

**Curriculum Committee Minutes  
November 10, 2003**

**Members Present:** Richard Anderson-Connolly, Bill Barry, DeWayne Derryberry, Christine Kline, Lynda Livingston, David Lupher, Ken Rousslang, Karin Sable (Chair), Joyce Tamashiro, Brad Tomhave, Carrie Washburn, Lisa Wood

**Visitors Present:** none

Karin Sable called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

**approval of minutes:**

Ummm, they weren't ready. But they will be soon!

**announcements:**

Washburn announced that the Senate, in its infinite wisdom, approved next year's academic calendar and the alternate calendar for 2007-8. They also did not send the Veteran's Day question back to us (for which we were grateful).

**Asian Studies subcommittee report:**

And so it continues. (Comments presented chronologically—the secretary threw up her hands after futile attempts at organization.)

***program designation: interdisciplinary emphasis***

Kline reported that we may still play with the "interdisciplinary emphasis" label, should someone come up with a better term. She reminded us of Barnett's eloquent characterization of the program: "a multidisciplinary program with interdisciplinary effect." When examining the connection of the program to a major, we should consider this intent.

Anderson-Connolly asked again if the Asian Studies program could really "complement" a math major.

Barry replied that "interdisciplinary" refers to the Asian Studies entity, not to any connection with a major. There is an expectation that it will complement a major, but there is no presumption that it will complement all majors equally. Having just the term "emphasis" would be worse—it would sound as if a biology major, for example, were focusing on Asian Studies within her major. Tempering "emphasis" with "interdisciplinary" serves to distance Asian Studies from the major.

Sable again suggested substituting "concentration" for "emphasis." An "emphasis" emphasizes—it affects something—whereas a "concentration" can stand alone.

Wood suggested that it might not really matter what we call this designation; someone reading one of our student's transcripts should have the opportunity to ask the student what he studied. Lupher politely begged to differ, stressing that if the language on a transcript weren't sufficiently descriptive, someone sorting through piles of resumes might simply assign one he didn't understand to the circular file.

Tomhave noted that the "emphasis" is a common registrar word, while "concentration" is not. One assumes that an "emphasis" has something to do with another discipline. "Concentration" might be similarly interpreted.

Kline suggested that we could wait until later to make a final word choice, since the wording for the bulletin isn't made final until March. Washburn noted that admissions materials will refer to the "Asian Studies program"; what we're discussing is for internal, faculty-level consumption.

Barry acknowledged that “interdisciplinary” is a bit confusing. However, it does serve to extract the emphasis from the major. Asian Studies is not an emphasis within biology, for example; it is rather an “emphasis in the interdisciplinary field of Asian Studies.”

Wood asked why we don’t just refer to it as the “Asian Studies program” on the transcript. Barry worried that a student might then be viewed merely as a participant. Similarly, he reported that the word “certificate” had been bandied about; Wood said that sounded like a preprofessional training designation.

Washburn stated that a student’s transcript would not say “x major with an Asian Studies...” There would not be an explicit link to a major.

Tomhave told us that our transcripts currently have a line for major, with a line beneath for minor. There is no room to the side. Where would this new designation go? Below the major? (That might imply a link to the major.) Below the minor?

Barry suggested we charge a subcommittee with the consideration of these weighty issues. Or perhaps we could just ask Tomhave, Barry, and Finney to hash it out. Sable chose the latter. The triumvirate has been so charged.

Anderson-Connolly admonished us to consider carefully point #4 in the proposed program designation guidelines (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), recalling again

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

Kline proposed that such a person would be rare. Sable suggested that would could finesse this by changing the phrase “major or minor” to “educational goals.”

Rousslang mused that the current language implied to him the inverse of the normal situation: it sounds like a student has “Asian Studies with an emphasis in his major” instead of “an emphasis in Asian Studies with a major in x.”

Sable asked if she might offer a friendly amendment, replacing the word “emphasis” with “concentration.” Tomhave said it wouldn’t help—either term would be obscure.

Finished musing, Rousslang wondered how the current proposal related to the code’s requirement that discontinuation of schools or programs go to the Senate. Barry noted that additions of programs must have the Academic VP’s approval, since such additions implied resource allocations. Washburn asserted that we were not discontinuing a program, just ending a minor. Kline asserted that this was the transformation of a program, whose faculty has stayed the same.

Having uttered the word “minor,” we began again to consider simply using that designation for Asian Studies. Kline reiterated that the proposed Asian Studies program implies a major investment of time and goes beyond the introductory level of courses that might constitute a minor. This program has “heft.” For example, this program incorporates two units of language—how’s that for heft? A program like this requires significant commitment, and offers a “rich range” of academic experiences.

Wouldn’t a math minor have depth? (Wood)

Barry said that the Asian Studies faculty would withdraw their proposal if they had to accept the designation of “minor.” They view that as an insufficiently “heft”-y word to embody their conceptualization of their program. In addition, there is a conceptual difference here: Asian Studies is a program whose intent is to complement disciplinary study; it is not something separate, as a minor may be.

Sable noted that we are considering the basic guidelines of the designation “interdisciplinary emphasis.” These guidelines might have implications for other “studies” (environmental, women’s, etc.). They might also help use distinguish the university as a whole.

Tomashiro wondered if adoption of this designation by other programs would imply increased rigor for those programs. Sable: yes. Tomashiro followed up: can we really assume more rigor with the current “5 to 9” course guideline? (See point #5.) Shouldn’t we eliminate the overlap with the definition of a minor, perhaps by changing the guideline for the emphasis to “7 to 9” units?

(Let the record show that Sable abandoned us at this point, temporarily passing the coveted mantle of power to Kline.)

Lupher cautioned that we must have coherent guidelines; we must be careful.

Derryberry wondered how many more courses the new designation would add to the old Asian Studies major. How much double-counting would there be? Barry said that adding an Asian Studies emphasis to, say, a history major might add four more courses.

Wood wondered what would be the big-picture effect of creating this new category.

Similarly, Derryberry wondered if a program could offer both this interdisciplinary emphasis and a minor. Barry replied that it would be possible for a program to offer a major, a minor, and an emphasis. Kline, however, could not imagine offering both a minor and an emphasis. Asian Studies would not, since part of the impetus for redesigning the program and creating the emphasis was to become more “programmatically honest.” Students wishing to go to graduate school in Asian Studies would be better served with the new “overlay” than they could be with a minor. In Asian Studies, there is no common methodology, no single answer to the question, “What constitutes this field of inquiry?”

Anderson-Connolly observed that traditional fields have majors and minors. Perhaps nontraditional fields should have a separate category (like emphases). He wondered, however, if such a categorization could cause problems for other “studies.”

Barry appealed to evolution. Disciplines evolve; what was once nontraditional could become traditional (witness the relatively newly traditional “classical studies,” now recognized enough to be palatable to grad schools). The “studies” could be asked to choose whether to offer a minor or an emphasis.

Wood, on becoming traditional, noted that there are now Ph.D.s in women’s studies; there are none in Asian Studies. Wood, on asking “studies” to choose either/or, said that there may be other factors to consider later; for now, there should be sufficient guidelines in the current proposal to require a “study” to make a case. Kline concurred.

Anderson-Connolly reminded us of Tomashiro’s suggestion to change guideline #5. Wood, asserting without proof that seven units is significantly more than five, suggested that an emphasis require seven to nine units.

**Tomashiro M/S/P changing “Guidelines for the Program Designation Interdisciplinary Emphasis” point #5 to require “seven to nine” courses.**

Tomhave, refusing to let our mythical math major rest, thought that perhaps the intent of the program—what we wanted the Asian Studies courses to contribute to his education—could drive the language that we used for the designation. Anderson-Connolly proposed that guidelines #1 and #4 be rewritten, so that they would not appear to exclude math majors. Derryberry, taking one for the team, agreed.

But Barry, Livingston, and Kline did not. Barry, most dramatically and emphatically speaking for this cohort, asserted that Asian Studies need not “complement” (as in, “fill out, complete”) a major. Wood agreed: isn’t a liberal arts education all about reaching beyond a narrow discipline? Can’t students benefit from “counterpoints” as well as “complements”?

Kline asserted that the letter of intent (see guideline #4) will require each student to make the relevant connections for himself. Wood suggested that #4's "[n]ormally" be changed to "[i]n most cases." Barry argued that #4 is not about the students anyway—it's about the program.

Wood and Lupher then pointed to #1's and #2's "extends beyond" language. Doesn't this imply a connection? Lupher noted that if his arm extends beyond ..., it's still attached!

Kline said that for Asian Studies, it's geography that determines multidisciplinary.

Barry said no one's going to a good grad school with an Asian Studies major. Wood replied that whatever we do must be broad enough for both students intending to go to grad school and those who are not. Barry didn't see the problem, however, wondering what was limiting in the proposed language: "It should be broadly conceived enough so that it's open to everyone."

Tom have agreed with Lupher. "We can't have a minor masquerading as a program."

Gosh, this was getting contentious.<sup>1</sup> Luckily for us, it was time to go. **The committee adjourned at 8:55 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda S. Livingston

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<sup>1</sup> not really