

Effective: October 1997

**Academic Program: Undergraduate Studies
INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS**

Approved: October 1997

Revised: November 1, 2004, Deans' Council

September 21, 2004, Faculty Senate

February 2024, Deans' Council, Faculty Senate

This policy establishes a framework for interdisciplinary programs, including minimum course requirements and organizational structure. The rationale for these programs is to provide students with interdisciplinary perspectives that cannot be provided by one department.

DEFINITIONS

Interdisciplinary Major and Interdisciplinary Minor: A major and a minor which integrate the knowledge, perspectives, and methodologies of more than one discipline to form a specific academic focus in a recognized or innovative discipline not currently offered by existing academic departments (e.g., American studies, international studies, gender studies).

Interdisciplinary Course: A course that crosses disciplinary boundaries and develops integrated knowledge by reflecting the knowledge, perspectives, and methodologies of multiple disciplines.

Faculty Teaching in the Program: Faculty identified by the coordinator in consultation with the curriculum committee who offer courses in the program.

FACULTY SELECTION

Teaching interdisciplinary courses requires instructors who are well-versed in the methodologies and perspectives of multiple disciplines. These educators will possess the following qualifications and attributes:

1. **Expertise in Multiple Disciplines:** Instructors will have a strong understanding of the disciplines that are integrated into the course. This can come from formal education, research experience, or professional practice in the relevant fields.
2. **Collaborative Approach:** Often, interdisciplinary courses are co-taught by faculty members from different departments. This requires a collaborative

mindset and the ability to work effectively with colleagues from diverse academic backgrounds.

3. **Pedagogical Flexibility:** Educators will be capable of employing a variety of teaching methods to accommodate different types of content and approaches. They will be adept at facilitating discussions that bridge various disciplinary perspectives.
4. **Commitment to Lifelong Learning:** Because interdisciplinary fields can evolve rapidly, instructors will be committed to continually updating their knowledge and staying abreast of developments in the relevant disciplines.
5. **Ability to Foster Critical Thinking:** Instructors will encourage students to think critically and creatively, helping them to draw connections between different fields and apply this integrated knowledge to complex problems.

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Interdisciplinary Major Course requirements for an interdisciplinary major will follow any current University policies regarding requirements for a major.

An interdisciplinary major will require a minimum of 30 credits of coursework.

1. A minimum of six (6) credits of interdisciplinary coursework, focused on the integrated discipline represented in the major (an introductory course and a 300-400 level capstone experience/course)
2. A minimum of (15) additional credits in one discipline or clearly defined, interdisciplinary course of study, with at least nine (9) credits or more at the 300-400 level.
3. A minimum of six (6) additional credits from other disciplines or clearly defined, themed-elective grouping with at least three (3) credits at the 300-400 level.
4. Three (3) credits will come from interdisciplinary coursework or from a related discipline.

Interdisciplinary Minor An interdisciplinary minor will require a minimum of 18 credits of coursework.

1. A minimum of six (6) credits of interdisciplinary coursework, focused on the integrated discipline represented in the minor (an introductory course and a 300-400 level capstone experience/course).
2. A minimum of nine (9) additional credits from at least two (2) disciplines, with at least six (6) credits above the 100 level.
3. Three (3) credits at the 3-400 level will come from either interdisciplinary coursework or courses in related disciplines.

Course Scheduling

Interdisciplinary courses will either fulfill general education requirements and/or be cross listed with courses in the teaching faculty member's home department.

ORGANIZATION

Interdisciplinary programs will be housed within a college under the auspices of a dean. The curriculum committee of an interdisciplinary program will select, with the approval of the college dean, where the program will be housed.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee

A committee composed of the director of the interdisciplinary program, faculty teaching within the program, and students (if desired) in the program, will be organized in a way that best serves the interests of the program. The coordinator will conduct an election within the program's teaching faculty for committee seats immediately after their election. The committee's leadership will be determined by the committee.

Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Program

In compliance with the existing CBA policy, each interdisciplinary curriculum committee will determine the selection process for the program coordinator, including approval by the Provost.

The coordinator of an interdisciplinary program will have a three-year term commencing with the terms of triennially elected department chairs. Each coordinator will report to the Dean of the college in which the program is housed. Coordinators will have responsibilities equivalent to the department chair in administering the interdisciplinary program.

Coordinators will also:

1. Communicate the needs of the program to the appropriate college Deans.
2. Collaborate with appropriate college Deans on matters relating to staffing, scheduling of classes, budgeting, and faculty selection process.
3. Serve as the primary adviser for students in the program.
4. Guide systematic program review on the required five-year cycle.
5. Maintain a list of courses offered in the program and faculty teaching those courses.

Council of Interdisciplinary Coordinators

The Provost will appoint each coordinator to the Council of Interdisciplinary Coordinators (CIC) in their appointment letter and meet with the CIC in each fall to elect a chair. The elected CIC Chair will schedule a council meeting at least once each academic year.

The Council will coordinate the efforts of the interdisciplinary programs and will choose Faculty Senator(s) from faculty teaching within the program. The senator(s) will serve in the CIC if they are not serving as coordinator. An alternate senator will be selected from one of the coordinators. One (1) senator will be elected for every five (5) programs with a minimum of one (1) elected senator (i.e., 10-14 programs = 2 senators, 15-19 programs = 3 senators).

The Council of Interdisciplinary Coordinators (CIC) will:

1. Strategize enhancements to existing interdisciplinary programs.
2. Review and evaluate proposals for new interdisciplinary programs and the interdisciplinary courses within them.
3. Initiate recommendations for changes in academic regulations and policies or

related matters affecting interdisciplinary programs and forward these to the Academic Policies Committee.

Note: The policy on interdisciplinary programs replaces prior policy on interdepartmental major programs as adopted in 2004.