Academic Priorities Council

Minutes: November 29, 2012


2. The Council unanimously endorsed approval of the proposal for a Joint Degree Program Master of Regional Planning (MRP) / Master of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA).

3. The Council extensively discussed the iCons (Integrated Concentration in Science) Undergraduate Certificate Program. Bryan Harvey elaborated on the distinctions between Concentrations and Certificates. This can best be summarized by quoting the email Bryan would later send to Dean Goodwin explaining the problem.

"Hi, Steve:

Let me elaborate a little on Dick's excellent summary of the meeting.

Back when iCons was first being conceived, Ernie and I spent a lot of time working with Scott to figure out how to make it work. What we came up with was a very nice model in which participating departments would adopt an iCons concentration for their own program, through which the iCons courses (including junior year writing and later IE) would substitute for some of the existing degree requirements. The student would receive a B.S. in some discipline with an "integrated" concentration.

What has been submitted, however, takes a different approach. The iCons curriculum would no longer be integrated into a degree program, but rather be a freestanding certificate. This raises two issues:

1. As Dick points out, certificates are separate credentials, and the campus's policy doesn't let a student receive multiple credentials for the same work.

2. Departments are responsible for their own degree requirements. If a department wants to incorporate iCons into its requirements it can, but we have no precedent for telling a department that a third party can assume responsibility for its degree requirements, which seems to be how the current iCons proposal is structured.

So right now the iCons proposal seems stuck. Everyone likes the idea, but as proposed it is not something that can be approved. Dick's suggestion is an attempt to address #1 (making it clear that students will not actually receive the certificate). This seems unsatisfactory, however, from all
angles: iCons clearly doesn't want to become invisible, and it's going to be awfully hard to explain to students why they are signing up for a certificate that they aren't actually going to get.

But even adopting Dick's language does not address issue #2. The proposed "certificate" really does take over part of a department's degree requirements, including JYW and IE. It seems to me that a department would need to formally agree to that. Otherwise, degree audit will not recognize the iCons courses, and the student will never be cleared for graduation.

To me, the simplest way to resolve this is to go back to the original plan: iCons will be a concentration within one or more majors. It gets coded into degree audit, and life is good. Do you have any insight into why this is not the approach being taken?

There are other ways to proceed. The iCons package could be a certificate, but not one that substitutes for disciplinary degree requirements. So, for example, there could be a series of iCons courses that a student would take in addition to regular degree requirements, for which they would receive an iCons certificate. That series of courses would not include JYW or IE. But it's hard to see why this would make sense from the iCons perspective, since the whole idea is to integrate into a major.

I'm eager to move this forward, but it sounds as if somehow we need to get iCons and the departments in the same credential. I'm happy to work with whomever to come up with a solution. Let me know how you would like to proceed.

BCH"

The email that Dick Bogartz sent read

"Hi Steve-

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Academic Priorities Council concerning the iCons (Integrated Concentration in Science). The Council is eager to endorse the proposal. (I for one would like to take it.) But a problem exists concerning the difference between a concentration and a certificate.

The proposal uses both terms, calling it a concentration but applying for a Certificate Program. If it were a concentration, there would be no problem because there is no conflict between a degree in an area of study and a concentration in that area. The student will receive credit for both. But if it is a Certificate, then, the Council agrees, the students need to be informed early in the process that the
Certificate can be overridden by their degree. Specifically, Sen. Doc. No. 09-018A states that

"If a student who has completed a Certificate seeks clearance for a degree program which overlaps with that Certificate program, then the Registrar will note on the transcript that the certificate has been superseded by the award of the degree."

Thus it is possible for a student to be expecting a degree and a certificate and only receive the degree. We would like there to be a conspicuous early warning to the student of this possible eventuality.

If a quick change can be made in the proposal that deals with this I believe the Council could endorse its approval very quickly, even by email vote.

-Dick

The Council is awaiting a revised proposal.

4. Following some discussion of the sizes of the resulting departments, the Council unanimously endorsed approval of the proposal for Separation of Finance and Operations & Information Management into Two Departments.

5. The proposal for a Management Certificate in Sustainable Business Practice was tabled until such time as the Council receives a response concerning the proposal.

6. The proposal for an Accelerated MS in Food Science had been discussed on October 18. We await clarification concerning whether the program has credits that add to 150.

"An accelerated Master’s option requires minimum total credits, taken across both programs, equal to 30 plus the minimum baccalaureate credit requirement. The typical undergraduate degree requires 120 credits, so the credit minimum for the accelerated option would be 150 unless a higher undergraduate requirement applies."

---Sen. Doc. No. 10-043

7. The Council will consider the possibility of disapproving the proposals for the Joint M.S./J.D. in Labor Studies and Law and the Five College Ethnomusicology Certificate Program because replies have not been forthcoming.