

**COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES  
COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

Date: September 1, 2008

To: XLI Senate of the Academic Council

From: Philip Lavori, Chair, Committee on Graduate Studies  
Ian Hodder, Chair, Committee for the Review of Undergraduate Majors

Re: Recommendation for the Renewal of the Graduate and Undergraduate Degree Programs  
In the Interdisciplinary Program in Symbolic Systems

C-RUM had two meetings with the Symbolic Systems Director, Ivan Sag, and Associate Director, Todd Davies, on February 22 and May 16. Their report noted that the trend in artificial intelligence, linguistics, and psychology has moved from algebraic to probabilistic approaches, and the Symbolic Systems curriculum has evolved in response to these developments (including requiring SYMSYS 100 as its one core course). The IDP has added requirements and strengthened the computer science/programming courses in the major. The result of these discussions was a recommendation for a five-year renewal of the undergraduate program, with a mandatory three-year interim report to be provided to the School of Humanities and Sciences. C-RUM strongly recommended that the IDP make more progress in improving the program's core courses and its undergraduate advising. The section of the interim report that deals with advising will also be provided to C-RUM.

C-GS met with the same Symbolic Systems team on April 10 to review the IDP's master's degree program, which has become an appropriate transition for students to take before making professional decisions. Symbolic Systems graduates have gone into many different PhD programs; schools of medicine, law, and business; and a variety of professional careers. To date the program has only accepted internal applicants (co-terminal students); its goal is now to expand and allow applications from outside Stanford. This is a slow process, as the kind of background Stanford students bring is not always seen in external applications. The hope of the program is to double the pool of applicants, with a yield of a dozen enrollments each year. However, the MS will continue to be an academic, terminal degree program, which will only admit as many students as the faculty can personally supervise.

**The Committee on Graduate Studies recommends a five-year extension of the graduate degree program of the Interdisciplinary Program in Symbolic Systems, with authority to nominate candidates for the MS degree, for the period of September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2014.**

**The Committee for the Review of Undergraduate Majors therefore recommends a five-year extension for the undergraduate degree program in Symbolic Systems, with authority to nominate candidates for the BS degree, undergraduate minor, and Honors Program, for the period of September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2014.**

**COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES  
COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS  
RECOMMENDATION FOR RENEWAL OF  
INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN SYMBOLIC SYSTEMS**

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- II. Letter from Richard Saller (Dean) and Susan Stephens (Senior Associate Dean) of the School of Humanities and Sciences, to C-GS and to C-RUM, dated February 1, 2008.
- III. Symbolic Systems Program Self-Study, dated November 1, 2007.
- IV. Symbolic Systems Overview
- V. C-RUM Questions to Symbolic Systems (from May 16, 2008 meeting); Symbolic Systems documentation in Response
- VI. Stanford Bulletin 2007-08
- VII. Symbolic Systems Website Documents

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