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INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Academic Senate Policy S85-74

At its meeting of April 30, 1985, the Academic Senate approved the following changes in Senate policy S81-74, approved by the Senate at its meeting of May 5, 1981.

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 campus-wide number of 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 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. Sub-sets of interdisciplinary minors should be available to fulfill some of the requirements in General Education.

Ways in which this could be accomplished:

- a. Students could complete an interdisciplinary (integrative) minor which could count toward general education requirements in Segments II and III.
- b. Students can take 9 units of a chosen sub-set of upper-division courses from interdisciplinary minors which would satisfy Segment III of the course and approved for Segment III General Education credit.

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 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 schools on the form and characteristics of their interdisciplinary centers.

- d. Review and comment on all new, cross-school interdisciplinary curricular proposals, both undergraduate and graduate in an advisory capacity to the Associate Provost and the Senate Committee on Curriculum Review and Approval.

- e. Consult with the Segment III committee in the development of criteria for evaluating proposed sub-sets of interdisciplinary minors and other interdisciplinary packages for meeting general education requirements. Consult subsequently with the Segment III committee in the review of specific proposals.

- f. Support 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. The Council requires access to budgetary resources, including faculty time when necessary, to carry out this function.
- g. Publicize and represent the University's interdisciplinary activities to the campus at large and to interested publics.
- h. Recommend changes in the University's procedures that facilitate interdisciplinary activities, e.g., FTE accounting, budget review, personnel evaluations, registrations, class schedule construction, etc.
- i. Conduct periodic reviews of interdisciplinary activities of students and faculty at San Francisco State and report findings to the President. Special attention should be devoted to the maintenance of high educational quality.

The membership of the University Interdisciplinary Council shall be:

- a. School representatives to the UIC should be elected by the faculty of the school. (8)
- b. Chair of Educational Policies Council of the Academic Senate or designee
- c. Provost or designee
- d. University Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Studies (Dean of Undergraduate Studies)
- e. Dean of the Graduate Division or his designee.

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. Presenting the recommendations of the Council to the appropriate agencies of the University, e.g., the Provost, the Academic Senate, etc.
 - 3. Coordinating budgeting and support requests of the University Interdisciplinary Council through the Provost.
 - Working closely with the University Planning Group, the Resources Planning Group, the President's Council and the
 - 4. Academic Senate in order to assure that the interests of interdisciplinary cooperation are represented in all important areas of decision-making.

5. Keeping in close contact with the school coordinators and provide whatever facilitation possible to their efforts, especially in the realm of curriculum development.
6. Informing faculty of funding opportunities and provide guidance in the pursuit of extra-mural support of interdisciplinary research and development.
7. Providing a focal point along with the Council for the University's commitment to interdisciplinary studies.

c. Each school of the University should designate a school coordinator of the interdisciplinary curricular development who will assist faculty groups in the formulation of interdisciplinary proposals and who will stay in close communicative contact with his/her Dean, other school coordinators and the University Coordinator (the Dean of Undergraduate Studies). The coordinator should have access to secretarial support and other services and supplies as appropriate.

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 school 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 schools.

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 H RTP 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.

- 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.
- 4.
 - 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.
 6. The University Interdisciplinary Council, once established, must be evaluated by the Senate at the end of five years and its existence extended by positive Senate action.

****APPROVED BY PRESIDENT WOO ON MAY 21, 1985****
