REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

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

- A major goal of the University is to decrease time to degree while simultaneously providing a strong liberal-arts based education.
- The current fiscal situation means fewer instructional staff and concomitant reductions in the range of course offering.
- Given the uneven distribution of reduced instructional staff across departments/programs, the removal of GE subcategory requirements would allow for more efficient use of limited instructional resources while preserving the breadth of the broad categorical areas of general education.
- The Liberal Education core, which goes into effect Fall 2016, is focused on broad knowledge outcomes in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts rather than specific disciplinary fields. This proposal is aligned with the Liberal Education structure.

- The actual text that would be deleted from the Undergraduate Catalog is illustrated below:
  - Category I. Communications. Requirements: A minimum of six credits, including at least one course from two of the three subcategories.
  - Category II. Natural Sciences. Requirements: Nine to 12 credits from at least two of the six subcategories. At least one course must be a laboratory science* course.
  - Category II. Social Sciences. Requirements: Nine to 12 credits from at least two of the seven subcategories.
  - Category IV. Humanities. Requirements: Nine to 12 credits from at least two of the five subcategories.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Colleges can still define graduation requirements over and above the University GE requirements.
2. Removing subcategories will provide students more flexibility.
3. Removing the subcategories is consistent with Liberal Education—provides breath as well as a step towards the new Liberal Education.
4. If approved, this proposal will go into effect 2015 and be retroactive to previous catalogs in order to enable students to graduate.
5. Colleges won’t discuss their degree requirements if/until the University requirements are changed. The Registrar’s Office can program new Degree Audits within about one week after colleges specify their degree requirements over and above the University requirements.
6. Each program’s degree requirements will help determine which GE courses students will take.
7. The Honors program has been running without discipline-specific requirements for a long time with no negative effect on students.
8. GE still has a limit of 10 credits per prefix.
Pros of Recommendation:
1. Deleting the subcategories would help students graduate in a timely manner, despite fewer GE seats available.
2. Some departments are taking a huge IAS hit. Removing the subcategories would help distribute across more departments the burden of providing GE seats.
3. Students would have a greater choice and flexibility of course choice.
9. Advising would be easier. Advisors could encourage more breadth. What is your interest? In what do you want to challenge yourself? This would help students redirect their focus from ensuring they have satisfied the subcategories to focusing on interests.
10. Removing the subcategories provides students with the opportunity to choose courses focused on what students want to take rather than what the need to take.

Cons of Recommendation:
1. We all have a commitment to help students achieve breadth in their education, but how we can do this is changing. Whereas more detailed breadth was built into the requirements, responsibility for enforcing breadth now shifts to students, faculty and advisors.
2. Currently it is possible that students explore different content areas that they would not have explored without the required subcategories. However, course availability will help spread out the seats. Additionally, no more than 10 credits from any one course prefix may be counted toward General Education requirements.

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None

Committee Recommendation:
Remove the General Education (GE) Subcategory Requirements from the University Graduation Requirements.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The Academic Policies Committee,

by a vote of _9_ in favor and _0_ against on March 17, 2015

recommends that the General Education (GE) Subcategory Requirements be removed from the University Graduation Requirements.

Implementation Date: 2015-2016 Catalog, with retroactive application to earlier catalogs

Signed: ______ Jean A. Pratt ______
Chair of the Committee
Send to: University Senate Office