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MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Richard L. Williamson
Chair, Faculty Senate

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard L. Williamson'.

Date: April 30, 2014

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2013-40(B) – Faculty Senate University Curriculum Committee Recommendations Regarding the General Education Areas of Proficiency Requirements

The Faculty Senate, at its April 23, 2014 meeting, voted unanimously (1) to accept the Faculty Senate University Curriculum Committee report regarding the General Education Areas of Proficiency requirements, (2) to adopt the recommendation regarding Math Proficiency or Quantitative Skills, and (3) neither to accept nor reject the Committee's proposal concerning Writing Across the Curriculum, but rather to remand the matter back to the Committee for further consideration.

There was a broad consensus supporting the Committee's conclusion that the system of "W" courses was not working, and that more of the responsibility should be placed on the Schools. Many also thought that there should nevertheless be a common core of communications competence regardless of a student's major.

In light of the considerable effort the Committee has put into the matter, the Senators expressed the hope that the Committee could report back to the Senate in time for it to act this coming academic year.

The report and recommendations are enclosed.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action concerning item (2) above, and otherwise for your information

RLW/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
William Green, Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Richard Beckman, Chair, University Curriculum Committee
Academic Deans

CAPSULE: Faculty Senate Legislation #2013-40(B) – Faculty Senate University Curriculum Committee Recommendations Regarding the General Education Areas of Proficiency Requirements

APPROVED:  DATE: 6/9/2014
(President's Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: Sr. Vice Provost Green

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LEGISLATION: IMMEDIATELY
(if other than June 1 next following)

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____

Report and Recommendations to the GWC
University Curriculum Committee
Submitted on behalf of the Committee by Rich Beckman, Chair

Following the adoption of Legislation #2012-19(B), Faculty Senate University Curriculum Committee (UCC) Cognates Implementation: an Implementation of the Revised Areas of Knowledge of the General Education Requirements (GERs) of the University of Miami, The University Curriculum Committee began its review of the Areas of Proficiency General Education Requirements as requested by the Chair of the Faculty Senate.

The Areas of Proficiency requirements ensure that students either already possess, or develop at the University, the ability to express themselves effectively, to use mathematics with facility, and to reason cogently.

- English Composition: Good writing facilitates clear thinking, and clear thinking is the foundation of effective communication. The expectation is that students become adept at using the English language as an effective communication tool. Effective writing skills are representative of an educated person because they are instruments to advance ideas efficiently and persuasively.

Students fulfill this requirement by satisfactorily completing ENG105 and ENG106, or the equivalent. Appropriate Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) scores in English composition may be used to satisfy this requirement. An appropriate score on the SAT or ACT verbal examination may earn a student exemption from, but not credit for, ENG105.

Students will be able to:

- Gather information, synthesize data, compare various points of view, and present results in writing.
- Develop the ability to read texts critically and to use textual evidence to support a sophisticated written argument.
- Consider audience, tone, organization, and standard conventions in relationship to specific rhetorical tasks.

- Writing Across the Curriculum: In addition to ENG105 and ENG106, students must complete five courses designated as Writing across the Curriculum (W) courses. The purpose of these courses is to help students refine their writing so that they are able to communicate ideas clearly and effectively through the various styles of writing appropriate to their majors and minors.

Writing courses require a substantial amount of writing and the preparation of papers corrected for diction, syntax, style, and content. Some courses fulfilling Areas of Knowledge requirements (described below) may simultaneously satisfy this requirement.

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate ability to write persuasively, using argumentation tools and advocacy appropriate to subject, audience, and occasion.

- **Mathematics**

In a world increasingly influenced by science and technology, it is important for students to acquire the capacity to use and understand essential mathematical applications. The mathematics requirement helps students learn to use quantitative methods to solve problems. The course requirements for mathematics emphasize the manipulation, interpretation, and application of quantitative data. Students fulfill this requirement by completing a mathematics course beyond MTH101 (excluding MTH107), completing MAS110, or completing an approved course in statistics. Exemption from the mathematics requirement or placement in prerequisite courses is based on any of the following tests: AP, IB, or a placement examination administered by the Department of Mathematics.

Students will be able to:

- Select quantitative tools appropriate for solving problems.
- Use quantitative tools appropriate for solving problems.
- Interpret quantitative data in an appropriate manner for solving problems.

The following motion passed the UCC with a unanimous vote (with one abstention). It was then presented to School and College Councils or their appropriate undergraduate curriculum committees. The Student Senate, the College of Arts and Sciences and the Schools of Architecture, Business Administration, Communication, Education and Human Development, Engineering, Marine and Atmospheric Science, Music and Nursing have all endorsed the proposal.

Recommendations of the University Curriculum Committee regarding the General Education Areas of Proficiency Requirements

After completing its review of the Areas of Knowledge portion of the University of Miami General Education Requirements with the establishment of a cognate-based approach to Areas of Knowledge and an implementation plan, the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) began a review of the Areas of Proficiency portion of General Education with an examination of the Mathematics and the English Composition and Writing Across the Curriculum (W) portions of the current proficiency requirements.

At this time, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Regarding the Math Proficiency, The UCC recommends renaming the Math Proficiency requirement "Quantitative Skills."

Proposed Copy: In a world increasingly influenced by science and technology, it

is important for students to acquire the capacity to understand and use essential quantitative skills. The Quantitative Skills requirement helps students learn to use quantitative skills and tools to solve problems, including the interpretation, manipulation and application of quantitative data. Students fulfill this requirement by completing a Department of Mathematics course numbered MTH108 or higher, or a quantitative skills course approved by the student's college/school and the University Curriculum Committee in consultation with appropriate academic units (e.g.: Mathematics, Computer Science, Engineering, etc.)

Exemption from the requirement can be achieved through the following tests: AP, IB, SAT, SAT subject test in mathematics level 2, or a test administered by the Department of Mathematics.

Students will be able to:

- * Select and use appropriate quantitative methods and tools, to solve problems.
- * Interpret, manipulate, and apply quantitative data, to solve problems.

Note (not for bulletin): The test scores required for exemption will be decided by the Department of Mathematics. The Office of Admissions will be asked to let high schools know about the new subject test option. (The Department of Mathematics has plans for offering a proctored version of ALEKS as the "examination administered by the Department of Mathematics".)

Regarding the Writing Across the Curriculum (W) portion of the current proficiency requirements, the Committee was informed by David E. Wiles, Executive Director of Assessment and Accreditation in the Office of Planning, Institutional Research, and Assessment and an ex-officio member of the UCC that there is no effective assessment mechanism in place for this portion of the General Proficiency requirements and that we are therefore out of compliance with the SACS accreditation standards. Different faculty members, programs, departments and schools each define "W" courses differently and no one at the University-level reviews these courses to see how they meet the perceived goals.

The UCC discussed the challenge of designing an appropriate measure for assessing the approximately 700 sections of "W" courses currently available, as well as a proposal to terminate the current requirement and replace it with something that gives schools and colleges more control in designing an advanced communication proficiency specific to the needs of their students.

The UCC unanimously recommends phasing out the current Writing Across the Curriculum General Education requirement and empowering each school/college to determine and propose how best to teach and assess the appropriate advanced communication proficiencies (beyond the current English Composition proficiency) necessary for their students in a manner aligned with the school/college's disciplines and accreditation requirements.

These proposals will be reviewed and approved by the UCC in consultation with appropriate academic units (e.g.: English, School of Communication, etc.). Within its proposal, each school/college should include any additional resources required to successfully complete this requirement.

Regarding the current English Composition requirements, the University Curriculum Committee continues to study this Area of Proficiency within the context of the evolving communication and digital media landscape, the Writing/Communication Proficiency Requirements of our Peer Aspirational Institutions and feedback from deans, faculty and students and will present its recommendations at a later time.

Implementation

The Committee recommends that the Quantitative Skills Proficiency be implemented immediately for incoming freshmen (or as soon as is feasible based on the ability to update Bulletin copy and inform Schools and Colleges).

The UCC unanimously recommends phasing out the current Writing Across the Curriculum General Education requirement, and empowering each school/college to determine and propose how best to teach and assess communication skills that are appropriate for their students. These proposals will be reviewed and approved by the UCC in consultation with appropriate academic units (e.g.: English, School of Communication, etc.). Proposals must describe what communication skills the students must acquire, including writing skills beyond the composition proficiency, and other discipline specific communication skills. Proposals must include a plan for assessing those skills. Proposals must describe any new resources required. Proposals are due to the UCC by 27th February 2015 with the goal of implementing the Communication Skills Proficiency in Fall 2015 for incoming freshmen.

Writing Across the Curriculum (W) courses will continue for students admitted prior to Fall 2015, as students are linked to the Bulletin under which they entered the University. These courses will also have to be assessed.