

## PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

### TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL:

Master of Urban Planning Joint Degree Option  
Department of Urban and Regional Planning  
College of Fine and Applied Arts  
November 18, 2006

### SPONSOR:

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### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this proposal is to provide a mechanism that permits joint master's degrees between Urban Planning and other programs on campus. We believe that the possibility of an interdisciplinary professional degree with Urban Planning would provide a very attractive opportunity to potential students, would add to the academic strength of this campus, and would enhance the academic program of students both within and outside of Urban Planning. The benefits of joint degrees, compared to two sequential degrees are twofold. First, students would benefit from an interdisciplinary program that encourages them to integrate their studies across the two disciplines. Second, students could receive two degrees in less time than normally required, while still retaining the full educational value of each degree.

For internal purposes, we are sensitive to the issues of accreditation by the Planning Accreditation Board. The PAB expects to see a substantial MUP program that offers not only the basic minimal requirements, but also offers students the opportunity to integrate their planning education into a substantive area of specialization or concentration. We are comfortable that the dual degree option we propose would accomplish this, in a manner similar to our two current programs in Law and Architecture.

### JUSTIFICATION:

This proposal was approved by the Graduate College Executive Committee in 2002 after considerable consultation with the Program Subcommittee. They expressed support for encouraging interdisciplinary education, but initially had several concerns, which we have addressed in this proposal, as approved by the Graduate College in early 2003. Specifically, this proposal addresses the following issues:

*Preserving the value of the MUP degree.* The proposed joint degree requires completion of all core courses and the capstone project, and it requires completion of 40 hours of Urban Planning



courses. The courses taken for the second degree will contribute to the "area of concentration" for the MUP degree. When approving requests for joint degrees, we will verify that the proposal describes an overlapping of Urban Planning with the other field. This is to ensure that the joint degree student acquires knowledge and skills substantially equivalent to a student who takes the programs separately. Our internal guidelines will identify the programs that are most appropriate for joint degrees; proposals for joint degrees with other programs will require significant justification.

*Eligible Master's Programs.* Students from any program would be eligible to apply. They must justify it by means of their proposal, as well as by a statement of commitment from both programs. We expect their proposal to clearly justify the rationale for the joint degree and present an academic plan for achieving it. We would require an explicit statement of support from their advisor and director of graduate studies of the other program, as well as from their MUP advisor and MUP degree director. In many cases, we believe that it would be desirable for the other program to agree to apply Urban Planning courses toward its degree requirements. Most importantly, the other program would need to explicitly recognize the student as a joint degree candidate.

*Timing.* The two degrees must be taken concurrently or consecutively. A student cannot complete one master's degree, work for a few years, and then come back to get a joint degree with Urban Planning. We think the *joint* aspect of this is important: students should study in their other program close enough in time to the MUP so that they are able to reflect on the significance of that discipline within the context of urban planning. As is true of all joint degree programs at UIUC, a student who wishes to enter a joint degree program must be admitted separately to each program as a joint degree candidate. Both degrees are awarded simultaneously upon completion of all requirements.

#### **BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:**

This program would demand minimal administrative effort, as we would expect to enroll only one to three joint degree students each year. Student demand on our resources would be the same as for our normal MUP students. This program would not increase the total number of students we admit to our MUP program, and we assume the same would be true for the partner programs in the joint degree.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION:**

Not applicable.



**CLEARANCES:**

*[Signature]*  
Head/chair of the sponsoring department or unit

9-27-06  
Date

*[Signature]*  
Dean of the college of the sponsoring department or unit

27 Sept 2006  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Senate Educational Policy Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:**

Candidates may propose joint programs combining the MUP with other UIUC master's degrees, according to the following guidelines: 1) They must either be enrolled or offered admission to the other degree program; 2) They must submit a proposal to the MUP program director describing the interdisciplinary value of the proposed joint program and show how the second degree serves as a specialization in the planning curriculum; 3) They must provide evidence of a commitment to their proposal from their academic advisor and director of graduate studies from each program; 4) The proposal must be approved by the Graduate College via petition; 5) At least 40 hours must be in Urban Planning, including all core, capstone, and concentration requirements; 6) The two programs must total a minimum of (a) 80 hours, or (b) the sum of 40 Urban Planning hours plus the required number of hours for the second degree, whichever is greater (in the latter case, the other program may at its discretion count up to 8 hours of Urban Planning courses as electives in meeting its degree requirements as long as students are required to take no fewer than 40 hours in that program); 7) Students may receive credit for a thesis or master's project in both programs provided faculty from both programs participate; and 8) Students must be in residence in Urban Planning for at least two semesters. Up to 16 hours may be waived if a student has an undergraduate professional degree in urban planning and the department approves a petition for this option. This reduction in courses cannot be combined with option 3 [this refers to an option for the MUP degree, listed in Programs of Study], and the student must take at least 30 hours units of his or her coursework in urban planning.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

Immediately.