

SENATE
APRIL 13

Harold L. Cannon

Harry Staley

Richard Stearns

John J. [unclear]

John [unclear]

12. NITECEN

H. Bakhru

Marie Lafayette

Gene Carter

Eugene McLean

Mark Weprin

John [unclear]

Scott Rosenberg

Anne Roberts

W. F. Hammond

John [unclear]

Mark Tabor

Paul Kartel

Richard Jones

George G. Williams

Frank [unclear]

Tom [unclear]

Pat [unclear]



UNIVERSITY SENATE

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the University Senate

FROM: Eugene Garber, Chairman

DATE: April 8, 1981

The University Senate will hold a special meeting on Monday, April 13, to consider the proposal from the Undergraduate Academic Council for reinstituting distribution requirements for undergraduate students.

The meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will be held in the Campus Center Assembly Hall.



UNIVERSITY SENATE

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

Minutes of April 13, 1981

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman-Elect, Harold Cannon, at 3:40 p.m. in the Campus Center Assembly Hall. Senator Cannon noted that he would be chairing the meeting since the Chairman wished to participate in the debate on the proposed resolution.

1. Distribution Requirements Proposal

Senator Snow, Chairman of the Undergraduate Academic Council, moved approval of the resolution regarding distribution requirements; the motion was seconded.

Senator Snow gave some background information regarding the numerous committees and proposals which resulted in the proposed requirements.

Helen Desfosses, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, answered several questions regarding the LEAP program. There were several questions as to the affect this proposal would have on transfer students.

After additional discussion, it was moved and seconded to delete section C-2 of the proposal. The motion to delete was defeated.

It was moved and seconded that a provision be added to set up a separate committee of the UAC to develop the proposals for the courses and the curriculum. It was noted that if the proposed recommendations are approved by the Senate the Curriculum Committee of the UAC must report back to the Senate in the spring of 1982 for final approval. The proposal was defeated.

It was moved and seconded to close debate. The motion to close debate was approved.

The main motion was approved by majority vote.

2. Rockefeller College and Institute

President O'Leary reported to the Senate that the Long-Range Planning Committee of the Council on Educational Policy and the Council had both approved the formation of the Rockefeller College of Public Service and the Institute of Government.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

UNIVERSITY SENATE
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

Revision of Requirements for the
B.A. and B.S. Degrees

INTRODUCED BY: Undergraduate Academic Council
April 13, 1981

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

- I. That the current requirements for the B.A. and B.S. degrees be amended by addition of the following:
 - A. The completion of a distribution requirement consisting of a minimum of six graduation credits of approved courses in each of the following six categories: (1) Symbolics, (2) Natural Sciences, (3) Social Sciences, (4) Literature and the Fine Arts, (5) World Cultures, and (6) Values. A maximum of twelve credits with the same course prefix (e.g., A Eco, S Ssw, etc.) may be applied toward completion of the distribution requirement.
 - B. The completion of a writing requirement to be satisfied in one of the following ways:
 1. Students may complete an approved writing course in the Department of English with a grade of "C" or better, or "S." Approved writing courses are courses listed under the rubric "courses in writing" by the Department of English, except for any such courses which are specifically disapproved by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council.
 2. Students may complete with a grade of "C" or better, or "S," one course approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council as having an appropriate writing component.
 3. Students may be exempted from taking a specific writing course through procedures set forth by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council in consultation with the Department of English. Exemptions may be based on such factors as AP credits, CLEP credits, RCT and Regents examination scores, etc.
- II. That this distribution and writing requirement be implemented in accordance with the attached guidelines.
- III. That the above requirements become effective for all students graduating in May 1986 and thereafter.

Guidelines

Proposed Distribution and Writing Requirements

I. Distribution Requirement

- A. Students will fulfill a 36-credit distribution requirement consisting of a minimum of 6 graduation credits of approved courses in each of the following six slightly modified LEAP categories: Symbolics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Literature and the Fine Arts, World Cultures, and Values.
- B. The LEAP definitions of categories, except for "Cultures of the Past" which has been redefined as "World Cultures," will be utilized.

1. Symbolics

In the study of symbolics students should first understand two basic features of human symbol systems: their internal structure and logic, and their ability to give pattern and meaning to experience. Building upon these basic understandings, students should proceed to the more specific examination of verbal or mathematics symbol systems, as exemplified by (but not limited to) such studies as linguistics, foreign languages, communications, philosophy of language, logic, mathematics, and computer science.

2. Natural Sciences

In the study of natural sciences students should, while grasping the super-eminent role of the experiment in the scientific enterprise, also understand the following closely related fundamentals: (1) concepts--as defined in verbal and operational statements; (2) natural laws--as formulations of experiences; (3) theories--as they relate to natural laws, experiment, and prediction; (4) epistemological strategies--as the development and organization of information based on deduction, induction, and rationalization; and (5) the mathematics of science--as forming, with (4) above, the basis for prediction, judgment, and decision-making. After mastery of these basics students will then apply them to a specific science.

3. Social Sciences

In the study of the social sciences students should learn how ideas and institutions relate to behavior--individual and collective, historical and contemporary. Students should learn the diverse concepts, theories, and methodologies which will enhance their understanding of individual and collective behavior in different societies. Students should also have the opportunity to relate these matters to particular practical concerns, e.g., the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of specific public policy options.

4. Literature and the Fine Arts

In the study of literature and the fine arts students should have the opportunity to study several significant works of art in several major media and genres. They should gain a basic understanding of the historical changes in artistic modes and of the relationships between art and culture. Then, more specifically, they should work with several critical paradigms for classifying, interpreting, and evaluating works in a single mode. And they should have the opportunity to experience the creative process.

5. World Cultures

In the study of world cultures students should expand their knowledge and understanding of their cultural experiences and form new perspectives on their own cultural assumptions and traditions for application in our multi-cultural, heterogeneous world. Courses will provide exposure to the essential and distinctive features of world cultures, whether western or non-western. From either a historical or contemporary perspective, these courses provide the student with an awareness of another culture's distinctive patterns of thought, belief, and action, and a basic understanding of social systems, intellectual trends, religious and ethical values, and literary and artistic achievements. This aim may be achieved through appropriate courses in a variety of disciplines or through special courses that may be developed.

6. Values

In the study of values students should learn how human beliefs and choices derive from conscious or unconscious models of knowledge and systems of ethics. From these basics students should proceed to the analysis of a perennial issue (political power, distributive justice, religious tolerance, the responsible application of scientific discovery, etc.). They should study how models of the past were applied to these issues and with what results. They should clarify their own values by testing them against the systems of knowing and choosing offered by contemporary society.

C. The Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council shall establish a list of approved courses in each of the six distribution categories. These courses shall be proposed by the academic units in which they are taught, and approved by the Curriculum Committee. Academic units, in proposing courses, and the Curriculum Committee, in approving them, should bear in mind the following guidelines:

1. Acceptable courses may be fundamental to a discipline or be a representative sampling of the way professionals proceed within a discipline. They may also relate a discipline to societal needs and concerns. They should not be narrowly focused or highly specialized, and should not require significant prerequisites. They may teach a basic skill, such as a foreign language or expository writing. They may be required for a major or pre-major in a field

and teach basic vocabularies and methodologies, and at the same time, be tailored for non-majors.

2. Some courses may be acceptable only in two-course sequences (such as two semesters of a foreign language).
 3. Where the academic unit and the Curriculum Committee agree, ways may be provided for students to substitute advanced courses for the listed options.
 4. Class size should be small when practical, especially when course objectives are best achieved through small class sizes.
 5. Instruction should be provided wherever possible by permanent faculty, including some senior faculty. Faculty should grade essays in required papers and examinations when practical. Every effort should be made to insure the highest standards of instruction, regarding both selection of instructors and selection of TA's for discussion and laboratory sections.
 6. The academic units should provide accurate course titles and course descriptions for the courses they propose. They should also provide names of probable instructors. The academic units should provide reading lists, course outlines, examinations, and student course evaluations for courses which have been taught previously.
- D. The distribution requirement will not be required of students who complete the Liberal Education Advancement Program (LEAP).

II. Writing Requirement

- A. In addition to fulfilling the distribution requirement, students must demonstrate proficiency in writing in one of the following ways:
1. Students may complete an approved writing course in the Department of English with a grade of "C" or better, or "S." Approved writing courses are courses listed under the rubric "courses in writing" by the Department of English, except for any such courses which are specifically disapproved by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council.
 2. Students may complete, with a grade of "C" or better, or "S," an approved course with an appropriate writing component. Guidelines for these courses are to be developed by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council in consultation with the Department of English. Following establishment of the guidelines, courses shall be proposed in the academic units in which they are taught, and approved by the Curriculum Committee. These courses should also conform to Guidelines 4, 5, and 6 in Section I-C.

3. Students may be exempted from taking a specific writing course through procedures set forth by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council in consultation with the Department of English. Exemptions may be based on such factors as AP credits, CLEP credits, RCT and Regents examinations scores, etc.

- B. Courses which satisfy the writing requirement also count toward satisfying the distribution requirement if they have been approved for both requirements.

III. Evaluation

Each course that has been approved for either the distribution requirement or the writing requirement must participate in a university-wide student evaluation each time the course is taught. This mandatory student evaluation shall be administered, published, and made available to the student body through the normal processes used in the publication of the ACT, or shall be the evaluation that emerges from the current pilot testing program under the direction of the Council on Educational Policy.

IV. Additions and Deletions of Approved Courses

Additional courses for either the distribution requirement or the writing requirement may be approved at any time. Courses which have been approved for either the distribution requirement or the writing requirement will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council after every third year. Courses which no longer conform to the guidelines will be dropped from the list of approved courses. The Curriculum Committee may review and withdraw approval of any course at any time.

V. Additional Considerations for Curriculum Committee

- A. The Undergraduate Academic Council stipulates that the Curriculum Committee, insofar as possible, incorporate the recommendations of the Committee of Cultural Diversity.
- B. In 1981-1982, the Curriculum Committee will work with the School of Business to determine the maximum possible satisfaction of the distribution requirement by students majoring in accounting, taking AACSB and state requirements into account. It is expected that the accounting curriculum will be modified somewhat.
- C. The Curriculum Committee will establish appropriate guidelines for the articulation of transfer students in meeting the distribution requirements.

VI. Timetable

In 1980-1981 approval of this proposal by the University Senate is sought.

In 1981-1982 the Curriculum Committee should establish a list of approved courses for each of the six categories. The proposal would then be implemented for students who matriculate as freshmen in the fall of 1982 and would apply to all students who graduate in May 1986 and thereafter. If necessary because of resource limitations, the writing requirement may be implemented at a later date.

DISCUSSION

Over the last several years the campus has moved in the direction of a liberal education requirement. The Liberal Education Advancement Program (LEAP), an experimental program, is the major tangible result from discussions to date. More recently, the faculties of the College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences have developed independent proposals for distribution requirements and recommended their adoption by large majorities.

Strong support for some kind of a liberal education or distribution requirement exists in many units on the campus. Respondents to a recent student poll also favored a distribution require (see Appendix I). The strongest sentiment for distribution requirements was voiced by seniors, many of whom regretted not having taken a more broadly based curriculum in their first two years at SUNY-Albany. Distribution or general education requirements exist on many SUNY campuses (see Appendix II), and Albany is the only University Center without any kind of distribution requirement.

A Special Committee on Distribution Requirements was appointed by the deans of the schools and colleges, and charged with developing a proposal for a campus-wide distribution requirement. The committee was composed of two members from each of the three arts and sciences colleges, one member from each of the schools, the Dean and Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and two student representatives appointed after consultation with the Student Association.

That committee strongly believed that its work, or any legislation arising from its considerations, should not be of such a nature as to adversely affect the LEAP program. Formal evaluation of the experimental LEAP program will begin in fall 1982, and recommendations resulting from the LEAP evaluation could be implemented as soon as fall 1984. It is uncertain that the LEAP experiment can be extended to the entire student body because of the large demands it makes on faculty resources. The committee drafted a proposal which draws upon many of the ideas of LEAP, but is easier to implement. Implementation of this proposal would not detract from the forthcoming LEAP evaluation. Since the proposal is simple and related to the LEAP program, it should be easy for the campus to implement a more extensive proposal in 1984, if indeed such a proposal should materialize.

The report of the Special Committee on Distribution Requirements forms the basic structure for the distribution and writing requirements proposed by the Undergraduate Academic Council. Suggestions from the Liberal Education Advancement Program Committee and the Committee on Cultural Diversity were incorporated into the UAC's final proposal as presented for the establishment of a distribution requirement and a writing requirement.

A degree at SUNY-Albany requires completion of a program of intensive study in a specific discipline. But beyond this, a university degree should indicate a breadth of intellectual experience and the acquisition of certain skills, such as the ability to write and the ability to reason critically and analytically. Currently, a degree at SUNY-Albany does not necessarily imply either breadth of intellectual experience or the acquisition of basic skills. For example, it is possible for an individual to graduate with a B.S. degree in any department of the College of Science and Mathematics without ever taking a course outside the college. This concern is not allayed by the observation that most individuals do take courses outside their special fields of study, for the question is one of standards, and whether a student should be allowed to receive a university degree after completing a narrowly conceived course of study. Furthermore, many students currently do not acquire an adequate breadth of intellectual experience; and many do not learn basic skills, such as the ability to write an English sentence. This proposal specifies a minimum standard in terms of breadth of experience and the acquisition of basic skills.

There is not one but many ways to define breadth of experience in terms of specific subject matter. The campus has just completed an exhaustive discussion of this definition, leading to the adoption of the six LEAP categories. --- The Undergraduate Academic Council felt that the category "Cultures of the Past" was too narrowly defined, and redefined the category as "World Cultures." Although some modification of the categories may prove desirable at some point, the UAC felt they provided a sound foundation on which the Curriculum Committee could build its classification of courses.

Distribution requirements have been separated from the writing requirement. Many courses which will satisfy the distribution requirement will not have a writing component. Not only would resource limitations make it impractical to require writing in all courses, but also some courses do not lend themselves to a writing component, such as courses teaching basic mathematical skills.

Those in favor of distribution requirements contend that a student's academic freedom of choice is relative, and not absolute. The specific requirements in a major bring about a considerable surrender of "academic freedom of choice," and yet such requirements are universally accepted. The further limitation of this "academic freedom of choice" by the imposition of distribution requirements is a quantitative change in the degree of "freedom of choice," and not the violation of a fundamental principle. The overriding need, proponents would argue, is to insure that students receive the breadth of intellectual experience and acquire the basic skills that should be part of any university education.

Proponents of the breadth requirement acknowledge that the quality of instruction on this campus often leaves much to be desired. But they see this proposal as a means for improving instructional quality. The campus-wide Curriculum Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council would have the power to approve and disapprove specific courses for the distribution requirement. The Curriculum Committee is explicitly charged with evaluating the content and quality of courses which the various academic units propose for satisfaction of the breadth requirement.

The proponents of this proposal do not believe that it will have a major effect on class size. Some classes, such as foreign languages, are traditionally taught in small classes, and should continue to be taught that way. But there is no reason why some materials cannot be communicated effectively in large classes. Proponents believe that student dissatisfaction with large classes is most frequently directed at the quality of teaching, and not class size per se. As argued in the preceding paragraph, proponents believe that this proposal will have a positive effect on the quality of teaching.

Proponents of the breadth requirement also agree that academic advising could be greatly improved. Many professors are insufficiently conversant with the programs in their own departments, and have even less knowledge of appropriate courses in other schools and colleges. And even under the assumption that this situation could be corrected, that is, even if all professors were well informed of other programs and conscientiously carried out their advising duties, there is no guarantee that students would follow their advice. The proposal for a breadth requirement, by selecting the specific courses which are most suited for study outside of a major, greatly reduces the demands made upon the academic advising system. A student choosing from a relatively small pre-selected list of appropriate courses cannot go too far wrong.

The Undergraduate Academic Council believes that six credits constitute a minimally sufficient exposure to each of the six distribution categories. A single three-credit course in most cases would not give adequate exposure to a distribution category. Many students will fulfill 12 credits automatically in satisfying requirements for their major, so that the "real" requirement would be approximately 24 credits, or eight 3-credit courses. This would average out to one course each semester during a student's four years of study, which the UAC feels is a reasonable requirement. Such a program provides the greatest possibility for a true liberal education while still leaving considerable opportunity for students to specialize. A 36-credit requirement would be no more demanding than distribution requirements at other SUNY campuses, most of which exclude major courses from counting in the credit totals required (see Appendix II).

The 36-credit requirement would also have various secondary benefits. It would encourage the utilization or development of two-semester sequences in some distribution categories. This might be particularly important in some areas such as the foreign languages, where a one-semester exposure is little better than none at all. In addition, since the 36-credit requirement would result in an increased exposure to different intellectual endeavors, this version would lead to a more informed choice of major for the undecided student.

Attachments: Appendix I
Appendix II

Most Students Want Distribution Requirements

Mark Fischetti
 The ASP randomly surveyed 253 undergraduates and 33 teachers last week to find the reaction of the SUNYA academic body regarding the imposition of distribution requirements here, a proposal now being investigated by special committee.

Overall, 67 percent of SUNYA students favored distribution requirements. An average of 19.9 required credits was suggested. Although only a small sample of

teachers was taken, those surveyed were highly in favor; 88 percent supported distribution requirements. Teachers suggested an average of 23.9 required credits.

Only 38 percent of freshmen surveyed favored requirements, and freshmen preferred as few mandatory credits as possible.

The percent in favor increased steadily with class year, as did the amount of required credits suggested. Upperclassmen generally

stated that as they advance in their education they appreciate more, and thus better understand the necessity for a well-rounded curriculum. Seniors supported requirements the most. Many said they regret not having taken a broader curriculum, while others who felt they had taken a wide range of courses are glad they did. Freshmen, however, stated greater concern in finding a major than in becoming well-rounded.

Of those who have decided on a

major, the Social Science majors favored requirements and considered themselves more diverse than other students did. Science and math students least favored distribution requirements, but the disparity among majors was not great.

The ASP survey read as follows: "There is presently a committee on distribution requirements which proposes that, to graduate, SUNYA students would have to complete one or two courses in each of the following categories: Other Cultures, Social Sciences, Literature, and Fine Arts, Natural Sciences, and Symbolics.

"Required courses would amount to a minimum of 18 credits and a maximum of 36, depending on how the final proposal is devised.

"Pro: A person who graduates with a degree should have been ex-

posed to certain kinds of knowledge basic to an educated person, to prepare him not only for a job, but for anything he might encounter in life.

"Con: A student is limited in academic freedom. Required courses may not be within his interests."

The person's class, major, age, and sex, were asked, as well as the following questions: "Are you in favor of distribution requirements? Why or why not? Whether in favor or not, how many credits would be a fair amount to require (18 to 36)? With or without such requirements have you, in your opinion, taken a wide range of courses?"

Students and faculty who favored distribution requirements generally agreed that a college education means more than just completing a major, while those against did not like "being told what to do."

Students	Distribution Requirements			Required Credits		Well Rounded		
	Yes	No	% in Favor	Avg.	Std. Dev.	Yes	No	% Yes
Freshman (21)	8	13	38%	18.5	1.5	13	8	62%
Sophomore (54)	30	24	56%	19.3	2.8	45	9	83%
Junior (110)	78	32	71%	20.2	5.2	91	19	83%
Senior (68)	54	14	79%	20.0	3.9	51	17	75%
Total (253)	170	83	67%	19.9	4.4	200	53	79%
Majors								
Science and Math (34)	21	13	62%	21.0	5.2	28	6	82%
Business (42)	29	13	69%	20.2	4.3	24	8	81%
Soc. Sci. (67)	47	20	70%	18.0	5.2	58	9	87%
Humanities and Fine Arts (64)	43	21	67%	19.9	4.6	53	9	85%

Teachers	Distribution Requirements			Required Credits	
	Yes	No	% in Favor	Avg.	Std. Dev.
Science and Math (13)	12	1	92%	23.4	10.6
Business (5)	5	0	99%	24.0	7.0
Soc. Sci. (6)	5	1	83%	28.2	4.9
Humanities and Fine Arts (9)	7	2	78%	21.6	3.0
Total (33)	29	4	88%	23.9	7.7

SUMMARY OF REQUIRED GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITSAT SUNY CAMPUSES

- Buffalo: 24 credits outside of major area
- Binghamton: 40 credits - may include courses in major
- Stony Brook: 36 credits - excludes courses in major
Also requires proficiency in English composition, mathematics, and foreign language
- Brockport: 33 credits - excludes courses in major
Also requires 6 credits in communication arts and foreign language for B.A.
- Cortland: 36 credits - at least 24 must be outside major
Also requires 3-6 credits in English composition and 0-13 credits in foreign language
- Fredonia: 30 credits - excludes courses in major
English composition included within 30 credits
- Geneseo: 30 credits - excludes courses in major
Also requires proficiency in writing
- Oneonta: 21 credits - excludes courses in major
- Oswego: 33 credits - some major courses counting
Also requires 3-6 credits in English composition and 3-6 credits in mathematics

March 10, 1981

SENATE ATTENDANCE SHEET

APRIL 13, 1981

J-S.U. PPAC

1. Norman Dreyfus
2. H. DeJong
3. R. H. Wilson
4. J. Kiedel
5. B. Bentzen Skutin
6. E. Christoffen
7. J. M. Webb
8. [Signature]
9. [Signature]
10. John Hartigan
11. Paul Kastell
12. Lewis Rothenberg
13. Neil Gelfand
14. David Rich
15. Dot Christensen
16. Vernon Beech
17. Jerome Hanley
18. Jeff Morgenstern
19. Judith A. Baer
20. Marlene Rozett
21. R. Hardt
22. David Burn
23. Robert Meyers
24. H. P. Crosby
25. H. L. Frisph
26. Gabrielle Gerhard
27. Gail Goldstein
28. Muriel Bens
29. Neil C. Brown

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