November 1, 2006

TO: Academic Programs Subcommitee
    Undergraduate Council

FROM: Sylvia Modias, Director
       University College

   Lynne Trondal, Assistant Vice President for Student Retention
       Office of Enrollment Management

   Patti Ota, Vice President
       Office of Enrollment Management

RE: Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) Program Modification

Introduction
The Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) major is an alternative to a traditional major/minor program, allowing a student to design a program that reflects unique educational interests and career goals. There are 60 majors officially declared at any given time and an average of 100 who have ever expressed interest or are, in fact, working on the major but have not declared. The University awarded the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies to 65 students during 2005-2006.

Two curriculum formats are available: discipline-focused and topic-focused. The focus is on the disciplines in the traditional version; the focus is on the topic in the International Studies and Science and Technology versions. Dr. Wayne Decker is the director for the International Studies major. The Science and Technology does not currently have an assigned faculty but has not been selected by students for the past six semesters. Under the discipline-focused format, students choose three academic fields from which they select coursework targeted to their individual area of interest. Coursework is selected in consultation with departmental advisors from each department represented. Under the topic-focused format, coursework is selected from a pre-approved selection of courses developed by a multidisciplinary faculty committee composed of specialists in the topic area. The proposed program change includes addition to the existing text about course selection.

"Courses within each subject area must be selected in consultation with and approved by the department's major advisor." Finally, the departmental advisor's signature in each study area is required on the IDS proposal form prior to final approval by University College.

Problem
The primary requirement of the major is that two of the three subject areas must be from departments within the Colleges of Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. This was established when the major was assigned to the former College of Arts and Sciences which included Fine Arts, Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Science. Since then each of these have become independent colleges; the central advising structure that supported them - the Office of Academic Services - has been dissolved; and University College has been designated the academic home for the major providing advising planning for the students and the administrative infrastructure.

This particular requirement is overly restrictive. Students are increasingly interested in identifying the ways their major will assist them to become more effectively and functionally educated to deal with the 21st Century. For IDS majors the opportunity to select their three subject areas on a topic across or within undergraduate colleges is very appealing. However, students cannot currently be accommodated if they want more than one subject area outside the three colleges. This includes students in good academic standing who have been
pursuing a different major but determine that it is not the major they want to pursue, or find they are excluded from their major of choice due to requirements for admission to advanced standing and/or admission to the professional phase of the program. Examples include, over 700 PreNursing students competing for 108 seats annually in the professional nursing program; over 400 PrePharmacy students competing for 75 seats annually in the Pharmacy program, an average of 100 students each semester.

Proposed program changes:
1. Delete IDS major requirement that two of the three subject areas must be from departments within the Colleges of Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

2. Update course selection and advising process to include the following text:
   Courses within each subject area must be selected in consultation with and approved by the departments' major advisors.

Proposed new catalog text would read:
The Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IDS):
The IDS major is an alternative to a traditional major/minor program, allowing a student to design a program that reflects unique educational interests and career goals. The student selects these subject areas, each with 21 units that relate to a common theme. Two of the three subject areas must be from departments within the Colleges of Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Courses within each subject area must be selected in consultation with and approved by the departments' major advisor. During the sophomore or junior year, students submit proposals to University College outlining their intended course of study. In addition to the general IDS option, there are two structured concentrations available ...

(see attachment for full text of description of major)

Reasons for changes:
1. The foundation for the "two of these subject areas..." requirement is no longer viable as the college structure that supported it - College of Arts and Sciences - no longer exists.

2. There is an increasing number of students in good academic standing excluded from majors due to selection criteria. The IDS major offers an excellent option and increases the likelihood of retention and graduation from the UA. Letters of agreement from key colleges are included with this proposal.

3. Expanding the colleges a student can select also brings the discipline-focused IDS into alignment with the International and Science and Technology IDS where the approved course list is comprised of courses from colleges across the university.

Benefits to be derived:
1. Increase student access to the IDS major by deleting the requirement that two of the three subject areas must be from departments within the Colleges of Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

2. Strengthen student connection to advising by requiring that courses within each subject area be selected in consultation with and approved by the departments' major advisor.

Implications of the change for students, faculty, resources, and other academic programs:
1. Students: increased availability of the IDS major due to increased flexibility of colleges from which to select study areas, increased early connection to major advisors

2. Resources: no additional funding/staffing requested. There is some implication for seat availability in key impacted courses – e.g., ECON, COMM, PSIC. University College IDS advisors will continue to work with students to identify strategies to complete required courses.
Current IDS catalog entry
The Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IDS):

The IDS major is an alternative to a traditional major/minor program, allowing a student to design a program that reflects unique educational interests and career goals. The student selects three subject areas, each with 21 units, that relate to a common theme. Two of the three subject areas must be from departments within the Colleges of Humanities, Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Courses within each subject area must be approved by the department's major advisor. During the sophomore or junior year, students submit proposals to University College outlining their intended course of study. In addition to the general IDS option, there are two structured concentrations available:

Concentration in International Studies: The structured IDS Concentration in International Studies follows IDS requirements for work in three areas: students take at least 21 units each in international systems, language/regional studies and a functional track. Options for the functional expertise or track are Applied Political Economy, Science and Technology, and Development and Culture. Approval of a student's program of study rests with the Director of International Studies and Scholarships, and with the track advisors. To support this global, interdisciplinary educational plan, sixth semester proficiency is required in a foreign language. All IDS International Studies majors also undertake an international immersion experience (normally study abroad) and write a Senior Capstone Thesis under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

Concentration in Culture, Science, Technology & Society (CSTS): The concentration in CSTS provides students with a coherent and challenging major focusing on the interaction between science/technology and culture/society. The major is composed of three subject areas of 21 units each. Students take the core courses in CSTS as Subject Area 1. The other two subject areas are chosen from Anthropology, Economics, History, International Studies, Sociology, one of the natural sciences, or one of the College of Engineering disciplines. All students complete a Senior Capstone Thesis under the guidance of a faculty advisor.