

Report to Senate: Interdepartmental (INTD) Courses

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The INTD Designation

“The Interdepartmental designation is used for courses that are truly interdisciplinary or interdepartmental; courses under the sponsorship or scope of a single department are given the departmental designation (e.g., History 195).”

Senate “Guidelines for Submitting Course Proposals (Nov. 1995, updated 2002)”
(<http://www.senate.uconn.edu/GUIDE1.html> as retrieved on Jul 15, 2007)

Some interdisciplinary teaching initiatives of faculty falls entirely within the scope of their department’s courses; others are appropriate for cross-listing (e.g. when two departments agree that the particular course fits equally comfortably within both departments’ disciplinary course offerings). The interdepartmental (INTD) designation is another option for interdisciplinary teaching initiatives and may be adopted when at least two departments share “ownership” of a course. Seven of the current INTD courses with catalog listings can be classed as collaborations of this type.

The INTD course designation is currently home for courses associated with a wide range of programs designed for University of Connecticut undergraduates, whatever their major and school or college affiliation. Such significant undergraduate programs include the University of Connecticut Honors Program, First Year Experience, and Senior Year Experience. Some other programs have important constituent courses among INTD offerings: Study Abroad, Urban Semester, the Individualized Major Program, the Diversity minor, and Linkage through Language.

Oversight of INTD Courses

Responsibility for INTD courses rests with the Provost, who has delegated course oversight arrangements to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Dr. Makowsky has three goals for INTD courses:

- that INTD should represent a course category available for the promotion of interdisciplinary collaboration across schools and colleges;
- that faculty review of INTD course proposals should ensure that INTD courses achieve the quality expected of other courses across the University; and
- that a process of INTD course approval should be agreed across the University as the acceptable means to provide oversight for INTD courses.

Administration of INTD Courses

Since 2004 the Individualized & Interdisciplinary Studies Program (IISP) has administered INTD courses. IISP is part of Undergraduate Education & Instruction, overseen by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Administration of INTD courses by IISP involves working with a faculty committee to approve new courses, as well as the Office of the Registrar and INTD-teaching programs to ensure that course descriptions and relevant information are up-to-date. In 2005 a process of consultation and reform was initiated to enhance faculty review arrangements for INTD course proposals so that they would be more consistent with the Vice Provost’s goals for INTD courses.

Faculty Review of INTD Courses

An INTD C&CC was created in Fall 2006 as part of arrangements, initiated by the Vice Provost and developed in consultation with Senate, to provide better, appropriate oversight of interdepartmental courses and other university-wide courses taught under the designation “interdepartmental.” Faculty appointments to the Committee from each undergraduate school and college were made. In academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08, INTD C&CC functioned as the inaugural or transitional cross-college oversight committee for INTD course approvals. In January 2007, Senate Scholastic Standards Committee was asked by the Vice Provost to recommend a revised INTD course approval process. Such review took into account the work done by INTD C&CC and considered reservations expressed about the 2006/07 INTD course approval arrangements. In Fall 2007 Senate Scholastic Standards Committee proposed recommendations to the Provost.

In January 2008 Senate approved the recommendations for a revised undergraduate interdepartmental (INTD) course approval process, creation of a new University Interdisciplinary Courses Committee (UICC), and eventual

recategorization of some existing INTD courses as University (UNIV) courses. The proposed new designation, UNIV, would emphasize that some courses serve important functions in university-wide academic and academic-related programs. A new UICC would serve to clarify and advise faculty members and staff who propose interdisciplinary and/or program-based, non-departmental courses on the approvals required. The committee would carry out advisory vetting and provide oversight of INTD and UNIV courses. While the UICC would act as a “gatekeeper” for the INTD and UNIV designations, UICC would not accredit new courses; schools and colleges, as well as Senate for particular types of courses, are the course accrediting bodies.

INTD Activities (2007/08)

In recognition of the transition to new INTD course approval arrangement, a policy to keep INTD courses running in 2007-08 at “steady state” was implemented: only those new INTD course proposals already in the pipeline at the start of Fall 2007 semester were considered by the INTD C&CC; experimental courses previously reviewed and approved by the INTD C&CC were permitted to continue to be offered after administrative review. INTD C&CC did not meet in Spring 2008. In recognition of the transition period, consideration of new INTD proposals that would represent changes to the catalog were deferred until the time the new University Interdisciplinary Courses Committee would be ready to act as the reviewing body.

INTD C&CC met twice in Fall 2007. The Committee considered and approved three INTD course proposals. Two were INTD course proposals to introduce satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading options for experimental courses: INTD 194 (1998) *Variable Topics Seminar* and INTD 290 (3985) *Special Topics*. The new courses were required to implement decisions made in the previous year for several experimental INTD courses with satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading. These catalog changes were approved by Senate. The third proposal approved was an experimental INTD 290 section for a Stamford Interdisciplinary Internship course. INTD C&CC also approved the delisting of one INTD course.

In Fall 2007 INTD course renumbering was implemented and all existing INTD catalog descriptions were reviewed and agreed as up-to-date with course instructors, INTD C&CC, and the Registrar’s Office.

The INTD administrator worked with the Chairs of Senate Scholastic Standards Committee and Curricula & Courses Committee concerning the recommendations to the Provost for the formation of a University Interdisciplinary Courses Committee, the revised process of INTD course approval and oversight, and the conceptualization of a new course category: UNIV. In Summer 2008, the INTD administrator worked with the Provost’s Office to obtain nominations of faculty members from each undergraduate school and college to the University Interdisciplinary Courses Committee.

INTD Course Statistics (2007-08, with comparatives for 2006-07)

Of the 31 INTD courses approved for regular listing in the course catalog, 25 were taught in 2007-08 (06-07: 29 and 24 respectively). One INTD course was dropped from the INTD designation in Spring 2008.

Nine INTD courses were designated general education courses (as either Ws and/or content area courses). With the one course dropped from the INTD curriculum, there are currently a total of eight general education INTD courses.

PeopleSoft listings of INTD course sections (based on data supplied by OIR)

	2007-08		2006-07	
	Sections	Seats	Sections	Seats
First Year Experience Program (INTD 180, 182 – each 1 cr.)	249	4,113	266	4,308
Honors Program courses (INTD 170, 198, 291 – 3 cr., 1 cr., and 3 cr. respectively)	22	366	29	425
Linkage through Language course (INTD 222 – 1 cr.)	39	255	35	223
Senior Year Experience course [lecture sections] (INTD 283 – 1 cr.)	2	331	1*	176
Departmental- and Program-based courses with individual catalog listings	34	234	41	253
Other INTD courses (including experimental, special topics, independent study courses)	81	579	114	971
Total	427	5,878	486*	6,356*

Every one of UConn’s six campuses used at least two INTD courses to offer sections to its students.

2007-08 instructors of INTD course sections were 40% faculty (tenured, untenured, adjunct), 13% graduate students, and 47% other professionals (06-07 based on Spring and Fall data only: 30%, 10%, 60% respectively).