

Critical & Creative Thinking Graduate Program Annual report to CAPS & Graduate Studies, 2013-14

by Peter Taylor, Program Director, 3 June 2014

Overarching Goals for '13-14

- A. Support the intellectual, professional, and personal development of CCT and other students, through teaching, advising, mentoring, a coherent program of study, and community building that extends to include alums.
- B. Attract applicants to CCT and advise them through to matriculation.
- C. Establish sustainable, non-exploitative operations and planning.

Numbers

Since the last annual report (i.e., from June '13 – May '14):

The Program has served 33 matriculated students (32 M.A., 1 Certificate), including 14 new M.A. matriculants and 1 readmit. 1 M.A. student graduated and 5 other have completed all course work but not their capstone. 2 students lapsed as active students and 1 transferred to another program, leaving 29 continuing M.A. students.

Through regular, online, other UC, and cross-listed sections, CCT instructors served 232 course registrations in CCT and SICW courses, including crosslistings, which is a 4% decrease from the previous year.

Notable changes or successes

- A. Because the majority of applicants now seek to take the Program from a distance, CCT has created an effective mode of instruction that combine a face-to-face group with students joining through google hangout. To include all students in the CCT community, the regular monthly evening events continue to allow online participation as do the month-long Collaborative Explorations (<http://collabex.wikispaces.com>) open to the wider public and international participation. Assistant Director, Jeremy Szteiter, received the Innovation in Online Teaching Award, bestowed by the University Conference on Teaching, Learning and Technology. The GPD and Assistant Director advised all current and prospective students, which included responding to inquiries, new student interviews, and mid-program check-ins.
- B. The Collaborative Explorations are intended to draw attention to the Program, but no applicant has yet come through that route. The number of matriculants returns the Program to strong levels after a drop during recent years when the Program's status was in limbo post-AQUAD. A proposal is also in the works for a doctorate in Creative and Transformative Education, in partnership with MassArt (<http://bit.ly/CTEdocs>).
- C. A search is underway for a 50% faculty member, who will cover the teaching of retiring faculty member Carol Smith as well as have an active presence in activities and forums through which attention could be drawn to CCT course offerings and degree tracks.

Challenges

- A. Given that fewer classes are face-to-face and fewer CCT students take those classes, there is less informal advising. A regular check-in at the end of each semester is being initiated, starting this week.

- B. Application numbers need to increase in order to reduce the following vulnerability: CCT courses always serve a majority of students from outside CCT. This is a strength, but also a vulnerability if those registrations drop. This AY the non-licensure LTET M.Ed. has continued on uncertain grounds as the Department chair considers changes that would reduce the role of CCT courses.
- C. Successfully complete the search and then collaborate on effective recruitment in a world where applicants find CCT but not through any systematic routes. If the doctorate is approved, it would add to the advising load, but the increase in student numbers would, it is hoped, lead to the 50% position becoming 100%.

Other Program Successes

1. CCT initiated and provided stipends for Workshops (in collaboration with the Graduate Writing Center) on Supporting Students' Writing Development throughout the Graduate Curriculum, <http://graduatewritingcenter.wikispaces.umb.edu/-/FacultyDevelopment/2014workshops>.
2. The GPD led an activity for GPDs on Sustainable Practices in Under-resourced Graduate Programs with a focus on alum community building, <http://bit.ly/gpd7may>.
3. The Inter-college Seminar on Humanities and Sciences continued both semesters, hosted by CCT with support from CAPS, <http://sicw.wikispaces.umb.edu/ISHS>.