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MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Tomas A. Salerno
Chair, Faculty Senate

Date: November 25, 2014

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2014-11(B) – University Curriculum Committee
Advanced Writing and Communication Skills

The Faculty Senate, at its November 19, 2014 meeting, voted by majority to approve the University Curriculum Committee advanced writing and communication skills.

The current Writing Across the Curriculum General Education Proficiency (5 “W” courses) is not performing adequately. A high-quality, contemporary education must ensure that students can communicate the knowledge they have acquired in their major to consequential audiences for that knowledge. The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) therefore recommends removing that requirement from the General Education Proficiency requirements, and proposes instead that the university require the development of advanced communication skills in every undergraduate program. The requirements will be designed, administered and assessed by individual schools and colleges.

In order to meet the required minimum writing proficiency, the advanced communication component in every undergraduate program must include a specified amount of evaluated and revised writing. Students with multiple majors will need to fulfill the advanced communication requirements of only the school/college that houses their primary major.

This new approach to the Advance Writing and Communication Skills does not affect any existing English composition requirements.

The University Curriculum Committee will return to the Senate to present a proposal that establishes how the program will be implemented.


This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action.

TAS/rh

Enclosure

cc: Thomas LeBlanc, Executive Vice President and Provost
Richard Beckman, Chair, Curriculum Committee

CAPSULE: Faculty Senate Legislation #2014-11(B) – University Curriculum Committee
Advanced Writing and Communication Skills

APPROVED:  DATE: 12/15/2014
(President's Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: University Curriculum Committee

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

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____

Advanced Writing and Communication Skills

There is a broad consensus within all Schools and Colleges, as well as the Faculty Senate, that the current Writing Across the Curriculum General Education Proficiency (5 "W" courses) is not working, and that more of the responsibility should be placed on the schools and colleges. The UCC endorses the principle of effective writing, but believes and affirms that a high-quality contemporary education must also include other advanced communication skills to ensure that students can communicate the knowledge they have acquired in their major to the most consequential audiences for that knowledge. The skills required will vary greatly within and across disciplines, in terms of content and presentation. The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) therefore recommends removing that requirement from the General Education Proficiency requirements, and proposes instead that the university require the development of advanced communication skills in every undergraduate program. The requirements will be designed, administered and assessed by individual schools and colleges, with outcomes documented in the Program Assessment Report for each program. Each school/college's requirements will be reviewed and approved annually by the UCC in consultation with appropriate academic units and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. Proposals to the UCC must describe what communication skills the students will acquire. These must include writing skills beyond the current composition proficiency (see below), as well as other discipline specific communication skills. Proposals must describe any new resources required.

The stated purpose of the current Writing Across the Curriculum 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. In order to meet the required minimal writing proficiency, the advanced communication component in every undergraduate program must include a specified amount of evaluated and revised writing.

Students with multiple majors will need to fulfill the advanced communication requirement of only the school/college that houses their primary major. As students are linked to the bulletin under which they entered the university, Writing Across the Curriculum (5 "W" courses) will be required of students admitted prior to the implementation year of the legislation. The Madison Assessment Information Literacy Test, which is administered to seniors prior to graduation, will be used to measure outcomes in these courses.