

## Interdisciplinarity@WMU- Phase One planning Template

1. **Brief Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the proposed interdisciplinary initiative. What types of questions would the initiative ask? What types of complex problems would it seek to solve?

A number of WMU graduate programs offer courses that address professional development as well as preparation for college teaching (usually geared to courses offered by their units). This proposal would create a unified rolling pattern of courses to be offered (to prevent duplication in the same academic year) that fit this profile. It would call for the units to accept comparable courses from other units for credit toward the completion of the masters or doctoral program for their students, if such courses are offered or required.

2. **Impacted units:** What existing units, programs, and colleges would be involved in the proposed initiative? What other possibilities for collaboration across campus or in the broader community might exist now or in the future?

History, English, and Political Science would be involved.

Other units that have comparable coursework could participate, if they have classes that combine a dual focus upon academic professionalization (e.g., conference attendance, the academic publishing market, job acquisition in and out of academia, c.v. and letter of job application, grant getting), and undergraduate teaching skills (such as course design, syllabus preparation, plus assignment creation and evaluation). I was not able to identify others in CAS that offer comparable courses.

3. **Impact on teaching, learning, and curricula:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on teaching, learning, and curricula. How might this initiative help to grow enrollment, including by reaching new audiences of learners through continuing education, dual enrollment, or professional certification? How will the proposed initiative positively impact the training of undergraduate and graduate students? How does it enhance our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Courses offered in History, Political Science, and English would appear less frequently in the rotation of regular classes. The affected courses are Political Science 6940+6960, History 6980, and ENGL 6300. It would increase the integration of graduate programs, by incorporating students from other programs in an ongoing fashion to classrooms led by academics in other units.

- 4. Impact on research and creative activity:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on research and creative activity. How will this initiative promote discovery and creative scholarship? How might it result in increased external funding?

N/A

- 5. Efficiencies and/or cost savings:** How might the proposed initiative contribute to increased efficiencies and/or cost savings, for example by reducing administrative positions (e.g. chairs/directors), sharing staff support services and/or by sharing facilities?

This would lead to efficiencies of course offering, such that individuals in multiple departments could lead comparable courses that might have higher enrollment by combining the students from multiple departments in a single class per year, rather than divided among multiple classroom settings.

It would force department chairs/course scheduling associate chairs to consult between units, which would increase inefficiencies. This might be particularly true for units that are course scheduling in different cycles (one semester ahead v. 2 years ahead).

- 6. Impact on course offerings and workload:** At present, proposed initiatives will only be feasible and sustainable if they can be supported by existing resources, including instructional capacity, faculty and staff time, and facilities. Will the proposed initiative streamline existing course or program offerings? Could the initiative help create more equitable and sustainable workload for faculty, for example, by reducing the need to offer under enrolled courses, reducing the frequency of course offerings or eliminating the need to teach some courses?

It would reduce the frequency that some courses are taught in various units. It would not eliminate those courses, but would space them out to be taught less frequently within a given unit.

- 7. Additional Information:** What additional information would you like to provide in support of this proposal?

This proposal is sent forward without consulting every affected stakeholder in other units, as will be true for many other proposals submitted using this form, if not all of them. I spoke with Priscilla Lambert, the DGS in Political Science, but not Meghan Meusen, DGS in English. The chairs of Political Science and English were not consulted. We should act to protect academic freedom as well as with regard for professional courtesy—to discover unintended consequences and possible harmful effects. Therefore, all stakeholders at the units involved should be consulted before forwarding ANY proposals for further consideration.

- 8. Contact**

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