UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF VISITORS
MEETING OF THE
EDUCATIONAL POLICY
COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2010
EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 25, 2010
3:15 – 4:15 p.m.
Board Room, The Rotunda

Committee Members:
Glynn D. Key, Chair
Hon. Alan A. Diamentstein  Hon. Lewis F. Payne
Susan Y. Dorsey  Don R. Pippin
Helen E. Dragas  E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., M.D.
Rahul Gorawara  John O. Wynne, Ex-officio
Randal J. Kirk  Edmund W. Kitch, Consulting Member

AGENDA

I. ACTION ITEM (Dr. Garson)
   • New Degree Program: Masters in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies  1

II. REPORTS BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST (Dr. Garson)
   A. Access UVa (Dr. Garson to introduce Ms. Valerie H. Gregory, Mr. J. Milton Adams, and Ms. Laura D. Casteen)  4
      • Recruiting Efforts (Ms. Gregory)
      • Engaging Students From Low-Income Families in Academic Programs (Mr. Adams)
      • Supporting Students From Low-Income Families (Ms. Casteen)
   B. Vice President’s Remarks  5
      • Student Information System
   C. Faculty Senate Report (Dr. Garson to introduce Ms. Ann B. Hamric; Ms. Hamric to report)  6

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION (to take place in separate session)
   • Faculty Personnel Actions
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF VISITORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BOARD MEETING: February 25, 2010

COMMITTEE: Educational Policy

AGENDA ITEM: New Degree Program: Master of Arts in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, to be offered by the College of Arts and Sciences

BACKGROUND: The University proposes to establish a new degree program, the Master of Arts in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, to be offered by the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures (MESALC) in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Over the past decade a critical need has emerged for professionals in a wide range of fields who possess expert knowledge about the peoples and cultures of the Middle East and South Asia, and proficiency in the languages spoken there. Matching this emerging need is a remarkable growth in American college students’ interest in studying these regions and learning their languages – especially at advanced levels. The Master’s degree program in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies is proposed to help address these critical needs.

The University is well positioned to offer advanced degrees in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies. MESALC fields strong language and literature programs in three Middle Eastern languages (Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian) and four South Asian languages (Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and Urdu). Interest in these language programs, and in particular the Arabic program, has been growing rapidly over the past decade, with overall enrollments nearly doubling since 1998.

DISCUSSION: The proposed M.A. program is a three-semester course of study that requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits in coursework related to the Middle East or South Asia. Students will choose a focus in either Middle Eastern Studies or South Asian Studies, but uniform admissions and graduation requirements will apply to both regional emphases.

The program’s distributional requirement will stipulate that students complete at least one graduate-level course on their region in each of the following four disciplinary
fields: History, Language and Literature, Political Science, and Religion. The remainder of the students' coursework will come in the form of elective graduate-level courses (from any department or school) that focus on the student's region, or that enhance the student's critical skills.

To our knowledge, there is no other institution of higher education in the Commonwealth that offers a graduate degree in either Middle Eastern or South Asian Studies. Nor are there any programs in the Commonwealth that overlap significantly with the program proposed here.

The proposed M.A. program would compete with similar programs in neighboring states, especially Georgetown University and George Washington University which have strong, well-known programs.

Other schools in the region, including Johns Hopkins University, American University, Duke University, University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State University have programs that differ in significant ways. It is worth noting also that the "research triangle" universities are actively engaged in creating the kind of program that the University is proposing.

Similar programs elsewhere (Texas, Columbia, New York University, etc.) operate with great success, but the demand for spots in these programs greatly exceeds the supply, ensuring an applicant pool of highly competitive students.

The degree program proposed can be supported with existing faculty; no new lines are required to initiate and operate the program at the expected capacity. The program relies upon courses taught in several other departments as well as those taught in the MESALC department. The recent increase of faculty in MESALC, as well as the coincidental hiring of faculty in other departments who teach on the regions of Middle East and South Asia, will satisfy the growth in demand for courses at the graduate level in these areas.

Student interest in the program is expected to be very high. In the spring of 2008, an informal poll of MESALC's graduating majors found that a significant proportion of MESALC graduates would consider staying at U.Va. to complete an M.A. in regional studies if such a program were available. In addition, it is expected that this program will tap a much larger pool of college students who become interested in regional studies while completing undergraduate studies at
institutions that lack advanced language and culture classes in their region.

The proposed M.A. program in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies will contribute in significant ways to the long-term strategic goals of the Commission on the Future of the University and other initiatives approved by the Board during the past decade. In the modern era of global interconnectedness, it is crucial for American universities to interpret "internationalizing" in a global framework, looking beyond the familiarity of the U.S. and Europe to encompass regions more distant and less familiar. The proposed interdisciplinary M.A. program will provide an important model for the integration of language and culture study with other curricular activities.

The Master of Arts in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies was approved by the Faculty Senate on November 20, 2009, and it is anticipated that the program will be initiated formally in fall 2010, pending approvals by the Board of Visitors and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

All new degrees must be approved by the Board of Visitors before they can be forwarded to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia for approval.

ACTION REQUIRED: Approval by the Educational Policy Committee and by the Board of Visitors

APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM: MASTER OF ARTS IN MIDDLE EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

RESOLVED, subject to approval by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Master of Arts in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies is established in the College of Arts and Sciences.
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BOARD MEETING: February 25, 2010

COMMITTEE: Educational Policy

AGENDA ITEM: II.A. Access UVa

ACTION REQUIRED: None

DISCUSSION: Dr. Garson will introduce the following faculty; each will present Access UVa updates:

- Ms. Valerie Gregory, Associate Dean of Admissions
- Mr. J. Milton Adams, Vice Provost for Academic Programs
- Ms. Laura Casteen, Associate Dean of Students
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COMMITTEE: Educational Policy

AGENDA ITEM: II.B. Vice President’s Remarks

ACTION REQUIRED: None

DISCUSSION: The Executive Vice President and Provost will give a brief report on the completion of the Student System Project.
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COMMITTEE: Educational Policy

AGENDA ITEM: II.C. Faculty Senate Report

ACTION REQUIRED: None

DISCUSSION: Dr. Garson will introduce the Chair of the Faculty Senate, Ms. Ann B. Hamric. Ms. Hamric will report on the issues and questions that faculty have raised to the Senate Chair so far this year.