



Interdisciplinary Minors & Certificates Complete Proposal

Rationale: The College of Arts and Sciences has been exploring the creation of several new interdisciplinary minors and certificate programs. These proposed new programs combine existing, regularly taught classes from different disciplines into a coherent grouping focused on a relevant and innovative theme. Along with existing minor programs, these new programs will provide students more opportunities to complete a minor or certificate that complements their major area of study; advances their personal, professional, and civic goals; and improves career readiness and marketability in a world where job descriptions will continue to change frequently.

Interest in creating these new interdisciplinary programs predates KBOR's proposal of a systemwide plan of general education, but the new system has provided even greater motivation and opportunity for such programs. The KBOR system reduces the overall number of general education credits required and students in some degree programs will have greater flexibility to take elective courses or complete an optional minor or certificate program.

Proposal Process: Proposing these programs has been a thoughtful and collaborative process over the past year. The work began in August 2022 when CAS department chairs began brainstorming the potential for new interdisciplinary minor and certificate programs that would make use of existing, regularly taught classes not requiring prerequisites.

In spring 2023, the CAS Deans office invited CAS faculty to participate in "faculty success groups" to look more carefully at the possibilities brainstormed by chairs.

In fall 2023, an ad hoc committee consisting of faculty from all five CAS Divisions was formed. The committee reviewed existing catalog requirements for minors and certificates. The committee next proposed revised "rules" to govern existing and new minors and certificates and to distinguish between "departmental" (one discipline) and interdisciplinary (more than one discipline) programs. These rules are as follows:

- *A departmental minor in the College of Arts and Sciences shall consist of no less than 15 hours in one discipline as specified by the department. Of these, at least 6 hours must be at the upper-division level. Students must have a grade of C or better in each course in the minor. A minimum of six hours used to meet the minor requirements must be earned in residence at Washburn University.*
- *An interdisciplinary minor in the College of Arts and Sciences shall consist of no less than 15 hours in at least two different disciplines as specified by the minor program. Of these, at least 9 credit hours must be outside of the major discipline.*

Students must have a grade of C or better in each course in the minor. A minimum of six hours used to meet the minor requirements must be earned in residence at Washburn University.

- *A certificate in the College of Arts and Sciences shall consist of at least 9 credit hours. Students must have a grade of C or better in each course for the certificate. A minimum of six hours used to meet the certificate requirements must be earned in residence at Washburn University.*

The ad hoc faculty committee also continued to review the work of chairs and faculty success groups and solicited feedback from the Divisions on the proposed interdisciplinary minors and certificates. It now brings forward # (will add exact number when complete) new interdisciplinary minors and # new interdisciplinary certificates for consideration.

Oversight of New Programs: These proposed interdisciplinary minor and certificate programs will be coordinated and overseen by the College of Arts and Sciences Deans Office. Because they all rely on courses that are regularly taught as part of other, existing programs, they are at the very least revenue-neutral programs. No new investments in facilities or faculty are needed. The majority of courses come from within the College, but relevant courses from outside of the College have been included as well. Faculty who apply to serve as “program directors” may receive a small administrative stipend (up to \$500) depending on the number of students enrolled into the program. The College office will provide administrative support with scheduling and promotion of the programs. We will explore the creation of 4-year degree plans that integrate likely major/minor pairings.

Conclusion: Packaging existing courses into new and innovative minor and certificate programs will help to find new audiences for existing resources. Moreover, analysis conducted by the ad hoc faculty committee revealed that, in their proposed configuration, many of the interdisciplinary programs are unique to the region and state. These programs will help to enrich the learning and career opportunities of students in a wide variety of major disciplines as well as different degree programs including associate and applied associate degree programs.