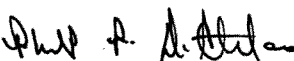


Protocol for Establishing an Inter-Disciplinary Certificate Program for Undergraduates

Approved by Provost, April 29, 2008 

General Overview Considerations

Certificate programs which are owned and administered by a single school or college are expected to follow the protocols established within each such school or college. Certificate programs that are designed to be available to students from multiple schools or colleges or that are focused on topics spanning multiple schools or colleges are expected to follow the protocol for establishment and operation as specified in this policy document of the Office of Undergraduate Education. Programs focused on graduate students should follow the protocols specified by the Graduate School. Programs with both undergraduate and graduate components will need to be approved by both the Graduate School and the Office of Undergraduate Education. Establishment of a formal Certificate program under this protocol assumes the program to be essentially academic in spirit and implementation to include, for example, a formal entry for completion on the student's academic transcript.

Establishing an Inter-Disciplinary Certificate Program for Undergraduates

Most cases of establishment begin with a faculty and/or administrator committee that identifies a need or opportunity which is evaluated by that committee. An endorsement of that committee and the endorsements of the most relevant units (departments, schools, colleges, etc.), should be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Education providing a narrative description of the purposes of the program, how the program fits within the campus but includes multiple schools or colleges, value of the program to students and the campus, the relationship of the program to other related certificates, minors or degrees, consistency with campus academic mission and plans, operational costs and plans to include physical space, equipment needed, staffing from both an academic and administrative perspective, and a formal schedule of assessment and re-evaluation after a reasonable period of operation (usually three years).

The proposing group should specify all requirements, identify the procedures for verification and notification to the Registrar's office, and list the individual person and office that will be directly responsible for operating the Certificate program. If an advisory or oversight group is planned, that should be described as to form and function, to include an appeals process by which students may ask for exceptions to whatever the certificate specifications include. The proposers should specify which students are eligible and which are ineligible, delineation of the specific requirements which must be met to earn the Certificate, precise language to be placed on the transcript (usually the name of the certificate program), date when the Certificate is to be officially awarded (usually at the time the baccalaureate degree is awarded), and any other relevant requirements, privileges or policies.

This narrative will be evaluated by the Office of Undergraduate Education, coordinating with appropriate faculty and administrative units. If modification of the proposal is requested, the Office of Undergraduate Education will work with the proposing group to arrive at a suitable resolution of whatever issues seem to be problematic. When all those issues are resolved, the Office of Undergraduate Education will sign an approval letter and so inform the Provost and the Office of the Registrar. The re-evaluation and assessment narrative of the program's successes and achievements should be sent to the Office of Undergraduate Education after the first period of implementation (usually 3 years) for approval of permanent status.