

**THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS  
Wednesday, February 17, 2016  
McKenna Hall Auditorium**

**ATTENDANCE**

Deans: *Dean:* John McGreevy; *Associate Deans:* Jim Collins, JoAnn DellaNeva, Margaret Meserve, Mark Schurr; *Assistant Deans:* Ava Preacher, Joseph Stanfiel, Vicki Toumayan

Chairpersons and Directors: Thomas Anderson, Kevin Dreyer, Peter McQuillan, Rory McVeigh, Dianne Pinderhughes, Peter Smith, Thomas Tweed, Yongping Zhu

Elected Faculty: Alessia Blad, Catherine Bolten, Jon Coleman, Jessica Collett, Ann-Marie Conrado, Denise Della Rossa, Richard Donnelly, Sabrina Ferri, Timothy Fuerst, Robert Goulding, Tom Gresik, Laura Miller, Darcia Narvaez, Abby Palko, Jessica Payne, Jason Ruiz, James Sullivan, Juan Vitulli, David Watson, Hannelore Weber, Shauna Williams, Lira Yoon

Undergraduate Student Representative: Ashley Murphy

Graduate Student Representative: Dasha Safonova

Regularly Invited Guests, Observers, and Resource People: Denise Ayo (Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures), Laura Betz (PhD in Literature Program), Peter Jeffery (Program of Sacred Music), Mary Celeste Kearney (Gender Studies), Matt Zyniewicz (Dean's Office)

Guests: Carlos Jauregui (Department of Romance Languages and Cultures), Zygmunt Baranski (Department of Romance Languages and Cultures)

Excused: Gary Anderson, Matt Ashley, David Betson, Patrick Griffin, Claire Taylor Jones, Elizabeth Mazurek, Collin Meissner, Noreen Deane-Moran, Nicholas Russo, Brittany Sanok, Meagan Simpson, Carmen Tellez

Dean John McGreevy convened the meeting at 3:30 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the February 10, 2016 College Council meeting were approved.

## COLLEGE BUSINESS

### Proposal: PhD in Spanish and PhD in Italian

#### PhD in Spanish

Dean John McGreevy explained that the Council voted to close the PhD in Literature program last fall 2015. He then asked Associate Dean Margaret Meserve to talk briefly about the proposal under consideration, to establish a PhD in Spanish degree program and a PhD in Italian degree program. M. Meserve recalled that the Council voted last fall 2015 to close the PhD in Literature Program. M. Meserve noted that procedurally the proposal to the Provost must state that the College will discontinue the PhD in Literature and approve the start-up of the two new programs. Because the effect of the new programs on the Department is neutral in terms of necessary resources, with the same stipend lines, same administrative support and faculty, the three activities—to discontinue PhD in Literature and to start both PhD degree programs—must be considered together.

Tom Anderson (Department of Romance Languages and Literatures) stated that the Department has been thinking about these changes for a while and has been hiring with the changes in mind in terms of the future of the Department. The new programs are to be viewed as a continuation of what the Department has been doing for masters programs for many years and then offering PhD-level Spanish and Italian since the establishment of the PhD in Literature program.

Carlos Jauregui (*quest*: Department of Romance Languages and Literatures) observed that both proposed degree programs were the result of a very collaborative and long process of thinking about and analyzing the market, considering the potential student pool, and discussing the possibilities for the future of the Department. There were two broad considerations. On the one hand, there was the more conservative tactic, taking a more realistic approach to the market. The Department desired to propose a program that will allow students to be hired in the job market. On the other hand, the proposed programs are somewhat novel. The Department wanted to move away from a more traditional understanding of a PhD program, preparing students to think more broadly in the disciplines. These degree programs will have the students preparing for their respective dissertations even from the time of admission when they should already have a research project in mind. This approach should quickly place the students in the field and in the job market. Such a program will accelerate the process and students will more quickly move to writing their dissertations, with a dissertation proposal expected in the fifth semester. The programs will take only the best students so that remedial work will not be necessary.

Catherine Bolten (Department of Anthropology) asked for a clarification on the alignment of Spanish and Hispanic studies. She mentioned Portuguese and the larger Latin American diaspora that may not be specifically Spanish. Would such studies have a place in the proposed degree program in Spanish? C. Jauregui responded that the studies in Portuguese and Brazilian literature and culture will be taught by two student instructors. Currently the Department does not have a specialist to teach such topics but is currently attempting to build a Portuguese language program and is recruiting an instructor. Portuguese will be a crucial component of the PhD in Spanish, but at this point the Department does not expect to attract students who wish to write a dissertation on Brazilian language and culture.

T. Anderson mentioned that the recent external reviewers of the Department suggested that the Department should build a more robust Portuguese program and work toward offering a major in

Portuguese. The Department views Portuguese as being a very important part of the PhD in Spanish in the future. Many graduate students who pursue the study of Latin American literature also want to take Portuguese.

J. McGreevy observed that the study of Brazilian literature and culture as well as Portuguese are issues that go beyond the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. He noted that few scholars study Brazil at Notre Dame. How can the Department not lose strength in the fields that study Mexico and the Andean region, while developing programs in Brazilian studies and Portuguese? And, what about the job market?

T. Anderson stated that the job market—especially in Latin American studies—is strong. If the degree program attracts advanced students with backgrounds in Latin American literature and theory, then the program will be able to successfully place every student, albeit from small cohorts of students. The program will admit only a few students each year.

C. Jauregui also replied that unfortunately some of the data are simply indicators of the health of the market. After 2008 there was an important decline in job offers across the disciplines and in all the languages, but there has been a tendency for the job market to recuperate in the last three years. The authors of the proposal measured the number of people looking for jobs and the number of offers or positions available, tenure-track or otherwise. The number of people in the market every year has been approximately the number of dissertations produced in the area every year. The authors calculated that 58% of the advertised positions were tenure-track. The job market has been soft on the lower-institutional-quality-end of the degree programs. The excellent programs, such as Notre Dame's, can aspire to and will get into a higher sector of the market, which will guarantee the placement of our students.

Jason Ruiz (Department of American Studies) wondered about the rationale for the program's expectations in terms of students' time to completion of the degree.

C. Jauregui stated that the time to degree has to do with the necessities, realities and resources that the program has for students to finish their dissertations and move into the job market. The program's aspiration of not providing an MA in route to the PhD and of accepting people who have been teaching, or who have an MA, already have dissertation projects or have publications that they can develop, for example. Given that situation, the program can accelerate students into dissertation mode without administering the typical comprehensive exam structure that other PhD programs might have.

M. Meserve stated that the degree programs' proposed comprehensive exam structures and the transitions from course work to dissertation are appealing and innovative. The authors worked with the two proposed degree programs so that students will have 12 months of stipends. Students may use the summer months for directed readings or for other academic purposes. The comprehensive exam structure will be in slow motion, if you will, one assignment at a time, and when students begin their third year, many of the exams will already be completed. Some peer programs have already transitioned to this model.

C. Jauregui observed that the first two summers will be crucial for the students' academic progress. The first summer will be dedicated to research connected to an area related to the dissertation, and the second summer will be dedicated to the development of a dissertation proposal.

**J. McGreevy called for a vote to approve the PhD track in Spanish. The vote was: 36 in favor, 1 against, 2 abstentions.**

## PhD in Italian

Zygmunt Baranski (*quest*: Department of Romance Languages and Literatures) indicated that the proposal for a new PhD in Italian is similar in focus to the proposal for a new PhD in Spanish. One difference is that the PhD in Italian degree program will normally not admit students without an MA, and therefore the program will be able to train students who will eventually be competitive on the job market. Z. Baranski noted that the placement record in Italian so far is pretty good. Only two students either from the PhD in Literature or the Medieval Institute in Italian have not obtained tenure-track positions. Given Notre Dame's reputation in the area, the graduating students will be very competitive in the job market.

Hannalore Weber (Department of German and Russian Languages and Literatures) mentioned that her main concern is about the potential for students to secure adequate positions after graduation. She stated that she almost believes it would be unethical to lure students into a program when the graduating students may well not get a job. Couple that with the fact that most graduate students are married or have a partner, the situation becomes even more complicated. The statistics in the proposal show that the market was stable for the last 15 years, yet there has been a drop in the percentage of Italian positions from 2008 from 7% to 5.9%, then back up to 6.4% (2010-11), down to 5.8% (2011-12), up to 6.3% (2012-13). Later the proposal mentions that in 2013-14, there were 55 positions advertised in Italian, of which 18 were tenure-track, 34 non-tenure-track, and 3 not specified. The number of positions went to 48 in 2014-15, of which 21 were tenure-track positions, 26 non-tenure-track, and 1 not specified. The proposal also states that the number of doctorates awarded in Italian was 44 in 2013 and 39 in 2014. H. Weber asked where are the graduating students going to go?

Z. Baranski observed that the proposed Italian program faculty at Notre Dame are concerned about where their specific students are going to go. The question about where students from other programs will go is a question for colleagues who teach in those other programs. Z. Baranski recalls that Notre Dame's track record over the past 10-15 years for placement of students who have specialized in Italian is probably better than most universities in North America. Z. Baranski noted that he has formed, supervised and placed more PhD students in Italian than any other person working within either North America or the United Kingdom. At end of their degree, students in the PhD in Italian program will have the skills and resources that will make them extremely competitive in the job market. Because of the reputation of Italian at Notre Dame and because of the experience brought to the formation of the PhD students in Italian, he is confident that the program will continue to have a very good track record in terms of placement. He also noted that the program will enroll about 2 students a year.

T. Anderson stated that the Italian program already is considered to be one of the premier programs in the country, and it will not take very long for it to be ranked at the very top.

C. Jauregui observed that the market analysis depends essentially on where a particular institution or program wants its students to land in the job market. There is a spectrum of programs in terms of quality. About 20 tenure-track positions and about 40 positions overall are announced each year. About 40-44 dissertations are produced every year. Even those students from institutions that are mid-rank in terms of prestigious universities will have good chances to get a job. The Italian program will be in the mid-rank, at least initially, given the faculty and library resources.

M. Meserve mentioned that the Department went through an external review in the fall 2015. The committee consisted of two Italianists, one specialist in French and one in Spanish, and they very

enthusiastically endorsed the plans to begin a degree program in Italian. They even mentioned that they would send their own students to the program.

Ann-Marie Conrado (Department of Art, Art History and Design) wondered what the relationship will be between the students who study Italian in the Medieval Institute and students who study Italian in the PhD in Italian degree program. Z. Baranski replied that there are two students in the Medieval Institute who are studying Italian and there are others who are registered in different years in the PhD in Literature degree program. Part of the success of the Italian program is that the students from the Medieval Institute and the students in the PhD in Literature program know that they have a home in the Italian section. This will continue to be the case for those students in Institute, for those who remain in PhD in Literature, and for those who will transfer to the new degree program.

Abby Palko (Gender Studies) asked about the placement record of the PhD in Literature program. Where has the program placed students? Italian Departments? English Departments?

Z. Baranski explained that the placement record has been mixed because of the nature of the degrees that the students pursued. The students with more of a comparative focus in their research typically are placed into Literature-type departments; others have generally been placed in Italian departments.

**J. McGreevy called for a vote to approve the PhD track in Italian. The vote was: 31 in favor, 5 against, 1 abstention.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

J. McGreevy adjourned the plenary meeting at 4:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew C. Zyniewicz  
Dean's Executive Administrator