

**RESOLUTION ON STUDENT-DESIGNED
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR
(#03-98/99-EP)**

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University recommend to the President that the attached guidelines for the Student-Designed Interdisciplinary Studies Major be approved, effective Fall 1999, and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University recommend that the faculty member appointed to coordinate the Student-Designed Interdisciplinary Studies Major be given adequate assigned time to perform this function.

The Coordinator

The faculty coordinator for the program will meet with each student applicant, discuss the program, judge if the program is appropriate for the student's educational needs, and guide the student in the formulation of her/his program of study, including his/her rationale for taking the major. After the student has received approval from the chairs/program leaders, or designees, in the disciplines selected, the coordinator will sign the appropriately completed major contract presented by the student.

Department Chair/Program Leader - Advisors

In many cases a student in the program may be working with a faculty member other than the chair or program leader in one or more areas. In such cases the chair/program leader may designate that faculty member as signatory of the major contract and of any subsequent changes to the contract. Three chairs/program leaders, or designees, will serve as the student's advisors. The student must meet with these advisors at least once a semester. Any changes to the contract must be signed by the advisors and approved by the coordinator. The advisors will serve as evaluators of the student's final project (SP 401).

Eligibility

Students in good academic standing are eligible to apply for the Interdisciplinary Studies Major. A student may apply only 18 previously completed units and only 6 units in progress of the 48 units required in the major when the major contract form is signed by the coordinator and the advisors. No more than nine of the completed units may come from any one area. Thus, a student must have 30 or more semester units to complete within the major in order to meet minimum degree requirements.

Application Procedure

After discussion with and approval of the faculty coordinator (see above), the student must gain approval from each department chair/program leader, or designee, for the courses in that department/area chosen by the student. The coordinator, with the help, if needed, of the student's advisors, will aid the student in his/her written rationale or statement of purpose for the major as well as guiding the student through the course approval process if needed.

The coordinator and the chairs/program leaders, or designees, of the departments/areas constituting the major must approve and sign the major contract. Subsequent changes to the contract may be made only with the consent of the coordinator and the chairs/program leaders, or designees, of the departments/areas constituting the major.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL FOR THE
STUDENT-DESIGNED INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR
(Revised December 08, 1998)

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

Humboldt State's Student-Designed Interdisciplinary Studies Major traditionally has been considered a rigorous major for students who could express good reasons for not taking a traditional major. Students accepted in the program were able to show that a combination of courses from different majors, or areas, would better meet the student's educational needs. The student would make his/her case by writing a rationale which would include the courses to be taken from three disciplines. This rationale had to be approved by a faculty member coordinating the whole program and by the chair/program leader in each of the disciplines chosen.

Recently, however, the position of coordinator has been held by an administrator. This has meant that the traditional role of the faculty in making curricular decisions has been diminished since other majors require a faculty member to be the department chair or coordinator. In addition, several department chairs have noted an increase in pressure from students who are about to graduate for the department chairs to sign off on an Interdisciplinary Studies Major without any evidence of the expected thoughtful rationale normally required. This has led to a great increase in the number of Interdisciplinary Studies Majors, but with a concomitant serious dilution of educational rigor.

GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDENT-DESIGNED INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR

Purpose and Program Structure

The purpose of the Student-Designed Interdisciplinary Studies Major is to provide students with a structure for the formal study of an interdisciplinary theme that encompasses three academic disciplines. The Interdisciplinary Studies Major is intended to be an exceptional major with a high degree of academic rigor.

The course of study for the Student-Designed Interdisciplinary Studies Major consists of approved course work in three* academic disciplines as follows: a minimum of 48 units approved by both the coordinator of the program and the department chairs/program leaders, or designee(s), of the disciplines chosen. Forty-five of these 48 units shall be distributed over 3 distinct areas or disciplines, with at least 12 units allocated to each of the areas (at least 6 of which must be upper division in each area), and at least 33 units of these 45 units must be upper division. In addition, a 3 unit course (SP 401) must be completed. This course will require a senior project, thesis, or culminating experience demonstrating the integration of the disciplines in the student's major. The course must be approved by the coordinator. The evaluation and grading of the course work will be done by the student's advisors. (All classes in the major, except those that are mandatory Credit/No Credit, shall be completed with a grade of C or better.)

* With the approval of the coordinator, appropriate advisor, and the Assessment of Prior Learning Program Leader, the student may meet part of one of the three disciplines by completing units in SP 351 (Portfolio in Prior Learning).

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL FOR THE
STUDENT-DESIGNED INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES MAJOR
(Revised October 12, 1998)

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