

SPECIAL REPORT

of the

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

and the

GENERAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

concerning

**THE APPLICATION OF
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS TO RETURNING STUDENTS**

Presented at the
642nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 16, 2005

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

William Richards Adrion, Mokhtar Atallah, Martha Baker, Robert Bernatzky, Deborah Carlin, Stephanie Chapko, John J. Cunningham, Jeffrey Eiseman, Ginger Etinde, Ruth Green, John Jenkins, Chair, Arthur Keene, M. Christine King, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Ernest May, Jennifer Normanly, Theresa Ray, Dennis Searcy, Craig Sinclair, Linda Slakey, Cecilia Trachy, Margaret Wherry

GENERAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

Maurianne Adams, Mokhtar Atallah, Gail Cruise, Joan Culley, John J. Cunningham, Alexandrina Deschamps, Ginger Etinde, Robert Faulkner, Edward Golding, Judith Goodenough, Kevin Klement, Randall Knoper, Therese Labine, Mark Leckie, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Ernest May, John McCarthy, Chair, Lori Mestre, Bernd Schliemann, Nate Therien, Cecilia Trachy

**THE APPLICATION OF
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS TO RETURNING STUDENTS**

I. BACKGROUND.

The basic structure of current General Education requirements dates back to 1986. Prior to 1986, University-wide degree requirements for bachelor's degree candidates were called "CORE requirements."

Currently, returning students who were admitted before 1986 and who satisfied only some of the CORE requirements before leaving the University are required to complete the current General Education Requirements. Previously completed coursework at the University is evaluated against the current General Education Requirements; if an old course is found to meet the standards of a current General Education requirement, it is accepted. This process is analogous to the evaluations carried out for students transferring in coursework from another institution of higher education.

However, the Registrar's Office does not currently have a clear mandate regarding the treatment of returning students who were originally admitted under the CORE requirements, completed all the CORE requirements, and are now returning after a long absence to complete a bachelor's degree. In many cases, those who have completed the CORE have not completed courses that would meet the full set of current General Education requirements if the coursework were to be re-evaluated by current standards.

II. AMC OBSERVATIONS.

- 1) Current UMass Amherst bachebr's degrees should not be based on degree requirements eighteen years out of date. Degrees in the twenty-first century should require completion of the current General Education requirements; all our current graduates should demonstrate that they have met the educational goals of the current General Education program.
- 2) Treating all returning students under the same criteria simplifies advising, reduces risk of miscommunication and streamlines processing. Researching students' CORE status becomes ever more difficult, labor-intensive and error-prone with each passing year, especially since it is necessary for only a handful of students each year (fewer than five, frequently zero). After this long period, it makes sense to abandon tracking CORE status for any purpose.
- 3) Students with special cases have the option to request exemptions through the Variance Committee of the Council on General Education.

III. AMC RECOMMENDATION.

We recommend that students who were admitted when CORE re quirements were in effect and who return to the University in the fall of 2005 or later to complete their bachelor's degrees be required to fulfill the same General Education requirements currently applied to all students entering the University. This will ensure that all students from the CORE era who return to the University after a long absence are held to uniform standards and processes, regardless of whether they completed all or only part of the CORE requirements during their previous enrollment.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate affirm to the Registrar that students who were admitted when CORE requirements were in effect and who now return to the University to complete their bachelor's degrees are required to fulfill the same General Education requirements currently applied to all students entering the University, effective Fall semester 2005, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 05-041.