

University Curriculum Committee (UCC)

Chair: Alistair Welchman

Members: Liang Tang, Gregory Hazleton, Pepe Chang, Raymond Garza, Martha Fasci, Brian Davies, Turgay Korkmaz

There is one proposal before the committee: a BA in Geography and Environmental Sustainability -- Social Studies Teaching Track (Department of Political Science and Geography)

The Committee recommends that the Senate vote to accept the proposals and send them on for final administrative approval (5 in favor, 0 opposed with 3 abstentions).

BA in Geography and Environmental Sustainability -- Social Studies Teaching Track

The Department of Political Science and Geography proposes a new track in their existing BA program in Geography and Environmental Sustainability specifically tailored to students who intend to become social studies teachers in Texas middle or high schools. Such students require teacher certification that involves a number of education and other related courses in addition to domain-specific knowledge.

Students who take a regular degree and then apply for certification can end up taking as many as 147 hours. The proposed degree integrates teacher certification courses into the core curriculum choices and electives of a Geography BA. As a result, students can achieve a BA and teacher certification in only 120 hours.

The substantive content of the degree will enable students to become Social Studies teachers at the middle school level (6th- 8th grade) or Economics, Geography, Government, and History teachers at the high school level, as well as allowing them to meet the standard of a Texas Highly Qualified Teacher (defined as one having 24h in their disciplinary area, with 12h upper division).

Folding the teaching certification into the degree does not just save students time (and hence money) but also makes them eligible for extra educator-related funding opportunities.

The Department has worked with the Secondary Teaching Certification Center to ensure students take courses that prepare them for the mandatory Social Studies Composite TExES exam.

The Department already teaches the appropriate courses, and so is not requesting any new resources, although it does expect up to 24 new majors in the program within 5 years.

The UCC had some minor issues with the first draft of the proposal (including the name!) but these were settled to everyone's satisfaction in a slightly modified second draft.

The Committee recommends that the Senate vote to accept this proposal.