

MINUTES

Meeting Date: January 30, 2012
Time: 12:00-1:30pm
Place: BUSN 321

Voting Members and Alternates in Attendance: Chair Hedley Freake, Laura Burton, Eric Donkor, Larry Gramling, Richard Rockwell, Jennifer Telford, Edith Barrett, Michael Bradford, Olga Vinogradova, Tom Meyer.

Ex Officio Members and Alternates in Attendance:., Margaret Lamb, Lynne Goodstein, Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Dan Doerr, Maria Martinez, David Ouimette, Kim Chambers.

Also in attendance: Monica van Beusekom.

Meeting called to order at 12:04pm.

1. Welcome.

2. Minutes of the December 7, 2011 meeting

Dr. Jennifer Telford moved that the minutes of the December 7, 2011 meeting be approved as submitted. Dr. Eric Donkor seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

3. Announcements

Chair Hedley Freake noted that the UNIV/INTD procedural document the UICC submitted to the Senate Executive Committee was approved by the Senate Curricula and Courses and Senate Scholastic Standards committees; Senate Scholastic Standards will prepare a motion that would include a Senate By-Laws change and a request that the Provost approve the UNIV designation; this motion is expected to come before the Senate at the February 27, 2012 meeting.

4. Program reports

4.1. Individualized Major Program, Report

The IMJR Program is the umbrella for two plans of study, one through CLAS and the other through CANR. In the mid-2000s, there were also plans in Family Studies and Allied Health.

The IMJR Program is broad in scope and reach; in AY 10, 155 IMJRs worked with 199 faculty advisors across 38 departments in 7 schools and colleges. Seven schools and colleges contribute courses to IMJR plans of study; there are also two current INTD courses, one a thesis course (4697W) and another, a capstone course (4600W), which contribute to the plans of study. These courses best fit the UNIV designation as defined in the procedural document.

The key approvals processes for an IMJR plan of study include the IMJR committee which is comprised of seven faculty members with a currently vacant 8th position. These faculty are primarily from CLAS to reflect that students in the IMJR program are predominantly drawn from CLAS. The committee also includes non-faculty members, but, decisions are made by

faculty majority consent. The IMJR committee is also the first body to review proposals that relate to the IMJR scheme.

The IMJR Program is the primary unit within the Individualized and Interdisciplinary Studies Program. The IISP is primarily an advising unit and works with students in the process of developing IMJRs. Much of this work is centered around trying to get students clear enough about what they want to do within an IMJR before they go out to speak to faculty. Three faculty advisors from areas included in the IMJR are needed in order to submit an application for admission to the program.

Besides the three faculty advisors, the following steps are required to complete the application process: a statement of purpose and a proposed plan of study with a list of alternate courses as no guarantee for access to courses is provided. The feasibility of student plans are closely examined at the point of application and any substitution of courses would have to be approved by the student's faculty advisors. Application packets are then circulated to the IMJR committee for feedback, and then students are interviewed by a subset of the committee, with at least 2 faculty members present. Final decisions are made by the Admissions panel.

Students must apply to the program after their first 30 credits are completed; they must also apply prior to taking their last 30 credits. Most students admitted to the program are juniors at admission, though there are some sophomores and, periodically, a few freshmen if they have the credit standing.

The IISP, then, does the following to support the IMJR Program:

- Pre-IMJR advising: professional advisors support students on procedural matters; discipline-specific information is obtained from faculty advisors
- Coordination of capstone courses: the INTD 4600W course is taught by Dr. Ken Fuchsman, an extension professor with Continuing Studies
- Monitoring timely degree progress
- Monitoring thesis proposals and submission
- Capstone courses: Monitoring timely registration for appropriate courses

Throughout a student's time in the program, faculty advisors play a crucial part.

Existing courses associated with the IMJR Program:

- INTD 4600W Capstone. This course has been taught since Fall 2004.
- INTD 4697W Thesis. This course has also been offered since Fall 2004 and is the thesis capstone for IMJR students. Theses are exclusively supervised by faculty.

Students with double majors are not required to take the capstone. While it is desired that all students take one of the two INTD capstone courses, the IISP needed to remain mindful of resources and constraints; because of this, the IISP wanted to build in the practical possibility for an alternative capstone. In most cases, though, double major IMJRs do one IMJR plan and one traditional major and have begun integrating the two majors so a capstone in the second major is likely to do quite well as the IMJR capstone. Double major arrangements and alternative capstone courses are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Hedley Freake asked if there was any push to expand the program to more than the two schools which currently offer an IMJR option. Dr. Margaret Lamb noted that her predecessor approached other schools in the hope of creating an IMJR option in each. However, for a range of reasons, including professional accreditation, several schools, including Engineering, Fine

Arts, and Business, declined to entertain the option. This would also be true in Pharmacy, Education, and Nursing.

Dr. Michael Bradford asked if all courses in student plans are coming from the two schools which offer an IMJR. Dr. Margaret Lamb responded that IMJRs are made up of 36 undifferentiated credits, though each plan is required to have a core (18 credits) of courses in the college granting the degree. If a student has access to courses in other schools, he/she can include these in their IMJR plan of study.

The IMJR capstone course (4600W) has generally been resourced by the Provost's Office through arrangements and negotiations with the Vice Provost for undergraduate education. Several years ago, then-Vice Provost Veronica Makowsky, looking for ways to better integrate Continuing Studies with other parts of the university, negotiated a 1-year rolling contract to have Dr. Ken Fuchsman teach the IMJR 4600W course.

Dr. Edith Barrett moved to approve the IMJR Program report and the transition of existing INTD courses associated with the program to UNIV when the designation becomes available. Dr. Michael Bradford seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

4.2. UNIV-type INTD 2600 Individualized Study Across Academic Disciplines

The proposal is coming to the UICC for comment. Because it is related to existing plans within CLAS and CANR, it will go to the C&CCs of those schools for their comments before it returns to the UICC for approval. [INTD 2600 has NOT been proposed for inclusion in the CLAS or CANR individualized major plans. It is possible that such a proposal would be made at some point in the future after INTD 2600 has been taught for an appropriate period of time.]

Dr. Margaret Lamb introduced the course proposal.

The new course was developed as an online course by Dr. Monica van Beusekom (IISP Assistant Director) and Ms. LuAnn Saunders-Kanabay (IMJR Advisor) in close collaboration with representatives from Instructional Design and Development and with feedback from Dr. Ken Fuchsman, the IMJR Capstone Instructor. It is planned as a letter-graded 1 credit course to be taught by Dr. van Beusekom and Ms. LuAnn Saunders-Kanabay, both of whom have experience teaching at the university level.

The course is meant to introduce students to ways of talking about the intersection of different disciplines. Although many students may talk about an overriding theme, they have difficulty seeing how a cluster of courses fit together because they have never had to talk about their studies at a conceptual level. It is intended that this course would be included in the current IMJR admissions process.

In the current pre-admission process, IMJR advisors and faculty work with many students on their statements of purpose and plans of study; but, there are also many students who never work with the advisors. In the current form, the course would be a more structured approach for students thinking about pursuing an IMJR. It is designed as an online course so that it can be easily added to a student's schedule, but it also includes points at which students are

brought together for discussion and presentations, within the extent of what is feasible with a particular cohort of students.

Several UICC members raised questions about the proposal. Dr. Edith Barrett noted some confusion about whether the course was meant to introduce students to interdisciplinary thinking, in which case 1 credit might not be enough to be truly meaningful; if this is the intention, she opined that a 3 credit course with additional assignments and reading would be more appropriate. Dr. Margaret Lamb responded that course credit was discussed early in the development process and the conclusions were much more pragmatic; if the course is meant to help structure advising, the scope of resources is limited to 1 credit. As a 1 credit course, it is intended to be a spark for discussion with faculty advisors and that much of the understanding about interdisciplinary would come from a student's work in other courses.

Dr. Richard Rockwell noted that the IMJR is not described as an interdisciplinary major, but as one that includes courses in at least 2 departments. He asked why the IMJR Program was focusing on interdisciplinarity. Dr. Margaret Lamb stated that students do not have experience talking about disciplines, let alone interdisciplinarity. Because the course is intended to introduce students to what those terms can mean, it gives those students, even those working in cognate departments, a better conception of disciplinary differences and strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplines.

Dr. Jennifer Telford asked whether letter-grading was necessary for this course. Dr. Margaret Lamb argued that, because students would be asked to do academic reading and academic work in the form of discussion posts and the statement of purpose essay, a letter-grade would be appropriate. Dr. Monica van Beusekom added that student analysis of an interdisciplinary case study would also be part of the course. This will deal with issues like what defines disciplines in terms of methodology as well as how some people who promote interdisciplinarity tackle those differences.

Dr. Richard Rockwell stated that the course included a lot of reading, but that students could benefit from UConn faculty who have on-the-ground experience working with these issues. He added that there are many on campus lectures that would serve as good opportunities for students to ask questions. Dr. Margaret Lamb responded that proposers have talked about podcasts of local faculty within the online course but that it would be feasible to, on a limited basis, include on campus faculty members in face-to-face class sessions in presentation/questions format. She added that the opportunity for more face-to-face discussion with question and answer time is a trade-off of an online format meant to allow students to not be constrained by the schedule, particularly those students taking the course at a regional campus.

Dr. Eric Donkor asked for clarification about to whom this course would be open. Dr. Margaret Lamb answered that the course would not be restricted to those in the program, but intended for those planning to apply. The course is general enough to benefit all students – even those who decide not to apply to the IMJR Program, she noted, but the statement of purpose end-product would be used in the application for those students applying to the IMJR Program.

Dr. Tom Meyer asked whether the course is meant to be a philosophical course about interdisciplinarity or one taking a more pragmatic approach. Dr. Margaret Lamb answered that the course discusses some of the philosophical questions and methods of research but in

an introductory way. The course is trying to get students to be able to ask questions of potential advisors and be able to dig deep into the philosophy of their discipline and/or methods.

Dr. Lynne Goodstein asked whether the reference to consultation with UConn faculty in relevant departments (question 4) meant that the assignment would ask that students seek out faculty to learn more about that discipline in order for the student to begin to focus their interests. Dr. Margaret Lamb noted that this is indeed the case, and provides more of a structure for choosing faculty advisors than is currently in place.

Chair Hedley Freake posed a procedural question. CLAS and CANR C&CCs will be commenting on this proposal because it concerns one of their degree programs. The course would then come to UICC for approval. What does the IMJR Program want the UICC to do with the proposal at this time? Dr. Margaret Lamb responded that she hoped for some endorsement of the course plan and, importantly, wished to gather UICC comments in advance of review by the relevant C&CCs. Should endorsement be given at this time by the UICC, Chair Hedley Freake noted that, if the course is modified during the CLAS and CANR C&CC review, the course would have to be returned to UICC for review.

Motion to approve the course pending responses and recommendations from CLAS and CANR curricula and courses committees.

Dr. Richard Rockwell noted that what is needed from CLAS and CANR is more than comment, and that the two schools would need to coordinate their response to the IMJR program. He added that one of the things that will give the CLAS C&CC pause is the letter-grading of a UNIV course in one of their degree programs. Dr. Edith Barrett noted that, if this course is meant to be glorified advising, it should not have a letter-grade; letter-grading would be appropriate if this course is seen to focus on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.

Dr. Laura Burton seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

4.3. Current INTD courses without departments

Chair Hedley Freake asked the UICC to look at the group of courses without departmental home as one group (INTD catalog section was circulated). Many of these courses are of the special topics variety with a mixture of language used to describe them. He asked the UICC to consider whether the UICC needed all of them or whether some should be eliminated in an attempt to simplify offerings and language.

Dr. Margaret Lamb noted that the special topics designations have tended to be used by courses that the UICC has approved as experimental.

Dr. Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith stated that when the Senate approved course renumbering, the Senate C&CC recommended that the university set up a numbering scheme at every course level. Some of these courses were set up based on that recommendation.

Dr. Jennifer Telford noted that one “Special Topics” course at each level would cover it all. Chair Hedley Freake added that perhaps one special topics course at the 1000-level and another at the 3000-level would likely suffice. This, however, would not solve the issue of

grading as grading format is a course-level decision. This means that two special topics courses would be needed at each of the 1000- and 3000-levels, allowing both letter-graded and Sat/Unsat graded versions. The UICC will need to think of a way to indicate the grading differences in the course title to simplify the catalog entries.

Dr. Richard Rockwell explained that in CLAS, there is a difference between variable topics and special topics, with special topics courses intended to be experimental offerings that may be offered up to a maximum of 3 times; variable topics courses, rather, are approved by CLAS C&CC and are offered at the discretion of the department and do not need CLAS approval for offering past 3 times and do not aim for a permanent listing in the catalog.

Dr. Margaret Lamb asked the UICC to consider if it would be the “department” that would oversee a variable topic series or would if it would be overseen by a program (within boundaries approved by the UICC). Hypothetically, IMJR might develop a variable topics seminar that regular faculty teach as part of the program.

Chair Hedley Freake reminded the UICC that it does not have the authority to generate courses so the UICC would not want variable topics.

Of the existing INTD courses without a departmental home, Chair Hedley Freake noted that INTD 3984 Interdisciplinary Experience is used exclusively by the Learning Communities to designate higher level work and as a service learning component. He asked whether the UICC could designate this course as a First Year Programs and Learning Community course. Mr. David Ouimette agreed to this arrangement.

Also, INTD 3991 and 1991 are internship courses that have come out of Student Affairs. These course will be assigned to that unit; the UICC will periodically ask them to report on their usage.

Because the UICC is outside the schools and colleges, Chair Hedley Freake noted that orphan courses would have to be designated as UNIV courses. Schools and colleges will have the opportunity to create INTDs version of courses should they wish to propose them.

Dr. Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith argued that there is a need for an INTD special topics option. Chair Hedley Freake noted that this would break the UICC’s own rules as the course would not have originated within a school or college. A solution could be to keep a INTD special topics shell for those course needing to use the INTD version of the designation.

Motion to adjourn at 1:30pm. Motion seconded.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
IISP Administrator

