

January 17, 2010

JOHN YODER, CHAIR

Undergraduate Council

Academic Senate Davis Division

RE: Closure of Textiles and Clothing Major to Admissions

Dear Undergrad Council:

At its regular meeting Friday, January 7, 2011, the Senate members of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES) Executive Committee voted, 6–2, to close the major in Textiles and Clothing (TXC) to admissions for a period of two years following when the decision takes effect. It is your responsibility to affirm or deny our decision. Recently, the Committee on Elections, Rules & Jurisdiction ruled that Undergraduate Council should be the final authority regarding closure of a major to admissions in addition to being the final authority regarding dis-establishment of a major. This case about TXC is far from routine. The faculty involved with the major do not want to close it to admissions. You will not be receiving from them the normal documentation expressing support. Indeed, the sole document you may have for your own decision might be this letter.

As part of a restructuring plan to reduce total faculty numbers in the College by about thirty-three, the Dean of CA&ES proposed last year to eliminate the Department of Textiles and Clothing. The Dean's decision followed a comparison of the scale and scope of research department by department within CA&ES; the effective provision of undergraduate instruction and the quality of majors were not part of this comparison. The dean concluded that smaller departments were not viable. He encouraged three of the smaller ones to merge into one larger department, and proposed to eliminate another besides TXC. The Department of Textiles and Clothing has had five ladder-rank faculty, plus some courses taught by lecturers. One of the five, a social scientist, is on the verge of retirement. The other four have been in negotiations to move to other departments. One already holding a joint appointment with Women's Studies has been negotiating with Design in HARCS. The other three have been in discussions with the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering in CA&ES. These transfers are not yet confirmed. The votes in the sequence required to dis-establish the Department of Textiles and Clothing have not yet been held.

Even though obviously connected, the Department of Textiles and Clothing and the major in Textiles and Clothing are distinct. The TXC major had 90 registered students as of Fall Quarter 2010, following a steady increase over the last decade. Of these 90 students, 82 were women. The TXC major is the only one of its kind within the University of California. In addition to a minor in Textiles and Clothing, the department administers a second major in Fiber and Polymer Science. Because the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering has agreed to be the administrator for Fiber and Polymer Science, a decision to close that major to admissions is not yet required. But few students would be affected. As of Fall Quarter 2010, the Fiber and Polymer Science major had 3 students, all women. The most recent reviews of both majors were positive. The Department of Textiles and Clothing has not been asked for any current material about the TXC major. (The CA&ES Dean's Office could provide some.) Nor has the CA&ES Executive Committee examined the major itself.

From what the master advisor knows of current majors in TXC, some would not have attended UCD without this major, while some might have majored in Managerial Economics, while the majority would likely have selected Design as the alternative. These predictions seem consistent with the declared majors in the TXC introductory courses, which are taken by many students besides TXC majors themselves (according to SIS DS statistics). Both Managerial Economics and Design can be described as impacted majors.

The four faculty who will remain after the retirement of the fifth want very much to continue the major. Any major requires some department to assume responsibility for administrative support. The Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, which may accept three of the four faculty, has stipulated a condition that they will not provide administrative support for the TXC major (beyond the transition for

John Yoder, Chair, Undergraduate Council
RE: Textiles & Clothing Major
January 17, 2011
Page 2

existing students). The TXC curriculum, even if compressed, requires some coverage in the area to be vacated by retirement. The Dean of CA&ES has refused the funding for the lecturer(s) necessary to supplement the remaining faculty.

We have taken action to close TXC to new admissions after several meetings with You-Lo Hsieh (Department Chair) and Susan Kaiser (master advisor). Several weeks ago, the Executive Committee requested that the Department of Textiles and Clothing take a vote on whether or not the TXC major should be closed to admissions. At our January 7, 2011 meeting, Professors Hsieh and Kaiser reported to us that "the faculty voted not to vote" [sic]. Given the realities facing the Department of Textiles and Clothing, not to mention CA&ES as a whole, the Executive Committee assumed the responsibility for considering whether the TXC major should be closed to admissions.

The desire of the faculty to continue the TXC major is the reason that the Executive Committee did not vote unanimously. It is also the reason that we included the condition of two years. We want to give every opportunity for the interested faculty to work out some other arrangement, such as an inter-college, inter-disciplinary major. (Continuing the minor has also been mentioned.) We, perhaps more so than the faculty involved, recognize that such an outcome will be difficult to achieve for a multitude of reasons, including finding a department for administration of the major and finding the resources for lecturers and TAs.

Given the low probability that the TXC major can be maintained longer term, the Executive Committee feels students will be ill-served if they select this major. We recognize that closure of this major to admissions may well set it on a path to where dis-establishment is inevitable. Indeed, it is the intention of the Dean of CA&ES that dis-establishment happen. A number of us are disquieted that the dean has thereby determined curriculum, which should be under the purview of the Academic Senate. Rather than resolve this deep contradiction within UC governance before the fate of the TXC major is determined, we feel it important not to mislead prospective students beginning as soon as possible.

If you agree with our perspective, you too will vote to close the TXC major to admissions, whether from freshmen, transfer students, or current students wishing to declare a major. We urge you to expedite your review. If your decision is delayed much beyond the next few weeks, Transfer Agreements will begin to be written for Fall Quarter of 2012, allowing TXC as a choice. The Undergraduate Admissions Office could rewrite instructions for freshmen and transfer applications for Fall Quarter of 2012 as late as this summer, but further delay would result in the major being on the application for admission for Fall Quarter of 2013. Of course, if you do not agree with our perspective, urgency is not an issue.

Because this case is so far from routine, as I noted at the outset, I would be willing to represent the CA&ES Executive Committee at one of your meetings.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey C. Williams, Chair
CA&ES Executive Committee

JCW:sb
cc: You-Lo Hsieh
Raul Piedrahita
Robert Powell
Ken Shackel
Diane Ullman