SYNOPSIS OF A PROPOSAL FOR THE INITIATION OF A NEW INSTRUCTIONAL LEADING TO THE MINOR IN EUROPEAN STUDIES

European Studies program, Department of International Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Proposed CIP: 010506

Description of Proposed Program

a. Program Purpose

b. What are the objectives of the proposed program?

This proposal to replace the current Certificate in European Studies with a Minor in European Studies (MES) has five objectives:

1. To make European Studies on campus more legible to undergraduates. They are often uncertain what a Certificate is or why it may help them, though Certificate requirements are similar to minors.
2. To contribute to UO’s focus on internationalization more broadly. Europe is the main destination of UO students studying abroad. The MES will offer them a clear way to integrate their foreign studies with their work on the home campus. Creation of the MES alongside programs in African Studies, Latin American Studies, Asian Studies, and Russian and Eastern European Studies will also signal a consistent UO commitment to regional expertise and study around the world.
3. To help students signal to employers or graduate schools, in a more legible way than the Certificate offers, that they have acquired Europe-focused expertise.
4. To respond to consistent student demand for Europe-focused courses.
5. To respond to an emergent “critical mass” of faculty in the wake of several hires and tenure cases.

b. What are the numbers and characteristics of students to be served?

In the past six years some 700 students have taken GEOG 202 “The Geography of Europe,” the core introductory course for European Studies. More than 500 UO students study in Europe each year. Currently four to six students per year receive European Studies certificates. With a more legible Minor program, we expect a jump to 15-20 European Studies minors per year, with growth potential from there. Within the next five years we anticipate approximately 75 students will complete the minor. Enrollees in upper division courses on the European Union as History (EURO 410/510, now EURO 415/515) and in the Idea of Europe (offered as HIST 420, RL 407, or PS 410) are indicative of students likely to be attracted to the minor: from still undeclared, to majors in Anthropology, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, International Studies, Sociology, and Pre-Business and Pre-Journalism, and more.

Though the program is for undergraduates, we also expect that prospective graduate students in the humanities and social sciences may be attracted to UO thanks to this stronger signal of a locus of Europe-focused faculty and resources.

c. How does the program meet the needs of Oregon and enhance the state’s capacity to respond effectively to social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities?

A key requirement for economic development in Oregon and effective participation by the state’s citizens in a global society is enhanced international awareness and understanding. Students graduating with a minor in European Studies will be better qualified to participate and succeed economically and politically in the global arena. Europe is our largest trade and investment partner by a large margin, both for the US broadly and Oregon specifically—Americans still invest more in the Netherlands, for example, than in China—and the United States is more similar to this region of stable, prosperous democracies than any...
other. A clear program to give students broad European expertise will help prepare them to seize the many opportunities created by that deep economic, political, and cultural transatlantic relationship. The minor will also help prepare students for graduate or professional school in a variety of fields, such as geography, political science, international affairs, business, journalism, and linguistics.

2. Relationship to Strategic Direction

a. How does the proposed program further the mission and strategic directions of the University of Oregon?

International awareness is central to UO’s mission statement and the University President’s vision for educating informed global citizens. A truly internationalized research university makes curricular commitment to all major regions. It may have made sense to first develop area-studies programs in non-European regions to which UO needed to direct students’ attention—precisely because well-developed economic, political, cultural, and study-abroad ties would keep many connected to Europe in any case—but Europe now stands out for lacking a comprehensible organizational place in our curriculum. To open the clearest pathways to international opportunities for as many of our students as possible, European Studies needs to join the other regional specialties as a minor-granting program.

b. How does the proposed program maximize student access, academic productivity and institutional quality?

This proposal aims first and foremost at communicating more clearly to students what options they already enjoy for European Studies on campus, improving their access to existing resources. We also hope to use the Minor requirements to encourage two kinds of student choices that will greatly strengthen their UO and life experience: to study foreign languages, and to study abroad. Lastly, we also hope to contribute to academic productivity and quality by requiring interdisciplinary studies from our minors, and by offering them a clearer way to integrate their study-abroad experiences with home-campus study.

3. Resources

a. What resources are needed to support this program? (Specifically identify the resources currently available as parts of existing UO programs or reallocations within existing budgets.)

The European Studies program currently receives a $2000 annual operating budget and a $2000 Director’s stipend. Operationally we draw on the staff of OCIAS in the International Studies. The proposal anticipates no need for further staff or technology resources, but includes requests for a total of $4,742 in new annual spending:

Partial GTF position for one quarter for Model European Union. One quarter, .2 FTE for a graduate student to help prepare our team for the annual EU simulation at the University of Washington. Currently done awkwardly on volunteer basis. Total new cost: $1,542 per year.

Modest expansion of existing annual funding for speakers and events. Expanding the operating budget to $4000 will allow us (in collaboration with other programs) to organize one mini-conference per year, significantly upgrading our profile. Total new cost: $2,000 per year.

Support for one graduate student or faculty member to attend one specifically Europe-focused conference per year. Total new cost: $1,200 per year.

b. Does the program represent a collaboration of two or more UO academic units? What other existing programs complement this proposed program?
The European Studies committee includes faculty from across the university. It operates in the context (and crucially, with the staff support) of the International Studies department. In that sense it is deeply collaborative. This proposal represents no change in organization, however.

4. Student Outcomes

   a. What are the projected outcomes for students graduating from this program, including their employment opportunities? (Be as specific as possible).

   Students who receive the minor will be better-informed citizens of the US and better able to affect US-policies vis-à-vis Europe. They will be able to read international news and other media relating to Europe with greater critical understanding of how the information may be biased, incomplete, connect to other pieces of knowledge they already have, etc. This program will also offer a way for students who study abroad in Europe to better integrate that experience with home-campus study. In career terms, the minor will better equip students to pursue job opportunities in the enormous volume of transatlantic economic activity, in the dense arena of international NGOs that exist mainly between the US and Europe, and in the international organizations (whether regional or global) that are largely headquartered in Europe. They will be better prepared for graduate work in a variety of disciplines, wherever Europe-research questions will be part of their program.

5. Indicate the timeframe for submitting a complete proposal to the Office of Academic Affairs.

   The proposal is complete and is being submitted with this synopsis.