

Breadth Requirement Issues - Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGS) – 2007-2008

UGS View of Breadth Requirement Issues

UGS feels that there are three major issues involving breadth requirements at UD. The overarching issue is the non-universal understanding and use of the term breadth requirement. This unconformity exists across colleges, e.g., breadth requirements as defined by the College of Engineering vs. the College of Arts & Sciences, vs. “major requirements” in the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources; as well as between Departments within some colleges, e.g., different majors within each of the Colleges of Business and Economics, Health Sciences, and Human Services, Education, and Public Policy have varying defined breadth requirements.

The second major issue is the variability of terms/definitions that are used to define the sets of breadth requirements, e.g., Group A: An Analysis and Appreciation of the Creative Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts & Sciences vs. the major requirement of Literature and Arts in the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. This variability in definition is made even more confusing by what courses may satisfy these breadth requirements, e.g., Group A requirements in the College of Arts & Sciences are met by taking courses from a specific list. The Literature and Arts major requirement can be met by taking any courses from English, Art, Art History, Communication, Music, Theatre, Foreign Language, or courses cross-listed in these Departments.

The third major issue is the lack of consistency in the definition of which specific courses may satisfy a particular breadth requirement, e.g., the Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management defines Humanities as any course in Art, Art History, Communication, Comparative Literature, English, Foreign Language, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Jewish Studies, Linguistics, Museum Studies, Music Philosophy, Theater, and selected courses within Women’s Studies and Science and Culture. Others would argue, including UGS, that some of the courses within these disciplines are not humanities courses, e.g., standard foreign language grammar/conversation courses such as SPAN105, 106, 107.

UGS Recommendation for Ad hoc Committee

UGS recommends that an ad hoc committee be formed to study the issue of Breadth Requirements. UGS suggests that the membership of this committee should include members from UGS, the General Education Committee, and representatives from each of the Colleges. This committee should study the issues described above and make recommendations concerning ways to resolve the issues, with emphasis on developing a university-wide definition and implementation of breadth requirements. It is one of the desires of UGS that the recommendations of the ad hoc committee create a curriculum pathway such that undergraduates are not unduly penalized or confused if they change majors across departments or colleges. UGS would recommend that the ad hoc committee be formed by the end of the 2008 spring semester and that the committee present a status report to the University Faculty Senate at the first Senate meeting in the fall of 2008 with final recommendations to be presented at the December, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting.