Aug. 4, 2016

From: Maggie Foran

Assoc. Director Teacher Education Programs/MiT

To: Curriculum Deans

Scott Coleman

Trevor Speller

Re: Evaluations from Tacoma Program

I have had for many years concerns about the insufficient detail in year-end program evaluations from the Tacoma programs. I find the evaluations start with a generic overview about possible topics covered over the year, followed by the heart of each student’s evaluation primarily talking about the level of engagement he/she had with the program. Rarely do I see reading lists, or specific mention of the actual topic of a student’s research project, etc.

The credits equivalencies awarded also give few clues to actual content – for instance, in the enclosed example the student earned 6 credits in research but there was no mention in the narrative portion of the evaluation about what he did a research project on, and whether this was a solo or collaborative effort. Thus, the evaluation gives me few clues as to actual content knowledge covered and obtained.

These Tacoma program evaluations leave me with little to go on to evaluate a student’s background for readiness to meet entrance requirements for the MiT program, and I think other graduate programs would also have difficulty assessing actual content studied.

I had pointed out examples of these types of scanty evaluations from Tacoma programs to Scott last summer, but I see no improvement, given the recent one enclosed.

I have learned to get some detail to go on about actual content within Tacoma programs by asking quarterly for the course descriptions. I learned today from Amy Betz I could also ask for copies of syllabi from the Dean’s area if needed. Another source that I have used to gain clues on content is asking Tacoma students to share with me their interim evaluations from the end of a quarter from specific sections of study they took, such as “Policing by the Numbers” from winter 2016. Mid-year evaluations have more detail than the year-end program summary evaluation.

I hope you are able to work with the Tacoma faculty to discuss how their students’ evaluations could be improved to communicate more, and more thorough information.