



TO: Amy Johnson
President, Faculty Senate

FROM: Michael Gamel-McCormick, Interim Dean 
College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy

DATE: March 5, 2009

SUBJECT: New Disaster Science and Management M.S. and Ph.D. Graduate Degree Proposal

At the request of the Faculty Senate Graduate Curriculum Committee, I write to explain my support for the new graduate degrees in major in Disaster Science and Management. These proposed degrees draw on the significant resources of the University in sociology, public policy, political science, engineering, economics, human development and many other sciences and social sciences. These degrees are also strongly interdisciplinary and focus on strong scholarship, community engagement and global issues, all of which are tenants of the University's strategic plan. From a scholarly perspective, these proposals make good sense; particularly the masters program that is designed to train both skilled researchers and managers, thus serving clear needs in the governmental, non-profit and scholarly sectors of the global community.

I have reviewed the resource requests for the implementation of the programs. With the awarding of the \$300,000 UniDel grant for implementation, I anticipate that the start-up needs for the proposed masters program will be covered. With the current faculty and course work needed for the masters program, I believe it is possible to both launch the program and sustain it over the next three years. It will be important for faculty connected with the program to work on the acquisition of external funding to sustain the program over a longer period of time.

As for steady-state funding, particularly for faculty resources and doctoral fellowships, under the current economic conditions, these resources will not be available from the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy. The hiring of additional faculty for this program is not, at this time, the top priority for the college. It is possible that the cross-college units connected with the program, including those within CHEP, over the course of time could decide to conduct joint hirings that would support the program or that current faculty could be reassigned to the program. This, of course, would be dependent upon the faculty in the units and the respective deans agreeing to this arrangement.

Given the approval of the UniDel grant at \$300,000, the current economic climate and the stated needs in the proposals for the M.S. and Ph.D. in disaster science and management, I believe that the M.S. program can be started and ultimately sustained with the start-up funds, faculty reassignments and efforts on the part of current faculty to secure external funding from sources such as local and state governments, federal agencies, national and international foundations. With the resources outlined in the proposal for the Ph.D. program, I do not think that it is wise to move forward with a program that will be underfunded in the short-term. Beginning the effort to build a program at the masters level, particularly with the non-thesis masters, will allow for the program to establish itself, to gain prominence and to support funding for a possible Ph.D. program in the future.

Please let me know if you have further questions as you make your final decision regarding these programs.

cc: Dan Rich, Provost
Havidan Rodriguez, Vice Provost
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