that after this initial review they be folded into the regular academic program review process. Yet, we also cannot wait until the next school-wide review, since the program is currently on hiatus pending official conversion and reconfiguration. Given these factors, we would argue that the best time to review program quality would be at the third-year review.

The Master of English program has no set curriculum precisely in order to allow the director to ensure a balance of offerings and so that those teaching in the program can highlight their research. In a nutshell, the program will be as diverse and cutting-edge in its offerings as the department itself and as curated by the director. This is a department, moreover, that not only has solid representation in American and British literature by period—areas of expertise that are still widely relevant to high school instruction in English literature—but also in many other areas.

The reconfigured program will indeed reflect the latest curricular developments in the field of English, broadly construed. We spoke about this at length at departmental meetings leading to the program's ratification. We plan to incorporate courses on rhetoric and composition, global Englishes, postcolonial literature, and TV and film studies, for example, in which the department is strong. We will also incorporate a robust component of critical theory, for which the department is justifiably famous. In every instance, our instruction will be tailored to particular student needs and abilities, which is to say we will not be dropping them unprepared into advanced conversations. Notwithstanding, it is very much our goal and a fundamental aim of the program to expose students to all that this rich and evolving field has to offer.

We would only add that these aims were already built into Master of English in its previous incarnation. To take but one example, a teacher in a local high school wrote a thesis in the program on the graphic novel and was advised by a faculty member who had taught a course on this topic in the program; this teacher now offers courses in the graphic novel and in science fiction for high-school juniors and seniors in which student demand outstrips supply.

CCGA re: Faculty workload. Given that the ME is and will continue to be a Plan I thesis-based Master's program, there will continue to be a not-insignificant workload associated with mentoring students in preparing their theses/essays, and in reading those theses by the program director and affiliated faculty reader. Also, I am presuming that the thesis will undergo revision(s) based on comments from the two faculty readers? Is this workload accounted for in the overall faculty workload and compensation estimates in the proposal? I know that all aspects of formal teaching are, but it was not clear if the thesis mentoring, reading, editing, etc. on the part of program faculty was considered.

Response: One of the nine courses required for completion of the degree is specifically geared to thesis writing. The faculty member teaching this course in any given year will receive the regular compensation for teaching a single course. This faculty member will serve as one of two readers on a given thesis. In addition, a second thesis supervisor will receive \$750 in research and travel money per completed thesis (as was the case with the Master of English previously). While this is the amount we paid faculty per thesis in our previous Master of English program, those theses did not have the benefit of having been work-shopped in a dedicated seminar. This payment strikes us as both fair and adequate to incentivize faculty, since the theses will be roughly 30 pages in length. Finally, this expense, which we will not incur until our second year (2021-2022),

will be paid for out of our yearly projected balance. We have updated the budget to reflect this payment. Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

CCGA re: Return to aid: There is no proposed return to aid, which is uncommon in self-supporting programs. I recognize the rationale noted in the proposal that if return to aid were included it would require raising the tuition across the board, possibly reducing accessibility to students in general. I also realize that one could argue that accessibility is built into the 'lower' cost of the program based on the market survey. However, one could counter that the cost of the converted program (\$27,300) is already nearly 3-times the cost of the current State-supported program (\$9,600) that has been essentially operating in a self-supporting mode. Given the target demographic of the students, is it worth considering adjusting down the estimated net revenue generated per student (\$6000) and directing some of that to return to aid? This might also help with providing additional means to increase the diversity of the program.

Response: We have given this matter a good deal of thought. Originally, we planned for some small fellowships (around \$500) and worked these into the budget. The amount, we recognized, was more attuned to the former tuition for the program and would provide marginal benefits in the new one. We subsequently calculated an RTA rate that would be more in keeping with that seen in many SSGPDPs (around 15% of tuition). This would require raising the proposed tuition significantly, however.

We have no good means of knowing the financial need of any particular applicant. What we do know is the main demographic for the program and the general earning capacity of this demographic. Most if not all of our students will already be employed in the teaching profession. This is why the program is set up as part-time, spread over two years, and with classes outside of the summer months scheduled in the evening. In this regard, it also seemed to us—and still seems to us—better to maintain a relatively low tuition as the best strategy for accessibility. Indeed, we have set the tuition as low as possible without undercutting the tuition charged for state-supported programs (this was a requirement locally imposed by our Graduate Division, but not an unreasonable one). In short, given the difficulty of determining who would actually benefit from financial aid as compared with others in a cohort, given that there will not be significant financial differences between our students, and given that most of them will already be earning moderate incomes and see only modest gains in income from the degree, we continue to think that the most equitable and sensible configuration is a uniform and moderately priced tuition. This program is, in a word, very different from a high-priced SSGPDP that—accurately or not—promises significant advantages in achieving a lucrative salary at the end of the degree.

We do not think that the proposed per student "net revenue" is unreasonably high. On the contrary. Such revenue will be used to create a reserve, which we have learned from experience is crucial for weathering fluctuations in enrollment numbers, and to supplement underfunded state-supported missions (most notably our graduate programs).

We certainly recognize that the increase in proposed tuition compared to what we formerly charged for the program is a significant leap. In many respects, this is our own fault: we should have consistently and incrementally increased tuition instead of holding it flat for as long as we did. While the intent was to serve our demographic, the result was fiscally unsound. Further, while the program did essentially function as self-supporting in its previous incarnation, it did not and would not meet the current criteria for self-supporting status. The leap in tuition certainly concerns us, but it is the minimal leap under the circumstances.

We also recognize that to mitigate the impact of the increase in tuition, we will have to do a fair amount of outreach and publicity explaining the benefits of the program. We will also be doing outreach and publicity to help ensure a diverse student body.

We would suggest that the best way to determine whether our strategies regarding tuition, accessibility, and diversity are sound is to see how we have fared at the time of the third-year review.

Recommendation

As the CCGA member handling the review of this proposal, I am mostly, but not fully satisfied by the proposers responses. On balance, I recommend that the proposal be approved. However, I also recommend 1) that the proposers be required to revisit their resistance to including any student return-to-aid into their financial model. Serving the K-12 teacher demographic in California with this ME program is a just cause that will advance the positive impact of UC on State primary education. However, K-12 school teachers, particularly those in low income districts, should not be forced to choose between incurring financial debt to complete this program in order to increase their salary by a few thousand dollars per year. And 2) the program, if approved, should undergo a rigorous third year review to assess quality and viability, since an external review of the current State program has not been conducted within the five year window prior to conversion as expected by UC policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Donald Smith, Ph.D.
Professor, Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology
University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
(831) 459-5041
drsmith@ucsc.edu