

## ***Guidelines for Approving New Minors at HSU***

Revised 11/2/10, ICC

Introduction: The Academic Master Planning (AMP) subcommittee of the ICC is working to establish curricular guidelines for minor programs of study. These guidelines include a program definition (language for the catalog), program standards, and factors to consider. When proposing new minors, faculty should document how their program meets the standards, or provide a rationale for an exception. The AMP is considering ways to expedite the documentation process. Initially, these standards will apply only to new minors. At some future date, these guidelines may be extended to all existing HSU minors.

### ***Background***

This impetus for these guidelines is a mix of issues:

- The ICC has received various curricular proposals related to minors and needs consistent standards to use in making recommendations about those proposals. In addition, the ICC Constitution charges the committee with developing criteria for approval and continuation of all academic programs. Because of the need to respond to proposals for new minors, the ICC began its criteria-development work with minors.
- Unlike most of our sister CSU campuses, HSU presently has virtually no standards for minors, resulting in extreme variability in minors in terms of number of units, coherence, and faculty understanding as to the purpose of minors.
- The HSU catalog lists many more minors than can be found in most other schools of our size. Many of the minors average only one or two graduates per year; some average even fewer than that.
- Minor curriculum needs to be kept up-to-date. Whenever changes are made to courses included in minors, student handbooks, minor contracts, catalog copy, DARS reports, and various other pieces of documentation must be revised. In many cases, faculty have failed to submit the appropriate curriculum change forms, resulting in out-of-date information in the catalog and at the registrar's office *and* the need for time-consuming course substitutions on the students' Minor contract.
- Students frequently plan to earn minors, but then drop them as they near graduation.

**Program Definition**

Minors provide a coherent exploration of a field of study different from a student's Major. Minors consist of 15 to 30 units of coursework, *including* all prerequisites for the courses. A minimum of six of those units must be in Upper Division courses.

*Rationale: Earning a Minor implies that the student has completed a certain disciplinary or interdisciplinary study with its own curricular integrity. The 15 to 30 unit range is based on CSU policy, examination of policies at other CSU schools, examinations of the current number of units required for existing HSU minors (some require more than 30, some require fewer than 15), and the ICC's firm conviction that hidden requirements do not serve our students well. Thus we have kept 30 units as the upper limit on units so that minors that require a significant number of background courses (math courses as preparation for physics, for example) can include all the needed prerequisite courses in the minor.*

**Program Standards****I. VISION AND BENEFIT**

**Minor programs of study support the Mission and Vision of Humboldt State University and provide learning opportunities that enrich the student's education.**

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. The minor supports the University Vision.
2. The benefits of the minor program to students are articulated in one or more of the following contexts:
  - The minor offers students complementary learning opportunities for one or more majors
  - The minor provides professional preparation for students in one or more majors
  - The minor enables students to pursue additional intellectual growth.
3. There are positive indications for current and/or potential demand from students for the minor.

*Rationale: A minor program should contribute to HSU's educational identity as well as student needs and interests in order to justify the direct and indirect costs associated with minors.*

## II. COHERENT CURRICULUM

**Minor programs have an intentional structure that provides students with opportunities to study one or more aspects of an area of study in sufficient depth to develop noteworthy knowledge and understanding.**

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. The minor program has a stated curricular focus, a set of related student learning outcomes, and an explanation of how the curriculum supports those learning outcomes.
2. The set of courses required in the minor program are justified with respect to the development of student learning; each course in the minor is mapped to learning outcomes that are articulated with the program student learning outcomes.
3. The minor consists of 15 to 30 units of coursework, including the prerequisites for any courses.
4. Courses required for the minor are available for students in the minor: they are offered frequently enough that students can complete the minor in a reasonable amount of time *and* have sufficient capacity that students will have the opportunity to enroll.

*Rationale: The learning outcomes of the minor need to be explicit to the students and faculty. In addition, the minor courses should to be available to students if the minor is to be offered.*

## III. DEPARTMENTAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

**Minor programs have identified faculty expertise and Departmental commitment. Minor programs are administered by an academic department (home) in one of the three colleges. This administrative home ensures consistent student advising and periodic review of the program's viability.**

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. The home department chair of the minor program acts as or designates an advisor in the program.
2. In addition, the minor program must demonstrate that sufficient faculty resources are available to support the curriculum, *especially* if any courses unique to the minor are included in the minor curriculum.

3. The home department commits to monitoring viability of the minor by tracking information such as the availability of needed courses and the number of graduates from the program.
4. Review of the minor program is planned for. This review may be within the related major program review, or for interdisciplinary minors, the home department may schedule a separate review.

*Rationale: A viable program reflects the training and interests of more than one faculty member. Minors should not need to be eliminated because one faculty member has left the University. Knowing who is responsible for oversight of a program is essential so that the necessary work is consistently completed.*

**Effective Date: Upon approval by the Provost, the ICC will apply these guidelines to all new minors under consideration.**