UC Merced Majors/Programs

Originally planned to open in Fall 2004, UC Merced officially opened to undergraduates in Fall 2005. Some graduate students were enrolled as of Fall 2004 and were working with some of the pioneering faculty. As of Fall 2005, these faculty had developed one graduate program (with five emphases) and nine undergraduate programs. Some programs were offered as "umbrella" programs, with the intention of splitting off more specific programs when enough faculty were hired to support them.

The graduate division began with one umbrella program (Individual Graduate Program – MA/MS/PhD). In fall 2007, the first emphasis was approved by the GRC (Graduate & Research Council) as a stand-alone graduate program: Environmental Systems (MS/PhD).

A similar strategy was implemented for undergraduate program offerings. For example, the "umbrella" program of Social, Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BA/BS) was developed in 2004. By Fall 2006, Psychology (BA) and Cognitive Science (BA) had become stand-alone majors, followed in 2007 by Economics (BS) and Political Science (BA), as well as the new degree objective of BS in Cognitive Science.

Response to questions from WASC (Aug. 7, 2008 email from Barbara Wright)

1. WASC's database shows 15 bachelor's degrees, 7 master's and 7 PhDs.

   Yes, this is what UC Merced submitted in our FY06-07 WASC Annual Report. See attached table showing the undergraduate and graduate programs offered from FY05-06 through FY07-08).
   The 7 master's programs listed, however, are actually emphases within 1 umbrella program: Individual Graduate Program (IGP). We realized in FY07-08 that we should have listed them as emphases, not stand-alone programs. All of the graduate programs/emphases have Master's (MAs, or MSs) and PhD degrees associated with them.

2. The UCM FY07-08 WASC Annual Report lists 19 bachelor's, 2 master's, and 2 PhDs.

   As the table shows, two of the undergraduate programs were deactivated (Human Biology, which was absorbed into Biological Sciences; and Social, Behavioral, & Cognitive Sciences, which was an umbrella program that "spawned" 4 programs: Psychology and Cognitive Science (both in Fall 2006) and Economics, and Political Science (both in Fall 2007). [In addition, a BS degree objective was added to the Cognitive Science program in Fall 2007; perhaps this should not have been listed as another program?] In addition, the World Cultures & History umbrella program "spawned" separate programs in History and Literatures & Cultures (both in Fall 2007).

   There were 6 continuing IGP emphases in FY07-08 (two involved name changes: Physics & Chemistry, formerly Atomic & Molecular Science & Engineering; and Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, formerly Computer & Information Systems). One IGP emphasis, Environmental Systems, became approved as the first stand-alone

graduate degree program. Two new IGP emphases were offered: Biological Engineering & Small Scale Technologies and Mechanical Engineering & Applied Mechanics. This resulted in two graduate programs (with both master's and PhD degrees): IGP (now with 8 emphases) and Environmental Systems.

3. The only new program planned for this fall, as noted in the email, is Anthropology (BA). All of the other programs were included in the WASC Candidacy Review.

From: Karen Dunn-Haley <dunhaley@mindspring.com>
Date: March 13, 2009 10:48:34 AM PDT
To: Henry Hernandez <hhernandez@wascsenior.org>
Cc: Robert Ochsner <rochsner@ucmerced.edu>, Barbara Wright <bwright@wascsenior.org>, Laura Martin <lmartin@ucmerced.edu>
Subject: Question re Graduate Emphases

Dear Henry,

As I have explained in the lengthy phone message I just left you, our graduate programs are working on creating policy that will trigger substantive change submission and review in the appropriate circumstances. I have been asked to determine whether substantive change review would be required if we added a new graduate emphasis. At the moment, since we are a start-up university, we have only two graduate programs -- Environmental Systems and the Individual Graduate Program (IGP), which is an umbrella degree covering 8 different emphases at the moment. If we add a new emphasis, does this constitute substantive change?

Thanks, as always, for your patience and your assistance.

I look forward to meeting you in person in April at the WASC ARC!

Karen

Karen Dunn-Haley, Ph.D.
Faculty Development Coordinator
Center for Research on Teaching Excellence
University of California, Merced
P.O. Box 2039
Merced, CA 95344
kdunn-haley@ucmerced.edu
831-915-6761 (cell)

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Azusa Pacific University

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California State University, Chico

President and Executive Director
Ralph A. Wolff

June 5, 2009

Nancy Tanaka
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs,
and Accreditation Liaison Officer
University of California, Merced
P. O. Box 2039
Merced, CA 95344

Dear Nancy,

I am writing as a follow-up to the conference call that took place on May 26, 2009, when a Substantive Change panel reviewed two UC Merced proposals, one for a BA in Anthropology, the other for Fast Track authority at the baccalaureate level. The panelists and I appreciated the opportunity to discuss the two proposals with Robert Ochsner, director of the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence; Karen Dunn-Haley, accreditation coordinator for Substantive Change and faculty development coordinator, Center for Research on Teaching Excellence; Kathy Jeffords, director, Budget Office; and other colleagues from the Center and from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts. We were sorry that you were unable to join the call but understand you were responding to a family emergency.

The reviewers found much to commend in both proposals, and as you know, the BA in Anthropology was approved. There was concern, however, that the proposal for Fast Track authority to offer baccalaureate degrees was premature; the panel therefore acted not to accept the proposal.

First, the panel noted that since its founding UC Merced has faced the challenge of balancing growth in student enrollment, growth in faculty, expansion of facilities, and available budget. These challenges have become even more acute in the current economic climate. The panelists wondered how this balancing would be accomplished, and what processes were in place, both to support decisions about which new degree programs would be introduced, and to help the University avoid rapid expansion of undergraduate degrees without sufficient infrastructure.

Second, reviewers observed that they would be more comfortable granting Fast Track authority if plans for educational effectiveness and collective, program-level assessment of student learning were more firmly established, and if the University could show more of a track record of collective analysis and use for improvement.

Third, the reviewers noted that UC Merced is still in Candidacy, with a CPR visit for Initial Accreditation coming up in September. The panel sees the CPR report and visit as opportunities for the University to assure the Commission that appropriate

plans and processes are in place to support expansion of degrees programs and ongoing educational effectiveness efforts.

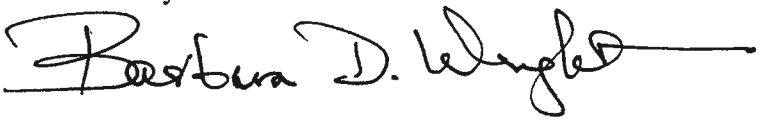
The panel was supportive of UC Merced's desire to obtain Fast Track authority and would urge the University to resubmit its proposal in spring 2010, once the visiting team's report has been submitted and the Commission has acted. Reviewers will then have more information on which to base a decision.

As your colleagues noted during the call, the University's strategic plan calls for measured progress, and in addition the current fiscal crisis in California will contribute to somewhat slower expansion. Thus the panel trusts that this delay in approving Fast Track authority will not adversely affect the University in the long term.

The reviewers were deeply impressed by the progress UC Merced has made in a few short years, thanks to its extraordinarily dedicated and hard-working faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The panel wishes the University well as it prepares for the CPR visit in September and looks forward to reviewing the proposal for Fast Track authority next spring.

If you have any questions, or if there is any way I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely



Barbara Wright
Associate Director

Cc: Sung Mo "Steve" Kang, Chancellor, University of California, Merced
Joanne Zitelli, Member of the Substantive Change Panel
Kartik Patel, Member of the Substantive Change Panel
Lawrence Coleman, Member of the Substantive Change Panel

Record of June 11, 2009 - Telephone Call with Barbara Wright and Henry Hernandez at WASC:

Participants:

Barbara Wright
Henry Hernandez
Sam Traina
Robert Ochsner
Karen Dunn-Haley

Sam explained that we have 8 separate emphases under the "umbrella" program, IGP, and one program that has been approved by the CCGA and CPEC. This one stand-alone graduate program, Environmental Systems, was an approved doctoral program in 2007 when WASC last reviewed UC Merced. The IGP, with the eight separate emphases, was also approved at that time. The emphases represent disparate academic areas; the IGP operates as "an incubator" for the programs until such time as these programs apply for stand-alone status by going through CCGA, CPEC, and WASC approval. Sam indicated that we are not envisioning adding emphases, and if we do, we have to go through Substantive Change. He also underscored that the current emphases must go through annual review and approval by the CCGA (the system-wide Academic Senate Committee for Graduate Affairs). He added that new graduate degrees that are not currently among the emphases may be proposed and taken directly to the CCGA and WASC for approval.

There are several hypotheticals that we discussed. The IGP, which stands for "Individual Graduate Program," is a sanctioned, legitimate, individualized program on other UC campuses and at many research universities across the country. It is conceivable that an individual student may want to combine separate areas of study and create his or her own IGP. Henry indicated that it was probable that UC Merced would have to apply for Substantive Change every time this type of situation might occur. We cannot treat the IGP as the other UC campuses do until we have general approval (10 degrees for 10 years or more).

Karen asked about policies and procedures relating to changing the name of existing emphases or merging existing emphases. Do we have to go through substantive change approval in these instances? Henry replied, "maybe, maybe not." He indicated that we would have to call him or Barbara to inquire and that there were questions that would be asked, such as "what will happen to the prior emphasis?" Or "what will be on the diploma? What will be the degree earned?" While indicating an understanding of the need for policies and procedures to trigger substantive change review, Barbara and Henry also spoke of the need for more informal interaction – for faculty to consult the ALO and Deans as decisions were contemplated. Barbara noted that, given UC Merced's size, any change should be discussed informally before formal procedures as followed.

After concluding discussion of substantive change, Robert asked about Table A and about receipt of the Fast-Track report:

To the first, Robert indicated that filling out Table A might be considered redundant given that Table A addresses changes in the 2008 CPR and that we are completing the full 2008 CPR. He asked what WASC was hoping to address by asking for Table A, and he indicated that he could see where it could operate as a kind of double check to make sure everything was there. Barbara answered, "You have a choice" in deciding to complete Table A or not. She also said it wasn't supposed to be repetitive. She indicated that institutions who are speaking directly to the issues addressed in Table A (she mentioned specifically transparency and retention) have no need to write a separate section.

Robert also asked about getting the Fast-Track report, which Barbara indicated was a letter, not a report. Robert mentioned that he realized Barbara probably had sent it to Nancy Tanaka, but since Nancy has been away due to a death in the family, we did not have access to the document. Barbara said she would send it to him right away.

We thanked Henry and Barbara for their time, etc.