

UC DAVIS

Defining Interdisciplinary Graduate Education

Jeffery C. Gibeling
CGS Summer Workshop
San Juan, Puerto Rico
July 9, 2007



Results of Google Search on Relevant Terms

- “Interdisciplinary graduate”: 10 million
- “Multidisciplinary graduate”: 1.7 million
- “Transdisciplinary graduate”: 220,000

What is a Discipline?

- Evolved system for organizing scholarship
- Distinctive set of methodologies
- Cultural norms
- Critical mass of participants
- Professional society
- Specific journal(s)

Disciplinary Programs



Department A

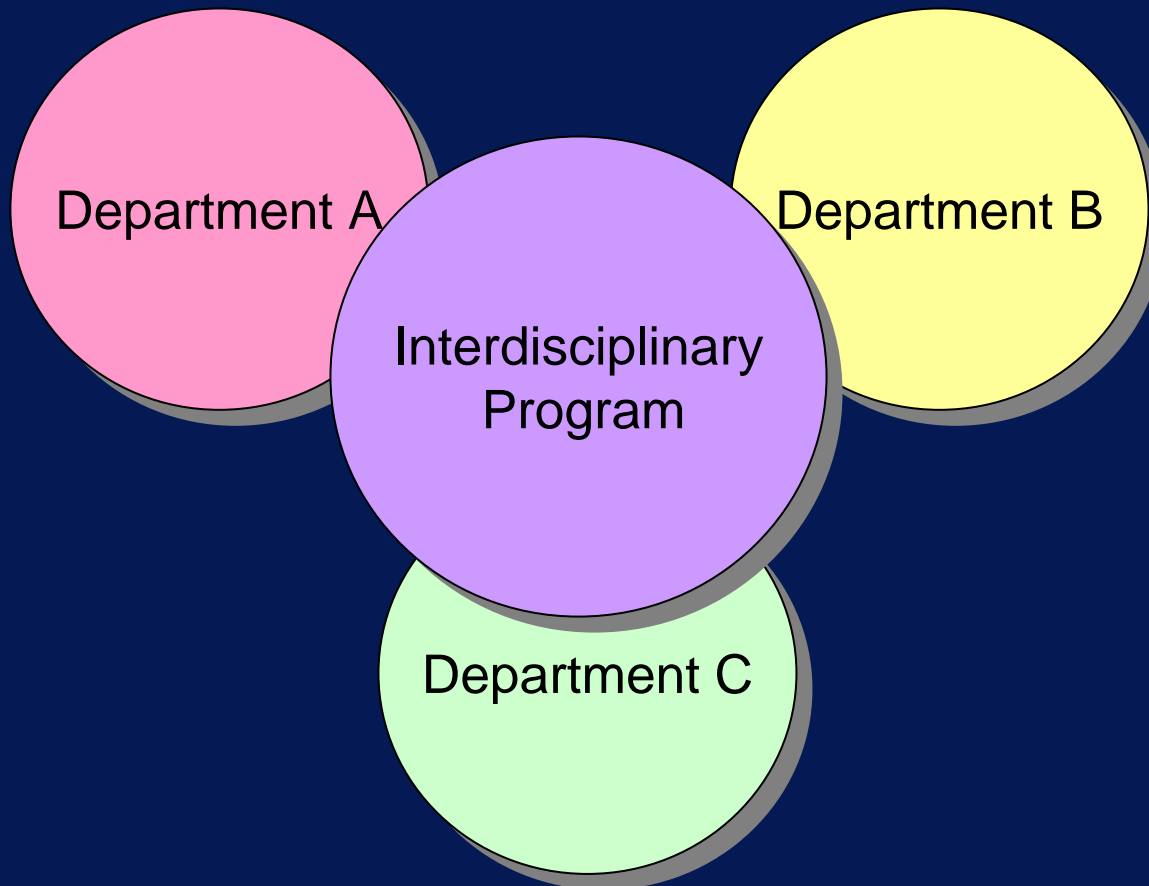
Department B

Department C

Interdisciplinary Graduate Education

Prepares students in a manner that integrates and synthesizes methodologies, perspectives, terminologies, information, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to enable them to creatively advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems beyond the scope of a single discipline.

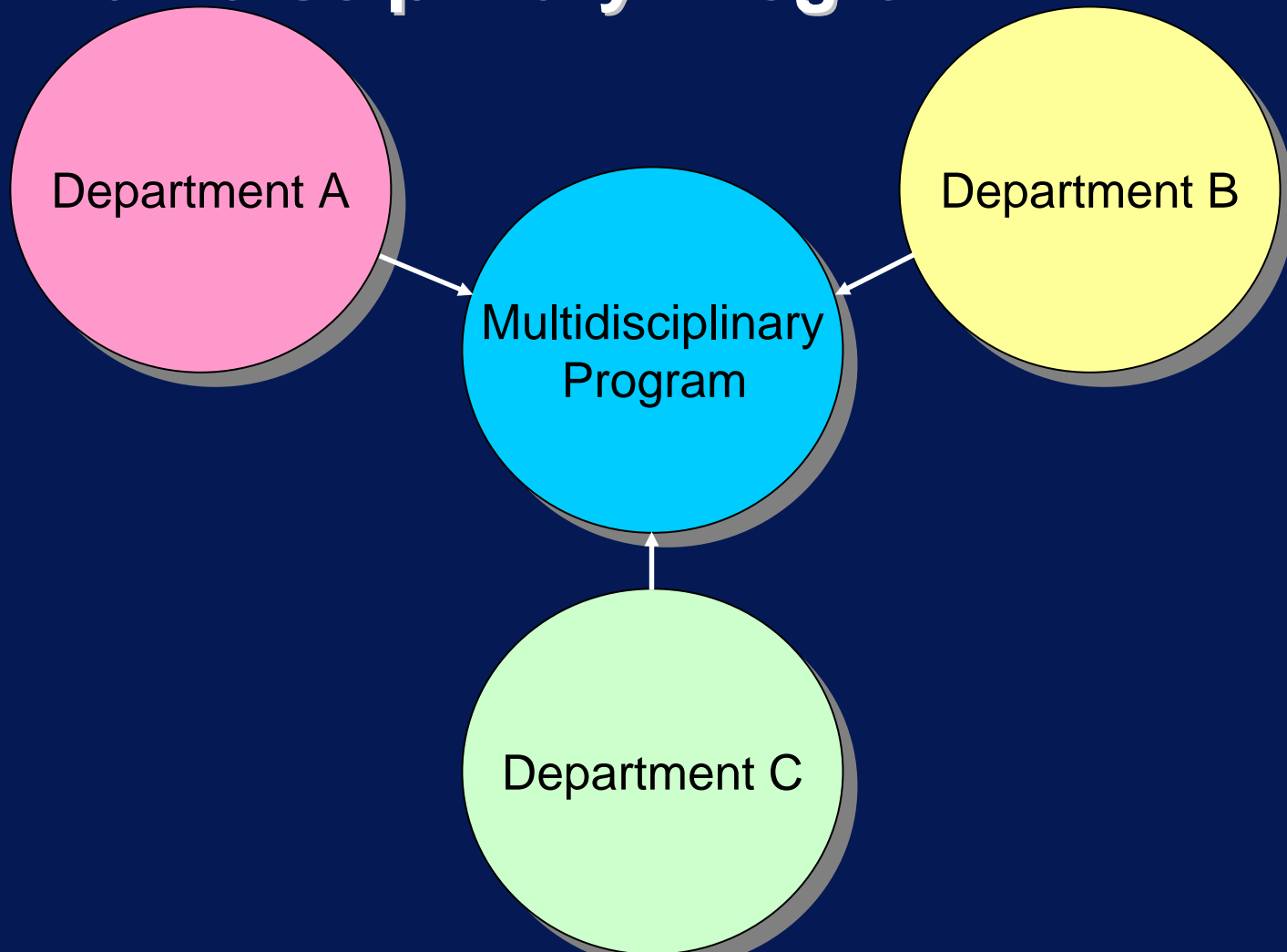
Interdisciplinary Program



Multidisciplinary Graduate Education

Provides students with exposure to methodologies, perspectives, terminologies, information, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to enable them to creatively advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems in ways.

Multidisciplinary Program



Drivers for Formation of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

- **Interesting questions are found at the interfaces between disciplines**
- **Desire to solve natural and societal problems that are inherently complex**
- **Generative technologies stimulate new areas of scholarship**
- **Flexibility in organizing graduate education**

Factors to Support Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

- Faculty leadership and vision
- Commitment by core faculty
- Adequate financial resources
- Supportive rules and culture
- Committed support staff
- Favorable administration

UC DAVIS

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Strong Leadership is Important!!



The Graduate School

North Carolina State University

Box 7102, Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7102
(919) 737-2871

December 30, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: [Proposers of Interdisciplinary Programs]

FROM: D. W. Stewart, Interim Vice Provost and Graduate Dean

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Developing Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

The attached guidelines were adopted by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School to facilitate development of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs at North Carolina State University. The Graduate School strongly encourages the development of interdisciplinary efforts.

Please note the consultation with the Graduate Dean, in Phase One, is a most important stage in facilitating the development of a program. Questions about Phases Two and Three can be answered fully at the preliminary review meeting. In Phase Two the Guidelines provide a detailed format for proposal development. Please be brief in responding to each item.

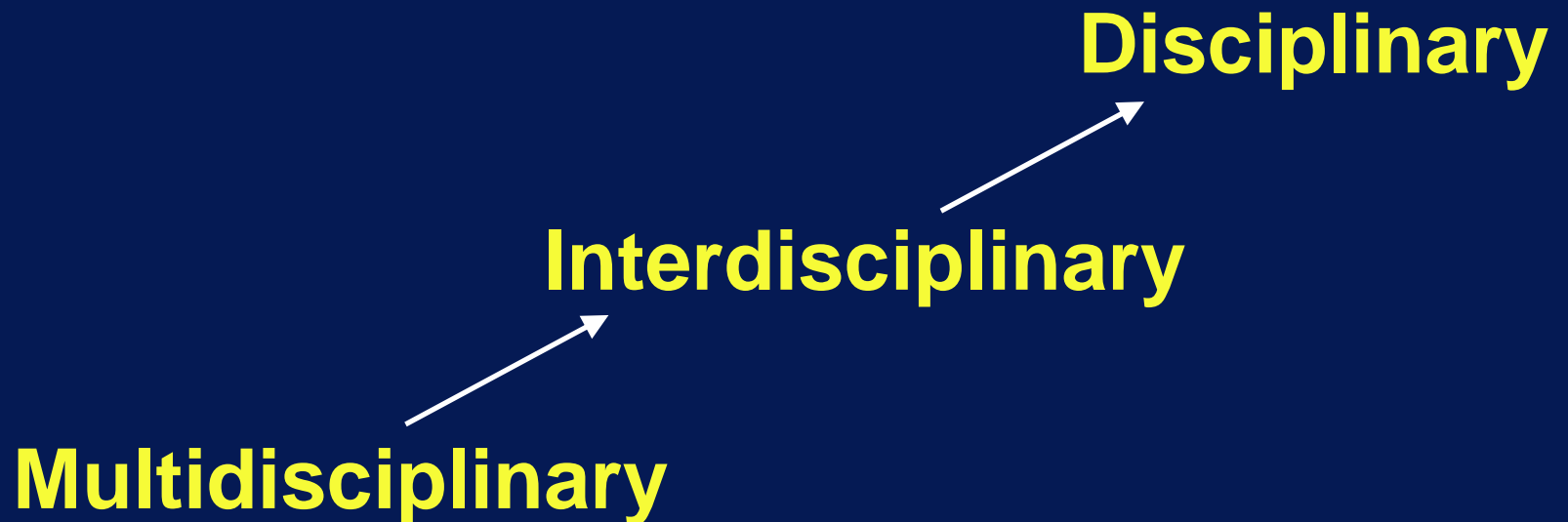
DWS:pl

Attachment

Barriers to Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs

- **Administrative/Organizational**
- **Resource allocation structures**
- **Inadequate funding levels**
- **Cultural differences between disciplines**

Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs are Transformative



Summary

- **Many institutions have developed successful models of Interdisciplinary graduate education.**
- **For some, it is a challenge to create, finance and sustain such programs; for others, part of the campus culture.**