

Curriculum Committee Minutes December 11, 1996

Members present: K. Bartanen, H. Bruce, R. Fields, T. Fikes, K. Hooper, C. Kline, D. Luper, C. Mehlhoff, G. Tomlin, M. Valentine, C. Washburn.

Minutes of the 27 Nov. 1996 meeting were approved.

Minutes of the 20 Nov. 1996 meeting were approved.

Announcements: Reminder that meetings of the Curr. Comm. next semester will be at 1 pm on Fridays. The first meeting will be during the first week of classes.

Subcommittee Reports:

Asian Studies Program: K. Hooper reports that the Asian Studies Curriculum Review is in large measure quite commendable. There is one issue that remains to discuss, but since C. Ives is in Viet Nam and S. Barnett is on leave, it seemed prudent to wait until next term to pursue the issue.

Interdisciplinary Major: R. Fields and his subcommittee compared the Veseth-plan with the old guidelines for an Interdisc. Major, dropped from UPS in 1981. He passed out quite a few pages of minutes/notes/etc., which have been appended below; discussion revolved around these handouts. The subcommittee is willing to work with Veseth over the winter break to discuss ideas for a new major and will come back to the Curr.Comm in the spring with a specific proposal.

Interdisciplinary subcommittee Dec. 4

There was a lively discussion of the differences between the UPS IIM and the Veseth proposed plan which reflects, presumably, the tenor of the IIM at other similar institutions.

The committee addressed the objections raised in '81 and after much discussion of the merits of each, concluded that the problems with the old IIM were valid concerns, particularly within the sciences whose linear sequences of course work depend heavily on accumulation of more and more sophisticated studies. The objections were less formidable in the humanities and social sciences.

With No. 2, the committee preferred the Veseth approach to Requirements and Applications (3 and 4 on the comp. list), and offered even more stringent safeguards to assure advisory faculty involvement, by suggesting that each write a substantial supporting letter, assuring focus, guidance and discipline.

No. 3 struck the committee as objectionable but avoidable. The general feeling was that the IIM should be aimed at preparation for graduate study, and that guidelines and criteria could be defined to assure this.

Objection No. 4 might not be a problem if there was expectation that only our top students be permitted to pursue the IIM and that Requirements, Applications and Faculty sponsorship be more clearly defined.

Objection No. 5 gave us some trouble. In many cases, the major/minor option would likely provide an adequate cross-disciplinary track, but it was also argued that there are newly developed areas of scholarly investigation which will not be so easily satisfied by the major/minor. It was also argued that an envisioned IIM would be infinitely superior to the double major which many students pursue as an avenue to graduate school.

Conclusion:

In theory, the committee sees merit in an available IIM for our top students, and they agree that the problems with the program as it existed formerly, can and must be avoided. The committee expects to meet with Professor Veseth before the Spring term begins to see what we may draft as guidelines for a newly formulated IIM, if the Curriculum Committee wishes to endorse the study.

Interdisciplinary subcommittee

12-9-96

Committee members,

The following is an attempt to outline the salient points presented to the 1981 Curriculum Committee as arguments for terminating the Interdisciplinary major (Active '74 to '81)

1. The program undermines the liberal arts objectives of the university. Students who have elected this option have been "sharply focused" and their program of study has **lacked the scope typical of a liberal education**. Programs often **avoid methodological courses** and students **do not develop the broad understanding or mastery** expected in usual, academic majors.

In practice, the selection of courses does not include sufficient work to develop proficiency in the methodologies of the disciplines involved.

2. The **burden of coherently defining a major is placed on the student**, who, typically, is ill-equipped in background or experience to do so. Compared to the coherence of typical academic majors grounded on the experiences of professionals, and expectation of an equally sound program which crosses disciplines, designed by a student, is unrealistic.

3. The individualized interdisciplinary **major has often been focused on a specific vocational purpose** rather than on a broad educational purpose.

4. The capstone element, the thesis, has been of questionable academic worth.

Faculty advisors have not brought sufficient academic rigor to the Individualized Interdisciplinary Major. Tenuous connection to advisor plus a disinclination to demand high quality work, coupled with the students' talent for eroding discipline produces so-so work.

5. **A completion of a second major or minor would suffice to provide students with adequate interdisciplinary experiences.**

NOTE: I have altered the working paper of the subcommittee's meeting, Dec. 4, 1996. I have rearranged Dean Bauer's 7 objections and collapsed them to 5, highlighting critical phrases for quick reading.

A COMPARISON CHART OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJOR
Abbreviated below as IIM

VESETH'S PROPOSAL

1. DESCRIPTION:

Students, in consultation with appropriate faculty members, may develop their own major to meet their particular educational needs. The individually-developed majors combine courses from various departments and independent study projects into a cohesive curriculum of study.

UPS GUIDELINES: Dropped in 1981 (in italics)

1. DESCRIPTION:

[Students] may design an interdisciplinary program consisting of courses drawn from two or more disciplines. These courses may not represent a random collection, but must be related carefully to one another to a rationale which gives coherence to the entire program.

2. SUPERVISION:

The IIM is supervised by a principal advisor from a relevant department with an IIS committee of at least two other faculty. (All three supervise implementation and certify completion).

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Supervision rests with the academic advisors, the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee and the Associate Dean of the University. (Each program, subsequent modification and completion is approved by all three agencies).

3. REQUIREMENTS:

a. Class Standing.

Twelve hours completed at UPS before applying.

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b. Deadline for application:

IIM proposed and approved by end of first term, junior year.

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No later than first term, junior year.

c. Required grade point:

Applicants must be in upper half of their class.

c. Required grade point:

No stipulation.

d. Required preparatory course work:

Must have completed 4 units of relevant course work.

d. Required preparatory course work:

No stipulation.

e. Min. number of required courses in IIM:

No stipulation.

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Minimum of 12 courses, 8 of these at the 300/400 level, with at least 2 in the same department.

f. Min. grade average:

No stipulation.

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Minimum gpa of 2. D grades acceptable with approval of the academic advisors and the Assoc. Dean, and only after completion of 7 courses in the major with grades of C or better.

4. APPLICATION:

a. Students identifies faculty advisor.

b. Students and fac. adv. prepares statement to include:

*educational objective

*how courses meet educ. obj.

*list courses

*demonstrates that existing programs do not meet these objectives.

c. Statement, plan, letters of support/agreement from advisor/supervisory comm., and transcript submitted to

Curriculum Committee.

d. Curriculum Committee takes prompt action. Informs all parties.

4. APPLICATION:

Student and fac. adv. prepares statement of rationale, listing courses already completed.

Four copies of application (signed by advisor/supervisory comm.) and transcript submitted to Assoc. Dean's Office for approval by Interdisciplinary Studies Committee.

CC subcommittee informs all parties of decision.

5. SENIOR THESIS OR PROJECT

Should be required.

a. Oral defense of thesis

No stipulation.

5. SENIOR THESIS OR PROJECT

End of second month, senior year, proposal submitted to Assoc. Dean and IIM committee for approval. [Note: there are a number of other "conditions" here.]

a. Oral defense of thesis

Required, and will constitute serve as the final examination in the major.

6. CHANGES IN THE IIM MAJOR

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Changes must be approved by all advisors and IIM committee. It is the student's responsibility to formally request approval of changes in the major.

Limburg-Program: D. Lupher and the subcommittee agreed the study abroad program was acceptable, even though there were certain problematical issues raised in the subcommittee and discussed at length, as can be seen by referring to the appended subcomm.-minutes:

Report of Subcommittee on Proposed Exchange Program with the University of Limburg

The School of Business and Public Administration has requested the Curriculum Committee's approval of an exchange program with the International Business Studies Program at the University of Limburg in Maastricht, Netherlands. For UPS undergraduates majoring in BPA with an emphasis in international business, establishment of this exchange program would provide the "international experience" which is a requirement for completion of that degree.

The subcommittee established to consider this proposal met at 1:00, Friday, Dec. 6. The members were David Lupher, Chair, Kris Bartanen, Kent Hooper, and Mike Valentine. Some reservations were expressed over the fact that most or all of the classes which our students would be taking at Maastricht would be taught in English. The Foreign Language Department has a long-standing and perfectly plausible disinclination to endorse study abroad programs which are located on "English islands" within otherwise non-Anglophone universities. It appears, however, that most classes in the Economics and Business Administration Program at the University of Limburg are normally taught in English, even when the clientele is predominantly European. Also, it was felt that a truly valuable "international experience" is bound to be had in such a key spot in the European Economic Community. Accordingly, the subcommittee approves recommendation of this proposed exchange program.

The subcommittee would, however, like to suggest that participating students be strongly urged to study a relevant language before going to Maastricht, and that they be encouraged to extend their language study while there.

Respectfully submitted,
David A. Luper, Chair

These detailed minutes are submitted somewhat cavalierly by
Kent Hooper, who is under no illusion that people read these sorts of documents very closely —
nor should they.