TO: Robert A. Corrigan, President
San Francisco State University

FROM: Pamela Vaughn, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Interdisciplinary Programs Policy, #S12-74

SOURCE COMMITTEE:
Executive Committee

SENATE ACTION:
At its meeting on May 1, 2012 the Academic Senate approved the revisions to the Interdisciplinary Programs Policy, #S12-74.

We solicit your concurrence.
Thank you.

cc: Sue V. Rosser, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Patricia Bartscher, University Counsel
Ann Hallum, Dean, Graduate Studies
Gail Evans, Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Helen Goldsmith, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Suzanne Dmytrenko, University Registrar
Brett Smith, Director, Undergraduate Advising Center

cc: All College Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs

Attachment.

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION:

APPROVED: [Signature]
DATE: 5/23/12
Academic Senate Policy

#S12-74

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

(formerly policy #S85-074 and #S09-74)

(n.b.: This policy incorporates revisions approved by the Academic Senate on March 17, 2009 and on May 1, 2012)

PREFACE - DEFINITIONS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

GENERAL - Any academic program which juxtaposes, applies, combines, synthesizes, or integrates material from two or more disciplines.

OPERATIONAL - Any program which is self-defined as interdisciplinary or which is composed of faculty and courses from more than one department and designed to be interdisciplinary in nature (as opposed to traditionally disciplinary programs) shall be considered an interdisciplinary program.

1. There shall be a number of campus-wide interdisciplinary minors.

Interdisciplinary minors should have the following attributes:

a. A center around coherent themes which transcend disciplinary lines and depart from the traditional domains of single discipline departments.

b. Interrelationship of two or more traditional academic disciplines or fields encompassing more than a single discipline, department or school.

c. A coherent curricular area which enables students to:

1. recognize the contributions of diverse disciplinary approaches while appreciating the value and limitations of specialized disciplinary knowledge;

2. experience an attempt at synthesis sometimes by the application of known interdisciplinary thought frameworks;

3. focus on emerging and developing topic, perspective, or practice.

d. A curriculum between 15 and 24 units, excluding stated prerequisites.
e. An academic program with appropriately designated faculty responsible for curriculum development, teaching, personnel decisions, advising and other related functions.

f. Some overlapping of courses between general education and major requirements, the extent and nature of overlaps to be stipulated in University policy.

Interdisciplinary minors may be complementary to and supportive of disciplinary majors. They provide opportunities for students to pursue studies related to their academic interests, and at the same time to gain different, broader perspectives. For these students in more specialized or professional majors, interdisciplinary minors may add a solid, liberal arts dimension to their education. As an adjunct to the liberal arts majors, interdisciplinary minors may be advantageous for students seeking career opportunities. The minors may be designated on students' transcripts.

2. Explicitly interdisciplinary means of fulfilling upper-division GE should remain available.

Ways in which this could be accomplished:

a. Students could complete an Integrative Studies Option as set out in the Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees, Majors, Concentrations, Minors, and Certificates policy (currently F10-255)

b. The Topical Perspectives option for upper-division GE should continue to include courses from interdisciplinary minors

Satisfying the interdisciplinary objectives of our general education program has many advantages:

a. It provides the student with a coherent educational experience explicitly designed to be interdisciplinary by a group of faculty who have an "on-going" program commitment.

b. Faculty from all over campus can participate in the development and offering of integrative minors.

c. Students will have an attractive array of options. If they use the sub-set alternative proposed above they will have to take only another 6-15 units to complete a minor which will serve as a valuable component to their major.

d. The University builds into its structure an incentive for faculty to engage in the development of interdisciplinary minors. This educationally sound opportunity should be especially attractive to those parts of the University which are
currently experiencing enrollment problems. It is one means of keeping valuable faculty resources fully employed.

3. There shall be a University Interdisciplinary Council (UIC) which shall:

a. exercise academic leadership in developing and fostering interdisciplinary efforts for the benefit of the University as a whole;

b. serve as the collaborating, cooperating, communicating body for all existing interdisciplinary efforts across campus;

c. consult with colleges on the form and characteristics of their interdisciplinary centers;

d. upon the request of the Baccalaureate Requirements Committee, provide consultation for identifying and evaluating interdisciplinary minors and other interdisciplinary packages for meeting general education requirements (e.g., Integrated Studies option for upper-division GE);

e. promote interdisciplinary efforts across campus, including advocating for resources or release time for faculty who wish to engage in the creation and implementation of interdisciplinary activities, whether a single instance such as a team taught course, a research proposal, or a total curriculum;

f. publicize and represent the University's interdisciplinary activities to the campus at large and to other interested parties;

g. encourage the University to develop equitable and flexible budgetary and cost-sharing policies that support interdisciplinary activities;

h. recommend that the University acknowledge the importance of interdisciplinary activities to the teaching, research, and service work of the university, including but not limited to, full-time-equivalent (FTE) accounting, budget review, personnel evaluations, registrations, class schedule construction;

i. conduct periodic reviews of interdisciplinary activities of students and faculty at San Francisco State and report findings to the President, with special attention devoted to the maintenance of high educational quality;

j. advocate for University acknowledgement of the importance of interdisciplinary activities to teaching and curricular innovations for retention, tenure, and promotion of faculty (RTP), both the exciting opportunities for integrated learning and the labor-intensive nature of team-taught classes;
k. advocate for University acknowledgement of the importance of interdisciplinary activities to professional development and research for RTP, including collaborative research and the innovative ways of knowing that interdisciplinary research yields;

l. advocate for University acknowledgement of the importance of interdisciplinary activities to contributions to the University in RTP decisions;

m. consult with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), to help facilitate interdisciplinary research and sponsored activities;

n. collaborate with other relevant Academic Senate committees and other campus bodies, to provide education and consultation regarding the policies and opportunities in practice for cross-listing classes and sharing curricula; and

o. conduct periodic review and recommendations regarding the barriers and opportunities presented by changing administrative structures (e.g. Colleges, Schools, Departments, Programs, Centers, Institutes, and Course cross-listings) and informal arrangements (e.g. MOU's, projects and initiatives) to facilitate interdisciplinary activity.

The membership of the University Interdisciplinary Council shall be:

a. One representative from each college elected for three-year terms by the faculty of the college.

b. Chair of Educational Policies Council of the Academic Senate or designee.

c. Provost or designee.

d. Dean of Undergraduate Studies or designee.

e. Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies or designee.

f. The Council may choose to add up to four faculty members as regular voting members, whose expertise adds special competencies to the committee’s membership, assists in the solicitation of the widest possible range of views, and increases its productivity. These members are in addition to those members specified in parts (a) through (e) above.

The University Interdisciplinary Council shall elect its chair from among its members according to the usual procedures for all-university standing committees.

4. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies shall serve as the University Coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies.

a. The University Coordinator shall provide academic leadership for the University in interdisciplinary activities and program development.
b. The functions of the University Coordinator shall include but not be limited to:

1. Working closely with and provide staff support to the University Interdisciplinary Council in all of its functions.

2. Providing a focal point along with the Council for the University's commitment to interdisciplinary studies.

5. The University shall take steps to remove impediments to involvement in interdisciplinary activities by both faculty and students.

a. Faculty should be encouraged and have the right to participate in interdisciplinary activities. Faculty members should be allowed, if they wish, to teach at least one course outside of their home department each semester as part of their regular teaching load. As usual in any extra-departmental involvement the wishes of the faculty member must be balanced with the curricular needs of his/her home department.

b. In order to facilitate extra-departmental teaching and other forms of interdisciplinary cooperation, the University's permanent FTE accounting system should be changed:

1. In addition to keeping FTE by pre-fix of student registration, FTE should also be recorded by the program, department or college which is providing the faculty time to teach the course.

2. FTE for cross-listed courses should be consolidated and credited (consistent with the previous recommendation) to the unit which is supplying the faculty time.

The present FTE accounting system discourages many types of interdisciplinary cooperation, especially across colleges.

c. When faculty participate in interdisciplinary activities their efforts should be rewarded and not penalized. For example:

1. As required in current University policy, the interdisciplinary contribution of faculty should be effectively characterized and adequately reported in the HRTP process even if it requires a separate input from a source external to the usual channels.

2. Committee and advising assignments in home departments should take into account the interdisciplinary involvement of faculty so that an equitable load sharing occurs.
3. The sharing and joint appointment process needs streamlining or we need creative alternatives to it as the present cumbersome procedures are stifling efforts of this kind.

4. Additional measures of educational performance need devising and applying for purposes of allocating and receiving resources other than straight forward FTE - such as giving recognition to interdisciplinary programs for the increased enrollments caused by their students taking courses in other programs, faculty development potential, additional burdens in advising and committee work, etc.

d. Students with an approved interdisciplinary program of courses (major or minor) should have equal access to those courses wherever they are offered along with students majoring in the departments offering the courses.

**Approved by the Academic Senate on May 1, 2012**