

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Attachments

- A. Proposed General Education Requirements for Fall '91 Freshman
- B. Departmental Honors
- C. Procedure for the Review of Academic Deans

A. **ATTACHMENT A**

Proposed General Education requirements for B.A. and B.S. students in the Arts and Sciences entering as freshman beginning in fall 1991

[Note: These requirements were modified April 1995; see above, Resolution III, B, 1. Senate discussion of this proposal extended over several Senate meetings, with each operative paragraph separately debated and voted upon; some amendments were made on the floor to the original proposal There was no single vote on the entire package.]

Note: Students taking degrees in the professional schools, transfer students, and students enrolled prior to fall 1991 will continue to be responsible for the General Education requirements as stated in the 1989-91 Undergraduate Bulletin.

Entrance Expectations: The following statement will be included in the Undergraduate Bulletin and in all admissions recruitment literature:

"Most successful students at the University have come to it with a strong level of preparation in basic academic areas. Although the following courses are not

requirements for admission, our experience suggests that applicants for regular freshman admission will be adequately prepared for University courses who have had, at the high school level, four years (units) of social sciences, four years (units) of English (with a substantial writing component), three years (units) of science, three years (units) of a second language, and at least three years of college preparatory mathematics. A number of students will be admitted who have not completed such a program, but they must realize that additional work in one or more of these areas may be necessary after arrival at the University in order to maximize their chances for success in its various academic programs."

Writing and Library Skills: Unless exempted, all students are required to successfully complete Writing I (English 101) and Reading and Advanced Writing (English 201). The criteria for exemption are the same as those currently in use (exemption by examination, transfer, or ESL 407-408). Writing will occupy a central place in Undergraduate College courses ([Attachment C](#)). A library skills component is included in ENG 201 and ESL 408.

Language Proficiency: Unless exempted, all students are required, prior to graduation, to demonstrate intermediate proficiency in a foreign language. Intermediate proficiency is defined as the equivalent of four semesters of college instruction. The requirement may be satisfied by successful completion of a designated course, by AP credit, or by placement examination. Any student for whom this requirement would necessitate more than 128 credits to complete a degree may be forgiven as many courses are necessary to get down to the 128 credit limit from either the Mathematical Sciences, Natural Sciences, Literature and Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Scientific Inquiry, Great Discoveries in Science or this Language Proficiency requirement.

Freshman Seminar: All freshman must successfully complete a Freshman Seminar ([Attachment D](#)).

World Civilization: All students must successfully complete World Civilization I-II (UGC 111-112), or an approved cognate course.

American Pluralism: All students must successfully complete American Pluralism and the Search for Equality (UGC211), or an approved cognate course.

Mathematical Sciences: Unless exempted, all students must successfully complete an approved two-semester sequence in a mathematical science. Exemptions are possible by AP exam or transfer credit. Students entering without adequate math skills (as determined by the math skills exam) should take MTH 115 or ULC 148 prior to enrolling in a mathematical science course.

Natural Sciences: Unless exempted, all students must successfully complete two approved courses in a natural science, including one semester of laboratory. Exemptions are made possible through AP exam or transfer credit.

Literature and Arts: Unless exempted, all students must successfully complete two courses (six credits) selected from the Faculty of Arts and Letters. Courses offered by the department of the student's academic major may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Exemptions are possible through AP exam, transfer credit, or double major or minor².

Social and Behavioral Sciences: Unless exempted, all students must successfully complete two approved courses (six credits) selected from the offerings of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Courses offered by the department of the student's academic major may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Courses that meet Mathematical or Natural Sciences requirements may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Exemptions are possible through AP exam, transfer credit, or double major or minor².

Scientific Inquiry: Unless exempted³, all students must successfully complete Scientific Inquiry (UGC 3xx), contingent upon successful piloting of this course by the Undergraduate College, or an approved cognate course.

Great Discoveries in Science: Unless exempted³, all students must successfully complete Great Discoveries in Science (UGC 3xy), contingent upon successful piloting of this course by the Undergraduate College, or an approved cognate course.

Senior Integrative Course: An approved senior integrative course may be substituted for one course in any faculty where it is cross-listed (Document available in the Senate Office).

Student-Initiated General Education Option

As an alternative to the above, student may petition, no later than three semesters prior to graduation, for approval of a student-initiated general education program. Such programs must meet the criteria specified in the document, Student-Initiated General Education: An Option Within the Undergraduate College General Education Curriculum (as approved by the Undergraduate College General Assembly on March 21, 1991). (Document available in the Senate Office but also [here](#))

Endnotes

1. The Arts and Sciences include the Faculties of Arts and Letters, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social Sciences, and also all students in Special Major programs.

2. Students who complete double degrees, double majors, joint majors, or minors in the Arts and Sciences will be exempt from the two-course requirement in each Faculty in which they complete a major or minor.
3. Students who have taken at least two courses in the physical, biological, or mathematical sciences numbered 200 or above will be exempt from the Scientific Inquiry and Great Discoveries in Science courses.

B. ATTACHMENT B

Departmental Honors

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The current Honors Program at the University at Buffalo functions strictly as a recruiting mechanism to attract outstanding students at UB. Students meeting the qualifications are invited to join the program only as they enter the university.

Since its inception eight years ago, the Honors Program has enjoyed remarkable success. Unfortunately because of limited resources, it has not been able to accept many students who, none the less, went on to produce excellent academic records at UB. In fact, there are approximately 1,000 students who are not part of the Honors Program but meet its 3.5 grade point standards. The Honors Council believes that Honors opportunities should exist for such students.

Students desire admission into the Honors Program because it offers explicit recognition of their academic achievements, provides opportunities for special courses and individual mentors as well as other benefits. To expand the current Honors Program for another 1,000 students would require a minimum of a

million dollars and a tripling of staff and space. The Honors Council believes we can accomplish many of the same academic goals by establishing a Departmental Honors Program.

This would be a program where UB would reward high achievers in particular disciplines and expand their opportunities to develop talents and experience in their chosen fields.

Several departments at UB currently have departmental honors programs in place. Although all departments, in principle, could have such programs, our survey indicates only 12 (22%) have elected to do so and some of these programs appear moribund. Most faculty appear not to know if their department offers such opportunities. We believe there are significant benefits to be gained by developing a strong Departmental Honors Program across the university.

Purpose of the Program

The general purpose of the Departmental Honors Program is to develop honors opportunities for the many excellent students who are not now part of the University Honors Program. Specifically, this program rewards and encourages excellence within specific disciplines.

This program alone is not intended to meet all of the needs and desires of excellent students, but we believe it to be a major step forward. In principle, it is easily accomplished for it is merely a formalization of a policy currently in practice. Moreover, there is no financial cost associated with the program.

Nature of the Program

There are two common features of most Departmental Honors Program at UB: a minimum grade point average, and a senior ("thesis") project. Some departments add other requirements as mentioned below.

In keeping with these principles, we propose that all University Departmental Honors Programs follow these guidelines:

1. Minimum Grade Point Average

Most departments distinguish three levels of performance at graduation, depending upon the grade point average within the major.

Honors - 3.25

High Honors - 3.5

Highest Honors - 3.75

We recommend them as minimum levels of attainment. Individual departments may opt for higher averages if they wish.

2. Senior ("Thesis") Projects

Senior projects are common requirements in Honors Programs across the country. Some schools such as Princeton require theses from all graduating seniors. The purpose of such projects is to encourage students to undertake an in-depth study in their chosen field of specialty, develop a more sophisticated understanding of at least one aspect of their field, and obtain some skills at analysis, research and creativity. Senior projects are generally extensive, often comparable to at least 6 hours of independent study (e.g. Anthropology, Biology). We suggest all departments require comparable scholarly or creative efforts.

Obviously, senior projects will differ among departments. In many fields such as the Natural Sciences, an experimental research program with a written thesis is appropriate. (Biology even requires an oral presentation and defense of the work.) In other fields such as the Fine Arts, a recital, a show or a nature of the senior project, the method of evaluation, and its acceptance or rejection should be left in the hands of the individual department.

3. Other Departmental Requirements

Departments may wish to establish specific additional criteria for students. For example, Psychology requires its honors students to complete a research methods seminar. Art History requires a directed reading tutorial. English and American Studies departments require each honors student have two letters of support from the faculty.

We propose that each department establish any additional qualifications for their honors program they deem necessary. It is possible that a department may wish to specify particular honors courses or honors sections of courses as requirements. Some such courses now exist.

Impact of the Proposed University-wide Program

Currently, only 12 departments have Departmental Honors Programs in place. In 1989, perhaps two dozen seniors graduated with such awards. Our proposal would greatly expand and vitalize the current program and should have two effects.

First, the formalization of a University-wide Departmental Honors Program by explicitly setting clear university-wide guidelines and the advertising of the program (which the Honors Council would undertake) would have an important effect in recruiting students to UB's excellent undergraduate program.

Second and most importantly, it will encourage excellent students by spotlighting outstanding academic performances. It should prompt gifted students to excel in their fields and promote creative enterprises as part of senior projects. And if experiences in departments such as Psychology and Biology are any gauge, many of these projects will lead to scholarly publications with faculty.

C. ATTACHMENT C

Procedure for the Review of Academic Deans February, 1994

The Review of Deans

An effective and regular procedure for the review of deans and decanal units has been discussed at UB for a number of years. It has been generally recognized that a process which is regular, participatory, reasonable and fair is required. As in any productive evaluation of job performance, the process should be formative, not merely summative. Participants in the evaluation should emerge from the process with a keener understanding of decanal responsibilities and the execution of those responsibilities. The dean should be assisted in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of his or her performance and should reach an understanding with the Provost about specific plans to address any concerns which may have emerged from the review process. Satisfactorily addressing these issues should become a formal part of the next evaluation.

Deans serve without specified terms at UB. They serve at the pleasure of the President and can be removed at any time without cause. These provisions guard against the most extreme forms of decanal ineffectiveness or malfeasance. The annual budget and program reviews from the Provost allow for an annual assessment of administrative and management effectiveness. Not systematically addressed is the effectiveness of the dean in the context of the faculty, staff and students and his or her effectiveness in the community and professions. It is upon these aspects that periodic decanal review should concentrate as well as upon broader issues of long-range vision and decanal vitality. A thorough

evaluation of the dean's effectiveness within the decanal unit should be undertaken periodically in consultation with representatives of the faculty and with the constituencies of the decanal unit (alumni, professional societies and the like). The process should allow for a meaningful review without the review becoming a dominating and disruptive aspect of decanal and faculty responsibility.

Process and Timing

While faculty involvement is imperative, the appropriate context for soliciting that involvement differs in the various decanal units. Faculty participation should be tailored to address these realities.

Participation in the process should be centered in a Decanal Review Committee appointed by the Provost. The constituency of this committee will be varied to allow for suitable representation (including student and staff as appropriate) of the specific decanal unit. Nominations for the faculty members of the committee should be received by the Provost from an appropriate faculty body, consistent with the governance structure of the decanal unit. The Provost may appoint from the list, but in as much as the committee is advisory in function, he or she maintains discretion to select other members as well.

The committee's report becomes one element in the Provost's review. Another is a self-evaluation prepared by the Dean, a summary of which will be available to the committee. The committee is to respond to the written guidelines and standards for decanal effectiveness provided to them by the Office of the Provost. These standards will have been developed by the Provost with appropriate consultation and negotiated with the dean at the time of appointment. Solicitation of opinion by the committee should be comprehensive, and confidentiality of responses should be assured.

A review at least once every five years is recommended. However, a new dean can benefit markedly from a review during the initial years of his or her appointment. A dean new in the post requires sufficient time to deal with those institutional problems which inevitably await a new administrator. These are often the obdurate problems left by previous administrators which are now identified as important priorities for resolution under a new administrator. The decanal review cycle should allow for an appropriate transition period for a new administration, a sufficient period of time for the administrator to develop working relationships, and an adequate base of experience from which he or she might be evaluated. A preliminary review in the third year of the service of each dean's initial appointment allows an opportunity to assess progress within the unit and the effectiveness of the dean in responding to the challenges which awaited him or her upon appointment. At the same time, the Provost and Dean will reach agreement on those goals to be assessed at the fifth year review.

The third year review shall be carried out largely within the decanal unit as an enhanced annual review. The Provost shall solicit the opinion and insights of faculty and other appropriate individuals regarding the effectiveness of the dean. The Provost will review this information with the dean and establish with him or her the performance criteria and goals for the remainder of the cycle. These criteria and the dean's performance within them should be central issues in the fifth year, full evaluation. This evaluation will, in distinction from the third-year review, also involve the external constituencies of the decanal area (alumni, professional societies, etc.) in whatever manner is deemed appropriate by the Provost and the Decanal Review Committee of the dean to be evaluated. Thereafter, the Provost will undertake the full review of each decanal area at his or her discretion, but no less frequently than every five years.

Outcomes

Deans should be accountable in the same spirit in which employee evaluations

are conducted throughout the institution. The review process should be viewed as an exercise which assists the dean in understanding and meeting the needs and expectations of the administration, faculty, students, and external constituencies which he or she serves. At its conclusion, the process should have established a set of agreed-upon goals and expectations to stimulate and guide the work of the dean. These will form a framework for the annual performance evaluations of the dean by the Provost. Those involved in the review should emerge with a better understanding of the challenges facing the dean and with keener insights about how faculty and administrative officers might better work together toward advancement of the decanal unit.

Process Review

This process shall be reviewed and amended as required and will be subject to a formal review of its effectiveness no more than five years after its adoption.

[Note: The original Faculty Senate resolution endorsing a decanal review process was adopted 4/17/90 by a vote of 45/0/2; the material presented in [Attachment C](#) resulted from discussion between the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost.]