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Interdisciplinary

PROPOSAL FOR PROCEDURE FOR SENATE TO FOLLOW
IN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

The Faculty of Education requests that the Senate establish an Interdisciplinary Programs Committee to examine all interdisciplinary programs and to report to the next meeting of Senate on a recommendation of the Faculty of Education that the Interdisciplinary Program for the study of human movement lead to a B.Sc. Degree.

Justification

There are certain distinguishing characteristics and responsibilities that are implicit in any discipline. It must, for example, encourage and carry on extensive research to support and advance existing theories and to lead to new concepts and knowledge. Existing knowledge must be organized and presented in an orderly and systematic fashion through course work or academic experiences. Each discipline too, must select interested and promising students and encourage them to follow specific programs leading to professional competence. Without these functions and responsibilities it is doubtful if any discipline would continue to advance.

The personnel in the Physical Development Centre are faced with a situation which makes it impossible to carry out two of these functions. The reason why this situation exists are several, but should in no way be construed as truly hampering the possibilities of future development.

The philosophy of the Faculty of Education is one which identifies that the training of a teacher begins first with his mastery of the subject field or discipline he intends to teach. The method of promoting mastery of a discipline involves requiring the student to complete his undergraduate training in existing disciplines within the Faculties of Arts or Science. Following this academic preparation, the student then undergoes a period of professional preparation. This appears to be a sound philosophy and one which is quite compatible with the thinking of the Physical Development Centre.

The difficulty arises, however, when one realizes that the field of physical education has in the past primarily been one of professional preparation. Only recently has the profession begun to realize that there are two aspects to its totality; one, an academic discipline in the true sense of the term, and two, the application of the discipline in a professional or technical sense.

Because of this situation there does not exist within the Faculties of Arts, Science, or Education, a place for the study of the academic discipline of physical education. This means that unless a program for the advancement of the discipline is evolved within the structure of the Faculties of Arts, Science, or Education the discipline can not be studied and as a consequence, students could not be prepared professionally.

The problem facing the Physical Development Centre therefore, was to define what in fact constitutes the academic discipline of physical education and then to determine how this field of study might best be incorporated within the existing structure of the University.

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The Physical Development Centre after extensive investigation and discussion agreed that the academic discipline of physical education may be identified as being the study of the science of human movement. It was further agreed that the science of human movement is founded upon a number of life and social sciences and that a study of human movement must first begin with a study of the basic concepts in these contributing sciences.

The Physical Development Centre, through a committee established by the President, worked closely with the Dean of Science in the development of an interdisciplinary program for the study of human movement. This program was thoroughly discussed within the department of Biological Sciences and the Physical Development Centre and was then advanced to the Curriculum Committees of the Faculties of Science and Education. The program was accepted in principle by both Committees and was passed back to the President's Committee for further modifications. The program, after refinement, was resubmitted to the Curriculum Committees; it was accepted in principle and in content and was advanced to the Faculty of Science for their approval and acceptance. The Faculty of Science by a vote of 20 to 15 declined to accept the program on the grounds that it did not appear to meet the requirements of a major degree in Science and suggested that the program should be sponsored by the Faculty of Education or such other body of the University that the Senate may recommend.

The President's Committee in reviewing the possible actions which could be taken to advance this program following its defeat by the Faculty of Science, recommended to the President that the Senate be requested to establish a committee to examine all interdisciplinary programs and in particular, the program for the study of human movement. It was further recommended that direct action be taken in the advancement of the program and that the Faculty of Education be requested to accept the courses proposed by the Physical Development Centre for the development of the program. The President concurred with these recommendations and suggested that the Faculty of Education be requested to advance these proposals to the Senate. It was further recommended by the President that the Faculty of Education should be requested to go on record as approving the offering of a B.Sc. degree for students following this program and as being willing to offer such a degree if the proposed Senate Interdisciplinary Committee is unable to come up with a more satisfactory solution.

It has further been suggested that the terms of reference for this committee could include the identification of the various areas of interdisciplinary activity that Simon Fraser University could teach. The committee could also make recommendations on the administrative structure for the overseeing of interdisciplinary programs, on the acceptability of proposed interdisciplinary programs and on the degrees to be offered for each interdisciplinary program.