

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 9916S
Date of Senate Approval 05/05/16

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 85:

Adding Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Clusters

Effective Date: Fall 2016

1. Add: On page 52, under the listing for **Optional Minor Fields of Concentration:**

Optional Interdisciplinary Clusters

In addition to the major field of study and optional minor fields of concentration, undergraduate degree-seeking students may also choose to complete one or more interdisciplinary clusters. Constituent courses in interdisciplinary cluster programs approach a topic or issue from multiple disciplinary perspectives and highlight connections between concurrent or consecutive courses comprising the cluster. Undergraduate clusters include an engaged experience such as a cornerstone course, a capstone course, or another high impact educational practice such as UNC Asheville faculty-led study abroad, cross-course projects, undergraduate research, or service learning. Interdisciplinary clusters will be recorded along with majors and minors on the student's permanent transcript.

Specific requirements for an interdisciplinary undergraduate cluster are as follows:

- A minimum of 4 courses from an approved set of courses
- A minimum of 12 semester hours
- Courses must represent at least two different disciplines (as determined by course prefix) from two different departments
- No more than eight of the required 12 semester hours that a student applies toward an interdisciplinary cluster may have the same course prefix
- No more than 8 hours from a declared major or minor may be applied toward an interdisciplinary cluster
- At least 3 of the 12 hours must be at the 300-400 level.
- All courses used for the cluster must be completed at UNC Asheville.
- HUM 124, 214, 324, 414, LA 178 and 478 may not be included in the list of courses for the cluster
- Students must have a minimum cumulative C (2.0) average on all courses used for the cluster

The following undergraduate interdisciplinary clusters are available:

TBA

Declaration of Optional Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Cluster

Students initiate the declaration process by contacting the appropriate cluster coordinator. Together, they complete an Interdisciplinary Cluster Declaration form that is then submitted to the Office of the Registrar in OneStop Student Services. Students are subject to the requirements in effect at the time they formally declare the interdisciplinary cluster. Students are responsible for knowing their cluster requirements and for completing them. In clusters with a designated capstone experience, the declaration must occur before enrolling in the capstone course. In all instances, clusters must be officially declared before the deadline for applying for graduation.

Impact Statement:

1. A UNC Asheville interdisciplinary cluster for undergraduates is a pre-determined set of courses offered by two or more departments or programs that will offer students a cross-field experience around a multidisciplinary topic or issue.
2. Impact on students: Students who wish to explore a topic across multiple disciplines in a coordinated program without committing to a full minor will have a place in the curriculum that recognizes their endeavors. Constituent courses highlight connections between concurrent or consecutive sections of courses comprising the interdisciplinary cluster; this allows students to learn from other students while studying a common theme from different disciplinary perspectives.
3. Impact on faculty teaching: The faculty who have interest in continuing or starting to offer intentional interdisciplinary learning opportunities in a topic (e.g. food systems, social entrepreneurship) or skill area (e.g. critical thinking, contemplative learning) may elect to do so within a workable structure for both students and faculty.
4. Impact on faculty and administrative oversight:

Management of cluster programs:

- a. Each interdisciplinary cluster will be supported by participating faculty from more than one department with the approval of their respective department chairs and/or Deans.
- b. A faculty coordinator from a participating department will need to oversee a student's application and completion of the cluster.
- c. UNC Asheville undergraduate students who wish to complete an interdisciplinary cluster will be required to fill out a brief application in the host department indicating the courses they plan to take to complete the cluster requirements.
- d. The coordinator will manage student expectations with regards to course offering time frames and advise students as needed to support their completion of the cluster.
- e. The cluster coordinator gives written notice to the Office of the Registrar when a student has completed the cluster requirements.
- f. Upon completion of the Baccalaureate Degree, indicate completion of the cluster program on the student's transcript.
- g. It is expected that faculty who teach 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 in some of the proposed cluster areas have already been meeting at least that often so this will have a modest impact on their overall faculty workloads.

5. 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.
6. Faculty proposing undergraduate interdisciplinary clusters will secure concurrence from the chairs/program directors of the participating departments. No significant impact on course offerings is anticipated. Courses slated for use in clusters should already be in existence (with few exceptions) and regularly offered.

Rationale:

1. Unlike trade or pre-professional certificates, the undergraduate Interdisciplinary Clusters offered at UNC Asheville would allow *only* degree-seeking undergraduate students the opportunity to enhance their undergraduate experience with a unique transcript remark.
2. The option of Interdisciplinary Clusters for degree-seeking students would offer intentional opportunities for students to learn multiple perspectives on a relevant and complex topic across at least 4 courses that address a topic or skill set from a variety of disciplines.

The effectiveness of this approach, evidenced in statistically significant gains in both student perceptions of learning and measures of actual learning, has already been documented at UNC Asheville. See 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 and 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.

3. Students with a special interest in an interdisciplinary cluster topical area (ones that are not effectively addressed by a single discipline) will be able to highlight this in their graduate school and job application materials.
4. 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.
5. UNC Asheville already offers a Graduate Certificate in Climate Change and Society that uses a 4 course (12 credit hour model) so there is a UNC Asheville precedent for offering a cluster on an interdisciplinary topical area. See <https://mla.unca.edu/ccs> for more information.
6. The Curriculum Review Task Force (CRTF) concluded that the Topical Clusters could be replaced with equally beneficial choices students could manage more effectively and that the ideals followed in the design and collaboration of the clusters be followed in the creation of the new general education structure. Further, the CRTF expressed repeatedly that the new structure not exclude the possibility of future developments of interdisciplinary learning experiences or learning communities that could reflect the nature and intent of the ILS Topical Clusters. The optional interdisciplinary cluster design affords such future developmental opportunities and creates the possibility of continuing ILS cluster-like interdisciplinary learning opportunities into which previous cluster courses and cluster topics can be accommodated.
7. UNC Asheville is uniquely qualified to offer Interdisciplinary Clusters due to our longstanding tradition of cross-disciplinary inquiry including such programs as the Humanities program.

8. While Interdisciplinary Clusters are a new offering (with similarities to previous ILS Topical Clusters), additional designations to student degrees is common at other UNC Universities: For example, a number of other UNC System schools offer undergraduate certificates in disciplinary or interdisciplinary areas. See Table 1. These include Appalachian State University (6 UG certificates) and NC State University (20 UG certificates: see info below), while others offer mostly graduate certificates including UNC Chapel Hill (<http://provost.unc.edu/files/2012/10/Guidelines-for-Certificatesfinal.pdf>). They range in size, scope, and purpose, but typically require a minimum of 12 credit hours. While some are skills or career-oriented, many do fit within a liberal arts model of education and some specifically promote interdisciplinary learning. Another school in North Carolina, Duke University offers specifically interdisciplinary undergraduate certificates. (see description below).

NC State language explaining Undergraduate Certificates:

“What is a University Undergraduate Certificate?

An NC State University Undergraduate Certificate Program (UCP) is a prescribed set of undergraduate level academic courses designed by an academic department or program and taken for credit by Degree and Non-degree studies (NDS) students. The proposed certificate program must have final approval from the Dean of Academic Programs & Services (APS). Upon completion, the certificate program will be designated on the participant’s transcript.

The Certificate must have a minimum of 12 credit hours. Courses included in a certificate program should be in every case an existing academic course. The proposed certificate program must be approved by the Chancellor and requires notification to UNC-General Administration to be added to the UNC inventory.”

“Duke University offers specifically interdisciplinary undergraduate certificates:

In addition to majors and minors, Duke offers a number of interdisciplinary certificate programs of study. These uniquely interdisciplinary courses of study are not available within any single academic unit, but rather offer students cross-field experience around a multidimensional topic. Duke offers 20 undergraduate and 32 graduate certificates, usually requiring coursework from among different departments.”

The proposed model for UNC Asheville would differ from NC State’s in that ours would only be available to degree seeking students and would be granted upon completion of their course of study.

Table 1: Undergraduate Certificates at UNC System, COPLAC, and Private Liberal Arts Institutions—Compiled by Associate Provost Ed Katz

UNC System Undergraduate Certificates

NCSU: <http://distance.ncsu.edu/programs/undergraduate-certificate-programs.php>

- Administrative Officers Management
- Fabric Manufacturing
- Food Safety
- Textile Fundamentals
- Agribusiness Management
- Agricultural Business Management
- Agricultural Leadership
- Agronomic Crop Production
- Animal Nutrition
- Computer Programming
- Feed Milling
- Fundamentals of Entomology
- General Horticulture
- Leadership in the Public Sector
- Microbiology
- Plant Pests, Pathogens, and People
- Renewable Energy Assessment
- Soil Science

Appalachian State: <http://cas.appstate.edu/academics/minors-certificates> and <http://programsofstudy.appstate.edu/programs/colleges/College-of-Arts-and-Sciences>

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • Forensic Science | 10 |
| • Global Connections | 15-21 |
| • Non-profit Management | 18 |
| • Geographic Information Systems | 12 |
| • Experiential, Interdisciplinary Education | 18 |
| • Civic Engagement | 12 |

UNC-Chapel Hill

- Preprofessional Undergraduate Certificates Only

UNC Pembroke: <http://www.uncp.edu/academics/colleges-schools-departments/departments/art/degrees/art-entrepreneurship-certificate-program>

- Art Entrepreneurship

ECU: <http://catalog.ecu.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=250>

- American Studies
- Atmospheric Science
- Business and Technical Communication
- Computer Game Development
- Cultural Resources Management
- Forensic Anthropology
- GIS
- Global Understanding
- Jazz Studies
- Spanish Translation

- Suzuki Pedagogy
- TESOL
- Urban Design

UNCSA: <http://www.uncsa.edu/academicprograms/programs.htm>

- College Arts Certificate in Dance, Drama and Music
- Professional Artist Certificate

UNCC: <http://academics.uncc.edu/undergraduate-certificate-programs>

- Business Languages (French, German, or Spanish)
- Game Design and Development
- International Public Relations
- Jazz
- Leadership Studies
- Translating (French-English, German-English, Russian-English, or Spanish-English)

UNC Wilmington: http://uncw.edu/aa/degree_programs.html

- Professional Writing 21
- Publishing 15

Western Carolina University; <http://www.wcu.edu/learn/programs/>

- Certificate in Public History 15
- Certificate in Culturally Based Native Health 12
- Certificate in Financial Planning 18
- Engineering Sales and Distribution 18
- Occupational Safety 14-15

COPLAC

Keene State University (both for- and non-credit options, for-credit below):

<http://www.keene.edu/academics/conted/programs/certificate/>

- GIS
- Multimedia Journalism
- Website Design

Southern Oregon University: <http://www.sou.edu/academics.html>

[Accounting, Postbaccalaureate](#)
[Applied Cultural Anthropology](#)
[Applied Finance and Economics](#)
[Business Information Systems](#)
[Conflict Resolution](#)
[Cultural Resource Management](#)
[Interactive Marketing and E-Commerce](#)
[Management of Human Resources](#)
[Native American Studies](#)
[Nonprofit Management](#)
[Regional Studies and Applied Research](#)
[Sustainability Leadership](#)

Southern Utah University: <http://catalog.suu.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=1014>

- International Relations
- Engineering Technology: Civil Design
- Public Administration
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
- Leadership
- Communication Speech Writing
- Agriculture with emphasis in Livestock Farm Management
- GIS
- Construction Technology

University of Maine, Farmington: <http://www.umf.maine.edu/majors-academics/alpine-operations/>

- Alpine Operations
- Addiction (forthcoming)

University of Mary Washington: <http://cas.umw.edu/about-the-college/majors-minors-and-courses-of-study/>

- GIS

Private Liberal Arts Colleges

Amherst College: <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/fivecollege> (offered in collaboration with a consortium of five colleges and Universities: Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and UMass Amherst)

[Architectural Studies](#)

[Asian/Pacific/American Studies](#)

[Buddhist Studies](#)

[Culture, Health, and Science](#)

[Ethnomusicology](#)

[International Relations](#)

[Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies](#)

[Logic](#)

[Middle Eastern Studies](#)

[Native American Indian Studies](#)

[Queer and Sexuality Studies](#)

[Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies \(REEES\)](#)

[Sustainability Studies](#)

Kenyon College

- Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association-Kenyon Certificate Program in Ecological Agriculture: <http://rurallife.kenyon.edu/educational-opportunities.html>

University of Richmond: <http://www.richmond.edu/academics/index.html> (Professional & Continuing Studies link)

- Information Systems
- Information Security
- Paralegal Studies

Dickinson College:

http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20056/center_for_global_study_and_engagement/2309/certificate_programs

- Health Studies
- Security Studies

- Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (coming in 2015-16):
<http://www.dickinson.edu/events/event/1399/>

Connecticut College: <http://www.conncoll.edu/academics/certificate-programs/>

- Museum Studies
- Community Action and Public Policy
- International Studies and the Liberal Arts
- Environmental Studies
- Art and Technology

Sewanee—University of the South

- Creative writing: <http://www.sewanee.edu/academics/english/programs/certificate-in-creative-writing.php>
- Watershed Science: <http://environmental.sewanee.edu/programs/watershed-science-certificate.php>
- Theological Studies: <http://theology.sewanee.edu/assets/uploads/CTSGainful.pdf>

Wheaton College: <http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Departments>

- Early Christian Studies
- Gender Studies
- Human Needs and Global Resources
- Military Science
- Pre-Law
- Christian Formation and Ministry Certificates

Siena College: <https://www.siena.edu/academics/academics-at-siena/majors-minors-certificates>

- Accounting
- Community Development
- Computer Science
- Information Systems
- International Studies, Foreign Languages and Business
- Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Pre-Law
- Revolutionary Studies
- Risk Management
- Theater

Oglethorpe University: <http://www.oglethorpe.edu/academics/programs.asp>

- Urban Leadership
- Urban Ecology

Salem College: <http://www.salem.edu/academics/undergrad/>

- Accounting
- Historic Preservation
- Injury Prevention Keyboard Technique (Music)
- Not-for-Profit Management