

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Kurt Schwabe, Chair
SPP Executive Committee

RE: Proposed Policy Teaching Credit for Faculty-Led Internship Courses

Date: January 1st, 2017

The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy has considered the proposal to offer teaching credit for faculty-led academic internship courses. We feel that academic internships can be an attractive and important component to the undergraduate educational experience, particularly with its ability to enhance learning outside of the classroom; consequently, barriers to student and faculty involvement should be identified and addressed.

This current proposal identifies one such barrier—faculty involvement/participation in faculty-led academic internship courses is low because faculty do not receive teaching credit for offering such courses. In considering the experiences of one of our own faculty in teaching an academic internship course, as well as the examples provided in the proposal, it is not difficult to support such a proposal when the effort by faculty members in teaching such courses—both in terms of the quantity of hours as well as in providing a high quality academic and learning experience—is similar in magnitude, if not sometimes more, compared to the effort required for regular courses in which faculty already earn teaching credit. Based on our own experiences, organizing and coordinating internships is a daunting task, necessitating major investments of time on the part of the faculty. As such, we are supportive of the idea of providing teaching credit for these courses given there are mechanisms in place to ensure that faculty effort and the academic component of the course is maintained in a manner consistent with that of other courses in which faculty receive teaching credit.

As far as the potential implications of such a policy on teaching loads and teaching capacities, we feel such concerns are regularly addressed by departments and programs with their current course offerings. Yet if particular departments and/or programs feel that they are limited in their ability to offer such courses and feel that their students are disadvantaged relative to other programs/departments for which the opportunity costs of offering these courses are lower, a larger campus wide discussion should be warranted.