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## Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Consumer Affairs

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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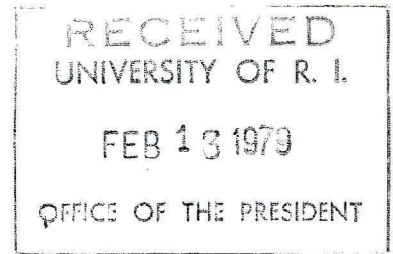
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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE  
BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate



TO: President Frank Newman

FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

- The attached BILL, titled Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Consumer Affairs

is forwarded for your consideration.

- The original and two copies for your use are included.
- This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on February 8, 1979 (date).
- After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Regents, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

- In accordance with Section 8, paragraph 2 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on March 1, 1979 (date), three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Regents for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Regents, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

February 12, 1979  
(date)

Dorothy F. Donnelly  
Dorothy F. Donnelly  
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

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ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

- Returned.
- Approved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Approved subject to final approval by Board of Regents ✓
  - Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

*approved by Bd. of Regents  
4/23/81*

2/20/79  
(date)

F. Newman  
President

College of Human Science and Services

Division of Interdisciplinary Studies

Committee on Consumer Affairs

ADD: Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Consumer Affairs

A. Proposal

1. Concentration requirements: 128 credits

- a. General Education requirements: 45 credits
- b. If not taken to fulfill the general education requirements or the concentration requirements the following courses are required:
  - 1) Oral and Written Communication Skills: 6 credits  
ENG 110 or SCRATCH (3) and one of the following: SPE 101, 102 or 215 (3).
  - 2) Functions of Economic and Political Systems: 12 credits  
ECN 125 (3), 126 (3), PSC 113 (3) and 221 (3).
  - 3) Research, Statistics and Mathematical Skills: 9 credits (Option A) or 15 credits (Option B)  
Option A: MTH 109 (3), EST 408 (3) and 412 (3).  
Option B: MGS 101, 102 (6), 107 (3) and 201, 202 (6).
  - 4) Analytical/Synthesis/Creative/Change Skills: 12 credits  
PHL 101 (3), 312 (3), PSY 113 (3), SOC 202, 208, or 304 (3).

c. Consumer Affairs Concentration: 33 credits

- 1) Courses required of all majors: 18 credits  
HMG 220 (3), 320 (3), 420 (3), 470 (3) or MKT 481, 482 (3), MKT 334 (3), and BSL 333 (3).
- 2) Students required to complete 5 of the following: 15 credits  
ECN 337 (3), HMG 210 (3), 422 (3), MKT 323 (3), 326 (3), \*BSL 450 (3), CDF 150 (3), 355 (3), MGT 301 (3).
- 3) Professional concentration: 12 credits  
Each student is required to take at least 12 credits for professional concentration designed to meet his/her professional goals. With the guidance of a member of the consumer affairs coordinating committee each student should select courses and/or field experience closely related to his/her chosen specialization. Examples of professional concentrations include: housing, social welfare, counseling, environmental studies, food, education, (non-certified), business management, textiles, and home economics. Other areas would also be suitable for a professional concentration.

d. Electives

The number of elective credits will vary due to the overlap in requirements for general education, and courses required for the consumer affairs concentration.

2. Creation of a Coordinating Committee for Consumer Affairs:

A Consumer Affairs Coordinating Committee shall be appointed by the Coordinator of the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies of the College of Human Science and Services and the program head of the Consumer Affairs Program, in consultation with the appropriate department chairperson and dean. The committee shall comprise one faculty member from the departments of Home Management, Textiles, Clothing and Related Art, Home Economics Education, Marketing, Management, and one faculty member from each department with more than two courses required in the Consumer Affairs Curriculum. (The initial committee shall include Jean Lown, Home Management; Patricia Helms, Textiles and Clothing; Louise MacKenzie, Home Economics Education; Robert Nason, Marketing; Richard Sisco, Management; and other faculty appointed by the Coordinator of the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies in consultation with respective department chairpersons and deans).

The Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for requesting resources from the Division Coordinator, making policy decisions related to the curriculum, and advising students majoring in Consumer Affairs.

A program head for Consumer Affairs shall be selected by the Coordinating Committee from its members. The program head shall work closely with the Coordinator of the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies in handling administrative details of the program, committee and student enrollments.

3. New Courses:

- a. HMG 220 Consumer In the Economy (1 and 11,3) Application of basic economic principles to consumer problems in a complex marketplace, buyer-seller relationships, effective consumer decision-making, effects of government policies on consumers. (Lec. 3) Pre: Economics course. Low
- \*b. HMG 420 Consumer Protection (1,3) Effectiveness of diverse approaches to consumer protection. Analysis of techniques such as information disclosure, standards for products and services, government and private agencies, redress channels, and legislation. (Lec. 3) Pre: 320 or permission of Instructor, Christner
- \*c. HMG 422 Current Consumer Topics (11,3) Critical examination of current topics in consumer affairs. Includes issue and policy analysis; costs and benefits for consumers, business and government; implications for policy formation. (Lec. 3) Pre: 220. Low

B. Rationale

1. Purpose:

The Consumer Affairs program is designed to create first, an educational capability at the University of Rhode Island to prepare students for professional contributions in the field of consumer affairs and second, a focus for cooperative interdisciplinary research.

The objectives of the program are:

1. to provide an educational opportunity for students to learn effective strategies for dealing competently with complex social and economic systems,
2. to provide professional training for students seeking careers in private and public agencies and businesses dealing with consumer concerns,
3. to provide field experience for students in related businesses and agencies, and
4. to provide interdisciplinary research opportunities for exploring consumer issues.

At present, the best URI can do for students who desire to study consumer affairs is to grant them the opportunity to declare an area of interest in consumer affairs. However, such a model represents a fragmented approach since there is presently no coordination or, for that matter, visibility of such a program. Furthermore, eighteen hours of course work falls far short of professional preparation in consumer affairs. The interest among students for such a curriculum is there and to continue with the present system is a disservice to our students, to the consumers they may come to serve, and to the prospective firms and agencies who employ consumer affairs professionals. An additional advantage of approving such a major would be the concurrent opportunities for service to the state and municipal government agencies with consumer affairs functions. Some of these agencies are serving URI students by providing them with field experiences, but URI does very little for the agencies in return. This is probably due more to the fact that their personnel do not know what we may have to offer them rather than the fact that there is an unwillingness for exchange. The lack of a defined program hinders visibility of the available course

offerings of different departments.

Just as identifying faculty with expertise in consumer affairs by means of adopting a curriculum in that field would enhance mutual working relationships with state agencies, it would also facilitate interdisciplinary research because of increased interaction among the faculty involved in the program. Although faculty expertise exists there is poor visibility and little coordination of teaching and research activities as interested faculty are scattered throughout various departments and colleges.

The model proposed here for the organization and coordination of a consumer affairs curriculum would bring together faculty from several departments in several colleges physically and ideologically for the purpose of identifying needs and making policies for the program. The natural result would be the discovery of mutual interests and opportunities for research.

2. Staff and Facilities:

The staff for the program in Consumer Affairs already exists. The design of the curriculum draws upon existing University faculty, facilities, and courses. It is envisioned that the number of students majoring in this curriculum would initially be approximately five to ten sophomores and juniors the first year, increasing to ten to fifteen sophomores, juniors and seniors the second year or a total of fifteen students per year. It is anticipated that the enrollments will increase and the limiting factor governing how many students could be accommodated in the future will be class size restrictions on required business courses.

At present the departmental faculty is adequate to staff the courses for this program and with a few internal departmental changes such as offering some courses once a year instead of twice and restricting faculty commitment to extension teaching the departments will be able to adequately implement this program.

The library collection relevant to the needs of this program is adequate, particularly for the initial stages. Departments in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Home Economics have been requesting relevant monograph and serials acquisitions for several years. It is assumed that the introduction of a Consumer Affairs program will result in some shifts in requests for acquisitions such that the library support for this program will improve significantly without additional costs being incurred.

3. Cost:

First year estimated costs to the university for this program would be \$1,500 to cover the need of purchasing more supplies and supervision of field placement experiences. In the second and third year, estimated costs will be costs for supplies, field placement supervision and \$1,290 per semester (or rate at that time) to hire someone to assume departmental teaching in extension. Estimated total cost would be \$1,500 the first year increasing to \$3,790 - 5,080 per year (depending on frequency of extension offerings) the second and third year.