Response to AQUAD Reviewers' Report and Action Plan
Critical & Creative Thinking and Science in a Changing World graduate programs
23 March 2018

• We are pleased that the reviewers concluded that CCT, with its SICW track, is "an excellent program doing excellent things, living the mission and values of the University, helping students develop marketable skills, and transforming the very lives of the students it serves."
• Our response consists of a few corrections, clarifications, and points where we disagree with assessments by the Administration as conveyed by the reviewers.
• We then present an Action Plan that addresses all of the key issues raised in the Reviewers' Report and in the Self-Study (especially the review of AQUAD goals, sect. IIB[1]). Planning entails actions and goals matched to resources and conditions, so many actions take the form of *requests for specific decisions by the Administration* (marked in blue font).[2] Whether or not those decisions match our wishes or the reviewer's recommendations for restoration of resources, having the decision clear will allow us to make best use of our not-unlimited time and resources.
• An appendix excerpts the rationale for CCT and SICW from the UMB website listings.

Corrections and Clarifications
1. This academic year, there are 17 *new* matriculants, but there are more students in total.
2. The drop in registrants from 2011-13 to 2014-18 consists of a marked *increase* in numbers of CCT registrants, a decrease in numbers of LTET students, and elimination of registration of students taught by the 50% SICW assistant in a CPCS program. The last component, which was included because it represented to CAPS return on its investment in staff for the Program, was sometimes as many as 50 students.

Responses to assessments from the Administration conveyed by the reviewers
1. *SICW is not a "boutique" program*. Such a label is used to describe small programs that survive only because they are given resources, waivers on minimum class sizes, etc. that regular programs do not have. That does not apply to SICW. Although the original SICW proposal was, as requested by the Provost, for a stand-alone, cross-college program, with the financial crash of 2008, the Graduate Dean advised against that plan and the proposal was translated into a track within CCT. One advantage was that there was no minimum cohort needed to start admitting students; a disadvantage has been that it adds to the marketing, recruiting, and advising work for the CCT Program without any additional resources.
2. *The Program's marketing, recruiting, and enrolling is effective* when viewed in relation to its resources. No evidence or reasoning is given to support the view that we need to increase our efforts in these areas or we should aim for an admissions target of 15. The high ROI for the Program (see Table 4 in the Self-Study) counters any unstated implication that performance shortcomings have been the reason for reducing resources to the Program.[3]

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[1] http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/file/view/AQUAD17GoalsReview.pdf
[2] The requested decisions by the Administration build on Table 8 of the self-study.
[3] As noted in the Self-study, before the University administration took control of all funds derived from courses taught in CAPS, the Program could point to its net return to the College in justifying requests for positions. After that time, the Program stopped making plans that assumed additional registration would translate into a full-time position when CCT faculty from CLA retired.

Action Plan addressing the Key Issues raised in the Reviewers' Report and in the Self-Study for CCT/SICW, March 2018

Issue from Self-Study or Reviewers' Report	Action	Implications
1. Revival of the 50% position that CAPS assigned to SICW and CCT in the period 2011-15.	Ask the Administration: Would you instruct A&F to increase both the revenue and expenditure lines of the CAPS budget so that the ½ time benefitted position can be restored?[1]	If yes, then an instructor with administrative responsibilities would be recruited who can a. teach SICW courses and CCT capstone synthesis course; b. promote BA-MA to Honors students; c. Help reduce the loose ends listed in Self-Study, sect. II.G; d. through b & c, sustain recent high admissions to Program.
2. Home for the Program	Ask the Administration to inform us, one way or the other: a. Are degree-granting programs going to be moved out of CAPS, as has been floated during the last 18 months? If not all degree-granting programs, are graduate programs going to be moved? b. If a move of the Program's home is possible or necessary, is the Honors College a possible home? c. Are online offerings going to be decentralized so that income goes through colleges other than CAPS? d. If a move of the Program's home is possible or necessary, would the expenditure and income lines in the budget for Jeremy Szteiter's position be movable to the new home?	Knowing the answers is necessary to plan the best use of limited time for institutional change work. For example, with respect to b., the CCT program faculty is not interested in seeming disloyal to its current home by working with Honors to formulate mutually agreeable proposal, only to find such a move is ruled out of bounds. Moreover, any move of CCT's home is out of question if the Program loses Jeremy Szteiter.

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[1] In response to any query of who should lose if CCT gains more funds, note that income from registration averaging 11.5 students for 4 sections *plus* cost-cutting already done [loss of GA, loss of annual program budget, streamlining of course offerings to increase enrollment/section, AQUAD review over the internet, etc] should cover almost all the cost. The rest could be gained by delaying approval of hiring or new resources for some program with a low ROI. (Table 4 in Self-Study shows the high ROI for CCT.)

3. Recruit "Transformative Education" students	Would the Administration lend their weight to a request that CEHD allows CCT's proposal to go ahead for a new Transformative Education track to recruit and serve the kinds of educators who sought out the Learning, Teaching and Educational Transformation track in CEHD until admissions were closed three years ago?[5]	Having this kind of student recruited and admitted to the University again* would help CCT sustain the recent high level of admissions and provide a clear focus for additional publicity (that can be readily done within the limited resources available for marketing). * (Those students used to take CCT courses.)
4. Restore $3000 discretionary budget.	Ask the Administration: Would you instruct A&F to increase the expenditure line of the CAPS budget so that the $3000 annual discretionary budget for CCT can be restored? If answer to above is no, Ask CAPS Dean: Would CAPS restore this budget within the funding allocated to the College?	With this funding restored, the Program would a. support professional development of its Assistant Director, b. host curriculum development workshops and stipends for part-time instructors to revise core courses to keep them up to date, c. complete the transfer of bound syntheses to pdfs accessible via Scholarworks, and d. transfer program and course materials from wikispaces (which is closing down) to a suitable alternative.
5. Provost sets target of 15 matriculants/year	Given that this target has been achieved in recent years, Program faculty will continue to focus on a. the combination of word-of-mouth, web presence, monthly open houses, informative & correct listings on UMB website, and prompt follow-up on inquiries; b. offering courses on a frequency appropriate to enrollment from CCT/SICW and other programs (the latter being beyond our control); and c. publicize vulnerable courses to students from other programs. (See also attrition reduction, Issue 7, and publicity, Issue 11, below)	See Responses to assessments from the Administration conveyed by the reviewers, point 2.

[5] The proposal was under review at Graduate Studies Committee in Fall 2015 when CCT deferred to the CEHD Dean's request for it to be withdrawn.

Issue	Actions	Responses
6. Administration wants Program to increase its marketing, recruitment, and enrollment efforts.	Program continues marketing, recruitment, and enrollment efforts with a view to matching student numbers with resources. (See Issue 5 above)	See Responses to assessments from the reviewers, point 2.
7. Reduce attrition, especially at the final point of capstone completion.	a. Program continues end-of-semester and mid-program check-ins but, with a view to reducing attrition if possible, follow up with students do not sign up for such advising. b. Ask CAPS Dean for affirmation of the cap of 6 for the capstone seminar and 12 for the pre-capstone research- and writing-intensive courses.	On b: In many semesters, some students are admitted above the cap, but preserving the caps signals the expectation of intensive, individualized instruction.
8. Promote cross-program registration	a. Promote BA-MA to Honors students. b. Promote CCT courses to M.Ed. students who do not seek licensure or who move out of the licensure track at an early point in their studies. c. Ask CAPS Dean: Will CAPS i. continue the policy that each year two–three honors student holders of the Chancellor's Scholarships can have fees waived while taking CCT courses; and ii. extend from LTET students to TCCS students the policy that those with assistantships will have CCT course fees waived.	On a: Revival of the 50% position would help here (see Issue 1). On b: see Issue 3 above. On c: The policies, established before CAPS became CCT's home, would be moot if CCT's home were to be moved from CAPS (see Issue 2 above).
9. Realize the potential SICW has for growth given the national emphasis on STEM education.	a. Promote SICW BA-MA to Honors students b. Arrange substitutes for core courses (e.g., the Biology's new Sustainability Science course in place of CrCrTh640) or suitable instructors for when Peter Taylor cannot teach them. c. See action plan for Issue 5.	See Issues 1 and 10.

10. Draw instructional faculty from other units in the University.	Would the Administration provide an endorsement or encouragement to the relevant Deans to endorse or encourage any department having a faculty member assigned regularly to teach a course in the CCT program (just as is the case for teaching in Honors College)?[6]	This is not needed if 50% position is restored (Issue 1). Without that position, from past experience, there will be semesters when Peter Taylor has to teach overload and ask to bank the courses for some future course release.
11. Publicity	a. Would the Administration instruct the University CIO and webmasters to restore into search results on the University website the UMB websites and wikis of programs and faculty?	The restored search would make readily visible (or make visible again) to UMB web visitors and other searchers the Program's 20 years of documentation, including the impact of the Program on its graduates, http://bit.ly/impactcct.
	b. Program undertakes the substantial work to i. get items lost in the latest website redesign restored and corrections made, and ii. shift course and program materials on wikispaces.umb.edu, which is being discontinued, to a new site.	
	c. Would the University webmasters allow there to be an official webpage for the Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies concentration?	The LAIS concentration is designed for promotion of CCT as a general studies Master's degree.
	d. Would CAPS provide a review of the challenges and problems that arose in the College plan to use Salesforce?	Understanding what happened (and didn't) will allow the Program to respond to the Graduate Studies move to use Salesforce.
	e. Program faculty members distribute publicity bookmarks at all talks or events.	These bookmarks are an attractive, low-cost form of publicity.
	f. Program maintains cross-postings among the various social media sites associated with the Program or its faculty.	Revival of the 50% position would help here (see Issue 1).

[6] For teaching in CCT the standard transfer of funds from CAPS to the other College would continue. Those funds allow for payment for a part-timer for the in-department teaching the faculty member would have done. (We understand that no such transfer happens for teaching in the Honors College.)

12. Curriculum innovation	Review and revise core courses to a. keep them "up to date with current scholarship and practice," b. "address the issues that diversity and inequality raise for understanding thinking and reflecting on practice," and/or c. shift them to hybrid format.	Funds permitting (Issue 4), host curriculum development workshops and stipends for part-time instructors. Collaborative Explorations underway in spring 2018 to help bring new theory into Scientific and Political Change course, PPol749/CrCrTh649. Revival of the 50% position would help here (see Issue 1).
	b. Share innovations and insights with faculty behind CEHD/UMB contribution to innovation in undergraduate and graduate math. and science education.	For example, Mathematical Thinking, CrCrTh650, now integrates the social context and social changes.
	c. Program faculty offer one presentation per year on teaching innovation through the Center for Innovative Teaching and other forums.	
13. UMB understanding of the Program's mission	Ask Deans and higher Administration: Would you commit to passing on your understanding of CCT's mission to successors?[7]	Given that administrators turn over or they lose sight of what had been made clear, if commitment on this issue is not made, the Program's mission will be explained to Deans and higher Administration a. when needed for a proposal (e.g., re: Issues 1-3 and 10 above); b. by preparing and circulating by Fall 2018 a 2-sided information sheet for CCT and SICW; and c. at the time of the next AQUAD review.

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[7] The opening paragraphs of the Program's listing on the UMB website (excerpted in the Appendix) makes clear how the rationale of a Critical and Creative Thinking Program is different from the ideal of promoting critical thinking or creative thinking
  a. in every field or course in the University, or
  b. in short-term, potentially income-raising workshops for organizations in the profit and non-profit sectors.

Appendix: UMB Website Descriptions of Rationale of Programs

Critical & Creative Thinking
(https://www.umb.edu/academics/caps/degree/creative-thinking)

The Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) program at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides its students with knowledge, tools, experience, and support so they can become constructive, reflective agents of change in education, work, social movements, science, and creative arts.

Critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice are valued, of course, in all fields. In critical thinking we seek to scrutinize the assumptions, reasoning, and evidence brought to bear on an issue — by others and by oneself; such scrutiny is enhanced by placing ideas and practices in tension with alternatives. Key functions of creative thinking include generating alternative ideas, practices, and solutions that are unique and effective, and exploring ways to confront complex, messy, ambiguous problems, make new connections, and see how things could be otherwise. In reflective practice we take risks and experiment in putting ideas into practice, then take stock of the outcomes and revise our approaches accordingly.

The rationale for a master's program of study in CCT is that an explicit and sustained focus on learning and applying ideas and tools in critical thinking, creative thinking, and reflective practice allows students involved in a wide array of professions and endeavors to develop clarity and confidence to make deep changes in their learning, teaching, work, activism, research, and artistry. By the time CCT students finish their studies they are prepared to teach or guide others in ways that often depart markedly from their previous schooling and experience. In these processes of transformation and transfer, CCT students have to select and adapt the ideas and tools presented by faculty with diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary concerns. Although each CCT course is self-contained and is open to students from other graduate programs, students matriculated in the Program benefit from extended relationships with core CCT faculty and fellow students that support their processes of learning — experimenting and taking risks in applying what they are learning, reflecting on the outcomes and revising accordingly, and building up a set of tools, practices, and perspectives that work in their specific professional or personal endeavors.

Science in a Changing World
(https://www.umb.edu/academics/caps/degree/changing-world-science)

This 33 credit MA in Science in a Changing World prepares students to focus on science in the context of social change or individual intellectual development. (This program is formally a track in the Critical and Creative Thinking graduate program.)

Course material, classroom activities, teaching/learning interactions, and projects focused on real-world problems provide students opportunities to:

• learn about science and its social and historical context

- gain a set of models for work in education, policy, and other areas of civic engagement
- discuss practices and philosophies of science, education, and social change; and
- undertake research with a view to engaging with science in a changing social and personal world.

Students with diverse backgrounds and career paths — from laboratories to field research, journalism to policy formulation, teaching to activism — are welcome to join the track. In addition to examining Science and its Social Context, students develop valuable professional skills in Research, Writing, and Evaluation for Civic Engagement and in Collaborative Processes and Problem-Based Teaching around current controversies involving science and technology.

Science in a Changing World students graduate well prepared to move across the persistent divide between sciences and humanities. They are able to participate in questioning and shaping the direction of scientific and social changes, as well as to teach and engage others to participate in this important endeavor.