

REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

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

Given the continuous disruption to service-learning opportunities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2020 – 2021 academic year, Academic Affairs (Associate Deans) is requesting a timely decision (prior to the end of the fall 2020 semester) on the suspension of the service-learning requirement for the Spring and Summer 2021 academic semesters for graduating seniors at UW-Eau Claire and branch campuses.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Concern about the number of opportunities available to meet the number of students who need to fulfill the requirement (both availability and uncertainty with virtual options).
2. Emotional state of students and type of students (traditional vs. nontraditional) impacted by the uncertainty of the service-learning requirement.
3. Impact of change in service-learning personnel (Director is leaving and replacement has not been identified).
4. Overall value of service-learning requirement for undergraduate students debated.
5. Current pandemic uncertainties warrants flexibility with the service-learning requirement.
6. Time is still available for students to identify and participate in meaningful service-learning opportunities for the spring and summer semesters.
7. The desire for the full University Senate to discuss the pros/cons of the proposal.

Pros of Recommendation:

Alleviates undergraduate students who are more stressed and concerned about a variety of things, including their family and friends during a pandemic. Addresses equity concerns for nontraditional students. Improves scheduling for graduating seniors for both academic semesters.

Cons of Recommendation:

Continuous waving of service-learning requirements diminishes its importance as a high impact practice (campus distinctiveness and LE alignment). Sends a message that Service Learning is less important than any other graduation requirement bringing into question why it is a requirement in the first place. Fails to hold students accountable for their role in the learning experience.

Technology/Human Resource Impact:

None

Committee Recommendation:

The committee approved the suspension of the service-learning requirement for the spring and summer 2021 academic semesters for graduating seniors at UW-Eau Claire and branch campuses.

Graduating seniors completing credit bearing service-learning (S-L) courses that are unable to complete the service-learning component of the course will still receive the S-L credit.

Graduating seniors unable to complete non-credit bearing service-learning (S-L) projects, will have S-L requirement waived.

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of 5 for to 2 against and 1 abstention on December 1st, 2020 (Date)

Recommends that:

The committee approved the suspension of the service-learning requirement for the spring and summer 2021 academic semesters for graduating seniors at UW-Eau Claire and branch campuses.

Graduating seniors completing credit bearing service-learning (S-L) courses that are unable to complete the service-learning component of the course will still receive the S-L credit.

Graduating seniors unable to complete non-credit bearing service-learning (S-L) projects, will have S-L requirement waived.

Implementation Date: 20/21 catalog



Signed: _
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office