January 8, 2005

D R A F T

Program Implementation Plan Proposals
Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought
(ASPECT)

Comparable programs at several Top 30 research institutions, which also are members of the Association of American Universities (AAU), inspire this initiative. The Dean in the former College of Arts and Sciences initially approved ASPECT in 2002. It then was endorsed for implementation by the Administrative Coordinating Council for the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ACCAHSS) during the 2002-2003 academic year, and it has been given a green light for implementation by AY 05-06 in the Graduate School's Plan for Graduate Degrees (IPGD). It is being strongly supported by the Dean of the new College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. And, finally, it has the backing of the Provost's Office. The IPGD directed the Department of History, Philosophy, and Political Science to implement this program. Later, the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies was invited to join with the group in August 2004. Moreover, when fully implemented, ASPECT will also include faculty from other College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences units as well as faculty in the Pamplin College of Business and the College of Architecture and Urban Studies.

Organizational Options and Rationale

As the IPGD-identified base for ASPECT, History, Philosophy, and Political Science intend to follow the operational model they have developed and followed successfully in managing the Science and Technology Studies Ph.D. program in the former College of Arts and Sciences. These three department heads all concur that this approach has worked for interdisciplinary doctoral studies at the University. In implementing the ASPECT graduate degree program -- once all, or at least most of the new resources needed for it to succeed are released to ASPECT units -- should adhere to the proven STS model. It will give ASPECT departments, faculty members, and graduate students a stake in creating and sustaining this curriculum. It also creates a useful program management model for sharing the interim academic governance and program management responsibilities on campus as they work with Burruss Hall to get ASPECT approved in Richmond.

The rationale for APSECT is quite strong, and it is imperative that the University implements this program quickly. The seven searches begun during the Fall 2004 semester are generating a great deal of excitement among scores of applicants elsewhere around the world, who see the University doing something very important, innovative, and interesting with the ASPECT project. At the same time, there are nearly twenty expert faculty already clustered together at Virginia Tech, working in this area of study. They mostly are in three different colleges, and their work is very respected nationally and internationally. ASPECT creates a new intellectual project for them, and it allows them to become more fully engaged in moving the University toward AAU membership. Hence, ASPECT now can:

1. provide a focused rationale for reinvesting in several departments and programs located with three colleges where budget cuts have prevented the teaching of vitally important core courses;

2. create a new graduate program of study for academic units that now do not have them, tied to a collective undertaking to lay additional foundations for future departmental development;

3. train many new doctoral students, who will teach additional 1000, 2000, and even some 3000 level courses, to cover core curriculum needs, free tenure/tenure-track faculty for research, and gain innovative instructional experience in the classroom;

4. draw together world-class faculty in many different departments to work on a common intellectual project at Virginia Tech, focusing their highly regarded talents on new approaches to cultural, ethical, political, and social thought that can, in turn, inform society about pressing moral and policy concerns; and, finally,

5. retain a number of outstanding assistant, associate and full professors who all serendipitously have chosen to work at Virginia Tech, but who remain quite moveable both in the U.S.A. and abroad within their professional areas of work.

Available and New Courses

At this juncture in Spring 2005, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science can offer 20 courses to anchor the program, and they will implement plans for teaching these courses, plus whatever new core courses might be proposed for adoption, as soon as the resources are released to them in AY 04-05 and 05-06. Along with these existing options, there needs to be a flexible set of 5000 and/or 6000 level "topics" courses in each department

that focuses on ASPECT-like substantive issues as well as at least one common "gateway" foundation and one shared "capstone" summation course for the ASPECT students. Some sort of professional socialization, pedagogical techniques, and publishing skills, or a "how to survive/thrive as an academic" seminar also needs to be developed. Plainly, any existing 5984 course that can be converted to a regular useful ASPECT class also should be added. Finally, these classes can be supplemented with cognate courses from other departments, once their syllabi are reviewed as being parallel to the purposes of the courses in the core set of ASPECT-affiliated units.

History Graduate Courses:

5104: Historical Methods

5205,5206 (STS 5205,5206) Main Themes in the History of Science and Technology

5504: Modern European History

5534: Imperialism, Nationalism, & Decolonization

5694: American Environmental History

Philosophy Graduate Courses:

5204: Topics in the History of Philosophy

5334: Ethics

5344: History of Ethics

6014: Special Topics in Philosophy

6204: Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy

6324: Advanced Topics in Social and Political Philosophy

Political Science Graduate Courses:

5214: Contemporary Political Theory

5224: Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory

5364: Public Ecology

5374: E-Governance

5504: Discourse Analysis

5514: Global Security

5574: Arts, Culture, and Civil Society

5444: International Politics

Suggested ASPECT Graduate Program Administrative Structure

The administrative structure of the ASPECT Program will maximize participation and responsibility among ASPECT teaching faculty and ASPECT graduate students. In the everyday business of the ASPECT Program, the Director and the Program's various committees will work to affirm and sustain the four-unit collaboration.

ASPECT Teaching Faculty

The ASPECT Teaching Faculty is composed of all ASPECT faculty on tenure lines and all other faculty who teach an ASPECT course at least once every three years. ASPECT teaching faculty will elect committee representatives, review policy matters including course and curricula proposals prior to review by the ASPECT Policy Committee, which will meet monthly to discuss matters of importance involving the program. It also can serve as one site for developing new initiatives. Responsibilities of individual faculty in addition to teaching ASPECT-related courses include attending faculty and committee meetings, serving on graduate advisory committees, helping students locate assistantship support, and attending ASPECT seminars.

ASPECT Graduate Student Organization

The ASPECT Graduate Student Organization (GSO) is composed of all full- and part-time students pursuing Ph.D. degrees in ASPECT. The GSO will coordinate student participation in the administrative structure and serves as one site for developing new initiatives.

ASPECT Director

The ASPECT Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the ASPECT Program, supervising and working with the ASPECT Administrative Assistant/Graduate Secretary, and the four lead departments. Additional responsibilities include serving as chair of the ASPECT Policy Committee and ASPECT Admissions and Review Committee; convening monthly meetings of the ASPECT Teaching Faculty; apprising unit leaders of the contributions made to the ASPECT Program by members of their units; awarding graduate assistantships; meeting monthly with the GSO and serving as a liaison with other units on campus.

Policy Committee

The ASPECT Policy Committee will have final program authority for matters of policy, including curricula, and advises the ASPECT Director on the operation of the graduate program. The Policy Committee is composed of eleven voting members, including the ASPECT Director (chair); the four main APSECT-base departments chairs, one ASPECT teaching faculty member each from History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science; and, two Ph.D. ASPECT students. Each faculty representative is selected by the unit in consultation with that unit's ASPECT teaching faculty. The ASPECT teaching faculty for a given unit includes ASPECT faculty with adjunct or other part-time appointments in that unit. Student representatives are elected by the GSO.

Admissions and Review Committee

The ASPECT Admissions and Review Committee is responsible for selecting new graduate students, assessing annually the progress of graduate students toward their degrees, providing advice to the ASPECT Director regarding the funding and awarding of assistantships, and involving graduate students in decision making when appropriate. The Admissions and Review Committee consists of five voting members, including the ASPECT Director (chair) and one faculty member each elected by the ASPECT Teaching Faculty from the Departments of History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science.

Preliminary Exam Committee

The ASPECT Preliminary Exam Committee is responsible for developing the recommended doctoral examination reading list once per year and administering the ASPECT Preliminary Exam each semester as outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of this document/web site. The Preliminary Exam Committee consists of six voting members, including one faculty member each elected by the ASPECT Teaching Faculty from the Departments of History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science, one at-large faculty member appointed by the ASPECT Director. In addition, the GSO elects one student representative each year to participate in drafting the reading list.

Teaching and Advising Committee

The ASPECT Teaching and Advising Committee is responsible for administering ASPECT policies for advising, peer review of faculty teaching, and mentoring graduate students in teaching. The Teaching and Advising Committee includes four voting members, including one faculty member each from the Departments of History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science, and Philosophy.

Amendments

Substantive amendments to this administrative structure require approval by all four units and a majority of three of the five voting members of the Policy Committee. For those amendments that would alter student representation on committees, approval by the GSO is also required.

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*Implementing ASPECT in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 will require the University to invest in a number of new GTA/GA lines in the four main ASPECT departments – History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science, and Philosophy -- to build a cohort of new doctoral students in the colleges where arts, humanities, and social sciences programs are now positioned. Nine new GTAs lines a year for four years -- three each in History, Philosophy, and Political Science -- are needed to create the minimum cohort that would allow ASPECT to work well by building up from nine in AY 05-06 to thirty-six (twelve in each department, or some mix with all ASPECT units) in AY 08-09. Since Interdisciplinary Studies does not have any graduate degrees at this time, some mechanism will be needed to allocate GTA/GA lines to this unit for students to assist this faculty as well as to anchor the study of cultural theory in ASPECT. To improve the University's research reputation in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, it is imperative that the Provost's Office continues to invest in building the ASPECT doctoral program.