



TO: Dr. Sue Monahan, Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Mark Girod, Dean  
College of Education

FROM: Stephen Scheck, Provost

DATE: September 3, 2014

**RE: Review of undergraduate degree major requirements**

Previously, OUS funding was tied almost exclusively to student full-time equivalents and the number of student credit hours taught in various disciplinary categories. This funding method is known as the RAM (Resource Allocation Model). In the future, our state funding will become increasingly weighted toward successfully meeting goals such as retention rates, timely progress toward graduation, graduation rates, and student cost per degree -- a performance-based model.

In past years, WOU faculty and administrators have talked about various factors that may delay our students' progress toward completion of a degree. Some of these factors, like student finances or family issues, are challenging to manage. Others, such as high school or community college advising, are also difficult for WOU faculty to influence. However, some factors are within the faculty's sphere of responsibility and therefore merit faculty attention, such as:

- 1) the number of courses and credits required by the major (including necessary pre-major courses);
- 2) the flexibility of the major degree requirements (e.g., number of free electives in the major);
- 3) the number of credits required by our general education/liberal arts core curriculum;
- 4) the number of credits needed to complete the required minor;

**Action Item:**

The purpose of this memo is to request department/program engagement in assessing items 1 and 2 (above) for their undergraduate degree programs. Specifically, I would like faculty to compare the WOU major curriculum to similar programs offered by a minimum of five (5) other colleges or universities. I encourage faculty to include several alma maters in their comparison group. An interactive PDF template will be provided for the faculty to use for reporting on this comparison process.

This engagement is intended give us insight into the robustness of our major curricular designs and to stimulate conversation within departments/programs about how our programs are constructed. Together, we'll learn more about how our designs support timely student progress while holding true to the stated learning outcomes for the major. Findings from this review will also be used to support our accountability reporting to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and our incoming WOU Board of Trustees.

Please provide me with your summary of these reviews, along with completed academic unit templates, by the end of the winter 2015 term; Friday, March 20.

Vice President for Academic Affairs