To be adopted:

A moratorium on the Interdisciplinary Studies Major

Justification:
Please see attached

Approvals:
Committee in Charge of Interdisciplinary Studies Major, 3/16/11
CHASS Dean Cullenberg: 2/10/11
CHASS Executive Committee: 5/26/10 and 9/29/10
CEP: 3/16/11
Interdisciplinary Studies Major
Report to the Executive Committee

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February 12, 2010
Interdisciplinary Studies Report to the Executive Committee

I. Introduction

a. Committee charge. We have been asked to investigate issues surrounding the Interdisciplinary Studies major (IDST), and to propose recommendations to remedy these problems. The issues revolve around two major themes: 1) problems regarding the administrative organization of the program, including communications with other departments on course availability and IDST majors’ access to courses in other departments; and 2) problems regarding the academic excellence fostered by the current curriculum and requirements.

b. Committee composition. The committee is composed of Kevin Esterling (Political Science, committee chair), Richard Arnott (Economics), Steven Brint (Sociology and Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs), Jodi Kim (Ethnic Studies), and Barbara Wotherspoon (CHASS student affairs officer)

c. Acknowledgements. We prepared this report after speaking with Anne Sutherland, Brenda Aragon, Sharon Payne, Sean O’Grady, Anthony Gonzales and Jose Bertuvides Much of this report reflects their ideas and expertise, and we thank them for their contributions.

d. Organization of this report. After outlining the background and requirements for the IDST major, we detail the organizational and academic excellence issues surrounding the major, and then offer possible courses of action. We discuss possible ethical issues surrounding changes to the program before concluding.

II. Background on IDST Major

a. Structure of the major. To complete the IDST major,¹ after completing two years of lower division coursework, students may choose between two options: 1) the “two concentrations” option requires seven upper division classes in their primary concentration, and four in their secondary concentration. Each concentration is a list of upper division courses, where the listing for each department is modeled after that department’s minor.

¹ We distinguish IDST from the named interdisciplinary studies majors such as Global Studies, Latin American Studies, Public Policy, California Studies, etc. This report does not consider the named interdisciplinary programs.
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requirements. These concentrations, however, are subject to change. Although the Executive Committee approved the structure of the major in 2004, the concentration listings have never been reviewed by the Executive Committee. 2) The “communications” option requires eleven upper division courses across a variety of departments. Neither option has a minimum GPA requirement, other than the student be in good academic standing.

b. History. IDST traces its origins to the Liberal Studies (LBST) major. IDST was approved by the Executive Committee as a separate major when in 2004 the requirements of the LBST major were changed to conform to subject matter requirements spelled out in the No Child Left Behind Act. LBST remains a major for students who intend to teach K-6 in California, while IDST is intended for students who have interdisciplinary interests.

c. Staffing. Anne Sutherland is the faculty director. The program has one MSO, Sharon Payne, and one full time advisor, Brenda Aragon. Some of the advising has been taken over by Sean O'Grady and Anthony Gonzalez in the CHASS office. There is a faculty committee that meets once or twice a year to review curricular changes.

d. Student composition. There are currently 409 IDST majors. Of these, 108 are in communication studies. Among the larger primary concentrations among the other students are Biological Sciences (40 students), Business Administration (130), Psychology (12), Sociology (31) and Undeclared (25).

III. Organizational Issues

a. Overview. Under the heading of organizational issues we describe organizational barriers that create confusion or inefficiencies in the administration of the program. These inefficiencies are often detrimental to students’ progress.

b. Communication between IDST and the departments. Departmental course offerings change from quarter-to-quarter and from year-to-year, and the courses listed in the catalog often are actually not offered in a given year. In developing their curricular plans for their IDST major, however, students rely on the catalog and the list of courses for each concentration that the IDST office maintains (which itself is based on the catalog). If courses are not offered, IDST students are required to continuously update their curricular plans. This is especially a problem for the communication studies option, the student’s 11 course mix often is based more on course availability, substitutable courses instead of a well-planned course of study. Currently, the IDST advisor does not receive advance notification of changes to curriculum and department course offerings thus course planning and degree tracking for students is difficult. However, even with advance notification, the problems of course availability and the need to substitute
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applicable courses are problematic. The IDST advisor does not receive departmental course offerings in advance of the catalog printing to help students anticipate changes or to plan and get into classes. To update the course lists for each concentration, the IDST advisor examines the minor requirements listed for the corresponding department in the UCR catalog every two years. The last updating was Fall 2008, and the next is due Fall 2010. The staff relies on the printed catalog to do this updating since they do not have the time to contact each department separately. The concentrations are informally modified throughout the year as students return to the IDST office asking for a substitute after having run into a roadblock in a department.

c. Resulting problems with students meeting their curricular plan. When a course that would otherwise satisfy requirements for a concentration is not offered, students must return to the IDST advisor and request a substitute class. This puts the onus on the (lone) IDST advisor to understand the substantive requirements of nearly every major in the college, as well as some outside of the college, to make an informed recommendation. Typically, a substitute can be found; however, with constant substitutions students’ curricular plans can quickly become incoherent. When there are substitutions, the advisor must then change the student’s course plan on the computer, which is time consuming.

d. Enrollment management. In addition to these communication problems, the coherence of students’ curricular plans is further eroded as departments are increasingly restricting upper division course enrollments to their own majors. IDST does not have the authority to enroll students in other departments’ courses, and so often IDST majors are unable to get the courses they need to conform to their curricular plans and to graduate.

e. Staffing. The IDST office has recently lost a staff person, and so is understaffed. The staff also administers the named interdisciplinary studies programs (Public Policy, Latin American Studies, etc.) along with Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies. As a result, the advisor is responsible for a large number of majors spread out in departments across the college and in other colleges, and this makes advising especially difficult. As a result of these staff shortages, students might not be getting the attention they need. And as we describe next, many of these students are in especial need for careful advising.

IV. Academic Excellence Issues

a. Overview. A number of people we spoke with are concerned that the current structure of the IDST major does not foster academic excellence among students. In principle, we strongly endorse creating interdisciplinary studies opportunities for students who find the departmental majors too
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confining and who wish to explore wide-ranging intellectual interests and pursue career goals in the way that best fits these interests. In a departmental major, the department takes the responsibility for presenting a coherent curriculum for students. Since by its nature interdisciplinary studies occur outside of the departments, it takes an exceptional student to pursue an interdisciplinary major well. Students must be able to master the concepts and methods from several fields and to make connections across fields in a coherent way. We find, however, that in practice students in the IDST major do not express interdisciplinary interests, and often are the ones who are struggling with the departmental curricula.

b. Lack of interdisciplinarity

i. For students who take the two concentrations, the concentrations often have no connections to each other. Students typically view the concentrations as “two minors” that are often only loosely linked at best. The concentration listings themselves do not integrate the concepts among the fields. One could imagine two concentrations in, say, psychology and behavioral economics, for a student that is interested in understanding psychological risk perceptions, with the courses in each discipline identified that would lead students to arrive at a broad and coherent understanding. But instead, the current concentration listings make no such substantive or methodological connections between fields.

ii. Students who switch to IDST often do so without actual interdisciplinary interests. Instead, they typically ask the advisors what two concentrations will get them to a degree the fastest.

iii. Interdisciplinarity requires grounding in each discipline, but we are doubtful whether seven courses in the primary and four in the secondary concentration provide enough grounding to gain enough insight into each field. The concern is the student is simply getting two half-way majors, without a deep grounding in either.

iv. Given current enrollment problems on campus, students in IDST must be especially flexible in their curricular plans in order to find classes in a given quarter. As a result, this places the advisor in a position to make substantive judgments of what substitute courses can maintain continuity and coherence across the two fields.

Currently, there is no requirement for faculty in either department to oversee students’ curricular plans. The mere fact that students must make substitutions on the fly reduces the chances that they will make interdisciplinary connections across the two fields, and maintain a vision of how even a carefully crafted plan connects two disciplines.

v. IDST lacks a capstone requirement, such as a final paper or project, to pull together ideas from the two disciplines. Thus there is no structural reason for students to make the effort to integrate concepts or material across the two concentrations.

vi. The Executive Committee has never reviewed the course listings for the concentrations, to review the concentrations for their intellectual coherence.
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vii One way to think of these curricular shortcomings would be to try to envision how one would evaluate this program using WASC accreditation standards that the departments were recently required to develop.

c. IDST attracts underperforming students
   i Students can have a below 2.0 GPA in one concentration and above in another, and still graduate. Thus, students who are performing poorly in departmental majors can switch to IDST to graduate. In addition, students who simply want the path of least resistance to a degree are attracted to IDST because of its low GPA requirements and because they can navigate between the two concentrations in order to avoid difficult classes.
   ii Many students who do not meet a department's minimum requirements for a major can switch to IDST to continue a reduced version of that same major. As a result, IDST has become something of an easy-out for students who wish to cling to a major that they are not doing well in, rather than going through the difficult process of reflecting on why they were not successful and choosing a different major which may present a better intellectual fit. Providing this release valve to students is potentially a disservice to students, as it does not force them to reflect on their actual strengths and their fit with that field. Students who perform badly in Biology might excel in Art History, if they were to give it a chance. But IDST enables students not to cast about in this self-reflective activity of finding where their actual abilities lie.
   iii This is particular a problem with students who are barred from continuing in a CNAS major, as they can still continue that major in CHASS. This allows them to satisfy requirements with D grades in their previous major. Enabling this is often not doing these students a favor; for example D grades in Biology won't get them into medical school.
   iv That underperforming students are attracted to IDST can be seen in appendix #1, which breaks IDST major GPAs down by primary concentration. Overall, the 409 IDST majors have a GPA about 0.3 below their peers in other CHASS majors, or in letter terms about a C- compared to a C for the average. Out of 27 concentrations, 23 have majors below the overall CHASS average (excluding IDST majors), and the four concentrations that have higher average GPAs only account for 10 students. The largest IDST concentrations (accounting for 201 students in Biological Sciences, Business Administration, and Sociology) also have GPAs below that of the corresponding department average.

d. Entry requirements for the concentrations do not match those of the corresponding majors. Many majors have minimum grades for lower division courses. For example, Sociology requires grades of “C” or better in lower division courses and Business Administration requires 2.5 GPA and
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2.0/2.5 in prerequisite areas. There are no similar requirements for IDST, as long as the student is in good standing, which only requires an overall average of 2.0 overall and 2.0 for upper division classes. This puts students at a disadvantage because they are taking upper division courses with students who are better-equipped than them in the subject area, potentially setting them up for failure.

c. **Students flip between concentrations as necessary.** Students often switch primary and secondary concentrations, or drop a concentration entirely, if they see their GPA dropping. As a result, IDST in many ways functions simply as an undeclared program. This is especially true since IDST does not have lower division courses as an entry requirement to show commitment to any specific concentration. CHASS apparently has in the works a proposal requiring a stricter plan, but reducing flexibility might hinder a student's progress toward a degree if he or she cannot substitute, given the difficulties with course offerings outlined above.

f. **Watered-down versions of the majors.** As a result of the problems listed in items IV a-e, in practice IDST students do not develop a deep grounding in any discipline, much less in several disciplines. When students who are poorly trained enter the work world or attempt to pursue graduate study, this reflects poorly on the institution and may devalue the UCR degree. For example, when entering the work world students will say they are “Business and Poli Sci” or “Biological Sciences and Chemistry,” making it sound like they are stellar students who are double majoring. As the data in appendix #1 demonstrate, however, this is usually not the case. Employers may be wondering how we can be awarding degrees to students with very little competency in these areas of concentration.

g. **Organizational issues worsen academic excellence problems.** This point is implicit in much of the above, but it is worth mentioning. But the organizational problems we discuss in section III exacerbate the academic excellence issues of this section. The organizational issues include a lack of faculty involvement and oversight; concentrations that have been maintained by staff; frequent substitutions of courses, etc.

V. Problems with Specific Concentrations

a. **Science concentrations.** Concentrations such as Biological Sciences or Chemistry are often used by students who are unsuccessful in the original science major. We mention above problems that arise when students are allowed to cling to a major that they already have demonstrated to have low competence in. In addition, CHASS advisors have no control over and little knowledge of courses offered in other colleges, and this makes it especially hard to advise these students. Irrespective of any restructuring of IDST overall, we recommend that these concentrations be collapsed into a general science concentration or even better eliminated entirely.
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b. Communication Studies. A major problem with the communication studies option is that it is misleading. UCR has no communication department or school and the college doesn’t offer communication studies classes. As a result, students often graduate unprepared for their intended career. For example, students who wish to pursue a career in broadcasting are not required to take media production, speech, editing, argumentation, public relations, internship, or communication theory courses. In addition, the prerequisite courses have limited availability (ENGL 33, ART 6, MUS 6, CRWT 56). Irrespective of any changes to IDST, this program needs more structure. Currently, students choose 11 random courses from MCS and ENGL, possibly sprinkled with THEA, SOC, CRWT. What actual courses they take is all up to them, without any need for faculty approval. Students can swap out courses from their course plan at-will, and they often need to because of limited course offerings. Perhaps a better option would be to do away with the communication studies option entirely, as students have alternatives in defined majors such as MCS, the journalism minor, and creative writing. Students have a clear demand for a degree called “communication,” however, and this student demand should be considered before this option is eliminated.

VI. An Available Alternative to the Current IDST Major

a. Support for interdisciplinary studies at UCR. We believe that the college should offer students who find traditional disciplinary boundaries too confining the opportunity to pursue an interdisciplinary curriculum. Indeed, we should encourage all students to pursue their intellectual interests as much as possible. To both master and bridge two or more different fields requires tremendous ability, a strong intellectual curiosity, and an exceptional level of motivation. By all accounts, however, these terms do not directly apply to the typical current IDST major. This suggests a mismatch between the IDST program and its own intentions. One possibility would be to allow admission only to students who can make a compelling intellectual case for their reasons to pursue interdisciplinary studies. A consequence is that a much (perhaps very much) smaller number of only the best students would take up this opportunity. This proposal would solve many of the academic and organizational issues we describe above. It would create new problems for the population of students who currently rely on the IDST major to graduate, and we discuss how to address these problems below.

b. The HASS major. We were surprised and interested to find that CHASS already has a major on the books that fits the description of an ideal interdisciplinary program intended for those students with truly wide-ranging intellectual interest, who can make a compelling case for their need for an interdisciplinary degree. That program is the Humanities/Social Sciences Individual Major (HASS). Typically, according to the catalog, the HASS individual major is built around a central concept in humanities and social sciences. The concept might be a specific culture, country or ethnic group such as Italian civilization and culture; an age or period such as the
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Renaissance or the industrial revolution; a great social issue or human problem such as war, revolution, communication; or any other topic which receives significant attention from several disciplines. For a fuller description of HASS, please see appendix #3. Given the existence of HASS, one possibility would be to dissolve the IDST major, and instead simply enroll students who have true interdisciplinary interests into the HASS major. As we show next, this would simultaneously address the communication and academic excellence problems we describe above, and would not necessarily require any additional funding or even new course or program approvals.

c. The structure of the HASS major. The catalog describes the structure and requirements of the HASS major; see appendix #3. HASS has an entrance essay that requires prospective majors to demonstrate that he or she understands how different disciplines integrate and present a compelling case for their intellectual interests in interdisciplinary studies. HASS also has as a capstone requirement in the form of a senior thesis (HASS 195 and 196). The senior thesis would help students to pull together the disciplines they have studied coherently in a research project. The catalog states the senior thesis “is the culmination of the major and represents an interdisciplinary approach to the central concept of the major.” HASS also requires majors to work with a faculty advisor, who must be a member of the Senate. More faculty oversight would resolve a number of issues with current IDST, including lending intellectual coherence to the student’s course plan, and would improve communication with the departments (since the advisor presumably would be in one of the departments). Expanding HASS would require that students be able to find additional motivated faculty advisors who are committed to interdisciplinary education and willing to participate in the major.

d. Possible changes to HASS. To address the remainder of the issues above, the college might consider adding a minimum number of departmental lower division courses as an entry requirement, to help ensure students perform well in a major before attempting to bridge to other majors, and to add minimum GPA requirements. These latter changes are not likely to be necessary, however, since it is likely that only motivated and intellectually curious students would approach a faculty member to supervise the major, and since faculty presumably can serve as appropriate gatekeepers. We would strongly recommend giving HASS students priority enrollment in classes, or at least same priority as majors, to ensure that they have access to classes. In addition, it would be necessary to grandfather in existing majors, or let IDST run its course with the final wave of majors.

e. Similar programs at other UC campuses. Other UC campuses have interdisciplinary studies majors like HASS, intended for exceptional students. UCR is the only UC campus with an interdisciplinary major in place as a safety net for underperforming students. For example, Berkeley’s interdisciplinary major is nearly identical to HASS, and in addition has required courses for how to think in an interdisciplinary way as a requirement.
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for its major (see http://ls.berkeley.edu/ugis/jsf/). UCI also has a program similar to HASS (see http://www.editor.uci.edu/09-10/idp/idp_1.htm).

VII. Ethical issues with eliminating IDST

a. Given the existence of HASS, it's not clear what the intellectual rationale is for the existence of a separate IDST program, since HASS already contains a strong design for interdisciplinary undergraduate studies that mirrors those at other UC campuses. We recognize, however, that IDST does currently function as a safety valve for underperforming students. Currently, about 400 students choose IDST, and many may rely on it as a path to graduate. What would become of this population of students if IDST were dissolved?

b. One possibility is that eliminating IDST would, in the long run, do students a great favor, and help them to perform up to UC standards set by their peers in other departments. We all recognize that students tend to measure up to our high expectations. The converse of this is if we set low expectations, students will only rise to those. We note a recent paper presented on campus by economist Philip Babcock, who found that grade inflation leads students to study less. Requiring students to meet a minimum GPA requirement for their major, whether in a traditional department or interdisciplinary program, might get them to self-select about their own abilities and fit with a major, to possibly seek out new areas where they might perform well, and most importantly, to recognize the urgency of doing coursework well when given the opportunity to learn at UCR.

c. We recognize that some students may feel they need to cling to one particular major, such as Biological Sciences or Business Administration, for practical reasons. Some students may feel parental constraints on what majors or careers they may legitimately pursue. Some students may lack the reflective capacity to consider broadening their own interests to other fields, or to consider what other careers might be pursued by a degree in a different field. What to do with these students? More generally, what to do with underperforming students, or students who are struggling but still qualify as having good academic standing?

d. On the one hand, one might argue that as long as students are in good standing, they are entitled to a degree, as a promise of sorts from their original admission to UCR. If IDST were eliminated, then students who cannot meet departmental requirements would need to leave UCR, or delay graduation until they could find a departmental home in which they can meet the requirements.² This in effect changes the policy on what counts as

² According to Sean O'Grady, not all departments have specific major declaration criteria. These departments do are: 1) Business Administration: Requires a minimum 2.50 overall GPA, minimum 2.00 in lower division major requirements (BUS 10, BUS 20), minimum 2.00 in major prerequisites (ECON 4, CS 8, STAT 48, MATH 22, ECON 102, ECON 103), and minimum 2.00 in breadth requirements
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“failing” to a de facto policy that one needs a C in a major, rather than simply good standing. But this entitlement argument cuts both ways, since allowing a poorly motivated, underperforming student to remain at UCR takes away a slot from a more motivated and qualified applicant seeking admission, such as a prospective transfer from a community college. Prioritizing the entitlement of a poorly motivated student necessarily implies denying the same entitlement to a more motivated student who was never admitted. And certainly, the appropriateness of any admissions decision is only fully assessed in hindsight.

e At the same time, it is not necessarily the case that eliminating IDST would cause this population of students to exit the university. Some students are simply using IDST as a path of least resistance to a degree, trading off effort for leisure. In the absence of IDST, many of these students would recognize on their own that the only way to earn a degree at UCR would require measuring up to the performance of their peers, and would recognize that doing so is better than the alternative. Indeed, doing so betters their prospects in the long run, even if they don’t recognize that fully as a college student. There would certainly remain some students in this population who truly would be set adrift if IDST were to disappear, in particular those who do not have the self-reflective capacity to consider other majors in which they might excel. These students would need an advising process in place that both forces them, and assists them, to self-reflect, and would help them learn how to do this. Academic advising for these students should be particularly intensive, and might even take the form of an “intervention” by trained academic advisors who are ready to do “life” advising about how to talk to parents and explain their curricular interests and decisions, how to develop a reflective capacity, how to improve their study skills, and so on.

Given that many of UCR’s undergraduates are first generation college students, the university certainly has a social responsibility to help these

They have plans to increase this to 2.50 in each of these areas effective Fall 2010.

2) Sociology: Requires SOC 1, SOC 4, SOC 5, and two additional lower division SOC classes with no grade lower than a 'C'. This is even more restrictive than a lower division major GPA requirement of 2.00, because a student cannot make up a C- with a C+ in another course. There is no overall GPA requirement for this major (other than the normal College requirement of 2.00).

3) Psychology: All lower division requirements must be completed with a 2.00 or better with no grade below a 'C-'. (Their lower division requirements are: PSYC 1, PSYC 2, PSYC 11, PSYC 12, 1 course in Math, 1 course in Biology, 1 course in Physical Science, and 2 additional science courses) These are not technically declaration requirements, but instead requirements to graduate. And 4) CNAS: All CNAS majors (Biological Sciences in particular) have strict declaration requirements. These range from the courses that must be completed to specific GPA requirements within lower and upper division areas. Some of these GPA requirements are above a 2.00 (e.g. CHEM). Their Major Declaration requirements can be found here:

http://www.cnasstudent.ucr.edu/students/comcriteria.html
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students succeed even if they arrive at campus ill-equipped to do so at first.
Note that the kind of advising we envision here would be intensive and so would likely require an increase in advising staff and resources

f. A final issue revolves around time to graduate, and in particular students who are kicked out of CNAS who migrate to CHASS to salvage a degree. Would eliminating IDST cause them to take even longer to graduate, since they would no longer be able to apply their CNAS units to their major? Not necessarily. See appendix #2

g. Note: a large number of student athletes are IDST majors. If IDST is to be modified or eliminated, the athletic department should be notified.

VIII. Conclusion

We conclude by reiterating our commitment, as a committee, to the idea of providing intellectually curious students an opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary undergraduate studies at UCR. We feel, however, that the current structure of IDST creates a range of organizational and curricular problems that would be difficult to overcome within its current framework. At the same time, a well-designed interdisciplinary studies program already exists on the books in the form of the HASS individual major, and this program closely mirrors successful programs at several other UCs. One important step we recommend is to give HASS majors either priority enrollment in classes, or at least equal priority to departmental majors. We recognize that eliminating IDST would, certainly in the short run, create transition problems for a sizable population of UCR students. If IDST is to be eliminated, then we recommend in the strongest possible terms that deep and meaningful advising, even counseling, be provided to these students to help them discover a major in which they can succeed.
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Appendix #1

Interdisciplinary Studies – Comparative Overview
(based on 09F enrollments, listed by primary concentration)

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<td>Average upper-division GPA: 2.618</td>
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<td>CHASS: All</td>
<td>CHASS: All (minus IDST)</td>
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<td>Average overall GPA: 2.801</td>
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| IDST: Ethnic Studies       | Number: 11          | Average overall GPA: 2.464 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.471 |
| IDST: Film and Visual Culture (Media and Cultural Studies) | Number: 11 | Average overall GPA: 2.598 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.611 |
| IDST: Geological Sciences  | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 2.233 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.233 |
| IDST: Hispanic Studies     | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 1.968 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 1.968 |
| IDST: History              | Number: 5           | Average overall GPA: 2.603 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.467 |
| IDST: Mathematics          | Number: 2           | Average overall GPA: 2.887 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.541 |
| IDST: Philosophy           | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 3.689 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: n/a |
| IDST: Physics              | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 2.244 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.244 |
| IDST: Political Science    | Number: 2           | Average overall GPA: 2.871 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: n/a |
| IDST: Psychology           | Number: 12          | Average overall GPA: 2.717 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.758 |
| IDST: Religious Studies    | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 2.704 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: n/a |
| IDST: Sociology            | Number: 31          | Average overall GPA: 2.507 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.481 |
| IDST: Sociology            | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 2.742 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.779 |
| IDST: Urban Studies         | Number: 1           | Average overall GPA: 2.039 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.039 |
| IDST: Visual and Performing Arts | Number: 1   | Average overall GPA: 1.938 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 1.938 |
| IDST: Women's Studies      | Number: 2           | Average overall GPA: 2.451 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.451 |
| IDST: Undeclared (no concentration) | Number: 25   | Average overall GPA: 2.375 |
|                           |                     | Average upper-division GPA: 2.666 |
Interdisciplinary Studies Report to the Executive Committee

Appendix #2

[This appendix, written by Sean O'Grady, presents the math on how a typical student who is discontinued from CNAS wouldn't necessarily be delayed in graduation if they didn't pursue IDST]

Let’s take a student coming from CNAS who has 110 units and 3 prerequisite courses to complete in their Life Science Core (e.g., BIOL 005C, CHEM 112C, and BCH 100)

If this student were to choose Interdisciplinary Studies with Biological Sciences and Anthropology, they would need to take 11 upper division courses plus their remaining prerequisites. Let’s assume they already took ANTH 001. This would leave them with 15 remaining courses (7 upper division BIOL, 3 preqs for BIOL, 4 upper division ANTH, 1 additional lower division ANTH).

However, if the student chose instead to do an Anthropology major, the student would have only 12 courses remaining (9 upper division, and 3 lower division) So, in many cases, a student can actually graduate quicker by choosing a normal CHASS major instead of choosing Interdisciplinary Studies and trying to “make use” of their investment in science courses.

The other possibility is a student who declares IDST with Biological Sciences and Chemistry. In this case, their 3-course Organic Chemistry series that they take as part of the Life Science Core (the prerequisites for the Biological Science concentration) can be used to apply towards the 4 upper division courses in Chemistry. These courses are CHEM 112A, 112B, and 112C.

So, using the same student from above, this student would have 7 upper division BIOL, 2 more upper division in CHEM (CHEM 112C plus an additional upper division CHEM), plus the other 2 prerequisite courses. This would be a total of 11 courses. So, they would have one less course than if they declared Anthropology. However, this student only has 110 units. Taking 11 courses gets them to 154 units. Students are required to earn 180 units to graduate. So unless this student has more than 7 remaining courses in his breadth requirements (28 units would put him over 180 units), his graduation would not be delayed by choosing a traditional CHASS major over Interdisciplinary Studies with Biological Sciences and Chemistry because he will need additional elective units anyway.

Additionally, many of these students are being discontinued from CNAS because they have failed one or more of their Life Science Core classes multiple times. The likelihood of them earning a passing grade the 3rd or 4th time around is very low. Also, CNAS has recently implemented policies that greatly restrict the ability of students to take a course for a 3rd time (they are given very low priority for enrollment). Thus, even if this student didn’t need elective units, it would still probably be quicker for them to choose another CHASS major. Also, based on their poor records of performance in the sciences, it would likely take them multiple attempts to pass their remaining science classes and further delay their graduation.
Interdisciplinary Studies Report to the Executive Committee

Appendix #3 The HASS Major

Major

The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences major is an interdisciplinary major designed for students who have specific interests that cannot be accommodated within any one of the departments in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences and who wish to construct a coherent program of their own. The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences major is not intended for students whose interests are undecided, students preparing to be Humanitarians, Artists, and Social Scientists major must propose a specifically focused interdisciplinary topic or a two- field area. Such students must have a faculty advisor who is a member of the UCR Academic Senate.

The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences major is fulfilled by a course of studies determined in consultation with an advisor and with the approval of the chair and the members of the committee overseeing the major. The student may construct either an interdisciplinary option or a two-field option for the major as described below.

Admission: Students who wish to select a Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences major must fill out a form and submit a carefully worded statement of purpose showing meaningful course of studies. The Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Committee considers each proposal in the context of the student's topic and statement of purpose. Students whose proposals are approved should petition for a change in major only after they have been informed of the committee's approval of their interdisciplinary program.

Every subsequent change in the student's major must be approved by the advisor, a record of the program and of program changes is kept in the student's files.

Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences courses are supervised by the committee and are open to major as well as non-major students.

Interdisciplinary Option: The interdisciplinary option is built around a central concept in humanities and social sciences. The concept might be a specific culture, country or ethnic group such as Islamic civilization and culture; an age or period such as the Reformation or the Industrial Revolution; a great social issue or human problem such as war, revolution, communication, or any other topic which receives significant attention from several disciplines.

Two-field Option: In special circumstances, the committee sponsors a two-field option for the major designed to allow students to combine studies in two disciplines. Such majors are approved only if they cannot be accommodated within a dual major or within the Liberal Studies Program.

University Requirements

See undergraduate Studies section.

College Requirements

See College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Colleges and Programs section.

Major Requirements

The major requirements for the B.A. degree in Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences are as follows. Students may choose either an interdisciplinary or a two-field option.

Interdisciplinary Option

1. Upper-division requirements (39 units)

   a) A minimum of 32 units directly related to the chosen concentration.
   b) At least 6 units that do not exceed 8 units HASS 195 and HASS 196

2. The committee may require upper-division courses beyond those indicated above if the topic of study requires specific language, quantitative, or methodological proficiency.

The senior thesis or research paper is the culmination of this major and represents an interdisciplinary approach to the central concept of the major. HASS 195 (Senior Thesis) and HASS 196 (Senior Research Paper) are supervised by a faculty advisor and designated to bring into focus a substantial portion of the major.

The following are sample interdisciplinary programs:

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- Comparative Literature
- Cultural Studies
- Film Studies
- Gender Studies
- History
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religion
- Sociology

Two-Field Option

1. Upper-division requirements (56 units)

   a) At least 8 units in each of two fields, supervised by a faculty advisor.

2. The committee may require upper-division courses beyond those indicated above if the topic of study requires specific language, quantitative, or methodological proficiency.

Lower-Division Courses

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- Comparative Literature
- Cultural Studies
- Film Studies
- Gender Studies
- History
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religion
- Sociology

HASS 195, 196 May be taken for honors by students who have completed the major requirements and have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better. HASS 195, 196 will be awarded only to students who have completed the major requirements and have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better. HASS 195, 196 will be awarded only to students who have completed the major requirements and have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better.

The Honors Program

See University Honors Program.

Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Theda Skurnik, Ph.D., Chair
Honors Committee Office, 243 Humanities and Social Sciences (951) 827-5489, skurnik@ucr.edu

Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences:

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- Comparative Literature
- Cultural Studies
- Film Studies
- Gender Studies
- History
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religion
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Dear David and members of the CHASS Executive Committee,

I am writing to indicate that as Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, I recommend that this program be placed in indefinite moratorium. The Esterling report, Anne Sutherland’s evaluation and my own have indicated that there are major problems with the program as it is currently structured. It is possible that in the future a better interdisciplinary program might be developed. However, along with others involved in the evaluation process, I would suggest that this not be done too quickly to avoid possible confusion between the present program and any restructured program.

Yours Sincerely,

Susan Ossman
Professor of Anthropology
Director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program
February 10, 2011

David Herzberger, Chair, CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Moratorium on Admission to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program

Based on our perception last year that the Interdisciplinary Studies program was not functioning with the organization and rigor that we expect of our majors, I asked the CHASS Executive Committee to study the Program and to make recommendations about how to strengthen the Program or, if it could not be strengthened, what alternative path we might take. I understand that you completed the study and produced a report. This report was written by a subcommittee chaired by Prof. Kevin Esterling (Political Science). I understand that the report was circulated to Professor Anne Sutherland, the director of the Program, who had the opportunity to respond to the report’s recommendations. Professor Sutherland, who has since retired, was unable to respond in a way that satisfied the CHASS Executive Committee. It is my understanding that her response did not address the many problems in the Program outlined in the Esterling Report. Professor Sutherland’s successor, Professor Susan Ossman, recommended closing the program in view of these problems.

I have read the Esterling Report, and I concur with its findings. I would therefore like to commence the procedure for placing an indefinite moratorium on admission to the Interdisciplinary Studies major. This moratorium is intended to apply only to Communication Studies and the “two concentrations” option associated with the Interdisciplinary Studies Program proper. It is not intended to apply to other interdisciplinary programs in the College, such as Global Studies and Public Policy.

Although I considered the possibility of disestablishing the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, I agree with the CHASS Executive Committee that a moratorium has two advantages over disestablishment. First, it is simpler to carry out. Second, some faculty members in the future may wish to revive the Interdisciplinary Studies Program in a more organized and rigorous form. A moratorium will allow for this possibility.
I would like you to follow the procedures of the Senate for placing a Program in moratorium. If I understand correctly, the first step in this procedure will be to solicit a formal statement from the current director of the Program, Prof. Ossman.

I wish to thank the members of the CHASS Executive Committee for their dedicated service and to Prof. Esterling's subcommittee, in particular, for producing such a thoughtful and well-grounded report.

Stephen Cullenberg
Dean

cc:  Associate Dean Steven Brint
     Professor Susan Ossman