

To: IIT University Faculty Council

From: Margaret Huyck, Co-chair, Interprofessional Studies Committee

Date: February 20, 2008

Re: RECOMMENDATION OF ISC REGARDING IPRO/ CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Background and Participants

The Interprofessional Studies Committee (ISC) is the body appointed by the University Faculty Council to provide academic oversight of the IPRO (InterProfessional Program) program. The appointments to this Committee are jointly approved by the UFC and the USC (Undergraduate Studies Committee), in recognition of the fact that the IPRO program is a required component of the undergraduate General Education component.

The issue we are addressing is whether academic departments can design and require particular IPRO projects for the students majoring in that discipline, and whether such projects can legitimately and reasonably satisfy the educational objectives of the IPRO projects, and more discipline-specific educational objectives such as a “capstone” project.

The ISC convened on February 19, 2008 to discuss these issues, and make a recommendation to the UFS. We understand that this issue will be presented to the full faculty for discussion, but we wish to convey our deliberations at this time. Those present at the deliberations included Professors Javad Abbasian (Chemical Engineering), James Braband (IPRO/Stuart), Don Chmielewski, Daniel Ferguson (IPRO/Stuart), Michael Gosz (MMAE/ Assoc. Provost), David Grossman (Computer Engineering), Margaret Huyck (Psychology), Tom Jacobius (IPRO), Kevin Meade (MMAE), Ralph Muehleisen (Civil Engineering), Steven Sennett (Architecture).

Summary of Recommendations

1. Academic departments should be encouraged to develop IPRO projects that can facilitate the development and demonstration of discipline-specific professional skills – but only if done in the context of a project problem definition that is open-ended and requires the active participation of at least two other disciplinary perspectives to address the problem.
2. The ISC and the IPRO Review and Selection Committee shall determine whether proposals meet the requirements of providing substantial learning opportunities for students in multiple disciplines.
3. The IPRO Program Director is responsible for monitoring all project proposals to ensure that they include substantial learning opportunities for students in multiple disciplines; that students from at least three majors are enrolled in each IPRO; that projects do not

enroll more than 12 students under the supervision of a single faculty guide, or 20 under two faculty guides. The ISC will monitor the implementation of this policy.

4. We recognize that “capstone” experiences can be provided in diverse forms within the context of the IPRO program. Individual students may take responsibility for a particularly-challenging technical component of a project, and have their work appraised and approved by both the IPRO faculty guide, and a faculty expert from the student’s major. A department may propose and supervise an IPRO project that includes some challenges designed for seniors designed to demonstrate competencies at the “capstone” level, and also include dimensions of the project that involve the perspectives and expertise provided by majors from other disciplines.
5. We also recognize that departments or disciplines may not wish to combine their capstone experiences with the IPRO program; while recognizing the broader scope of professional skills developed within the IPRO experience, they wish to assess the technical competencies of their students within separate capstone assignments.

MHH: 2/21/08