UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council
Date: December 14, 2009

SATISFYING THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE GEN ED WITH CREDITS EARNED WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the current bulletin wording regarding satisfying the foreign language general education requirement with coursework taken while studying abroad be revised as indicated.

2. That the changes be approved for immediate implementation.

3. That this bill be forwarded to the President for approval.
Current bulletin wording:

Foreign Language: Basic proficiency in the understanding and use of an ancient or modern human language other than English as demonstrated by:

- the satisfactory completion of the second college semester (i.e., level Elementary II) of foreign language study or its equivalent; or
- passing a Regents "Checkpoint B" Examination or a Regents-approved equivalent with a score of 85 or above; or
- demonstration of competency in a language other than English, including languages not currently offered for formal instruction at this university; or
- satisfactory completion of at least one college semester in a study abroad program in a country where English is not the primary language of instruction.

Change the phrase "satisfactory completion of at least one college ... of instruction" to

"in a study abroad program of any length, satisfactory completion of at least 6 SUNY credits of language instruction in any of the official languages of that country other than English, or, in a study abroad program lasting at least one semester, satisfactory completion of at least 3 SUNY credits of language instruction (clarification added by President Philip with UAC concurrence) in any of the official languages of that country other than English."

Rationale:

Learning languages overseas is different than learning languages in an otherwise English-speaking environment. The combination of classroom instruction plus everyday exposure to a foreign language for at least a semester produces basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a human language other than English. Foreign language courses that are intensive enough to yield 6 SUNY credits also give such basic proficiency even if they are not considered equivalent to a second-semester language course.