

Senate Petition:

Be it resolved that the Senate create an ad hoc committee to 1) evaluate interdisciplinary infrastructures, including cross-curricular programs, centers, activities, and resources at UNI, 2) explore interdisciplinary infrastructures and activities at peer and/or sister institutions, and 3) report findings that include recommendations for developing interdisciplinary infrastructures at UNI.

Committee Charge:

1. Evaluate interdisciplinary infrastructure(s) at UNI
2. Research peer institutions' infrastructure for interdisciplinary work (curricula and programming)

Outcome for the proposed committee's work:

1. Present findings related to current structures, needs, and challenges at UNI
2. Present research on other institutions
3. Proposal for next steps

Timeline:

1. November-December 2018: Form committee through Faculty Senate by appointing a Committee Chair. Chair seeks volunteers to serve on the committee via campus-wide email solicitation for nominations and self-nominations, including representation from each of the areas of the Academic Master Plan <https://provost.uni.edu/academic-master-plan>:

Voting Faculty Representatives:

- a. Sustainability Advisory Board member
- b. Diversity Faculty Advisory Committee member
- c. Community Engagement Faculty Advisory Board member
- d. WGS Advisory Board member
- e. General Ed/LAC Re-Envisioning committee member
- f. If not represented by the above, one representative from: CHAS, CSBS, COE, CBA

Non-Voting Representatives¹

- a. Office of Diversity/Director of CME or representative
- b. Office of Undergraduate Studies

¹ Consultation with other constituencies, including Student Access Services, Student Advising, Academic Learning Center, and other areas will be pursued.

- c. WGS Director
- d. Office of Sustainability Director
- e. Administrator from Academic Affairs

Timeline:

1. January-August 2019: Gather data, research, and explore interdisciplinary structures and practices at UNI and peer institutions
2. August-December 2019: compile and disseminate report, including recommendations for next steps

Rationale and Background:

We live in a world that requires collaboration, communication, creativity, and problem-solving within and across multiple disciplines or fields. As UNI seeks to keep abreast of the changing landscape related to global learning and working, as well as local needs within our state, university faculty and administration are engaged in a number of significant initiatives. This work includes: 1) a new faculty evaluation system, 2) revision of the General Education Core/LAC, 3) implementation of the Academic Master and Strategic Plan, and 4) development of a 30-year vision for UNI.

UNI has a long history of teaching and learning across disciplines. For example, the forty-year old Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies graduate program and minor, or the more recent Sustainability and Museum Studies Certificates. Interdisciplinary curricula continue to be proposed and revised. At the same time, valuable programming from the Center for Multicultural Education, Sustainability Office, and other centers on campus bring together faculty, staff, students, and community members around issues that cross any one discipline. This multifaceted work aligns with the Academic Master Plan in that it embraces an engaged and integrative learning environment. However, such work has largely been informal, lacking sufficient structures and resources to sustainably operate or grow.

As the UNI community strives to realize the core values of our Academic Master Plan, this proposal seeks to examine the structures that support engaged and integrative learning, particularly those related to interdisciplinary structures and activities. For example, the Academic Master Plan identifies "intentional collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs, as well as other divisions on campus" as necessary to deepen UNI's emphasis on applied learning across the curriculum. In addition, the Academic Master Plan emphasizes a "culture of cross-campus collaboration for faculty and staff that leads to the development of a unique, transdisciplinary community." Keeping in mind the larger global and local contexts, as well as the role of comprehensive institutions, the goal of this proposed committee is to examine and

carefully explore interdisciplinary work at UNI. The following questions will guide the committee:

- What is the current state of collaboration/interdisciplinary work across campus?
- What is the current state of collaboration/interdisciplinary work at peer institutions?
- What structures support collaboration/interdisciplinary work?
- What does the literature indicate as best practice related to interdisciplinary work?