

May 2, 2008

Scott Waugh  
Acting Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

**In Re: Academic Senate Response on Proposed Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction**

Dear Scott,

Upon receipt of the proposal to establish the Center for Society and Genetics as a Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction (CII), I requested that the following Senate committees review and opine upon it: Graduate Council (GC), Undergraduate Council (UgC), Council on Planning and Budget (CPB), Council on Academic Personnel (CAP), Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (CR&J), and finally the Executive Board, which speaks for the Academic Senate on such matters. The responses have varied. CAP and GC declined to opine. CR&J worked with the Center on its bylaws and approved them. The UgC voted to approve the proposal with some abstentions, while CPB overwhelmingly voted against it. Ultimately, the Executive Board chose to support the proposal on its scholarly merits and therefore recommends its establishment as a CII, but with the provisos described below.

During the Executive Board's review, many concerns were raised. Among them was the issue of why this proposal should be a CII rather than an IDP, given what appears to be an arbitrary distinction between the two. Namely, that IDPs cannot house 100% FTEs while CIIIs can. Should, therefore, both structures be allowed to house 100% FTEs and, if so, do we really need both structures? Also of concern was the question of who can initiate a CII. Historically, only the Chancellor has done so, but this practice raises a concern because initiation and approval of curriculum is the prerogative of the faculty. While approving this proposal, the Board resolved that an Academic Senate internal review be conducted of the Center for Society and Genetics within four years. The Board also raised questions as to whom the CII will report administratively. The Board resolved that the CII not be established until its reporting structure is clearly established and communicated to the Academic Senate.

Given Chancellor Block's priority to encourage interdisciplinary endeavors on campus, the Executive Board believes that this would be an excellent time to sort through these types of questions so that, as future proposals come forward, the Senate and administration will have a shared understanding of what is involved and how to proceed efficiently. More specifically, the Senate, working with the administration, would like to create a roadmap that addresses the creation of interdisciplinary programs and that reconciles or accounts for the arbitrary differences between existing options. Beginning at that time, all campus interdisciplinary units (CIIIs and IDPs) will be brought into conformance with the guidelines expressed in the roadmap.

Thus, although approving the current proposal with the above stated provisos, the Board resolved not to entertain any further proposals for CIIs until these concerns can be addressed and such a roadmap has been established.

I look forward to working with you as we resolve these matters.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Ligon Bjork  
Academic Senate Chair

Cc: Professor Norton Wise, Center for Society and Genetics Co-Director  
Professor Edward McCabe, Center for Society and Genetics Co-Director  
Maryann Gray, Assistant Provost  
Sally Gibbons, Associate Director and Institutional Coordinator, Undergraduate Education  
Jaime R. Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate  
Carlene Brown, Administrative Analyst, Center for Society and Genetics

Enclosures: Proposal:  
[http://www.senate.ucla.edu/issues/documents/CIIProposal\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.senate.ucla.edu/issues/documents/CIIProposal_Complete.pdf)  
Undergraduate Council Response  
Council on Planning and Budget Response  
Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction Response

February 14, 2008

Elizabeth Bjork  
Academic Senate Chair

**In Re:** Proposal to Establish a Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction (CII) in Society and Genetics

Dear Elizabeth,

The Undergraduate Council formally considered the proposal to create a Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction (CII) in Society and Genetics in two separate meetings, on January 25 and February 8, 2008. On the first occasion we discussed the proposal with Professor Norton Wise, Co-Chair of the Center for Society and Genetics (CSG) and Dr. Sally Gibbons, the Associate Director of the CSG.

The CSG faculty members are drawn from a wide range of disciplines, and their activities include the promotion and staffing of several successful “Cluster” courses for freshmen, a laudable program of graduate student and postdoctoral support for research, the sponsorship of a series of highly successful public symposia, and the recent establishment of a free standing minor in Society and Genetics. The minor was approved by Council on November 16, 2007.

*The Council voted to endorse the proposal, with eleven members in favor, one opposed, and five abstaining. The student vote was three in favor, zero opposed, and one abstaining.*

The CSG has a long-standing plan for integrating interdisciplinary academic programs (including the minor) with their research mission. The establishment of the CII will enable the transfer of administrative responsibility for those programs to the CII, streamlining such integration. Further, it will result in enhanced Senate oversight via the program review process. The budgetary and FTE resources already available for association with the CII will support the educational mission, and are inconsistent with an IDP.

The existence of two academic structures, IDP and CII, for interdisciplinary academic programs remains a central concern and frustration for Council members. In particular, the CII structure, and its distinction from that of an IDP, is perceived as developing in response to unusual circumstances rather than from a serious analysis of programmatic needs. A second concern was that the formation of the CSG, and Chancellor Carnesale’s allocation of FTEs to it, and the development of an educational mission, occurred with insufficient Senate consultation.

If the proposal is approved by the Executive Board and Legislative Assembly, the free-standing minor in Society and Genetics will need to be formally transferred into the CII.

Lastly, to whom the CII will report is still unclear. Options favored by Council members include the EVC/Provost, and the Council of Deans in the College of Letters and Science.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Brown", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Stuart Brown  
Undergraduate Council Chair

Cc: Jaime Balboa, CAO Academic Senate  
Tom Nykiel, Principal Policy Analyst



# MEMORANDUM

Academic Senate Executive Office  
Los Angeles Division  
3125 Murphy Hall  
140801

January 23, 2008

TO: Elizabeth Bjork  
Chair, Academic Senate

FR: Robert G. Frank, Jr.  
Chair, Academic Senate Council on Planning and Budget

RE: Proposal to Establish a Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction (CII) in Society and Genetics

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The Council considered this proposal formally in two separate meetings, of December 3, 2007, and January 14, 2008. On the first occasion we had the benefit of a PowerPoint presentation about the proposal given by Dr. Sally Gibbons, the Associate Director of the Center for Society and Genetics, and by Professor Victoria Sork, Chair of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and a longtime leader in the Center. In the interval between the two meetings I, as Chair, met with a group of several CPB members who had concerns about the proposal. Thereafter I had a long telephone conversation with Professor M. Norton Wise, Co-Director of the Center, to present those concerns. On January 9, 2008, I met with Professors Wise and Sork, and Associate Director Gibbons, at the Center's offices to discuss issues. Out of this meeting arose an additional memo, prepared by Center staff, that clarified several aspects of the proposal. This memo was circulated to CPB members. At the CPB meeting of January 14, 2008, Professor Sork and Associate Director Gibbons attended and answered questions, both about the proposal and the explanatory memo.

After the departure of the Center representatives the proposal was vigorously discussed. The Council was clearly impressed with the passion that Center members brought to their subject, the amount of work that had gone into the proposal, and the enthusiasm that they evinced for the kind of interdisciplinary analysis and instruction carried on by the Center. While recognizing all of these positive features, the Council as a whole had significant misgivings about the changes proposed. In the end, it voted not to endorse the proposal, with 1 member in favor, and 10 in opposition. Student members voted 3 in opposition, and 1 abstention.

Opinion in support of the proposal emphasized that this was an organization that already owned 6 FTE, had organized wide faculty support and participation, had sponsored and staffed several successful "Cluster" courses for freshmen, had carried out a laudable program of graduate student and postdoctoral support for research, had conducted a series of highly successful public symposia, had just started a minor and was planning a major in "Biology and Society" that held great promise. Transition to a CII would enable the Center to continue to do what it has done so far, but more efficiently and effectively.

Opinion in opposition to the proposal cited a number of serious difficulties, most of them revolving around the future level of resources needed, and the success with which the present Center had deployed the resources it already had. The following were the major areas of concern.

Source of Future FTE. The proposal, as well as the oral presentations, make the assumption that once the Center has become a CII, it would receive additional FTE (the proposal implies 3) to carry out its program. The Council had already been briefed by AVC Glyn Davies at its meeting of November 5, 2007, about the very low number of additional FTE that UCLA would receive in the foreseeable future. Many CPB members therefore felt disinclined to approve the creation of a unit with such strong expectations of additional FTE. There was also uncertainty about whether EVC Waugh, in his letter of support, was actually pledging these additional FTE. If so, members wanted to know how he would justify such a decision, given the demands all over campus for them.

Utilization of Current FTE. Skeptical members focused on the fact that the Center has thus far filled only 2 of its already existing 6 FTE. Spokespersons for the Center agreed that the process had, for various reasons, been more difficult and protracted than expected. They emphasized, however, that part of the delay had occurred because the Center was pursuing the laudable aim of sharing these FTE with academic departments, which gave rise to complications. Council members did not feel that such was a sufficient explanation, and that the problem lay more in the difficulties intrinsic in such interdisciplinary scholarship. Concerned CPB members also pointed out that the Cluster courses had been intermittent in nature, and didn't seem to reflect a high priority for the Center, nor evidence that there would be widespread interest in a major.

Resource Demands of the Projected Major. The proposal is to create a Center for Interdisciplinary *Instruction*. Some members were discomfited by the seeming mismatch between the still rather vague character of the projected major, and the clearly implied need for more resources to carry it out. Comparisons were made by Center leadership to the very popular Human Biology major at Stanford, but it seemed that the planners had not really familiarized themselves with the features of that program. Center staff were able to report that there was enthusiasm in the Division of Life Sciences for the idea of such a major. What wasn't clear to some CPB members was whether life science departments were willing to match their enthusiasm with faculty time, or whether such departments viewed a new major (and the Center as a CII) largely as a justification to acquire new FTE shared with the Center. Some CPB members felt that if the major was so important to the Center, a more persuasive strategy would be to get it started with the present level of support, and then use the success of the major as an argument for future resources. In the proposal as it stands, many members felt that the Center was asking for a changed status, more money and FTE, and *only then* would it be willing to develop a major. Resources first, program later, rather than the other way around. As the university faces potentially draconian budget cuts for AY 2008-2009 and beyond, CPB members felt that this was not a viable strategy.

Science Content of the Proposed Unit. Although CPB is clearly charged to comment on resource-related, rather than curricular, issues, some members (especially those from science departments) were uncomfortable with allocation of resources for a program that they interpreted—rightly or wrongly—as “light” in its scientific content. Spokespersons for the Center emphasized that the proposed major would have its own, specially designed, basic

course sequence in biology, one that would set the foundation for the major. Center faculty were clearly enthusiastic about this approach, and it formed one aspect of the need for additional future FTE. This way of thinking had the unintended opposite effect in Council. More than a few members felt that FTE and money would be better spent on a more rigorous grounding in biological sciences, rather than teaching only that biology necessary to understand social implications.

Allow me to make some general comments by way of conclusion. I have spent some time detailing the nature of the thinking, and discussion, that led the great majority of the Council's members to vote against the proposal. It was a vote denying *these requests*, at *this time*. Several members suggested the possibility of "tabling" the proposal, and dealing with it again in a few years; I believe such a tabling motion would have carried. That would give time for the Center to fill its present FTE. It could plan out and start a major, even if the major did not rest on all the resources the Center sees as necessary. The Academic Senate could then judge whether the major and minor have wide appeal, assess how well the appointed faculty have achieved their goals, and in general decide whether the Center has the justified claim upon permanent resources that establishment as a CII would represent.

cc: Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate  
Michael Goldstein, Vice Chair, Academic Senate  
Linda Mohr, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate  
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget  
Members of the Undergraduate Council

Academic Senate Executive Office  
Los Angeles Division  
3125 Murphy Hall  
140801

January 3, 2008

To: M. Norton Wise  
Co-Director, Center for Society and Genetics  
Professor of History

Edward McCabe  
Co-Director, Center for Society and Genetics  
Executive Chair, Pediatrics  
Professor of Human Genetics

From: Robin Fisher, Chair  
UCLA Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction

Re: Proposal to establish the Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction (CII)

The Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction (CR&J) reviewed the revised bylaws submitted on Thursday, January 03, 2008 for the Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction. The committee voted to approve the bylaws.

This approval notice is being forwarded the Executive Board for further action to your proposal to establish the Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction.

For more information or questions, you may contact Dayna Baker at (310) 206-2469 or email [dsbaker@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:dsbaker@senate.ucla.edu).

Cc: Elizabeth Bjork, Chair, Academic Senate  
Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate  
Judith Lacertosa, Executive Coordinator, Undergraduate Initiatives  
Carlene Brown, Management Services Officer, Center for Society & Genetics  
Sally Gibbons, Associate Director, Center for Society & Genetics  
Victoria Sork, Professor, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology / Institute of the Environment  
Dayna Baker, Senior Policy Analyst, Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction