

Adopted: February 5, 2019

**ACADEMIC SENATE  
Of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-862-19**

**RESOLUTION ON CREATION OF NEW DEPARTMENT FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY  
STUDIES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS**

**Impact on Existing Policy:<sup>i</sup> NONE.**

- 1 WHEREAS, Interdisciplinary Studies is currently an interdepartmental major within the  
2 College of Liberal Arts (CLA); and  
3  
4 WHEREAS, The Science, Technology and Society program is a set of four minors within  
5 the College of Liberal Arts (CLA); and  
6  
7 WHEREAS, The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has identified several benefits for formally  
8 combining two programs – the Interdisciplinary Studies (BA) program and  
9 the Science, Technology and Society (minors) program and elevating the  
10 combined programs into one new department called **Interdisciplinary**  
11 **Studies in the Liberal Arts Department**; and  
12  
13 WHEREAS, The benefits and the structure of the new department are provided in the  
14 attachment to this resolution; and  
15  
16 WHEREAS, Said change in status and name has been approved by the college of Liberal  
17 Arts department chairs/program directors and the CLA Interim Dean; and  
18  
19 WHEREAS, Approval for combining these two programs into a new department has  
20 been given by all college Deans and the Provost; therefore be it  
21  
22 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis  
23 Obispo approve the creation of a new CLA department, **Interdisciplinary**  
24 **Studies in the Liberal Arts Department**.

Proposed by: Interdisciplinary Studies Program and Science,  
Technology and Society Program  
Date: November 27, 2018

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<sup>i</sup> (1) Describe how this resolution impacts existing policy on educational matters that affect the faculty. Examples include curricula, academic personnel policies, and academic standards.  
(2) Indicate if this resolution supersedes or rescinds current resolutions.  
(3) If there is no impact on existing policy, please indicate NONE.

## Overview

As part of the CLA's commitment to Vision 2022 and the mission, core values and strategic goals of the university, both the Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) B.A. and the Science, Technology and Society (STS) Minors empower students with holistic, interdisciplinary experiences that prepare them for success in the global economy. Further, the CLA has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to ensure that students "develop the ability to understand, appreciate, and engage with the ways that different disciplines approach common problems."<sup>1</sup>

In open communication with all department chairs and program directors and the Interim Dean of CLA, we propose a reorganization to form a new department housing the Interdisciplinary Studies B.A. program and the Science, Technology and Society minors program. Reorganization will allow the college to support, teach and provide learning opportunities for students to develop an integrated understanding of important problems. Further, it provides students and faculty with interdisciplinary interests an intellectual home that allows them to develop their complementary and collaborative expertise. Finally, a single department structure provides the resources and support capable of addressing the increased demand in the minors and major programs in the most efficient manner.

## Background

The Chancellor's Office approved the revision of the Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) B.A. on 18 August 2018.<sup>2</sup> The IS program is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate students transferring from other majors, yet also focused enough to provide students with a coherent and rigorous baccalaureate education. The goal of the Interdisciplinary Studies program is to meet the needs of two student populations: (1) students whose major was not a good fit and who have had difficulty transferring into a new major, and (2) students whose academic goals cannot be best met through pre-existing major and minor options. The IS major is open to internal transfers only and provides an intellectual interdisciplinary home that supports the university's Graduation Initiative goals. In addition to a set of core courses, IS students must select one of seven areas of expertise: Arts & the Human Experience; Ethics, Law & Justice; Global Studies; Health, Culture & Society; Science, Technology & Society; Social Sustainability; or Technology & Human Expression.

The Academic Senate approved four new Science, Technology & Society Minors in 2015 to encourage interdisciplinary integration, knowledge and experiences at the intersection of science, technology and society. The four minors are, in alphabetical order, (1) Ethics, Public Policy, Science, Technology and Society; (2) Gender, Race, Culture, Science, Technology and Society; (3) Media Arts, Science, Technology and Society; and (4) Science and Risk

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<sup>1</sup> "College of Liberal Arts: Envisioning the Future, Tier 3 Narrative," (Winter 2015), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> As part of the revision process, the Chancellor's Office also approved the conversion of the existing, but suspended BA in Interdisciplinary Studies major from self-support in Extended Education to state-support in the College of Liberal Arts.

Communication. The four minors are united around a common introductory and capstone course with a separate set of required core courses and electives for each minor.

Starting in 2015, the four STS minors have been administered by a program director. In some cases, the director also served as the director of the Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts program.<sup>3</sup> As of fall 2018, both the Interdisciplinary Studies major and the Science, Technology and Society minors are run under the auspices of one director. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the ISLA program is hiring for Director of the STS minors and the IS major.

### **Rationale for a New Department**

The new department is necessary to provide an intellectual hub for students to pursue interdisciplinary work efficiently, minimizing time to graduation while providing a set of robust and meaningful integrative experiences. Importantly, from the student perspective, a department reduces barriers in navigating Cal Poly's organizational complexity, provides resources to ensure appropriate career and post-graduate related learning, increases targeted advising, and enables meaningful mentorship for senior projects and research. Each of these is important in achieving Cal Poly's Graduation Initiative goals. Each of these is also particularly important for the success of interdisciplinary programs.

While most departments and programs within the college are to some degree interdisciplinary, there is also ample evidence to suggest that such work and learning are better supported in environments and processes underpinned by interdisciplinary thinking and approaches. The goal of the new department is not to isolate faculty and students from other departments within the CLA but rather to create a department that serves as a natural hub for interdisciplinary work in its teaching, research and service.

Further, the IS major is currently the only major fully housed within the College of Liberal Arts that does not operate within a department structure and still only exists as a program. As evidenced in the table below, we anticipate increasing student demand for the IS major as it becomes fully operational. As evidenced by the success of the Science, Technology and Society minors demonstrated in the table below, students at Cal Poly are clearly seeking opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary work focused on issues and skills they wish to develop. Combined with the increasing success of the STS minors, such growth places tremendous pressure on programs that do not have the opportunity to retain dedicated tenure line faculty or the ability of students to efficiently complete degree requirements and graduate in a timely manner.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the Humanities (HUM) program and prefix courses were renamed Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts (ISLA) to better reflect the offerings and programs existing under the prefix.

Table 1. Student Demand Data

Academic Year	STS Enrollment	Anticipated STS Enrollment	Anticipated IS Enrollment <sup>4</sup>	Total
2015-2016	126			
2016-2017	144			
2017-2018	198			
2018-2019		150	24	174
2019-2020		175	48	223
2020-2021		200	60	260
2021-2022		200	72	272
2022-2023		200	84	284

At the most basic level, a department is necessary to ensure that the Interdisciplinary Studies major and the Science, Technology and Society minors can continue to provide holistic, experiential and vibrant learning opportunities for students. The departmental structure ensures that these students and programs are not relegated to lesser positions within the college and university structure. It creates opportunities for faculty to continue to invest in providing interdisciplinarily rich environments by recognizing the value and centrality of such work. It provides students avenues through which they can graduate in a timely manner with a degree that supports a wide variety of career-ready skills.

#### **Resource Implications of a new Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts Department**

Many of the resources to support the new department are already in place or secured. There are currently five tenure-line faculty attached to the STS Program via Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). There is currently a search underway for a STS/IS Director. The budget for the STS Program and IS Major have already been approved and accounted for as part of the approval process for the new major and as regular operating practices of the CLA.

#### Faculty, Administrative, and Staff positions

##### *Department Chair*

The makeup of the faculty will be reorganized in the new department under a Department Chair.

##### *Faculty*

We anticipate meeting the faculty needs for the new department in a number of ways. First, faculty within the CLA engaged in interdisciplinary work will have the opportunity to move all or part of their tenure-line appointment to the new department via a process approved by all department chairs, program directors and the Interim Dean.

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<sup>4</sup> "Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies: Proposal for Revising and Converting to State-Support," (Spring 2018), p. 24.

Second, there are a number of faculty formally attached to the existing Science, Technology and Society minors. Between 2014 and 2018, the CLA hired five faculty (Coleen Carrigan, Matthew Harsh, Jim Werner, Brian Beaton and Martine Lappe') who share their primary teaching, research and service responsibilities between the four minors and tenure-home departments within the college. The division of teaching, research and service responsibilities between the tenure departments and STS is outlined within each faculty member's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). We anticipate that the STS component of their MOUs would transfer over from the existing STS Program to the new department. In addition, the STS/IS Director to be hired in the 2018-2019 academic year will likely be 1.0 FTE in the new department, assuming a new department is formed.

Finally, there are a number of lecture- and tenure-line faculty attached to specific course proposals within the new IS major. The table below presents faculty for the core courses in the IS Major and the STS Minors as identified in the course proposals or by offerings since Fall 2016.<sup>5</sup>

Table 2. Core Courses in Interdisciplinary Studies B.A. and/or Science, Technology and Society Minors

	Course Title	Current/Previous Teaching Faculty	Listed Teaching Faculty on Course Proposal
ISLA 123	Introduction to Science, Technology and Society	Beaton, Harsh, Lehr	
ISLA 201	Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies	Bodemer	Adan, Askay, Murphy, Razi
ISLA 240	Introduction to Media Arts and Technologies	Johnston, Ruszczycy	
ISLA 303	Values and Technology	Johnston, Moon, Scarborough	
ISLA 305	Public Engagements with STEM	Kolodziejcki	
ISLA 320	Topics and Issues in Values, Media and Culture	Pierce, Westwood	
ISLA 340	Media Arts and Technologies: Storytelling	Barros	
ISLA 341	Media Arts and Technologies: Cinematic Processes	Barros	
ISLA 355*	Interdisciplinary Research Methods		Adan, Askay, Bodemer, Lowham, Murphy, Navarro, Razi

<sup>5</sup> Please note that ISLA currently houses many interdisciplinary study-abroad courses not included in the second table.

ISLA 393	Action-oriented Ethnography	Carrigan	
ISLA 440*	Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies Seminar		Adan, Anderson, Askay, Bodemer, Lowham, Murphy, Razi, Yeh
ISLA 456	Advanced Project-Based Learning in Science, Technology and Society	Beaton, Carrigan, Lappe, Lehr, Lowham, Werner	
ISLA 461*	Senior Project		Askay, Bodemer, Farber, Lowham, Murphy, Razi

\* First offering, 2019-2020 Academic Year

### *Staff*

We believe that the majority of the support staff required for the new department are currently in place or were approved as part of the proposal for the IS major.

### *Administrative Support Staff*

Since the launch of the STS Minors in 2015, the staff support for the HUM/ISLA programs has gone through several iterations, most of which were combinations of part-time support from other departments. Currently, the programs are supported by a single ASC I, Nicole Rivera (FTE 1.0). Importantly, the transition to a full-time ASC coincided with the launch of the new IS major, and includes staff support for the Center for Expressive Technologies.<sup>6</sup> During the first two years of the new department, the college has agreed to continue to provide administrative support staff through existing resources.

### Budget

We anticipate that the new department will require few additional resources above those previously approved for the STS program and IS major. The college currently supports the STS Director, the Administrative Support Coordinator, and the STS courses with the ISLA designation. The budget for the already-approved IS major includes the resources to support the IS major coordinator, additional administrative staff required for the program, and a budget to staff major courses in ISLA and in other departments. We anticipate that these combined resources should largely cover the operational costs of the new department.

### Space

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<sup>6</sup> The Center for Expressive Technologies is a college level center closely related to the work of the STS minors. It is currently directed by Dr. Matthew Harsh, associate professor in Social Sciences and STS.

The ASC already has an office space and the new IS/STS director will come in with a faculty office as part of the hiring process. We will use regular CLA processes for determining office space to move the program's Administrative Support Coordinator and Chair in proximity to each other as space and resources allow. As indicated in the proposal for the IS major, we do not anticipate requiring additional specialized classroom spaces or other facilities. The STS faculty already have access to existing research space in Building 52 and we anticipate that they would still have access to this space as part of the new department. Space resources and maintenance of these spaces have already been accounted for in the normal operations of the CLA.



CAL POLY

College of Liberal Arts  
Dean's Office

6 November 2018

Academic Senate  
Cal Poly – San Luis Obispo

Dear Members of the Academic Senate,

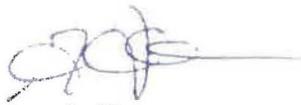
Thank you for your consideration of the proposed reorganization and change of administrative status for the Interdisciplinary Studies Program and the Science, Technology and Society Program. As department chairs, program directors and members of the College Council, we enthusiastically and unanimously support this proposal for the ways it will support student success and faculty development.

We believe that reorganization will allow the college to support, teach and provide learn by doing opportunities for students based in an interdisciplinary and integrated understanding of important problems. Importantly, the new department creates an intellectual hub for students to pursue interdisciplinary work efficiently, minimizing time to graduation while providing a set of robust and meaningful integrative experiences.

From the student perspective, a department reduces barriers in navigating Cal Poly's organizational complexity, provides resources to ensure appropriate career and post-graduate related learning, increases targeted advising, and enables meaningful mentorship for senior projects and research. By providing students and faculty with interdisciplinary interests an intellectual home in the college, a department encourages the development of their complementary and collaborative expertise.

Finally, we believe a single department structure provides the resources and support capable of addressing the increased demand in the minors and major programs in the most efficient manner. As evidenced by the success and growth of the Science, Technology and Society minors, students at Cal Poly are clearly seeking opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary work focused on issues and skills they wish to develop. Combined with the approval of the new Interdisciplinary Studies major, such growth places tremendous pressure on programs that do not have the opportunity to retain dedicated tenure-line faculty or the ability of students to efficiently complete degree requirements and graduate in a timely manner. A department would provide a stable and coherent structure for these two programs, and we support the creation of this department in the College of Liberal Arts.

Sincerely,



**Giancarlo Fiorenza**  
Chair, Art & Design



**W. Terrence Spiller**  
Chair, Music



**Richard Besel**  
Chair, Communication Studies



**Ken Brown**  
Chair, Philosophy



**Catherine Waitinas**  
Interim Chair, English



**Elizabeth Lowham**  
Program Director, Interdisciplinary  
Studies, Science, Technology and Society  
Chair, Political Science



**Denise Isom**  
Chair, Ethnic Studies



**Jasna Jovanovic**  
Chair, Psychology and Child Development



**Ken Macro**  
Chair, Graphic Communication



**Terry Jones**  
Chair, Social Sciences



**Kate Murphy**  
Chair, History



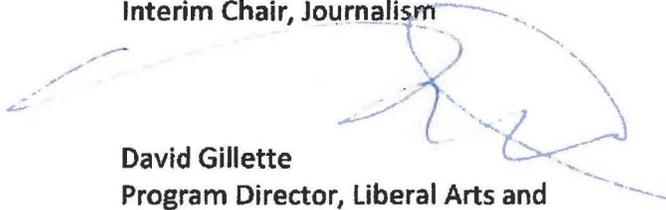
**Josh Machamer**  
Chair, Theatre and Dance



**Brady Teufel**  
Interim Chair, Journalism



**Jane Lehr**  
Chair, Women's & Gender Studies



**David Gillette**  
Program Director, Liberal Arts and  
Engineering Studies



**Fernando Fabio Sanchez**  
Chair, World Languages & Cultures



**CAL POLY**  
College of Liberal Arts

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Dustin Stegner  
Chair, Academic Senate

**DATE:** November 29, 2018

**FROM:** Kathryn Rummell *KAR*  
Interim Dean, College of  
Liberal Arts

**CC:** Kathleen Enz Finken, Provost and Executive Vice  
President for Academic Affairs  
Scott Dawson, Dean, Orfalea College of Business  
Amy Fleischer, Dean, College of Engineering  
Christine Theodoropoulos, Dean, College of  
Architecture & Environmental Design  
Andrew Thulin, Dean, College of Agriculture, Food  
and Environmental Sciences  
Dean Wendt, Dean, College of Science and  
Mathematics

**SUBJECT:** Resolution on Creation of New Department for Interdisciplinary Studies in the  
Liberal Arts

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This memo formally acknowledges approval of the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution and proposal to create a new department, Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts, by the Deans' Council. The Deans' Council endorsed the proposal at its November 26, 2018 meeting.