

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY

DESIGNATION CODE: **2008-09 CAPR 43**amended

DATE SUBMITTED: May 21, 2009

TO: The Academic Senate
FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Review (CAPR)
SUBJECT: Five-Year Program Review for Interdisciplinary Studies
PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate
ACTION REQUESTED: Acceptance of the Five-Year Program Review of Interdisciplinary Studies and Approval of the Continuation of the Program without modification

Executive Summary

The Interdisciplinary Studies program is not a regular program that advertises and seeks majors. The main objective of the BA/BS and MA/MS Interdisciplinary Degrees is to provide students with the opportunity to develop their own unique interdisciplinary programs of study with the advice and approval of faculty in the disciplines involved. The Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies sponsors and reviews these programs. There is no common curriculum and no faculty members are assigned to it. The course work of each Interdisciplinary Studies Major must come from at least two different departments and each major must have a three-member faculty committee, with faculty from at least two different departments. Due to the nature of the program, there is no Interdisciplinary Studies department. Enrollments are credited to the departments where students take courses and resources are drawn from the regular resources of the involved departments.

The number of approved undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors declined from 27 during 1998-2003 to 22 during 2003-2008. The number of approved graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors declined slightly from 36 in 1998-2003 to 33 from 2003-2008. Although the number of approved Interdisciplinary Studies Majors has declined slightly, the number of students graduating has increased. Eighteen (18) students graduated with a BA or BS in Special Major (later renamed Interdisciplinary Studies Major) from 1998/99-2002/03 compared to twenty-five (25) students from 2003/04-2007/08. Twenty-three (23) students graduated with an MA or MS in Special Major (later renamed Interdisciplinary Studies Major) from 1998/99-2002/03 compared to thirty-six (36) students from 2003/04-2007/08. This slight decline **in approved majors** is not a concern. In fact, the opposite might be true since the faculty take on Interdisciplinary Studies as an added uncompensated responsibility. A significant increase in the number of Interdisciplinary studies Majors might be a greater cause for concern.

The Outside Reviewer found that faculty who volunteer to serve in Interdisciplinary Studies are energetic and enthusiastic, and enjoy their involvement in the program. In his report, he stated that the basically pro-bono work of the faculty is admirable in all respects and recommended that the university administration find a way to reward the selfless contribution of the faculty to both the program and the university.

CAPR RECOMMENDATION FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM

CAPR recommends the continuation of the BA/BS in Interdisciplinary Studies and the MA/MS in Interdisciplinary Studies without modification. The date of the next Five-Year Review is 2013-2014.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Overview description of program

The Interdisciplinary Studies program is not a regular program that advertises and seeks majors. The main objective of the BA/BS and MA/MS Interdisciplinary Degrees is to provide students with the opportunity to develop their own unique interdisciplinary programs of study with the advice and approval of faculty in the disciplines involved. The Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies sponsors and reviews these programs. There is no common curriculum and no faculty members are assigned to it. The course work of each Interdisciplinary Studies Major must come from at least two different departments and each major must have a three-member faculty committee, with faculty from at least two different departments. Due to the nature of the program, there is no Interdisciplinary Studies department. Enrollments are credited to the departments where students take courses and resources are drawn from the regular resources of the involved departments. There were 11 graduates and 31 active majors in 2006/2007 and 10 graduates and 33 active majors in 2007/2008.

The Interdisciplinary Studies Program has accomplished a number of major changes and achievements since the last five-year review.

1. The curricular approval form includes three to four student learning outcomes for each Interdisciplinary Studies Major.
2. The name of the BA/BS and MA/MS in Special Major was changed to a BA/BS or MA/MS in Interdisciplinary Studies, effective Fall 2007.
3. The minimum GPA admission requirement for an undergraduate to enter a graduate Interdisciplinary Studies MA/MS was increased from 2.7 to 3.0, effective Fall 2006.
4. A survey has been administered to both faculty and students every five years to monitor the effectiveness of the Interdisciplinary Studies Major.
5. The highly effective administrative practices for the Interdisciplinary Studies Major have been sustained.

1.2. Overview of the documents submitted to CAPR

The report to CAPR included:

- Self Study
- Five Year Plan
- Outside Reviewer's Report
- Program Response to Outside Reviewer's Report
- Appendix A: CSU System Policy on Special Majors (Interdisciplinary Majors)
- Appendix B: Baccalaureate Degree Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Information and Instructions
- Appendix C: Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Proposal Form
- Appendix D: Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major Form – Associate Dean's Approval Form (Sponsoring College)
- Appendix E: Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major Form – Associate Dean's Approval Form (Non-Sponsoring College)
- Appendix F: Titles of Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix G: Grade Point Averages of Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008

- Appendix H: Gender/Ethnicity of Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix I: Faculty Advisor List for Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix J: Master's Degree Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Information and Instructions
- Appendix K: Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Proposal Form
- Appendix L: Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major Form – Associate Dean's Approval Form (Sponsoring College)
- Appendix M: Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major Form – Associate Dean's Approval Form (Non-Sponsoring College)
- Appendix N: Titles of Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix O: Grade Point Averages of Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix P: Gender/Ethnicity of Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix Q: Faculty Advisor List for Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Majors Graduated Fall 2003 through Summer 2008
- Appendix R: Survey Results of Faculty Who Served on Interdisciplinary Studies Committees 2003/2004 to 2008/2009
- Appendix S: Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Committee Memo
- Appendix T: Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Committee Memo
- Appendix U: Annual report 2006/2007
- Appendix V: Annual report 2007/2008
- Appendix W: Interdisciplinary Studies Major Assessment Plan
- Appendix X: Assessment of Student Learning Objectives

2. FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW/SELF-STUDY

2.1. Summary of Specific areas of the Self-Study

Program achievements

The major achievements since the last review were the change of the name from Special Major to Interdisciplinary Studies Major, the addition of a requirement for student learning outcomes, and an increase in the minimum GPA admission requirement from 2.7 to 3.0 for an undergraduate to enter the graduate Interdisciplinary Majors.

Curriculum and Student Learning

Since each Interdisciplinary Studies Major is unique with no set curriculum. However, each Interdisciplinary Studies Major student learns how to approach an issue or problem from at least two disciplinary perspectives. Every Interdisciplinary Studies Major must now meet three to four student learning outcomes. Each graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major must have a culminating experience. The culminating experience is the best place to measure the student learning outcomes. In the faculty survey, 73% reported that they thought the student learning outcomes developed were helpful in designing the student's program. However, only 37% said they used the learning outcomes at the end of the student's program. In the student focus group,

four of the six students reported that the student learning outcomes developed remained relevant to their program and that the outcomes “significantly” impacted their experience. Although the results of the student learning outcomes cannot be used to improve the curriculum, evaluation of the students’ attainment of their specific learning outcomes at the end of their programs is a good way of measuring the learning that they achieved as individuals.

Students, Advising, and Retention

There were 11 graduates and 31 active majors in 2006/2007 and 10 graduates and 33 active majors in 2007/2008. The flexibility to pursue a program of their own design allows the development of a course of study which is not found in departments. As a result, students remain at Cal State East Bay, rather than go to other institutions. Over the past five year period, a higher number of students graduated than there are students in the program. The retention and graduation rate is high since students drawn to the Interdisciplinary Studies are typically highly motivated and self-directed. They are working on a program that they helped to design.

The office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies (APGS) provides extensive advising for Interdisciplinary Studies Majors. Rosanne Harris, Coordinator for the program, works closely with the students, advising them on the purpose and paperwork procedures of the Interdisciplinary Studies Major. The students normally find three faculty members on their own to work with them, but if they are unfamiliar with relevant faculty, the AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies or the Interdisciplinary Studies Coordinator suggests faculty names. The students usually receive strong personalized advising, which is an attractive feature of the program and will be continued.

A number of faculty members meet face-to-face with students to develop their programs, but email and phone contacts work well for the remaining faculty. No one suggested that not meeting together as a committee was a problem.

APGS will remind university advisors of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program for students and will place this item on the agenda of the University Undergraduate Advising Committee (UUAC) in 2009/10. In addition, APGS will also add this on the agenda of the Graduate Coordinators meeting in 2009/10. The ethnic demographics show a higher percentage of white students and a lower percentage of Hispanics and Asians in the program. This may be because more Hispanic and Asian students are likely to be first generation students and less likely to venture into a “make your own” degree. The Interdisciplinary Studies Program will contact EOP and EXCEL advisors to be sure that they are aware of the existence of the Interdisciplinary Studies major in 2009/10.

Faculty

Since the Interdisciplinary Studies Major has no faculty, no requests for tenure track positions were made.

Resources

The Interdisciplinary Studies Major does not initiate special requests for resources from other units. Interdisciplinary Studies topics outside the current capacity of faculty expertise or university resources are not approved. The Curriculum Coordinator in the Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies provides administrative support for the Interdisciplinary Studies Major.

Requirements

The BA/BS in Interdisciplinary Studies was reduced from 186 to 180 units in Fall Quarter 2004, as recommended in the last Program Review.

2.2. Summary of Supporting Data

Interdisciplinary Studies Majors	2003/04 to 2007/08
Degrees Awarded	61 (25 undergraduate & 36 graduate)
Undergrad Majors	22
Grad Majors	33
Courses and Sections Taught	N/A
Average Section Size	N/A
FTES	N/A
FTEF	N/A
SFR	N/A
Ethnicity of Majors	See Data Table Below
Ethnicity of Faculty	N/A

Gender & Ethnicity	2003/04 to 2007/08
Undergraduate N= 25	
Female	72%
Male	28%
Total	100%
African-American	16%
Latino/a	4%
Asian	16%
White	36%
Other Non-White	8%
Declined to State	20%
Total	100%
Graduate N= 36	
Female	61%
Male	39%
Total	100%
African-American	14%
Latino/a	8%
Asian	11%
White	44%
Other Non-White	6%
Declined to State	17%
Total	100%

TITLES OF UNDERGRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJORS GRADUATED FALL 2003 THROUGH SUMMER 2008 (N = 25)

<i>Primary College / Title / Degree</i>	<i>Year of Graduation</i>				
	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
<i>College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (N = 15)</i>					
African American Studies, BA					X
American Religious Studies, BA		X			
Applied Linguistics, BA				X	
Broadcast Journalism, BA		X			
Business Communications, BA			X		
Democracy, Arts, and Cultural Studies, BA			X		
East Asian Languages, BA			X		
Far East Asian Relations, BA					X
Film Making, BA					X
Forensic Psychology, BS				X	
Health Care Issues for Women of Color, BS				X	
Scientific and Technical Communications, BS	X				
Social Justice, BA		X			
Visual Communication, BA	X				
Women's Studies, BA			X		
<i>College of Business and Economics (N = 2)</i>					
Mathematical Economics, BS		X			
Sports Management, BS				X	
<i>College of Science (N = 8)</i>					
Environmental Health Science, BS				X	
Forensic Science, BS		X			
Forensic Science, BS	X				
Forensic Science, BS	X				
Forensic Science, BS			X		
Marine Science, BS			X		
Nutrition and Body Health, BS			X		
Sociocultural Psychology, BA			X		

TITLES OF GRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJORS GRADUATED FALL 2003 THROUGH SUMMER 2008 (N = 41)

<i>Primary College / Title / Degree</i>	<i>Year of Graduation</i>				
	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
<i>Academic Programs and Graduate Studies (N = 2)</i>					
Multimedia Design for Marketing Information Products, MA	X				
Multimedia Technology, MS		X			

<i>College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (N = 11)</i>					
Alternative American Religions, MA			X		
Environmental Policy Research and Management, MS				X	
Forensic Psychology, MA				X	
Gender Communication Counseling, MA			X		
Geostatistics, MA	X				
Landscapes of the Human Spirit, MA				X	
Media and Cultural Studies, MA					X
Organizational, Consumer, and Audience Behavior /Mass Communication, MA		X			
Popular Culture and Lifestyles, MA					X
Public Sector Organization Development and Labor Relations, MS			X		
Water Resources Planning and Management, MS	X				
<i>College of Business and Economics (N = 6)</i>					
Accounting and Taxation, MS	X				
Applied Statistics and Economics, MS	X				
Broadband Advertising, MS	X				
Internet Marketing, MA	X				
Recreation Management, MS			X		
Recreational Administration, MS		X			
<i>College of Education and Allied Studies (N = 11)</i>					
Biological Sciences and Education, MA				X	
Educational Technology and Marketing, MS			X		
Educational Therapy, MS				X	
Forensic Psychology, MS			X		
Higher Education Technology & Assessment, MS					X
Leadership in Gifted Education, MS	X				
Leisure & Hospitality Management, MS				X	
Recreation Therapy, MS			X		
Recreation Therapy, MS	X				
Recreation Therapy, MS			X		
Sport and Psychology Studies, MS		X			
<i>College of Science (N = 6)</i>					
Computational Biology, MS					X
Forensic Science, MS					X
Forensic Science, MS	X				
Marine Mammal Management, MS			X		
Natural Resource Management, MA			X		
Paleoclimatology, MS				X	

3. OUTSIDE REVIEWER'S REPORT AND THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE

3.1. Outside Reviewer's Report

Dr. Mark Morlock, Associate Dean, School of Graduate, International, and Interdisciplinary Studies, California State University, Chico, visited the campus on February 26, 2009. The Outside Reviewer was pleased to be provided a copy of the completed program review well in advance of his visit so that he could familiarize himself with the particulars of the program prior to his visit. The Outside Reviewer found the program requirements are rigorous, thoughtfully developed, and appropriate for the program goals. In addition, the program has been judged to be academically sound and logistically feasible by two Deans and the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. What drew particular approval was the fact that CSUEB faculty and administration understand the limitations of the university's resources and faculty expertise disallow certain programmatic areas at the outset. Support for the program by faculty advisors is very strong and despite the fact that their contribution is essentially "pro-bono," they appear to be very enthusiastic in the creative roles they play as teachers and advisors.

Dr. Morlock made five recommendations in his report:

1. Raising the GPA for incoming undergraduates from 2.3 to 2.5, while allowing exceptions.
2. Establishing an Interdisciplinary Studies Committee comprised of a faculty representative from each College to approve Interdisciplinary Studies proposals. This would replace the current process where the AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies and the Associate Deans' approve the proposals.
3. Finding a way to reward or at least acknowledge the work of the faculty who volunteer to serve on Interdisciplinary Studies committees.
4. Making the Interdisciplinary Studies Major more visible to students.
5. Conducting exit and alumni surveys as an indirect measure of the assessment of student learning outcomes.

3.2. Response to the outside reviewer's report

The Interdisciplinary Studies Major program made the following responses to Dr. Morlock's recommendations.

1. The program concurs with the first recommendation to raise the GPA for incoming undergraduates.
2. While recognizing that it is difficult to say "no" to an enthusiastic student's proposal, establishing an Interdisciplinary Studies Committee would be problematic since it is hard to find faculty for committee service. In addition, it would be equally hard to find time for the committee to meet, and that would cause significant delay in the approval process. Lastly, removing the AVP from the approval process destroys any chance at long term consistency of program approvals. It should not be surprising that the Associate Dean normally approves the Interdisciplinary Studies proposals since by the time the proposals are reviewed the student proposal has been reviewed by the Graduate Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Studies Major, the AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies, and at least three faculty members.
3. In the current tight budget situation, rewards of money or assigned time are not feasible. However, letters of appreciation acknowledging the work of faculty who volunteer to serve on the Interdisciplinary Studies majors will be sent at the end of each academic year. These can be placed in their personnel files and/or dossiers.

4. The program disagrees with the fourth recommendation to make the program more visible. This is based on the very reasons that the reviewer cites in his report, namely that it is better to steer students toward established majors and not towards, as the reviewer states, a “roll-your-own” major that requires significant voluntary commitments from already busy faculty.
5. The program will return to its practice of exit surveys, which will be redesigned to include information on the student’s perception of the extent to which their student learning outcomes were met. Although alumni surveys are a good idea, the program is reluctant to follow through because the number of Interdisciplinary Majors is small (approximately 12 per year). An alumni survey would yield low results (one or two per year), meaning no useful data would be gathered.

4. PROGRAM’S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Based upon the Self Study, the Interdisciplinary Studies Major has laid out the following plans for the next five years:

1. Provide a rubric for the student’s committee chair to complete when the student has successfully finished his/her program of study. This would provide an assessment of the degree and the student’s specific student learning objectives. This new “Assessment of Student Learning Objectives” form is in Appendix W. The forms will be kept and reviewed by the AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies and will provide a better record of assessment for each student than is available currently.
2. Increase awareness of the Interdisciplinary Studies Major among advisors, especially those who work with minority populations, so that all students understand that they have the opportunity to develop an Interdisciplinary Major.
3. Rewrite the memo sent to faculty appointing them to an Interdisciplinary Studies Committee to clarify that the instructions include a description of the role of the chair and the committee members. This is in response to some faculty comments that their roles were not known to them (see Appendices S and T for current memos).
4. Send a letter of acknowledgement to faculty who serve on Interdisciplinary Studies Committees at the end of each academic year.
5. Return to the prior practice of administering an exit survey to graduating students. Although the graduating students no longer come to the office for a graduation check, it is possible to obtain a quarterly list of Interdisciplinary Studies graduates. An electronic survey will be sent to them. One question will pertain to the students’ perceptions of the success of the learning outcomes of their Interdisciplinary Studies Major.
6. Raise the GPA required for a student to enter the undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major from 2.3 to 2.5 in keeping with the policy in place at neighboring CSU campuses. The AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies would have the option of making exceptions. All undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies students who graduated between Fall 2003 and Summer 2008 had incoming GPAs of over 2.5 (Appendix G), so the impact of this change would not be great.

5. CAPR ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM’S FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The Interdisciplinary Studies has submitted an excellent five year report. It includes the program’s responses to all three concerns of CAPR for the last five-year program review, the

accomplishments of all five recommendations included in the Plan submitted to CAPR for Interdisciplinary Studies Majors covering the period of 1998/99 to 2003/04, and a well-crafted five-year plan for the future.

The ability for students to develop a program that meets their educational goals is a strong feature of the program. The cross-disciplinary nature of Interdisciplinary Studies is a valuable aspect to provide students the ability to graduate with an interdisciplinary approach “rather than a more narrow single major orientation.” The program prepares students well for graduate study, as well as for success in cross-disciplinary careers.

The energy, enthusiasm, and enjoyment of the faculty who volunteers to serve on the Interdisciplinary Studies majors are definite keys to the success of this program. CAPR suggests that some credit in the form of assigned time should be given to faculty because the work does take time, especially for advising. When a student in Interdisciplinary Studies enrolls in classes, the student does not count in the major and the department is not given advising credit. CAPR recommends that the department be given credit to the appropriate portion of that student. It might be possible to proportion out the majors to the department involved. There could be a report about the departments and faculty involved each year in Interdisciplinary Studies.

6. CAPR RECOMMENDATION FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM

CAPR recommends the continuation of the BA/BS and MA/MS in Interdisciplinary Studies without modification.

7. DATE FOR THE PROGRAM’S NEXT FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The date of the next Five-Year Review is 2013-2014.