REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue—why the issue is being considered (from the Director of the BPS program):

The Organizational Leadership and Communication 60 credit comprehensive major within the BPS degree was designed to be an entirely online completion program for students who came to UW-Eau Claire with an Associate of Arts and Science degree or equivalent coursework. Many students who are in the program have come to us with far more baccalaureate-level credits. These students would benefit from a 36 credit major option which will shorten their time to degree. This is timely. Since the minor is becoming optional, these students will be able to choose a certificate program to complement the 36-credit major option. All necessary coursework already exists to offer the 36-credit option, so no additional resources will be needed to implement this program.

Points Discussed by Committee:
1. The Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS) program serves an underserved population.
2. Most of these students are in their careers—they come from all different fields. They enter the program with vastly different numbers of credits.
3. Credits are UW credits with “stop out” (students who temporarily withdraw from college). Of the 55 students currently enrolled in the BPS program, 5 would benefit from a 36-credit option. These are students who enter with 80-100 credits. Three examples from the current student population include a person who was two courses short of a journalism minor, a person working on a second degree, and a person two courses short of a major.
4. For every 25 inquiries that UWEC receives about the BPS program, only 1 applicant actually registers for the program. Informal feedback indicates that students go instead to Oshkosh and elsewhere where a) a 36-credit option is available and b) the institution accepts more transfer credit. The focus with this proposal is to address the 36-credit option.
5. A 36-credit option would provide an additional path to the BPS.
6. A 36-credit major with a certificate will enable students to focus on career choices (e.g., healthcare). Students can select any online certificate. The program does not have to accept specific certificates (i.e., certificates don’t have to be packaged together with the 36-credit major).
7. Many courses for topical minors are online (see attachment). Topical minors can be used in any program—they would not be different for this program. The attached list of online courses is a sample—it is not exhaustive. Other online courses exist. Students can use classes they transfer in and then add remaining courses from UWEC, as long as they meet the requirement that no more than 7 out of their final 30 credits are taken outside UWEC. Even though the program is online, students can take face-to-face courses also.
8. Many of the students in this program end up with 130 credits by the time of graduation because they come in with so many approved credits. A goal of the 36-credit option is to enable students to graduate with closer to 120 credits.
9. Like any other UWEC program, students will be required to meet the GE/LE requirements.

Pros of Recommendation:
1. More timely graduation for students in the workforce
2. Same rigor as the 60-credit option; primary difference is in electives.
3. Adds flexibility
4. Addresses the underserved

Cons of Recommendation: No certificates are currently online; however, many online courses exist that could be grouped into certificates or minors.

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None
Advising students with topical minors takes no more time for online students than it does for on-campus students.

Committee Recommendation:
Establish a 36-credit major option within the Organizational Leadership and Communication program.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee,

by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 against, and 1 abstaining on November 25, 2014,

recommends that a 36-credit major option within the Organizational Leadership and Communication program be established.

Implementation Date: 2015-2016 Catalog

Signed: ______Jean A. Pratt_____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office