

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate *and*
General Education Curriculum Advisory Committee

FROM: Department Chairs, College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences

DATE: 10 February 2010

RE: Reforming General Education

In our meeting today, the director and chairs of the school and all the departments in the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences *unanimously* proposed that the Core Curriculum in the 2009-10 RU Undergraduate Catalogue be replaced with a reformed General Education curriculum, modeled on the content areas historically used in RU's General Education program prior to the Core's creation. The chairs' desire is that this new General Education curriculum, if adopted ultimately by the Faculty Senate, would go into effect in the 2010-11 catalogue.

Among the reasons for proposing this change are the following:

- The current Core was adopted and implemented too quickly, under pressure from the administration, and as a result it lacks both coherence and legitimacy, understood as faculty support for and attachment to its ends and means.
- The current Core's curricular incoherence can be seen in its deficiencies with respect to course requirements. Students using the 2009-10 catalogue will be able to graduate without a History course, or without a Philosophy or Religious Studies course, or without a literature course, or without two of those three. Students taking two or more History courses could, in addition to avoiding the other two subjects mentioned, avoid all other social and behavioral sciences as well. And the Core makes no progress on "internationalizing" the education of RU students in the most critical way, since it requires no foreign language study, nor makes room for such a requirement being set by any college.
- The four CORE courses present serious problems with transfer students, both those coming into RU and those seeking to transfer out.
- Intractable staffing problems for the teaching of the Core—especially the CORE courses—loom ahead of us, arriving as soon as Fall 2010.
- The goal of "interdisciplinarity" in the CORE courses has not been adequately supported with university resources, in training and otherwise, and it seems unlikely that it will be in the foreseeable future of RU's budget.

The proposal below avoids all of these problems, restoring a dependence on familiar disciplinary perspectives, and playing to the strengths of RU faculty and programs. In addition, it conforms to the goal of the university's strategic plan that General Education be reduced in total credit

hours from the old 50-hour program, and that it be divided into university-wide and college-wide requirements. We believe the need for a change is urgent, and propose the following:

University Requirements

(Area of 2008-09 GenEd)

English 101, 102	6	(1)
Fine Arts	3	(2)
Humanities:		
Literature	3	(4)
Philosophy, Religious Studies	3	(4)
Mathematics	3	(6)
Natural Science	4	(7)
History	<u>3</u>	(8)
Total Hours:	25	

College Requirements

International/Intercultural (college may require foreign language)	3-9	(5)
Social Science (college may narrow choices)	3-6	(8)
Mathematics and/or Natural Science	3-7	(6, 7)
Oral Communication and/or Health (optional)	<u>0-6</u>	(1, 3)
Total Hours	18-19	
Overall Total	43-44	

In setting the college requirements, each undergraduate college would be free to choose the areas to be covered and the courses available to satisfy requirements. Considerable variation would be possible, as in the hypothetical examples below. (These examples are just that—hypotheticals that bind no one—and dislike of any of them should not affect one's judgment of the proposal as such.)

CHBS requirements:
 International/Intercultural: 6 hours (foreign language)
 Social Science 6 hours
 Math/Stat/ITEC 3 hours
 Oral Communication 3 hours

CST requirements:
 International/Intercultural 3-6 hours
 Social Science 3-6 hours
 Math/Stat/ITEC 3 hours
 Natural Science 4 hours
 Health 0-3 hours

COBE requirements:
 International/Intercultural 6-9 hours
 Social Science 3-6 hours
 Math/Stat/ITEC 3 hours

Oral Communication 3 hours

CEHD requirements:
 International/Intercultural 3-6 hours
 Social Science 6 hours
 Math/Stat/ITEC 3 hours
 Natural Science 4 hours
 Health 3 hours
 Oral Communication 0-3 hours

WCHHS requirements:
 International/Intercultural 3-6 hours
 Social Science 3 hours
 Math/Stat/ITEC 3 hours
 Natural Science 4 hours

Health 3 hours
Oral Communication 0-3 hours

CVPA requirements:

International/Intercultural 9 hours
Social Science 6 hours
Oral Communication 3 hours