



**SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

# Received

MAY 13 2013

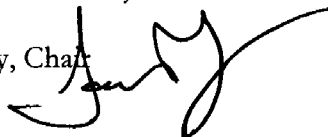
ACADEMIC SENATE  
1600 HOLLOWAY AVENUE  
ADM 551  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
phone: 415/338-1264  
fax: 415/338-3899  
e-mail: senate@sfsu.edu  
web: www.sfsu.edu/~senate

## Office of the President

### ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

May 06, 2013

**TO:** Les E. Wong, President  
San Francisco State University

**FROM:** Lawrence F. Hanley, Chair  
Academic Senate 

**RE:** Interdisciplinary Programs Policy, #S13-74

**SOURCE COMMITTEE:**

Academic Policies Committee

**SENATE ACTION:**

At its meeting on April 23, 2013 the Academic Senate approved the revisions to the **Interdisciplinary Programs Policy, #S13-74**.

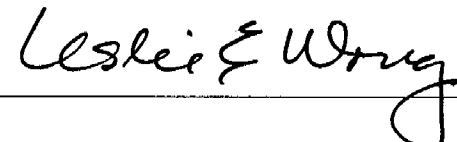
We solicit your concurrence.  
Thank you.

**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  
Jillian Sandell, Chair, University Interdisciplinary Council

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

Attachment.

**PRESIDENTIAL ACTION:**

**APPROVED:**  **DATE:** 5-7-13



## **Academic Senate Policy**

**#S13-74**

### **INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES**

**(formerly #S12-74)**

***Rationale:** The 2009 revision of the Policy on Interdisciplinary Programs and Practices focused on changes to the membership of the University Interdisciplinary Council; that revision did not reflect the development of numerous interdisciplinary curricular programs and courses at SF State--the primary goal of the original 1981 policy--nor the impacts of interdisciplinary research and campus reorganization. Nor did it discuss future involvement of principles of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary in light of the new GE requirements, Complementary Studies or such collaborations begun as an outcome of the 2013 Faculty Retreat. Thus a new policy has been developed during 2012-2013, to reaffirm SF State's commitment to interdisciplinarity, to reflect the current status of interdisciplinarity at SF State, and to facilitate new interdisciplinary activities.*

#### **1. Value Statement**

The Bay Area deserves a university that responds nimbly to both present and future opportunities, resources, and challenges. Indeed, part of the mission of San Francisco State University is to serve "the communities with which its students and faculty are engaged." Achieving this aspect of the mission of SF State requires a culture of interdisciplinarity, which can adapt the University to emerging challenges by creating collaborative structures that are problem-driven instead of discipline-generated. This culture of interdisciplinarity will also produce a synergy between the University and the cultural mosaic of the Bay area, allowing it to take advantage fully of its resources and creativity.

SF State both reflects and fosters the dynamic exchange of diverse cultures, ideologies, technologies, and ways of knowing that are characteristic of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. Interdisciplinary Studies thus represents the heart and soul of our University's work in teaching a diverse student body; developing curricula that reflect human diversity and promote critical thinking; attracting and maintaining faculty, staff, and administration with multidisciplinary trainings; fostering collegial exchange of intellectual ideas; and serving multiple and intersecting professional and local communities.

#### **2. Mission Statement**

Since its establishment by the Academic Senate in 1981 (Academic Senate Policy S81-074, revised as S85-074, S09-074, and S11-074), the University Interdisciplinary Council (UIC) has been indispensable in advancing interdisciplinary studies at SF State. Its mission is to

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

UIC's mission reflects the University's commitment to "Providing disciplinary and interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional education that is academically rigorous and intellectually challenging." This commitment is exemplified by San Francisco State University's longstanding rich tradition of interdisciplinary education, such as NEXA, the groundbreaking program that created an interdisciplinary approach of teaching science and humanities. Interdisciplinary programs and practices at San Francisco State include but are not limited to: interdisciplinary approaches to teaching within existing academic units; team or collaborative teaching across academic units; individual courses (including elective major courses, cross-listed courses, courses fulfilling GE requirements); minors; programs; majors; colleges; centers; research; research centers; and cross-campus faculty collaborations.

San Francisco State's commitment to interdisciplinary education and research is furthermore evidenced by the following Academic Senate policies:

*F10-255, Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees, Majors, Concentrations, Minors, and Certificates*, which provides for the creation and existence of interdisciplinary majors, concentrations, minors, and certificates, and an integrated studies option for upper-division general education.

*F11-241, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Policy*, which acknowledges that teaching and professional achievement and growth may be interdisciplinary as well as disciplinary.

*Educational Goals for the Baccalaureate at San Francisco State University*, endorsed by the Academic Senate on March 11, 2008, which states that students "will know how to make connections among apparently disparate forms of knowledge and modes of inquiry." (Goal #5, *Integration and Application of Knowledge.*)

### **3. Definitions and examples of Interdisciplinary Activities**

#### **3.1 Interdisciplinary Programs**

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

**OPERATIONAL** - Any program that is self-defined as interdisciplinary or is composed of faculty and courses from more than one department and designed to be interdisciplinary in nature shall be considered an interdisciplinary program.

#### **3.2 Interdisciplinary Teaching, Instruction, and Curricular Innovations**

Interdisciplinary teaching occurs across the University (within and across academic units) and across class levels (from lower-division to graduate). UIC supports ongoing interdisciplinary

courses and the formation of new courses and clusters, whether within or across academic units.

Interdisciplinary teaching at the lower-division and upper-division undergraduate levels creates a unique opportunity for students to learn how a particular subject has been differently interpreted by a range of scholarly traditions and disciplinary methodologies. By modeling the diverse interpretive skills that scholarly fields have used to understand the world, interdisciplinary modes of instruction prepare SF State undergraduate students to see topics from different points of view and to navigate a range of approaches, a crucial skill for their future education or careers. UIC supports maintaining a strong and diverse range of undergraduate interdisciplinary courses within and across academic units.

Interdisciplinarity is intimately woven into the student learning outcomes of the majority of the general education requirements of the baccalaureate degree. For example, in the *Topical Perspectives* option for upper-division general education, students explore one theme from three different disciplinary perspectives (areas B, C, and D); in the *Integrated Studies* option, students complete three courses (one each from areas B, C, and D) that have been devised by a faculty team into a coherent, integrative program of study.

Interdisciplinary teaching at the graduate level provides students the opportunity to engage in their own research across academic disciplines and fields. By adopting a variety of disciplinary methods to understand their subject matter, graduate students engaged in interdisciplinary research are often at the cutting edge of the emergence of new theories and interpretive methodologies. UIC supports maintaining a strong and diverse range of graduate interdisciplinary courses within and across academic units.

Interdisciplinary teaching is also at the heart of a number of interdisciplinary academic units, including but not limited to Applied Mathematics, Biochemistry, Education, Ethnic Studies, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Labor Studies, Liberal Studies, Urban Studies and Planning, and Women and Gender Studies. These academic units reflect the vibrant histories of intellectual exchange and the unique insights that come from interdisciplinary approaches. UIC supports existing and new academic units whose intellectual, political, and community histories have positioned them to be on the forefront of emerging innovative interdisciplinary theories and methods and UIC recognizes the crucial contribution they make to the University commitment to diversity.

### **3.3 Interdisciplinary Professional Development and Research**

Interdisciplinary research and professional development occurs when one faculty member applies two or more disciplines to a research or other professional activity, or when two or more faculty members apply their unique disciplines to a joint research or other professional activity. Because interdisciplinary teaching requires instructors trained in interdisciplinary research, UIC supports and advocates for a range of institutional resources that enable and sustain faculty engaged in interdisciplinary projects.

Any research or professional activity that juxtaposes, applies, combines, synthesizes, or integrates material from two or more disciplines is defined here as interdisciplinary professional development or research. As research continually evolves beyond the

boundaries of single disciplines and offers employment opportunities that require not only depth but also breadth of knowledge, integration, synthesis, and an array of skills, SF State must foster an even greater emphasis on interdisciplinary research and training. The UIC will identify measures that can be used to enhance interdisciplinary professional development and research opportunities for SF State faculty and students, and measures that can be used to evaluate the impact of these activities. The UIC will provide advice as appropriate to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to foster the integration of these measures into SF State's research culture. The UIC will also support and help promote the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs' efforts to inform routinely faculty of various interdisciplinary research funding opportunities as well as to provide guidance in the pursuit of extramural support of interdisciplinary research and development.

### **3.4 Interdisciplinary Contributions to the University**

Interdisciplinary contributions to the University may include, but are not limited to, the following: administrative assignments (other than primary assignment); faculty governance; committee work; special advising assignments for interdisciplinary programs (e.g., General Education advising, Special Major advising, etc.); interdisciplinary program development; sponsorship of interdisciplinary student organizations; and direction of non-instructional activities and projects.

## **4. Role of the University Interdisciplinary Council (UIC)**

With the increasingly transnational exchange of information, interdisciplinary studies offers an agile scholarly ability to adapt to and understand existing and new configurations of knowledge, research, and teaching. The rich history of interdisciplinary studies at SF State, together with its current and future potential as a pedagogical and scholarly methodology to address the intersections of disciplines, fields, histories, geographies, and communities, makes the UIC a crucial avenue to advocate for a university education that reflects the interdisciplinary nature of our campus and broader Bay Area community.

The UIC is charged to:

- 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. 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;

- e. publicize and represent the University's interdisciplinary activities to the campus at large and to other interested parties;
- f. encourage the University to develop equitable and flexible budgetary and cost-sharing policies that support interdisciplinary activities;
- g. 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;
- h. 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;
- i. 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;
- j. 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;
- k. advocate for University acknowledgement of the importance of interdisciplinary activities to contributions to the University in RTP decisions;
- l. consult with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), to help facilitate interdisciplinary research and sponsored activities;
- m. 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
- n. 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.

##### **5. Membership of the University Interdisciplinary Council (UIC)**

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.

#### **6. Role of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies/University Coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies:**

- a. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies shall serve as the University Coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies and shall provide academic leadership for the University in interdisciplinary activities and program development.
- b. The functions of the University Coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies shall include but not be limited to:
  - 1. working closely with and providing staff support to the University Interdisciplinary Council in all of its functions;
  - 2. presenting, in coordination with the UIC chair, the recommendations of the UIC to the appropriate agencies of the University, e.g., the Provost, the Academic Senate, etc.;
  - 3. coordinating support requests of the UIC to the Provost;
  - 4. working closely with the appropriate committees, in coordination with the UIC chair, in order to assure that the interests of interdisciplinary cooperation are represented in all important areas of decision-making;
  - 5. keeping in contact with the UIC representative and facilitating their efforts to promote interdisciplinarity, especially in the realm of curriculum development;
  - 6. providing a focal point, along with the UIC, for the University's commitment to interdisciplinary studies.
- c. Each UIC representative shall serve as coordinator and represent his/her college.

#### **7. General Principles regarding the facilitation of interdisciplinary activities by faculty and students:**

- a. Faculty should be encouraged and have the right to participate in interdisciplinary activities.
- b. Faculty should be allowed, if they so desire and if it will not adversely effect curriculum offerings in their home department/program, to teach at least one course per year outside of their home department/program as part of their regular teaching load. Faculty must discuss

such teaching desires with their chair/director well in advance of a scheduled offering of a course outside their home department/program.

c. The University's instructional activities accounting system should be designed to facilitate extra-departmental teaching and other forms of interdisciplinary cooperation:

1. In addition to crediting enrollment by the course prefix of student registration, credit should also be recorded by the program, department or college which is providing the faculty time to teach the course.
2. Credit for cross-listed courses should be consolidated and awarded (consistent with the previous recommendation) to the unit which is supplying the faculty time.
3. Equitable distribution of credit shall be made when faculty from different colleges co-teach a course.

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

1. As required by current University policy, the interdisciplinary contributions of faculty shall be effectively characterized and adequately reported in the RTP process even if it requires a separate input from a source not explicitly identified in the RTP policy. (For example, the evaluation from a chair/director or dean of an outside college might be required.)
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 should be streamlined or creative alternatives developed.

e. The University shall take steps to facilitate interdisciplinary activities by students. For example:

1. Students with an approved interdisciplinary program of courses (major or minor) should have enrollment access to those courses equal to that of a discipline-based major or minor. A university-wide student advising system that tracks students' projected course schedules would help curriculum coordinators develop course offerings that best match student enrollment demands.
2. Students should be encouraged, commensurate with their interests and within resource constraints (e.g. maximum unit accumulation), to combine majors, minors or areas of focus that create meaningful academic experiences and successful graduation patterns.
3. Within the reasonable constraints of resources and policy need, the University will review and, where appropriate, remove any policies or practices that unduly limit a student's ability to benefit from creative interdisciplinary study.

**\*\*\*Approved by the Academic Senate at its meeting on April 23, 2013\*\*\***