Attachment: Incubator Program

Incubator program, temporary authorization to rapidly develop competitive new degree programs.

For reasons of modernization, competitiveness, best educational practice and pragmatism of the operational budget of the academy, the University needs to act quickly to both capitalize on recent lessons learned on the competitiveness of combined competency degrees and to resolve the budgetary challenges that can no longer be deferred.

Thusly, it is requested that the Faculty authorize Academic Units to rapidly develop combined subjects degree programs of ~126 credit hours. These would be comprised of the very core of two current offered majors using for the greatest part, existing classes and keeping the development of new classes to an absolute minimum. This would include the core of the curriculum and maintain a 'module' of free electives (outlined below). There will be multiple points of curricular integration, inclusive of early in the program by design but also at different stages of the program. Some courses would, in particular, act as points of intersection between the disciplines, inclusive of practicum, experience-based, research, and entrepreneurial approaches. To help meet our learning objectives and intended contribution to a multidisciplinary program, no more than two courses may count for both disciplines in the combined major's program.

Key outline of new combined subject programs (multidisciplinary, degrees, distinctive from joint degrees where two existing degrees share some credit, these are new degree programs).

1. A norm of 126 credits and a maximum of 130 for undergraduates, and increasing the number of free electives at the same time should be a high priority.
2. Setting up modules consisting of the following; the core curriculum, major topic 1, major topic 2 and free electives may be considered as a structure.
3. A question will arise of what balance to strike. Modules of 30 credits each would substantially reduce the major topics and may (potentially) slightly reduce the core but boost free electives.

Approval process under the incubator

Before becoming permanent degree programs, there is a pragmatic need to develop approaches that can be offered in the very near future, to attract students to enroll. Operationally, we are not able to approve these new degree programs as of Spring 2023 one by one. We however do understand the outline structure and we have the capacity and will to authorize Academic Units to develop these combined programs under the leadership of their

academic deans. Before being formally offered in our catalog, they will need to be referred to the studies committee and the UFC for approval. However, this proposal provides temporary authorization by the faculty and the Board of Trustees, for the offering of these programs for the next two academic years before requiring final and permanent approval by the faculty and the board of trustees.This also enables us to straight-forwardly dispense with temporarily approved programs that are not successful, without the highly complex and challenging formal elimination process for permanently approved programs. This will help us manage our offering with a diminished burden on our already challenging process of approvals and eliminations.

1. Program proposed, developed, and approved within Academic Unit with Academic Dean approval.
2. Proposed, discussed, and approved at appropriate studies committee.
3. Proposed, discussed, and approved by the UFC.
4. Accepted by Provost and President.

The temporary incubator maintains faculty and administrative oversight, simplifying the process of offering new programs (and if necessary removing unsuccessful programs). It would follow the CIM process for "Not Significant" changes, even as new programs will need to be properly reported to our accrediting bodies. This will, of course, continue to be done.

*Example of existing approach as proposed here: Northeastern
Students with academic interests spanning two disciplines may choose to pursue a combined major. A combined major is one major that includes at least nine courses from each of the two participating disciplines. No more than two courses may count for both disciplines, i.e., there must be at least 16 courses in the combined major. There are multiple points of curricular integration between the two disciplines. This includes courses acting as a bridge between the two majors being combined, experiential learning opportunities, research and creative opportunities, and more. These opportunities for curricular integration occur at different stages of the program in order to meet the curriculum integration learning outcome(s). It is generally advantageous to declare the combined major as early as possible, especially when highly structured disciplinary components are involved.

See the online list of current combined majors (https://admissions.northeastern.edu/academics/combined-majors/). Students may request admission to a combined major by following the standard procedure for changing majors. A home college is designated, in which the student will be registered and from which they will be graduated. Most combined majors allow the student to choose the home college. Upon graduation, students receive one major, one degree, and one diploma. The combined major and home college will appear on the transcript and diploma.