

**Curriculum Committee Minutes  
November 3, 2003**

**Members Present:** Richard Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, DeWayne Derryberry, Cathy Hale, Sue Hannaford, Christine Kline, Lynda Livingston, David Lupher, Sarah Norris, Ken Rousslang, Karin Sable (Chair), Joyce Tamashiro, Melissa Weinman Jagosh

**Visitors Present:** Suzanne Barnett, Carlo Bonura, Nick Kontogeorgopoulos, Sunil Kukreja, Jim McCullough, Michel Rocchi, Lori Ricigliano

Karin Sable called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**approval of minutes:**

Anderson-Connolly noted that the "Veteran's Day" discussion at the beginning of the calendar subcommittee's report may suggest that the Curriculum Committee has endorsed the 69- v. 72-day imbalance between fall and spring semesters. He emphasized that our vote on October 27 was simply in approval of the fall, 2007 schedule, and should in no way be construed as a blanket endorsement of this structural imbalance.

With that caveat,

**M/S/P approval of minutes from November 3, 2003.**

**announcements:** not a one

**Special Interdisciplinary Major subcommittee report:**

**Hannaford M/S/P that the SIM proposed by Allison Gray be approved.**

Hannaford described this proposal, which incorporates classics, religion, and religious literature, as rigorous and interesting. Gray, a "strong student," has exceptionally good support from her committee (supervisor: Doug Edwards). Barry noted that there could possibly be some "bumps in scheduling" that could cause Gray to need to come back to the committee or to opt for a religion major.

**Asian Studies subcommittee report:**

***program designation: interdisciplinary emphasis***

Hale passed out copies of two documents that she had previously e-mailed to us for review. We began by considering the first:

**Motion: Members of the Asian Studies Subcommittee would like to move that the following document be approved as guidelines for a new program designation, *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*.**

### **Guidelines for the Program Designation *Interdisciplinary Emphasis***

1. The program designation *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* constitutes an enhancement or overlay for academic fields by providing an interdisciplinary context that extends beyond traditional study in a major or minor. Only interdisciplinary programs may offer this designation. Whereas a major typically offers a curriculum that provides a foundation in an academic field adequate for the pursuit of graduate work, and a minor provides an introduction to an academic field, an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* complements a traditional academic field by providing a curriculum or set of experiences that extend beyond traditional coursework in a major or minor.
2. A program that offers an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will provide a written mission statement that includes an explanation for: (a) how the *Emphasis* constitutes an enhancement or overlay for a substantial number of academic majors; and (b) how the requirements for the *Emphasis* designation provide a coherent and distinctive structure that extends beyond traditional study in a major or minor.
3. The requirements for the designation *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will have a coherent and distinctive structure that consists of more than a fixed number of electives. Such requirements may include common courses or experiences (for example, core categories, a gateway or capstone course, study abroad experience) as part of the designation curriculum.
4. Normally, the program offering an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will establish a mechanism to ensure that students reflect carefully on the relationship between the *Emphasis* and their major or minor (e.g., curriculum contract, a required letter of intent, required advising sessions).
5. The requirements for the *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* designation may range from five to nine courses.
6. Seminars in Scholarly and Creative Inquiry and in Writing and Rhetoric will not be part of the requirements or elective options for the *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*.

(end insert)

Hale offered the following initial comments about the numbered items:

#1: This provides a definition for the category, highlighting the distinctions among majors, minors, and emphases.

#2: “substantial number”—We do not need to state a specific number of majors affected, but a program needs to offer a rationale explaining how it is appropriate for more than one or two majors.

#3: This helps distinguish a “program” from a major or minor.

#4: The “mechanism” will require the student to reflect on the relationship between the emphasis and the major or minor; it is hoped that this reflection occurs throughout the student’s course of study.

Finally, Hale noted that the label “interdisciplinary emphasis,” suggested by John Finney, is open for discussion.

So discussion began. (The comments below are presented roughly in chronological order. However, the secretary has done her damndest to provide some sort of structure.)

**background**

Sable asked if the subcommittee had looked for comparable programs at other schools. Hale said that they had looked, focusing especially on humanities and Asian Studies programs. There were no similar programs at the sampled schools.

### **“interdisciplinary emphasis” label**

Anderson-Connolly found the proposed label to be a “tentative name” that could be misleading. While agreeing that Asian Studies was not a traditional discipline, he wondered if adjectives such as “regional” or “cultural” might be helpful descriptors. Kline agreed that these terms would characterize this program, and said that the subcommittee is still searching for appropriate language. Hale explained that “interdisciplinary” reflected a program’s drawing on faculty and information from a number of different disciplines; “regional” or “cultural” might not be broad enough for programs that might apply for this designation in the future.

Barnett described our Asian Studies program as a “multidisciplinary program with an interdisciplinary effect.” Its requirements, such as AS344 and the study abroad experience, force a self-reflection that is inherently interdisciplinary.

Barry spoke in favor of the proposed language. He explained that Asian Studies, like many multidisciplinary programs, can have problems training “in depth,” since they’re never plugged into a discipline. The proposed Asian Studies approach acknowledges that it is valuable for students to have disciplinary depth. Thus, the “interdisciplinary emphasis” label would apply to other such programs that provide a range of multidisciplinary studies, but not depth.

Anderson-Connolly then wondered what the other discipline in Asian Studies was.

Sable explained that in environmental studies, for example, students may integrate what they’ve learned when they reach the capstone experience. When students from varied backgrounds come together to have a dialogue and solve problems, *interdisciplinarity happens*.<sup>1</sup>

Kontogeorgopolous imagined a history major with an Asian Studies overlay. The result would combine history with a study of Asia from many disciplines—it would not be just a history of Asia.

Rousslang reminisced about the term “Asian Studies scholar,” which we considered last year. Barnett said the abandonment of that term happened within the context of the program review. Kline said that a student’s transcript should describe his program. Hale recalled some resistance within the Curriculum Committee to implying that Asian Studies students are “special”: all of our students are scholars. We have a system for recognizing distinguished academic performance, overseen by the Academic Standards committee. Thus, removing the term “scholar” “neutralizes” the Asian Studies designation. Barry agreed, noting that the terminology here is meant to parallel that of the designations “major” and “minor”—they are concentrations of courses. Sable noted that other programs may want to use this broad term.

### **application to other “studies”**

Anderson-Connolly wondered if other “studies” (e.g., African-American studies, women’s studies) should adopt this new designation. Hannaford responded that the designation could be attractive to programs currently offering minors: where minors might be seen as unstructured, unfocused, and/or introductory, the new designation could be viewed as more rigorous and challenging.

Should we then encourage programs to adopt this designation? (Anderson-Connolly) Barry replied that this was discussed with the humanities advisory board, who found the designation interesting. The new approach provides a different definition of interdisciplinary studies, building up a traditional field with interdisciplinary overlays (as opposed to creating a new synthesis). Barry believes each field needs to sort through its intellectual history to determine the course that would be most beneficial.

Kline noted that the new approach would not suit women’s studies; given their current resources, the faculty there believe that a minor is fine for them.

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<sup>1</sup> This should be a bumper sticker.

**“interdisciplinary”: the word/the concept/the relationship to a major**

Rousslang opined that the word “interdisciplinary” is “tired, worn out, and not telling me much.” Hannaford offered “special”; Kontogeorgopolous, the “buzz word” “multidisciplinary.”<sup>2</sup>

Barry stressed that we are considering a set of 5 to 9 courses that are outside ancillary classes—they are a true emphasis.

Tomashiro noted that departments are not necessarily associated with a particular major. For example, we assume that physics is part of a chemistry major. We are now moving beyond the traditional view of a department; programs, likewise, are moving beyond their traditional borders.

Kline offered that there could be a course that explicitly considers the interdisciplinarity of a program.

Then, to our horror, Anderson-Connolly called forth the specter that continues to haunt our discussions:

**The Math Major with an Overlay of Asian Studies.**

Could such a being exist?

Kontogeorgopolous noted that CSOC and P&G were more commonly expected majors, but supposed that a math major could benefit by stretching beyond her major to focus on Japanese culture or religion.

So then “interdisciplinary” doesn’t have implications about the major from which the student comes? (Anderson-Connolly) While “emphasis” makes sense when discussing a history major, does it make sense for our math major? (Lupher)

Sable proposed that the “emphasis” was within the context of a person’s general education, not necessarily his major. She then offered “concentration” and “designation” for our consideration.

Kontogeorgopolous reiterated that the emphasis is on studying Asia, and that the Asian Studies program is primarily designed for people majoring in history, sociology, and similar fields.

Does this then threaten the coherence of a person’s academic program? (Lupher) If there were a thesis, wouldn’t a math major have to incorporate math? (Derryberry)

Hannaford pointed to point 4: the mechanism here would involve a student’s interacting with faculty; together, the parties involved would define how the Asian Studies program would be a meaningful overlay for the student’s course of study.

Finally, Sable boldly ran away: she tabled discussion of this motion, admonished us to think about it, and moved us along to the consideration of the Asian Studies review.

***Asian Studies review***

Hale had given us the following:

Motion: Members of the Asian Studies subcommittee move to approve the Asian Studies Program review.

**Asian Studies Review  
(subcommittee members: Bill Barry, Cathy Hale, Chris Kline)**

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<sup>2</sup> Please join the secretary in hoping that her quotation mark key remains intact.

The Asian Studies (AS) faculty are proposing to change their current curricular structure from a major and a minor and to reorganize their curriculum to offer an enhancement or overlay for other academic fields . This would require a new curriculum category. To facilitate discussion of the proposed changes by the Asian Studies faculty, the AS subcommittee members have drafted requirements for this new curriculum structure and tentatively have labeled it, *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* (a suggestion from John Finney). A draft of the requirements is attached under the heading *Guidelines for the Program Designation Interdisciplinary Emphasis*.

In considering the Asian Studies review by the full Curriculum Committee, the subcommittee proposes first to consider the broader issue of guidelines for the new curriculum structure, followed by consideration of the proposed designation *Interdisciplinary Emphasis in Asian Studies*.

Summarized below are the rationale and requirements for the proposed *Interdisciplinary Emphasis in Asian Studies*.

**Rationale:**

The AS faculty believe that students with an interest in Asia would be better prepared for careers or graduate school if they take a concentration of courses in Asian Studies as a complement or overlay to traditional majors, such as history, economics, politics and government, or IPE. The faculty believe that the field of Asian Studies lacks a common methodology found in traditional disciplinary majors. Thus, a designation of *Interdisciplinary Emphasis in Asian Studies* for a curriculum that serves as an enhancement for majors and minors would be more 'intellectually honest.' The proposed reorganization of Asian Studies evolved through discussions by Asian Studies faculty about the current structure, feedback from Asian Studies students, considerations of faculty staffing, and recommendations from an outside consultant.

**Requirements for the Interdisciplinary Emphasis in Asian Studies Designation:**

Students must be in good academic standing and submit a letter of intent to the Director of the Asian Studies Program.

Completion of seven units plus study abroad (or internship) in Asia to include:

- 1) two units of Chinese or two units of Japanese  
or two units of another appropriate Asian language;
- 2) one semester or summer pre-approved study abroad or internship in Asia;
- 3) one unit Asian Studies 344 Asia in Motion;
- 4) four units of electives in the program curriculum (at least two units at the 300 or 400 level and at least two of the four units on campus in Tacoma).

NOTE: The Asian Studies faculty also proposed to recognize for Distinction those students who meet all of the following additional requirements:

- 1) earn a G.P.A. of 3.0 or above;
- 2) complete all coursework with grades of C or above;
- 3) successfully complete a senior thesis through Asian Studies 489, Asian Studies 370, or an approved research seminar course in a department participating in the program.

The members of the Asian Studies subcommittee suggest this part of the proposal be referred to the Academic Standards Committee, since it is their purview to determine the requirements for recognition of honor designations on transcripts and diplomas.

(end insert)

### honesty

Hale began the discussion by stating that the Asian Studies faculty's desired balance between social science and the humanities cannot be resolved simply by staffing. Kontogeorgopolous agreed, asserting that the question at hand was not how or if Asian Studies could staff a major (they could), but rather how the program should be restructured to become more "intellectually honest."

### minor?

Then, addressing the notion that a minor might be the appropriate designation for Asian Studies, Kontogeorgopolous stated that a minor acknowledges the sort of disciplinary methodology lacking in Asian Studies, for which an "overlay" or "enhancement" designation is more appropriate. He asserted that the proposed revision would meet all of the faculty's goals for the program, as well as better serving students. Hale added that the Asian Studies faculty characterize the revision as "cutting edge."

Barry noted that the program would effectively function as a minor for our beloved math major. The program, as conceptualized, would provide a designation that complements a major (a "certification of an experience").

Hale reminded us about the study abroad requirement, which is very different from taking a course as part of a minor. Current minors don't require this type of commitment.

### rationale

Kline noted that interested students might be looking forward to a graduate program; for example, a math major might be considering a graduate program in education, and may see the Asian Studies content as a valuable addition to his course of study.

### "logistics"

Hannaford wondered how this change might affect staffing or budget. Would the program risk losing tenure-line slots, for example? Would they be risking their corporate visibility? (Lupher.) Barnett replied that the program was upgrading. The AS faculty is striving to be a part of as many students' intellectual experiences as possible. In 1979, they set a goal of reaching 50% of students. They're not there yet, but at their current level of 38.4%, they are a presence in the wider intellectual experience of many students. They now want to offer a "new kind of intellectual choice" at a time when the university has moved to a smaller core. They believe their students will benefit from undertaking something that no one *has* to do. Barnett acknowledges that this implies a bit of a risk for the faculty, but notes that they can assess their progress and effectiveness as the program proceeds. (It could not go into effect until 2005 at the earliest.)

### coherence

Sable asked if there were a required contract. Barnett said no—it was a more informal letter of intent.

Sable worried that there might end up being 4 units of "scattered" electives, since there was no explicit requirement to meet. Barnett assured her that the apparent lack of structure would be mitigated by effective advising. McCullough noted that the proposed restructuring creates coherence. Currently, there is no reason for students' international experiences to be coherent. The new guidelines would encourage students to develop coherence within their courses of study. Kontogeorgopolous posited that students would take electives in one or two disciplines. Kukreja said that it was incongruous to suggest intellectual autonomy without giving students the opportunity to exercise it. The proposed structure would allow students to make their own decisions.

On that note, having just begun our exploration of the issues, **the committee adjourned at 8:55 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda S. Livingston

