

UC DAVIS

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



Structure of Interdisciplinary Graduate Education at UC Davis

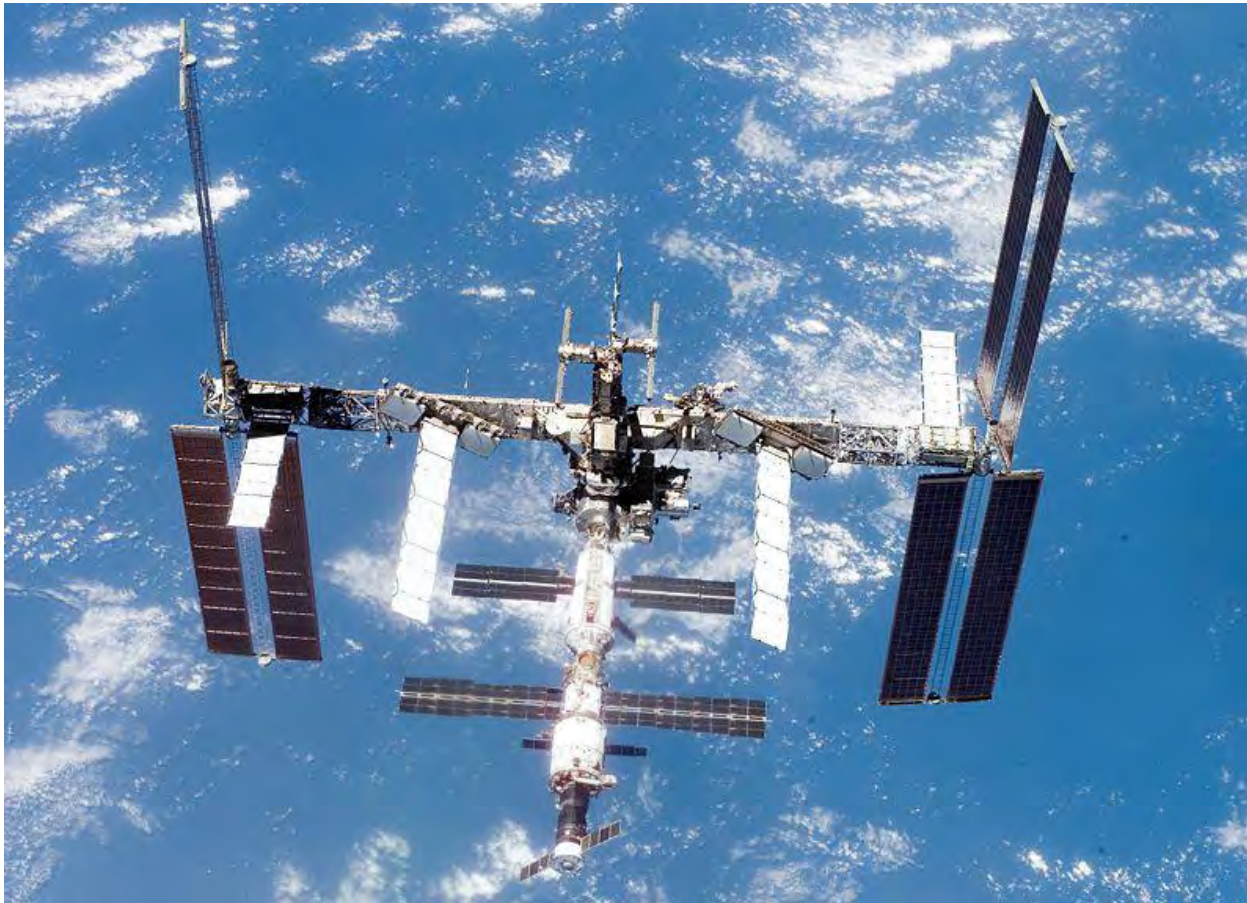
Jeffery C. Gibeling

**53rd CGS Annual Meeting
December 5th, 2013**

Decidedly Not Interdisciplinary Structure



Integrated and Interdisciplinary Structure



Philosophy of Graduate Education at UC Davis

- **Graduate education emphasizes shared intellectual interests of faculty and students;**
- **Programs should be flexible; support emerging areas of inquiry that transcend disciplines and are of special interest to the best students;**
- **Faculty scholarship enhanced by opportunities to participate in multiple graduate programs;**
- **All faculty should have the opportunity to work with graduate students.**

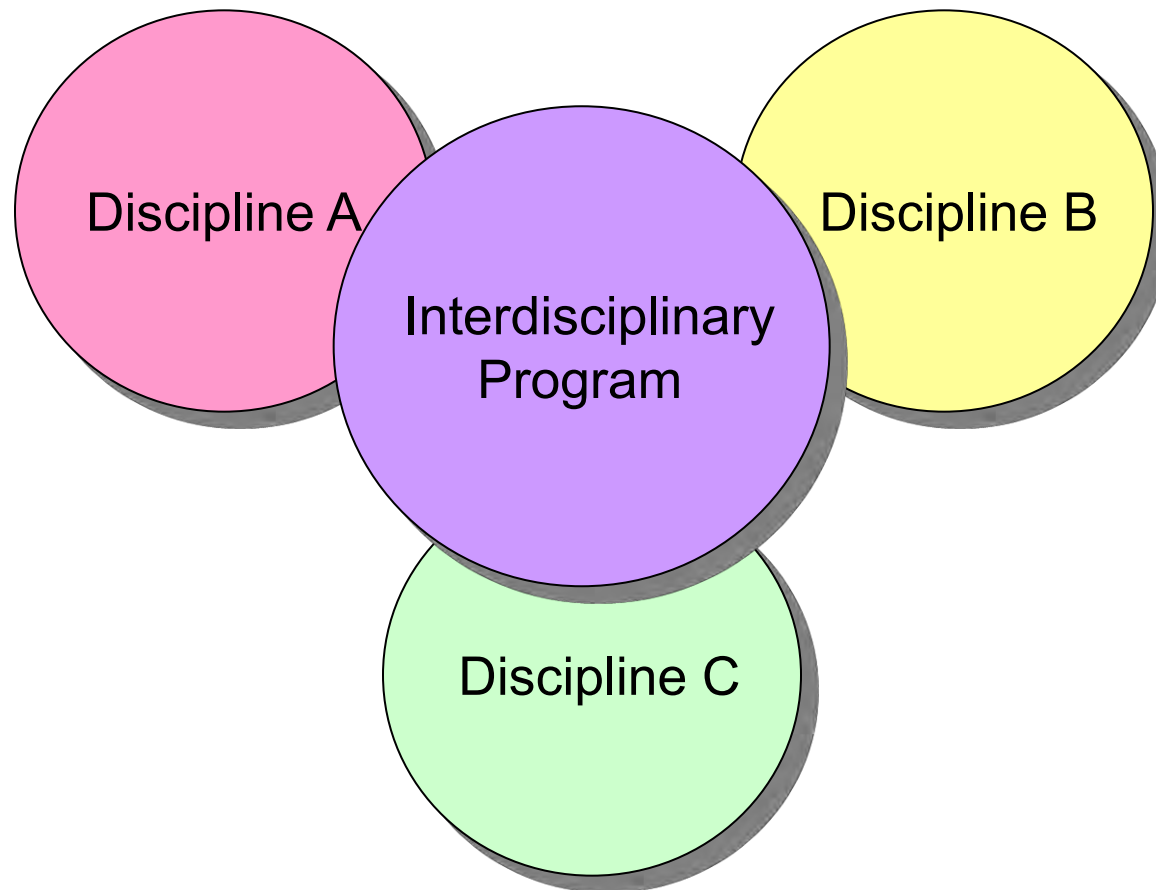
Interdisciplinary Graduate Education

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 existing disciplines.

Drivers for Formation of Interdisciplinary Programs

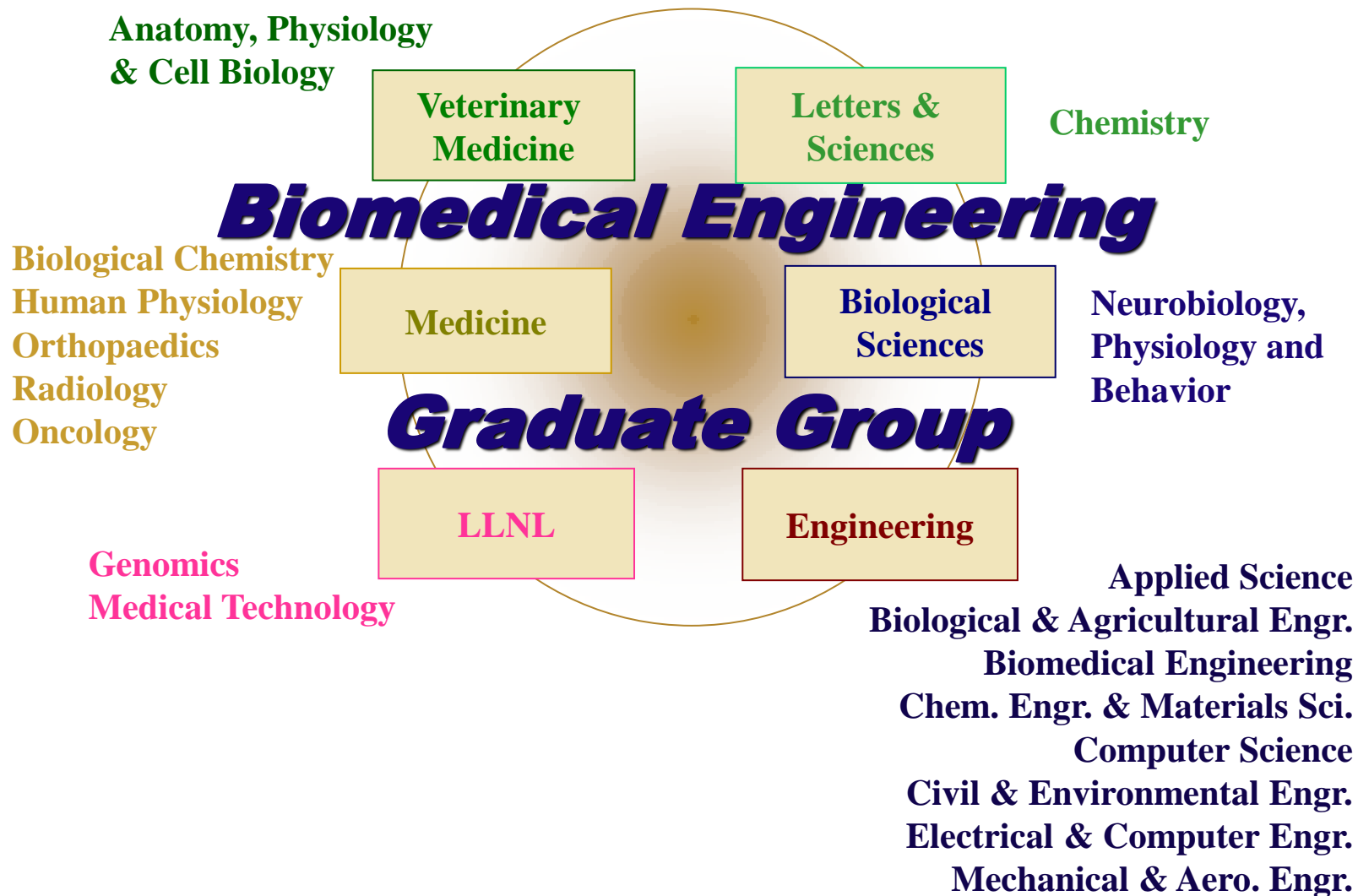
- **Interesting questions are found at the intersections between disciplines;**
- **Desire to solve natural and societal problems that are inherently complex;**
- **Generative technologies stimulate new areas of scholarship;**
- **Flexibility in organizing graduate education.**

Interdisciplinary Program



Graduate Groups at UC Davis

- **Out of approximately 90 graduate programs, 55 are organized as interdisciplinary graduate groups;**
- **Graduate groups most common in the life, agricultural and environmental sciences;**
- **Growing interest in the humanities;**
- **Sometimes have transition from graduate group to department-based program or vice versa.**



Why form a graduate group?

- **Truly interdisciplinary area of study;**
- **Interdisciplinary approach to a disciplinary field;**
- **Broad faculty participation from multiple schools/colleges/departments; no primary department;**
- **Program will benefit from organizational flexibility.**

Factors to Support Interdisciplinary Graduate Groups

- **Faculty leadership and vision to integrate across disciplines;**
- **Committed core faculty;**
- **Supportive rules and culture;**
- **Committed support staff;**
- **Adequate financial resources;**
- **Supportive administration.**

Graduate Group Management Philosophy

- **Treat department-based programs and graduate groups as equals with respect to academic requirements, fellowship funding, program review, etc.;**
- **Ensure that a lead academic dean shares responsibility for each graduate group;**
- **Graduate Dean must remain responsive to special challenges of graduate groups.**

Administration

	Graduate Group	Departmental Program
<i>Chair Appointment</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>
<i>Graduate Adviser Appt.</i>	<i>Graduate Dean</i>	<i>Graduate Dean</i>
<i>Academic Policy</i>	<i>Graduate Council</i>	<i>Graduate Council</i>
<i>Governance</i>	<i>Executive + Other Committees</i>	<i>Grad. Affairs Committee</i>

Financial Resources

	Graduate Group	Departmental Program
<i>Administrative Support</i>	<i>Graduate Dean & Academic Dean</i>	<i>Academic Dean</i>
<i>Chair Stipend</i>	<i>Graduate Dean</i>	<i>Academic Dean</i>
<i>Student Support</i>	<i>Grad. Studies Block Grant</i>	<i>Grad. Studies Block Grant</i>
<i>Fellowships, Recruit. Funds</i>	<i>Competitive</i>	<i>Competitive</i>

Challenges of Graduate Groups

- **No teaching faculty in graduate groups; difficult to offer courses and plan for faculty hiring that meets evolving needs of group;**
- **No control over TA positions – allocated through undergraduate teaching departments;**
- **Graduate Student Researcher (or RA) appointments made through major professor's department, but stipend level set by graduate program;**

Challenges of Graduate Groups

- **Difficult to identify proper administrative funding level;**
- **Lack “sense of place”;**
- **Membership review must be regular and rigorous;**
- **May lose vision/cohesiveness/leadership.**
- **Evolution of scholarship – what was once interdisciplinary may become an accepted discipline.**

Impact of Campus Budget Structure

- **Allocate budget credit for teaching graduate courses (home department of faculty member);**
- **Allocate credit for enrollment in major;**
- **Allocate budget and space credit for research mentoring (home department of major professor);**
- ***Adoption of incentive-based or activity-based budget models that favor traditional administrative structures.***

Summary

- **Interdisciplinary graduate education requires alignment of academic and administrative structures.**
- **Interdisciplinary graduate education should be aligned as closely as possible with traditional graduate program structures, recognizing explicit differences as necessary.**