February 17, 2006

MEMORANDUM

To: Jon Sticklen, Chairperson
    Executive Committee of Academic Council

From: Ralph Putnam, Chairperson
      University Committee on Academic Policy

RE: AA Bill# 14-25: Support the inclusion of multiple majors on students’ diploma

At its 22 November 2005 meeting, ECAC requested that UCAP review Academic Assembly’s Bill# 14-25 to support the inclusion of multiple majors on students’ diplomas.

After initial consideration at UCAP’s 2 February 2006 meeting, we sought input from Linda Stanford, Assistant Provost for Academic Services and University Registrar, who provided background information about current practices and issues regarding diplomas.

At our 16 February 2006 meeting, UCAP discussed MSU’s current practices for diploma content and the Academic Assembly proposal to include additional majors (beyond the primary major) on the diploma. **UCAP does not support changing current practice to include additional majors on diplomas.** The key points we considered in reaching this conclusion are included:

- The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) recommends that majors should appear on transcripts but not on diplomas, as the diploma is intended to document the overall academic achievement as represented by a degree. MSU’s longstanding practice goes beyond the listing of the degree type (e.g., B.A., B.S) to include the college and major on the diploma.

- The student’s MSU transcript provides the details of the students’ studies and accomplishments, including primary and additional majors, specializations, and other academic notations.

- It is the transcript (rather than the diploma) that serves as the student’s academic record when applying for employment or graduate study.

- Additional majors vary widely in terms of the number of credits they entail for particular students, depending on the student’s primary major and college.

Cc: Julie Harrison
    June Youatt
    Robin Pline