

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 10016S
Date of Senate Approval 05/05/16

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 86: Adding an Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Cluster in Food, Food Systems and Culture

Effective Date: Fall 2016

- Add:** On page 52, under the listing for **Optional Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Clusters**, before the section, **Declaration of Optional Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Cluster:**

Interdisciplinary Cluster in Food, Food Systems and Culture

Participating faculty and departments: Lanou (Coordinator) (Health and Wellness); Clarke (Biology); Mathews (Economics); Moorhead (Environmental Sciences); Peterson (Sociology and Anthropology); Wasileski (Chemistry); Wingert (Health and Wellness)

The Interdisciplinary Cluster in Food, Food Systems and Culture focuses on developing the student as an informed consumer of food by providing a platform for discussion of what we eat, why we eat, where our food comes from and its journey from production to consumption, and how food affects our bodies, health and lives.

The Food, Food Systems and Culture Cluster requires the completion of a minimum of 4 courses and 12 semester hours as follows. Courses used for the cluster must be completed at UNC Asheville.

At least one course must be chosen from the listing of Food-focused courses. Food-focused courses have food, food systems or food culture as a central theme and consistently offer students an intentionally interdisciplinary experience (e.g. cross-course project or other high impact pedagogical practice). The remaining three or more courses may be chosen from Food-focused or Food-related courses, following the distribution guidelines required of all interdisciplinary clusters. Other courses may be substituted with approval of the cluster coordinator.

Food-focused Courses

BIOL 110 Plants and Humans (3)
CHEM 109 The Food of Chemistry (4)
ECON 242 Economics of Food (3)
HWP 225 Nutrition and Lifestyle (3)
HWP 333 Food Politics and Nutrition Policy (3)

Food-related Courses

ENVR 358 Agriculture (4)
HWP 455 Pathophysiology of Chronic Conditions and Illnesses (3)
SOC 280 Sociology of Gender (4)

Impact Statement:

1. Impact on students: Students like those who were benefitting from the Food for Thought interdisciplinary topical cluster (9 hours) under ILS will be allowed to do so more fully with the this interdisciplinary cluster in Food, Food Systems and Culture (12 hours). Similarly, students who wish to engage in an intentionally interdisciplinary experience but who are not able to commit the number of hours required for an interdisciplinary minor (18 to 22) will be able to do so.
 - a. Across the semesters of participation in this cluster program, students will gain insight into the often hidden ways that food consumption impacts us on both the individual and collective levels. As human beings, our bodies and our societies are interlinked by numerous processes, many of which can be understood by investigating the dynamics of food in chemical, biological, cultural and social systems. Our primary goal for students is an enhanced, interdisciplinary understanding of the interplay of these systems and a more attuned sense of how food is a civic issue.
2. Impact on faculty: The faculty who have interest in continuing or starting to offer intentional interdisciplinary learning opportunities in food systems and food culture could elect to do so within a workable structure for both students and faculty. No significant impact on course offerings is anticipated. Courses slated for use in the Food, Food Systems and Culture cluster are already in existence (or have already been proposed) and are regularly offered (at least once every other year). It is expected that faculty teaching courses on the interdisciplinary course list for the cluster will need to meet at least once a semester for planning, program assessment and problem solving purposes. Faculty who have been teaching food-focused and food-related courses have already been meeting at least that often so this will have minimal impact on overall faculty workloads.
3. No changes in resources (cost or facilities) are anticipated. Requestors understand that GA approval is not needed in advance; however, the General Administration will need to be notified about this curricular addition when it has been approved on campus.

Rationale:

1. The Interdisciplinary Cluster in Food, Food Systems and Culture would offer intentional opportunities for students to learn multiple perspectives on a relevant and complex topic across at least 4 courses that address food and food related issues from a variety of disciplines. The faculty proposing this cluster have learned from our work over the last 8 years that this opportunity provides unique and valuable learning experiences for students. Both students' perceptions of their learning and measures of their actual learning demonstrate a statistically significant benefit of using interdisciplinary cross-class projects in the context of a grouping of courses addressing an interdisciplinary topic. (Wingert JR, Wasileski SA, Peterson K, Mathews LG, Lanou AJ, and Clarke D. The impact of integrated student experiences on learning. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (2014) 14:42 – 58. Wingert JR, Wasileski SA, Peterson K, Mathews LG, Lanou AJ, and Clarke D. Enhancing integrative experiences: Evidence of student perceptions of learning gains from cross-course interactions. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (2011) 11:34 – 57.)
2. Considerable additional faculty interest in participating in a food studies program (of some sort) has been identified by the former food cluster faculty. Eighteen faculty members responded to a survey of interest in teaching in food studies. At least 10 of those also participated in one of two focus group conversations and indicated interest in teaching food-related or food-focused courses as part of their departmental or programmatic teaching loads.
3. Students with a special interest in food studies and food systems (topics that are not effectively addressed by a single discipline) will be able to highlight this in their graduate school and job application materials.