

March 5, 2014

PHILLIP SHAVER, Chair
Faculty Executive Committee
College of Letters and Science

RE: Proposal to Establish a New Interdepartmental Program in Human Rights Studies

The proposal to establish a new Interdepartmental Program in Human Rights Studies was forwarded to all Davis Division of the Academic Senate standing committees and Faculty Executive Committees from the Schools and Colleges. Responses were received from Undergraduate and Graduate Councils, the College of Letters and Science Faculty Executive Committee, and the Committee on Planning and Budget.

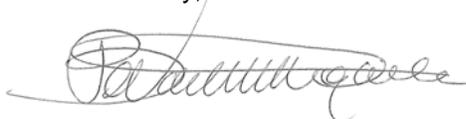
I would like to start by emphasizing that the responding committees were unanimously supportive of continuing to offer the minor and the designated emphasis in Human Rights Studies and recognize the program's role as a leader in undergraduate and graduate training in the field.

Undergraduate Council, the Graduate Council Academic Planning and Development (APD) subcommittee, and the Committee on Planning and Budget, however, all questioned the necessity of creating a separate academic unit to administer this curriculum. It was noted that the proposal lacks a strong rationale for changing the current status of the program to a separate, free-standing interdisciplinary program. Would a separate academic unit be able to solve existing problems with the program? Is there evidence that a free-standing interdisciplinary academic unit would lead to improved quality of the program?

The Committee on Planning and Budget and Graduate Council expressed concern about fiscal implications. Graduate Council noted a need for a better description of projected resource allocations for the program, including TA needs and funding, resources for a program director, staff requirements, etc. The committees offered a few suggestions for making the existing program stronger. The Committee on Planning and Budget suggested that Law School faculty should be included as part of any Human Rights Studies program. Undergraduate Council also indicated a successful interdisciplinary program would need a designated lead department like other interdisciplinary programs (e.g., coastal science).

Given the concerns expressed, the Davis Division of the Academic Senate does not support the creation of an interdepartmental program in Human Rights Studies at this time. Proponents are encouraged to incorporate Academic Senate suggestions in further developing plans for an interdepartmental program.

Sincerely,



Bruno Nachtergaele, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor: Mathematics

c: Carolyn de la Pena, Interim Vice Provost – Undergraduate Education