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Fitchburg State College
All College Committee

2000-01 Proposal Form

Date: October 12, 2000

I. <u>Proposal Title</u>: Revising LAS Requirements

II. <u>Proposal Initiator(s)</u>: Michael P. Riccards, President

III. <u>Collaborating Parties</u>:

IV. Proposal Summary (If applicable, highlight changes from previous policy or practice.):

The enclosed is a proposal for a revision of the LAS requirements which could become effective September 2002. The previous policy is attached.

V. <u>Rationale for the Proposal</u>:

The proposal takes into account the need to build on high school competencies and new Board of Higher Education requirements. It also gives students the chance for some flexibility within the number of required hours and to simplify advisement and graduation.

VI. <u>Proposal (Attach a complete proposal)</u>:

I have proposed to the faculty in my address in September that we make major changes in the LAS along the following lines:

1. That all students be required to exhibit mastery in the areas of English literacy (including reading, writing, language skills), math literacy (to be defined by the Board of Higher Education in 2001), and computer literacy; that those requirements can be met by taking particular courses offered by the college, or through a challenge of competencies arranged by the department or the college. If students choose to challenge those competencies and are successful, then the waived credits would be replaced by free electives.

2. That we would require only 48 hours of LAS course work and that the rest of the non-major credits be given over to liberal arts electives.

3. That students be required to complete two courses or six credit hours demonstrating their ability to understand how thinking embraces each of the following areas of inquiry: aesthetic, logical, symbolic, experimental (scientific), and historical or traditional. These would replace the current LAS clusters and modes of inquiry.

   The Liberal Arts and Science requirements are meant to provide students with the understanding that there are different ways of thinking. Howard Gardner, the Harvard University psychologist, has argued that there are different areas of mastery in terms of cognitive development, much of which cannot be explained by the traditional IQ indices. This proposal is meant to ask departments not only to identify particular courses, but also to include in those courses a cluster of materials on how each course relates to a particular mode of thinking. Thus, a course on the history of China, for example, would embrace a discussion of the way in which one understands a knowledge-base based on history, tradition, folklore, or even the oral traditions of humankind. Each department would identify what courses satisfy what requirements, however, the ACC and the Academic Affairs Office would put forth the general criteria by which such designations are made. The ACC, or an appropriate subcommittee, would review these courses every five years to make sure that in fact they satisfy the requirements unique to that area of thinking and cognitive development. To satisfy the LAS requirements, the core courses would have to have writing components, so that we could institutionalize writing-across-the-curriculum.

4. Lastly, I am requesting that every student pass either a general all college course on leadership studies or a particular leadership studies course that is tailored to the needs of a department. In nursing education, for example, there is a specific course that deals with the question of leadership in that field that would satisfy the leadership requirement under this rubric.

   I ask that this proposal be implemented as of the year 2002 to allow time for the necessary work that would be involved and also to allow for the contractual process for curriculum change to occur and to lay out the types of administrative mechanism to make it happen.

Proposed Core Requirements

1) English 1100 and English 1200 or their equivalent. One or both courses can be challenged via exam. Those who do so successfully will replace the course(s) with free electives.

2) Computer Literacy as defined by the campus under BHE guidelines (to be released academic year 2000-2001)

3) Math Literacy (to be defined by BHE in 2001)

4) 1 Leadership course (from the student's major department)

5) 2 courses which utilize aesthetic inquiry (study of the mind and emotions in relations to the sense of beauty; establishing the meaning and validity of critical judgments concerning works of art, and the principles underlying or justifying such judgments)

6) 2 courses which utilize logical inquiry (reasoning, argumentation applicable to any branch of knowledge or study)

7) 2 courses which utilize symbolic inquiry (characterized by or involving use of symbols; practice of investing things with symbolic meaning or character)

8) 2 courses which utilize experimental (scientific) inquiry (based on or derived from experience; empirical; pertaining to, derived from, or founded on experiment)

9) 2 courses which utilize historical/traditional inquiry (establishing general facts and principles through attention to chronology; analysis based on a comparison among several periods of development of a phenomenon)

10) Electives to bring total number of hours to 48

Current Requirements

Incoming Students:
The Readiness Program

All first-year and transfer students will be tested or otherwise evaluated upon entrance to Fitchburg State College to determine their proficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics. (Exams are scheduled both days and evenings throughout the academic year.) If their skills are found deficient by college standards, students will be required to participate in a readiness program designed to improve basic academic abilities and to provide new students with a solid and equal start to their college careers.

Readiness Program Courses and Requirements: EDUC 1000-Personal Reading Improvement strongly advised for first-year students who score in the bottom 25th percentile on the reading proficiency examination. **ENGL 0100-Basic College Writing:** required for fast-year students whose writing skills are determined to be unsatisfactory and if they have no transfer credit equivalent to Writing I and/or Writing II. **MATH 0200-Basic Mathematics I:** required for freshmen whose tested mathematics skills are determined to be below college level. Transfer students who fail the mathematics examination will not be required to take these courses unless they wish to enroll in a mathematics course at the 1000-level or above. Credit for ENGL 0100 and MATH 0200 is considered Institutional Credit only; that is, the courses will not count toward graduation, but will count toward full-time status for purposes of financial aid and athletic eligibility. Additionally, the grades received in these courses will be counted in each participant's Grade Point Average.

Common Graduation Requirements

In order to be eligible to graduate with a baccalaureate degree from Fitchburg State College, the following general requirements must be met:

- Successful completion of an appropriate discipline-based evaluation chosen by the department and approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Successful completion of at least 120 semester hours of course work; 45 of these must be attained in residence (normally including the .senior year)

- A cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher

- A 2.0 average in major course of study

- An application' for graduation must be filed with the Registrar's Office by January I of the year of anticipated graduation

Liberal Arts and Sciences Program Requirement:
Of the 120 semester hours needed to graduate, candidates must spend a minimum of 60 hours satisfying the requirements of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program, which includes the Readiness in English and Mathematics (if necessary) and the Constitution requirement (for teacher education majors only) as well as the following components:

- Quantitative/Scientific Cluster ("Q" symbol in course schedule)-4 courses, 1 must be a mathematics course beyond the readiness level; one must be a science lab. (NB: 4 courses, regardless of whether they carry three or four hours of credit, must be completed)

- Ideas and Events Cluster ("I" symbol in course schedule)three courses, one must have a historical perspective

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- Human Behavior Cluster ("B" symbol in course schedule—-2 courses

- Literature, Language, and Arts Cluster ("L" symbol in course schedule)--4 courses, 1 must be in Literature and 1 must be in Arts

- Writing I & II-ENGL 1100 and 1200, or their equivalent if taken at another institution,
' Health and Fitness--(See Health and Fitness) Requirement under Physical Education Program

- Junior/Senior Writing--specific requirements) defined by the department of the student's major , Computer Literacy-specific requirement(s) defined by the department of the student's major

- Speaking/Listening-specific requirement(s) defined by the department of the student's major

- Interdisciplinary ("IDIS" or departmental prefix in schedule)-two courses, one of which must be taken in the freshman year: These courses can simultaneously meet the requirements in content clusters

- Multicultural ("C" symbol in course schedule) -2 courses, which can simultaneously meet the requirements in content clusters

- Intermediate and Advanced Requirement-3 courses at the Intermediate or Advanced level in a Liberal Arts or Science discipline outside one's major. These courses can simultaneously meet the requirements in content clusters

- Liberal Arts and Sciences Electives--4 courses chosen from among those designated as part of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program

Candidates should be aware that the following restrictions apply with respect to fulfilling their Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements:

- Credits earned in one course cannot be divided

- Credits earned toward graduation cannot be counted twice, even though courses that satisfy Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements may also fulfill the requirements of one's major course of study
Certain majors specify which courses must be taken to satisfy Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements. Students should read the section pertaining to their selected major carefully before registering for classes.