Task Force on Graduate Education: Selective Excellence

Program Ratings and Rationale

Program: French and Francophone World Studies M.A., Ph.D. Program
Rating: Good

French and Francophone World Studies (F&FWS) is a relatively small graduate program (12 PhD, 6 MA enrolled in Fall '08) that has experienced a decreasing number of applicants in the past years. The graduate recruitment pool is small but the cohort is diverse with a number of students recruited internationally. Selectivity has increased over time. Recently the program expanded its focus to include culture, including Arabic culture. However, one faculty member in this area is insufficient for sustainable viability. The median TTD of 7.1 yrs is too long (8.1 years retrospectively). Percent completion of doctoral students for those who entered between 1996-2001 is 57% which is slightly above the UI average for all doctoral programs, but could be improved further, especially in light of the number of students from this cohort who are still enrolled (43%). Placement of doctoral graduates has been acceptable. Despite the few number of graduate students and a marginal number of faculty (5.6 FTEs), the program has attempted to expand its reach with cross listing of courses. With modest success at the doctoral level and faculty recruitment likely not on the immediate horizon, the program would benefit from a clearer plan for success. Extension of the program into an expanded cultural focus is admirable, but the intersection of Arabic languages and cultural studies needs to be better coordinated with other programs with interests in this area. F&FWS should seriously explore academic and intellectual mergers with other language programs as well as with other humanities programs to enhance synergy and infrastructure.