

October 3, 2017

Dr. Adele Schepige, President
Faculty Senate

Dear Senate President Schepige,

This letter is to reaffirm administrative actions that were taken in spring 2017 related to the 180-credit degree completion and the revised general education goals set forth in the university's strategic plan. These actions were discussed at a number of Faculty Senate assemblies and will, no doubt, be the subject of many discussions to come. The general context of these actions has WOU Board of Trustees endorsement because these actions will position the university to better support students in attaining a financially and logistically attainable degree.

To summarize, the university will:

- A. Produce a general education curriculum of approximately 60 credits that is contemporary and easy to understand by both students and faculty advisors. In light of this, the General Education Task Force was impaneled and has engaged in curricular design work that, once completed, will be transferred to the Faculty Senate General Education Committee for future curricular oversight.
- B. Reference general education core curriculum as a complete body of academic work. Students will no longer need to be referred to the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (LACC) requirements and then to other university curricular requirements in order to understand the totality of their general education requirements.
- C. Disarticulate B.A./B.S. major degree requirements from general education requirements, *i.e.*, the B.A. or B.S. degree in a discipline is to be configured so as to be attainable in 90 credit units – unless external professional standards for said degree dictate a need for coursework that results in more than 90 credits. Program faculty are to review their current programs for alignment with this 90-credit goal. If the curriculum proposed is more than 90 credits, the program faculty will need to provide evidence of external factors that contribute to the need for a larger degree program.
- D. Discontinue the minor as a university-wide requirement as of AY 2018-2019. Programs that wish to require a minor are to include the associated credits as part of their B.A. and/or B.S. 90-credit major degree curricula. Programs should submit a revised program proposal through the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee noting the new design of any major that includes a required minor.
- E. Provide students access to 30 free-elective credits (depending on general education final credits and professional standards noted above) in which to pursue an optional minor, engage in a study abroad experience, change majors or select coursework to augment career preparation. Importantly, these free electives can serve as a refuge for “lost credits” – especially for transfer

students. Having a free electives component within the 180-credit degree will support WOU's engagement with the HB2998 mandate of 30 transfer credits that must count toward university graduation requirements.

Other factors for Faculty Senate consideration:

- A. Review whether the B.A. vs. B.S. is defined university-wide (as currently done, see p. 35 of current catalog) or by academic programs following a set of guidelines developed by Faculty Senate. NWCCU's definitions of the B.A. and B.S. are: "Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.). An undergraduate degree normally representing about four years (120 semester or 180 quarter units) of college study, or its equivalent in depth and quality of learning experience. The B.A. degree implies a more liberal education orientation and the B.S. degree implies a more applied educational orientation."
- B. Review B.M., B.F.A., honors and A.B. degrees to determine how programs will wish to incorporate the new B.A./B.S. general education curriculum once that curriculum is adopted.
- C. Review whether the 62 upper-division credit requirement should be reduced.

None of the actions, above, affect other university requirements, such as credits taken in residence, limits on open-ended courses, 36-UD credits in the major, minimal GPA, etc.

Implementation of these changes:

Adopting and implementing a new general education curriculum and simultaneously implementing 90-credit unit major program (re)designs, represents a substantial alteration to academic life at WOU. This work will be challenging; it will not be completed in one academic year; and it will require close coordination at all levels of oversight of the curriculum. I will work with deans, division chairs, Faculty Senate, WOUFT, and the staff of various support offices so that the transition from our current curricular designs and practices to our future curricular designs and practices progresses in an orderly fashion. Further, we must ensure that the curriculum we design is effectively communicated to current and prospective students and the university faculty and staff. Ultimately, through hard work and a willingness to work creatively and collegially, our university will be better positioned to provide programming that better serves our students.

Wishing Faculty Senate and all our academic units a productive year.

Cordially,



Stephen Scheck
Provost

c: Dr. Kathy Cassity, Dean
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Mark Girod, Dean
College of Education