

TO: Beth Dobkin, Provost

**FROM: Steve Cortright, Chair
Academic Senate**

DATE: March 28, 2011

**RE: Senate Action S-10/11-20CA
Guidelines for Individualized Majors**

At the March 24, 2011 meeting of the Academic Senate, the attached Proposal to Formalize Guidelines of Individualized Major Approval Process was approved on the Senate's consent agenda. The issue was forwarded to the Senate from the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) where it was approved unanimously. This action was assigned Senate Action # S-10/11-20CA.

Attachment

cc: Brother Ronald Gallagher, President
Vice Provost Frances Sweeney

Individualized Major: Proposal to the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee

Current Catalogue language

Individualized Major. A student who believes his/her academic needs and purposes would be better served by a distinctive program of studies may present an individualized major plan. Besides fulfilling requirements for a major, this plan must satisfactorily lead the student toward the goal of liberal education which the College sees as essential for all of its graduates. Students wishing to pursue an individualized major must submit their proposal to the chair of the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee for approval. The chair may consult board members and appropriate department chairs before giving approval.

Proposed Catalogue changes:

*Individualized Major. A student who believes his/her academic needs and purposes would be better served by a distinctive program of studies may present an individualized major plan. Besides fulfilling requirements for a major, this plan must satisfactorily lead the student toward the goal of liberal education which the College sees as essential for all of its graduates. Students wishing to pursue an individualized major must submit their proposal to the chair of the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee for approval. **The guidelines for the proposal can be found online at: [provide UEPC website link to guidelines].***

Proposed guidelines:

Individualized Major Guidelines

APPROVAL PROCESS

- 1) The student wishing to pursue an individualized major consults with his/her current academic advisor and faculty in the appropriate fields to develop the individualized major proposal and develops the proposal, per the guidelines below. In the proposal, an academic advisor for the major is identified.
- 2) Chairs of the departments included in the proposal review and authorize the inclusion of the courses in the individualized major.
- 3) The student submits the proposal, attached to a “Petition for Special Action” to the Office of the Registrar.
- 4) The Registrar reviews the proposal and confirms that it meets requirements for an undergraduate degree at Saint Mary’s.
- 5) The Registrar forwards the proposal to the Chair of the Undergraduate Educational Policies Committee for his review and approval. The Chair may consult with members of the committee and appropriate department chairs prior to a final decision. If the Chair approves the individualized major, he/she informs the Registrar so that an appropriate GaelExpress program evaluation can be created. If the Chair does not approve the individualized major, he/she communicates his/her decision to the academic advisor and the student, with possible recommendations.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

1. List student name and ID number.
2. List proposed academic advisor name and department.
3. List title of proposed major.
4. Write a justification for the proposed major
 - a. A set of learning objectives to be achieved in this major.
 - b. A rationale for why this major is valuable for the student.
5. Provide a proposed program of study. List each course name, number, and department.
 - a. A set of lower division courses that represent the introduction to the discipline, and any skills or competencies necessary for advanced study in the discipline.
 - b. A set of upper division courses that represent breadth and depth in the discipline.
 - c. Any experiential learning that should be included in order to have advanced understanding of the discipline (e.g., study abroad, art production)
 - d. An integrative experience, culminating experience, or capstone experience and/or project that provides opportunity for the student to demonstrate their knowledge and competencies in the discipline. This may be but is not limited to an independent research methods course, a capstone seminar, or an independent thesis project.
6. Provide a description of how this program of study was developed (e.g., comparable to similar majors that exist in the Catalogue, comparable to the same major that exists at another institution).
 - a. Include attachments of similar majors, if available.
 - b. Include an explanation of how courses were chosen, with attention to the number of courses, the selection of lower division courses, prerequisites, upper division courses, and integrative experience.
 - c. Include a signature page of faculty and/or staff consulted in the development of the major.
 - d. Include a signature page of chairs of the departments with courses included in the major.