REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

The current “English Composition Competency” requirement is outdated in its language and conception. The proposed changes shift the requirement from a credit-based perspective to an outcomes-based requirement focus. The proposed changes allow for greater flexibility in fulfilling the requirement, which aligns better with current trends and other curricular changes at the University.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. “Competency” is impossible for students to attain in one 5-credit course.
2. “Competency” suggests “done with requirement.” The thrust of the new writing requirement is to establish a foundation in the first year of a student’s academic career upon which discipline-specific writing can build.
3. The Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing program is comprised of 4 courses, each with the same outcomes. The difference among them is the pace, level of depth, and types of support built in to foster student success.

Pros of Recommendation:

The following evidence, gathered from the pilot study of this program, supports this proposal:
1. Exit-survey data from the ENG 110-112 classes indicated a major need for change.
2. Survey data from the pilot program indicated that students see the relevancy of the course they took as well as an ability to transfer learning from their course to other courses.
3. Portfolio reviews indicated quality dealing with complex issues; students in the pilot-program courses provided more thoughtful and in-depth analysis than students in the traditional ENG 110-112 courses.
4. This new program meets students at whatever level of writing proficiency with which they enter and then builds on that. It facilitates integration of transfer students.

Cons of Recommendation:

Both components of the proposed University Writing Requirement involve additional human resources. Reading portfolios is labor intensive, but students will pay a fee as they would for “Credit by Exam.” These funds will be used to pay portfolio reviewers. The Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing will require additional sections; during the pilot, this funding has been coming from a Blugold Commitment award. All indications point to the continued funding of this project through Blugold Commitment funds. Without Blugold Commitment funds, the English department notes that this requirement still needs to be updated; adjustments would have to made in the outcomes of the Blugold Seminar courses to accommodate larger class sizes if the Blugold Commitment funding is not made permanent.

Technology/Human Resource Impact:

Students provided funding for this pilot study (including funding for two visiting professors on short-term stays) via the Blugold Differential Tuition funds. The pilot program is in its second of three years of funding. The Department of English will submit a Blugold Differential Tuition proposal for baseline funding to retain the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing. Part of the strength of this program is reduced class sizes, which increases the number of required sections from about 80 sections to about 100 sections. The English Department has been granted one additional FTE through the Provost’s Initiative of the Blugold Commitment.
Committee Recommendation:

Change the English Competency Requirement (from page 38 in the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog) as follows:

FROM CURRENT:

Curricular Requirements
* English Competency
  (English composition with a grade of C or above) .........................5 credits

ENGLISH COMPETENCY REQUIREMENT
All students seeking a baccalaureate degree under the provision of this catalog must satisfy the English competency requirement by earning five credits for Engl 110 with a grade of C or above. Students who have partially completed the composition requirement at another institution may be eligible to complete the competency requirement by passing Engl112 (see prerequisites for English 112) with a grade of C or above. Students who received a score of four (4) or five (5) on either of the English Advanced Placement tests are eligible to complete the competency requirement by taking and passing Engl112 with a grade of C or above (see prerequisites for English 112).

TO PROPOSED:

Curricular Requirements
*University Writing Requirement .......................(see the following description)

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT
Students satisfy the University Writing Requirement by fulfilling the University Writing Program outcomes in one of two ways: 1) completion of a Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing course with a grade of C (not C-) or above; placement in the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing is based on English Placement Test scores (UWENGL), English Advanced Placement exam scores, or previous composition credit as determined by the English Department; or 2) achieving a satisfactory score on the University Writing Program Portfolio (see English Department guidelines for details). All students are eligible to submit a University Writing Program Portfolio to modify placement in the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing. See English Department guidelines for details. All students must satisfy the University Writing Requirement before completion of the sophomore year.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee,

by a vote of __9__ for to __0__ against on 11/13/2012,

recommends that the current English Competency Requirement in the Undergraduate Catalog be changed for both the “Curricular Requirements” and the description as follows:

Curricular Requirements
*University Writing Requirement (see the following description)

UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT
Students satisfy the University Writing Requirement by fulfilling the University Writing Program outcomes in one of two ways: 1) completion of a Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing course with a grade of C (not C-) or above; placement in the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing is based on English Placement Test scores (UWENGL), English Advanced Placement exam scores, or previous composition credit as determined by the English Department; or 2) achieving a satisfactory score on the University Writing Program Portfolio (see English Department guidelines for details). All students are eligible to submit a University Writing Program Portfolio to modify placement in the Blugold Seminar in Critical Reading and Writing. See English Department guidelines for details. All students must satisfy the University Writing Requirement before completion of the sophomore year.

Implementation Date: Upon publication

Signed: ______Jean A. Pratt_____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office