JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)
Regular session - March 13, 1989 - 3:30 p.m.
Conoco Auditorium, Neustadt Wing, Bizzell Memorial Library

The Faculty Senate was called to order by Professor Gary B. Cohen, Chair.

PRESENT: Ahern, Baker, Bert, Brock, Cohen, Cook, Cozad, Dietrich, Fagan, Fife, Gabert, Goodey, Gudmundson, Hill, Hinson, James, Johnson, Kenderdine, Knapp, Knox, Kutner, Magid, McManus, Minnis, Moore, Mouser, Nelson, Ray, Reardon, Ryan, Salisbury, Sankowski, Smith, Stoltenberg, Swisher, Tompkins, Weaver-Meyers, Wedel, Zelby, Zonana

PSA representatives: Barth, Bloomgarden, Boehme, Scott
UOSA representative: Newton

ABSENT: Barker, Bergey, Blick, Farmer, Herstand, Jackson, Kiacz, Nicewander, Rideout, Robertson, Snell, Vestal

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular session of February 13, 1989, were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prof. Chris Knapp (Accounting) was elected to complete the 1988-91 term of Prof. Nim Razook on the Faculty Senate, representing the College of Business Administration.

The Spring General Faculty meeting will be held Thursday, April 20, 1989 at 3:30 in Dale Hall 128. A resolution will be presented on the task force proposal for campus-wide general education requirements.

The faculty awards luncheon will be held Thursday, April 6, 1989 at 11:30 a.m. in the Union Ballroom. Invitations will be sent to the faculty in the near future.

Attorney General Robert Henry will speak at the April 10 Faculty Senate meeting on legal questions and higher education in Oklahoma.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION ON SENATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Interim President Swank approved the modification in the ex-officio non-voting membership of the Employment Benefits Committee proposed by the Personnel Directors of both campuses and approved by the Senate (see 11/88 Journal, page 6); however, he has not yet addressed the Senate's request to add a member of the Senate's Committee on Faculty Welfare as a non-voting ex-officio member.

Interim President Swank approved the 1:1 elections to the Research Council from the February 13, 1989 Senate meeting and selected Prof. Anita Hill to complete Prof. George Henderson's 1987-90 term on the Athletics Council (see 2/89 Journal, page 3).

Interim President Swank acknowledged the resolution on athletic programs approved by the Senate at its February 13, 1989 meeting (see 2/89 Journal, Appendix I).

SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT

A reception for all members of the University community, given by Provost Wadlow, will be held March 15, 1989 at 5:30 p.m. in Dining Room 2 of the Oklahoma Memorial Union to celebrate the formal publication of the "Strategy for Excellence" document and to thank those who contributed to it.

At its usual monthly meetings with the Interim President and the Provost, the Executive Committee discussed the proposed alternative admissions process, the overhead rate for auxiliary enterprises, the temporary manager for auxiliaries, and the updated listing of capital projects. The administration would like to present a final version of the alternative admissions process to the OU Regents at their April meeting. Interim President Swank will try to make a draft available to the Senators for comment even if there is only time for a mail distribution. The Executive Committee has communicated the need for that to be an academic process and that no units on campus be able to admit students unilaterally. The State Regents have requested an updated ranking of the highest priority capital projects, and the Executive Committee will meet with the Interim President and the Chair of the Campus Planning Council on March 14 to discuss that subject.

The administration is considering a means for employees to make voluntary donations to the University's Centennial Campaign or to Annual Giving Programs by a payroll deduction system. The Executive Committee discussed this informally and did not have any objection. Prof. Cohen asked Senators who have any comments, suggestions or objections to let him know as soon as possible.

The Executive Committee discussed with Interim President Swank the Senate's concerns about achieving a better integration of student-athletes in the academic life of the University, including the appropriateness of separate dormitories (see 2/89 Journal, pages 4-5). Mr. Swank wishes to see the role of the Athletic Council strengthened in this area. Accordingly, the Senate Executive Committee asked the Athletic Council's subcommittee on Academic Standards to take up the issues raised at the last Senate meeting. The faculty members of that subcommittee are Joanna Rapf (English) and Joseph Rodgers (Psychology). The Executive Committee also asked that two members of the Faculty Senate, Professors Anita Hill, who has just been appointed to the Athletics Council, and Alan Nicewander, meet with the subcommittee.

Negotiations are continuing regarding the Senate's proposal for a Council on Campus Life. At this point there is some consensus in support of the basic concept and general purposes. Items still being debated are whether the students should have a majority among the voting members and whether the Council will advise the University President or the Vice President for Student Affairs. A revised proposal should be submitted to the Senate later this Spring. The issue of faculty participation in the process of revising the Student Code will be addressed by separate action at a future Senate meeting.

On February 20 the State Regents approved some refinements in the budget allocation formula for FY90. The new methodology has met with greater approval from the smaller colleges. A copy is available in the Senate office. One change is an adjustment to the composition of the peer groups used for each tier, which results in the comprehensive, regional, and two-year institutions being about the same distance from the average funding per FTE student in their respective peer groups. Other changes include a hold-harmless provision for 1990, which guarantees that no state institution will receive a smaller appropriated amount next year than this, and a commitment from the State Regents that revolving fund revenue will not be used to reduce the appropriation. While this is not as attractive for OU as last year's formula, it is a great improvement over the previous methods, and the State Regents were facing a fight in the legislature if adjustments were not made.

ELECTION, COUNCILS/COMMITTEES/BOARDS

The Senate approved the following nominations of the Committee on Committees and Executive Committee to fill mid-term vacancies on Councils, Committees, and Boards.

Athletics Council (2:1)
to complete the 1987-90 term of John Skvarla:
Joseph Bastian (Zoology) nominated by Committee on Committees
Craig St. John (Sociology) nominated by Executive Committee

University Book Exchange Oversight Committee (1:1)
to complete the 1986-89 term of Djebbar Tiab:
Eddie Smith (Chemistry) nominated by Executive Committee

FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE: MILDRED LAUGHLIN

Prof. Magid focused on Dr. Mildred Laughlin of the School of Library and Information Studies, who is a nationally recognized expert in the areas of children's and young adult's literature and school and public library services for children and young adults. Along with a public school colleague, Dr. Laughlin published a successful text in 1986 entitled Children's Literature: Enriching the Reading Curriculum, and has been asked by the publisher for a companion volume. She and her colleague, Kathy Latrobe, have written a book on preparing reader's theatre presentations. In 1980 she organized a "Festival of Books for Young People," which has attracted an increasing number of participants and has also spun off some interesting associated activities.

REPORT ON PROPOSED FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN

Prof. Joel Dietrich, Chair of the Senate's Committee on Faculty Welfare, reported on a flexible benefits plan under consideration by the administration (see Appendix I). A consulting firm, Hewitt Associates, was hired to conduct a feasibility study. The proposed plan has been tested with a focus group of 34 people. The Regents are expected to consider the plan in May, and if approved, the plan would be implemented January 1990 at the earliest. Any objections should be forwarded to the Senate Executive Committee.

The flexible benefits plan includes the same benefits as those currently offered for health, dental, long-term disability, life, and accidental death and dismemberment, plus the options to buy additional insurance or to elect no coverage and use those benefit dollars on other insurance or as additional income. Employees would be able to contribute to two types of reimbursement accounts with pretax dollars--one for health care and another for dependent care--but any unused balances left in an account at the end of the year would be forfeited to the University. The University will benefit by paying less social security tax because of the employees' pretax contributions.

Prof. Cohen asked if this would reduce the size of the covered pool. Prof. Dietrich answered that the only additional health plan is the option for a higher major expense category. Prof. Cozad said he was opposed to the idea because dependent coverage can already be handled in pretax dollars and the value of the benefit credit if an employee chooses no coverage is greatly reduced. For example, employees who choose no health or dental plans would only receive a $520 benefit credit for options worth $1068. Prof. Cozad also questioned whether several options would cause the premium rates to increase and the quality of health care to decrease. Mr. Bloomgarden said it is not clear whether the pretax benefit is available with plans other than the cafeteria style. Prof. Fagan questioned whether the University can keep pace with the rising cost of health care. Prof. Kutner pointed out that the Faculty Welfare Committee participated in the focus group and after reviewing the flexible benefits plan did not have any major objections. He said he believed the program could be made better if more money were available, but that he is reasonably satisfied that employees would be somewhat better off under the flexible benefits plan than under the old system.

REPORT BY PROF. JAY SMITH, CHAIR OF BUDGET COUNCIL, ON SECTION 13/NEW COLLEGE FUNDS

Prof. Smith reported on the concerns of the Budget Council and Campus Planning Council that there has been a shift in the allocation of Section 13 funds from the Norman campus to the Health Sciences Center over the past several years, that Section 13 funds are being used for ongoing expenses instead of renovation, and that there do not seem to be any written guidelines on how these funds are allocated. The allocation for the HSC has gone from 4.7% in 1984 to about 24.9% of available funds last year, an increase of about $700,000, and that campus is asking for close to 50% of the funds this year. In 1984 the Norman Campus received over $3 million in Section 13 funds, but by 1988 that had decreased to $2,670,000. Many of the recent proposals are to renovate space for other than academic purposes, while there is a pressing need for teaching and research space and equipment. The survey conducted by the Classroom Maintenance Committee concluded that it would take about ~~$50,000~~ $500,000 just to reach minimum standards for classroom space. Prof. Smith pointed out that federal and state funds for health-related programs and the Governor's bond money are available to the HSC and not to the Norman Campus. Another point is that 85% of all OU students are on the Norman campus, and 80% of the Norman campus buildings were built prior to 1971. Prof. Smith asked the Faculty Senate to endorse the recommendations of the Budget Council and Campus Planning Council to increase the allocation of Section 13 funds for the Norman Campus, both in terms of total dollars and percentage of total dollars available.

Prof. Johnson commented that the Health Sciences Center also benefits from the OCAST funds. He made a motion to endorse the recommendations of the Budget Council and Campus Planning Council that the percentage and dollar amount of Section 13/New College Funds available to the Norman Campus be increased to a share proportionate to the Norman Campus needs and share of the total University student body. The Faculty Senate unanimously approved the motion on a voice vote.

ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION: LIBRARY SERVICES AND BUDGET

Prof. Sul Lee, Dean of University Libraries, was asked to comment on some issues that were raised in the Senate small group meetings last fall. Those items included plans and priorities for the library's budget with regard to monographs versus serials and new serial titles and priorities in staffing. Dean Lee said his priorities are collection development, personnel, improved technology, and facilities. The library budget has not increased much since 1982 and, in the meantime, the cost of journals has continued to rise. He would like to maintain a good balance between serials and monographs, in terms of dollars spent, with a maximum of 60:40, but the ratio is now at 81:19. In 1984 the University Library had to cancel 840 journals, a situation he hopes to avoid in the future. By any comparison, OU has one of the most understaffed libraries in the country.

On the brighter side, installation has begun on a totally integrated system for the Library, including an on-line public card catalog, which can be accessed by personal computers at home or office, and access to other data bases.

Turning to facilities, Dean Lee explained that it was his intention to have the 1930 and 1958 facilities renovated when the Neustadt Wing was built, but that was not possible. Consequently, there are some facility problems to be addressed, such as environmental control and adequate space.

When asked what is being done nationally to address the problem of the rising cost of journals, Dean Lee said one of the possibilities is to bring pressure on publishers to set reasonable prices. Another is to share collection development responsibilities with other universities, such as Oklahoma State University. Prof. Johnson commented on the lack of integration with even the Health Sciences Center. Dean Lee responded that he is looking at how to improve the transfer of material between the OU campuses. There was a brief discussion about the ratio of serials to monographs and the difficulty in getting new serials introduced. Prof. Cohen asked whether any library positions were being downgraded. Dean Lee said some faculty positions have been lost and certain positions are difficult to recruit for, so recently he has had to appoint some people to professional positions instead of faculty positions.

PROPOSED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Prof. Cohen suggested that the best way to proceed would be to have discussion and suggestions by the Senate on the proposed general education requirements (see Appendix II) and then to vote on a recommendation to present to the general faculty at the April 20 meeting. Prof. Lehr, Chair of the Task Force, explained that regarding transfer students, the proposal is for the new general education requirements to apply to all students who begin their higher education studies in the fall of 1990 or later. Therefore, anyone who starts in 1990 at another college and then transfers to OU would have to complete the same general education requirements as the OU freshmen. Prof. Cohen noted that that would mean some adjustments in the articulation policy.

Prof. Weaver-Meyers recommended that the first guideline under Course characteristics be modified to read: "They should foster critical analysis and require the development of library and research skills." After a brief discussion of the appropriateness of this for all of the courses, Prof. Weaver-Meyers accepted a friendly amendment to change the language to [addition underlined]: "They should foster critical analysis and, when appropriate, the development of library and research skills." The proposed modification was approved.

Prof. Fagan said he believed the new requirements would add additional hours to the curriculum of some engineering programs. Prof. Zelby ~~added that the accreditation requirements limit the time it takes a student to graduate.~~ * Prof. Francis (AME), a member of the task force, said it was his opinion that no additional hours would be added to engineering because the language requirement is viewed as an admission requirement. It would, however, restrict flexibility in the Humanities area. Several senators said they believed the level of mathematics and natural science courses should be raised. Prof. Zelby questioned whether the general education courses would degenerate into mere service courses delegated to graduate students. He suggested that students be given the opportunity to select from a variety of requirements and then be required to take an examination at the junior level to determine how much they learned.

* said that adding hours would probably jeopardize accreditation.

Prof. Gudmundson said he was concerned about accomplishing the goals of general education while enrollment in courses are at historically high levels. He also questioned whether there were enough courses to satisfy the non-western civilization requirement and whether the solution might be to simply classify certain courses as non-western. Prof. Lehr said the consultant has been asked to provide advice on what courses might be appropriate. Professors Kenderdine and Baker agreed with Prof. Zelby that it is important to insure that students receive a legitimate general education. They further urged that there must be sufficient administrative support. Prof. Economou said the task force recognized there was a shortage of courses in some areas and that it boiled down to what is feasible. The task force envisioned most of these courses to be taught by faculty, not by G.A.s. He added that the task force has been very concerned with the matter of institutional support and would welcome a strong statement from the Senate. Prof. Lehr pointed out that a Task Force on Assessment has been formed, which should allay some of the concerns. Prof. Cohen noted that the State Regents have directed OU to develop an assessment program, but this is not so much an assessment of what students have accomplished as what kind of job the institution is doing in education.

Following some comments about tabling the issue, Professor Magid said he believed the proposed plan would make it more likely that a student would receive a general education than do the current circumstances. Prof. Cohen reminded the body that the OU Regents had requested a proposal by May. Given that one of the essential faculty prerogatives is to initiate courses and changes in the curriculum, some kind of action should be taken.

Prof. Ryan said he was concerned that a writing component was incorporated in all general education courses, yet it is possible to avoid taking anything quantitative. Prof. Lehr explained that three hours of mathematics are required. Prof. Ray agreed that the proposal did not require enough mathematics or a high enough level of mathematics. He asked whether students would still be able to test out of a course. Prof. Lehr said that would still be an option.

Prof. Cohen commented that perhaps the proposed requirements could be better, but that the resources of the University have a bearing on the implementation. He reminded the group that inaction on the part of the institution in the past resulted in an articulation policy that is not in the institution's best interest.

Prof. Nelson said the School of Music would like to go on record as supporting the recommendations but urging those involved in the implementation process to exercise flexibility in determining the specifics.

Prof. Zelby reiterated his suggestion for a comprehensive examination and made a motion calling for a method of certifying that students have met the requirements by an examination. Prof. Weaver-Meyers said she was surprised that faculty would assume that requirements for course work would not result in the education of students. In addition, she said she believed assessment of general education courses should not be done without also making an assessment of the non-general education courses. Prof. Zelby's motion was defeated on a voice vote.

Prof. Weaver-Meyers presented the following motion, on behalf of the Executive Committee:

WHEREAS the new general education requirements proposed by the University Task Force, together with the additional recommendation approved by the Norman Campus Faculty Senate, would provide a sound basic foundation for any undergraduate education and improve the quality of the educational experience for all undergraduate students,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Faculty Senate endorses those requirements along with the additional recommendation and urges their speedy adoption for the University by the General Faculty, the central administration, the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Prof. Kenderdine suggested that a statement be added that the proposal be reviewed in six years. Prof. Weaver-Meyers accepted that as a friendly amendment. The Faculty Senate approved, on a voice vote, the resolution endorsing the general education requirements proposed by the Task Force, together with the additional recommendation adding library and research skills under Course characteristics and the statement calling for the implementation and results to be reviewed after six years.

Prof. Magid presented the following resolution on behalf of the Executive Committee requesting the OU Regents to follow custom and seek the advice of the Task Force and Faculty Senate if they wish to make substantive changes in the proposed requirements.

Whereas normally new curricula that will be taught by the faculty are formally proposed by the faculty,

the Faculty Senate of the Norman Campus therefore requests that, should the University of Oklahoma administration or the Board of Regents desire substantive changes in the proposed new general education requirements, as endorsed by the Faculty Senate and General Faculty, the proposal be returned to the Task Force on General Education and the Faculty Senate for further review, possible revision, and a new endorsement.

The Senate approved the resolution on a voice vote. The Task Force recommendations will be considered at the General Faculty meeting on April 20.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The next regular session of the Senate will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 10, 1989 in the Conoco Auditorium, Neustadt Wing, Bizzell Library.

Sonya Fallgatter
Administrative Coordinator

Gail Tompkins
Secretary

Flexible Benefits

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee provides the following summary for your review.

Overview

The Employment Benefits Committee has recommended implementation of a flexible benefits program. With such a program employees will be given an annual allowance to purchase the benefits of their choice. If the choices are less than the allowance, the remaining amount will be converted to taxable income. If chosen benefits are more than the allowance, they will be paid from pre-taxed income.

Current Design

The flexible benefits offered would change each year. The proposal for the coming year is as follows:

Health Plan

The current three health plans would be available (BC/BS Basic, Prucare and BlueLincs) with the addition of a fourth BC/BS Alternate plan. The standard benefit allowance provides for employee only coverage. Additional coverage may be purchased for spouse and children. Employees who choose no health plan coverage would receive a $500 benefit credit.

Dental Plan

The current two dental plans would be available. The standard benefit allowance provides for employee coverage in the basic plan; additional coverage may be purchased for spouse and children. Employees who choose no dental coverage would receive a $20 benefit credit.

Life Insurance

The standard benefit allowance would provide for the current coverage of 1.5 of the annual base salary of the employee. Additional coverage for the employee, spouse and children may be purchased, or no coverage may be chosen.

Accidental Death & Dismemberment

The standard benefit allowance would provide for the current $20,000 employee coverage. Additional coverage for the employee, spouse and children may be purchased. Employees who choose no coverage would receive a $9 benefit credit.

Long-term Disability

Long-term disability coverage may be purchased for employees. No benefit allowance is provided.

Reimbursement Accounts

This is the new benefit option. Reimbursement accounts are funded with pre-tax income from which eligible expenses may be paid. Two accounts will be available, one for health expenses and one for dependent care. The maximum annual contribution to a dependent care account is $5,000 ($2,500 if married, filing separate returns). The maximum annual contribution to a health care account is $3,000. Dependent care expenses may be submitted until January 25 while health care expenses may be submitted until March 31. Any money left in an account will be forfeited to the employer.

Current Schedule

The regents approved a feasibility study. The consulting company has tested the preliminary design with a focus group of 34 faculty, staff and administrators to provide feedback on packaging and literature. Personnel Services is currently meeting with faculty and staff groups to discuss this project. A report is scheduled to be made to the Regents in May. The earliest date for implementation is January, 1990.

The University of Oklahoma

DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL
905 Asp Avenue, Room 242B
Norman, Oklahoma 73019
(405) 325-2578

TO: Gary Cohen, Chair
Faculty Senate

FROM: Don Flegal
Director, Personnel Services

DATE: March 3, 1989

SUBJECT: Flexible Benefits Update

As you know, Personnel Services staff have been working with Hewitt Associates to conduct a feasibility study for flexible benefits. Such a program would provide more pre-tax advantages for employees and save additional FICA for them and the University. It would also give faculty and staff a chance to personalize their benefits package or retain their current benefits. With flexible benefits the University's benefit dollars would be better utilized, and new benefits could be offered at no additional cost to the University.

Hewitt Associates have helped a committee of Personnel, Payroll and Computing staff from all three campuses set objectives, prepare an administrative details proposal, and develop a preliminary plan design. That plan design was recently tested with a focus group of 34 people from Employment Benefits Committee, Employees Liaison Council, Employees Executive Council and both Faculty Senate Welfare Committees. All participants indicated the proposed program would provide benefits as good or better than current benefits. They liked the choicemaking opportunities and options, especially the health care spending account. The plan design and pricing were judged satisfactory except for dental. The group's greatest concern was communication of the proposed program. Improved print materials, oral presentations, and one-on-one communication opportunities were strongly suggested. The groups rated benefits as important as pay.

We are currently meeting with faculty and staff groups to discuss this project. The Employment Benefits Committee will be considering flexible benefits again at their March meeting. We expect to report to the Regents on the results of the feasibility study in May. The earliest date implementation could occur is January, 1990.

Attached is a summary of the benefits included in the preliminary plan design. I can be available at your April meeting to answer any questions. Should you desire to have me attend that meeting, please let me know.

DBF:slt
Attachment

[This document was approved by the Faculty Senate March 13, 1989 with an addition to the first paragraph under Course characteristics. The Senate further recommended that the implementation and results be reviewed after six years and that the OU Regents seek the advice of the Task Force and Faculty Senate if they wish to make substantive changes in the proposed requirements.]

To: Faculty Senate, Norman Campus
From: Task force for University-wide general education
Subject: University-wide general education February 13, 1989

Preface

The University of Oklahoma, as a comprehensive research university, has a special mission to fulfill in the state. Unlike the junior and four-year colleges, it expects its faculty to be at the forefront of scholarship in their disciplines and professions. The resulting emphasis on the discipline can have a salutary effect on undergraduate education, since our faculty are highly knowledgable about the most recent developments in their fields and are enthusiastic about transmitting that knowledge to the undergraduates in their majors.

However, undergraduate education has historically included not only education in the major and its allied disciplines, but also *general education*, which aims to provide students with a broad perspective on the world in which they live and with intellectual skills that characterize areas outside their major. The general education component of undergraduate education has been deemphasized in recent years in the wake of demands for increased preparation for the major. The result too frequently has been the graduation of narrowly-educated students who are ill-prepared to function as the enlightened citizens upon whom our nation depends and who, indeed, are often unprepared to adapt to the rapid changes with which our modern world confronts them.

Consequently, many major comprehensive research universities, in order to achieve a better balance between general education and education in the major, have recently examined their general education requirements with a view to instituting *university-wide* general education requirements. University-wide general education assures that all undergraduates, regardless of major, will share a common level of general education and signifies that our undergraduates are, first and foremost, University of Oklahoma students, and secondarily members of a department or school.

Background

This task force was formed and began deliberations in September 1987. Unlike its predecessor, which in 1982 proposed guidelines for general education but left specific curricular issues to individual colleges, the present task force is charged with proposing a specific curriculum for all University of Oklahoma undergraduates.

During the 1987 academic year, the task force considered broad issues related to general education and produced in April 1988 an interim report which outlined the issues and presented the task force's goals and philosophy. This academic year, the task force has been working to transform the goals and philosophy into a curriculum. The task force was directed to produce a specific curriculum by December 1989, with implementation of the requirements expected to commence during the 1990/1991 academic year.

In September 1988, the task force shared with faculty the "interim report" that was produced in April 1988 and sought their comments. In mid-January, 1989, the task force distributed a draft of its proposed general education curriculum to faculty and sought input through open meetings

and written comments. This document incorporates some changes based upon that input.

General Education Curriculum

Core Area I. Symbolic and Oral Communication (9-19 hours, 3-5 courses)

English Composition (6 hours, English 1113 and 1213)
Foreign Language (0-10 hours)
Mathematics (3 hours, one course)
Other (for example: communication, logic or public speaking)

Core Area II. Natural Science (8 hours, 2 courses taken from the biological and/or physical sciences. The two courses must be from different disciplines and at least one course must include a laboratory component).

Core Area III. Social Science (6 hours, 2 courses, one of which is Political Science 1113).

Core Area IV. Humanities (12 hours, 4 courses).

Understanding of Artistic Forms (3 hours, 1 course)
Western Civilization and Culture (6 hours, 2 courses, one of which is History 1483 or History 1493)
Non-Western Cultures (3 hours, 1 course)

Senior capstone experience (3 hours, one course).

Overview.

In proposing this curriculum, the task force first sought to identify core areas of knowledge that are essential for all undergraduates. We then considered which courses would be suitable for each core area. We believe that the curriculum we propose represents a minimum that should be required of every OU student. It has been difficult to pare the curriculum to this level since there are so many courses that would be of value to students. However, general education credit hour restraints are severe in several colleges due to the extensive course requirements for degrees in those colleges and we also felt that some flexibility in meeting the 40 hour general education requirement of the Oklahoma State Regents was desirable. For students entering the University with sufficient foreign language, the total number of course hours in specified areas is thirty-eight. Such students would meet the forty credit hour minimum by choosing an additional course from any of the core areas or from an area specified by their college.

We have debated the nature of the courses within each core area. That is, should there be specially designed general education courses in each core area that every student must take, or should there be choice within each core area? We propose an approach in which criteria will be established for courses within each core area, with only those courses that meet the criteria being accepted into the curriculum. Students could then choose among approved courses. It is likely that quite a few existing courses will prove appropriate for the general education curriculum after

minor modification to meet general education guidelines. *However, we encourage departments and faculty to develop, and the administration to support, rigorous non-traditional interdisciplinary courses which address important themes within a given core area.* Such courses have potential for fulfilling general education goals optimally. However, because they will be difficult to develop and maintain, we believe that courses offered in the disciplines will provide a more secure foundation for the general education curriculum.

Although we have cited specific disciplines in the discussion of core areas later in this report, this does not imply that courses from that discipline will automatically be included or that disciplines not cited are excluded. Rather, the key consideration for the acceptability of a course will be whether it meets the criteria for the core area; for example, a statistics course in psychology could meet the requirements for the mathematics component in the Symbolic and Oral Communication core area. Also, a course in architecture could meet the criteria for a Western Civilization and Culture course and an interdisciplinary course offered by more than one department could satisfy the criteria for a given core area.

Course characteristics

All courses in the general education curriculum should be quality, college-level courses. They should broaden students' perspectives by introducing them to the methodologies, concepts and facts of diverse scholarly disciplines. They should provide students with the opportunity to improve their ability to express themselves in written and oral form and to use mathematical analysis when appropriate. They should foster critical analysis.* They should instill in undergraduates curiosity about subjects outside their major and a desire to continue learning. Above all, general education courses should be broadly, not narrowly conceived. They should attempt to relate their course material to the major issues and ideas of their subject area. In addition to these considerations, we propose the following guidelines for courses in the general education curriculum:

✣ *Writing should be incorporated into all general education courses.* The amount of writing will vary, depending on class size and the level of support for the class. However, each course should include one or more writing components such as essay exams, graded journals, laboratory reports or term papers. The University's Writing Center will open in January 1989, and will serve as a resource for students who want to improve their writing.

✣ *Ethical, international , minority and gender issues should be addressed in general education courses when appropriate.* These topics deserve attention, but the task force believes that they are best treated by integrating them into general education courses at appropriate times rather than by requiring courses which have them as the major subject.

✣*Mechanisms should be found for active involvement of students with the subject matter in their courses.* Achieving this goal can be difficult in large courses. However, new teaching methods have been developed that enable instructors in large classes to go beyond a simple lecture format. The University should provide programs to assist faculty in developing better instructional methods, especially for large courses.

✣ *Optimally, general education courses should be taught by regular faculty.* The University's Strategy for Excellence calls for a substantial increase in the number of faculty. The new faculty should be used, in part, to help their departments meet the demands of the general education

* The Faculty Senate recommends changing this to read:
They should foster critical analysis and, when appropriate,
the development of library and research skills.

program. Graduate teaching assistants should serve as primary lecturers in general education courses only when absolutely necessary. Rather, they should assist faculty by serving as graders, discussion section leaders and laboratory assistants. In multisection courses, a faculty member should supervise teaching assistants in order to achieve consistency among sections.

✣ *Course descriptions should be up to date and multisection courses should be taught from a common course description.* Students should be able to have a good idea of the nature of a course by reading the course description printed in the course catalog. Although faculty must have freedom in how they teach a course, they should teach it within the confines of the course description for the course. Similarly, all teachers in a multisection course should agree to follow the course description, so that reasonable uniformity can be achieved among sections.

✣ *In addition to the capstone experience, at least one other general education course must be taken at the upper division (3000-4000) level.*

✣ *General education courses should be subject to periodic review.* In order for standards in general education courses to be maintained, periodic review of the courses is essential.

Core areas

Core Area I: Symbolic and Oral Communication. Students must be able to write effectively. The two required courses in English composition (English 1113 and 1213) provide a good foundation in writing, but sustained writing experiences throughout the general education curriculum are important in order that writing ability improve and not flounder. Thus, writing components in general education courses and writing as a component of the capstone experience *(vide infra)* are included as part of the general education program.

We believe that a foreign language is important and that all undergraduates should have some competence in a foreign language. The level of ability we envision should be achievable with the equivalent of two years of high school foreign language or two college-level courses in a single language. This should provide students with the fundamentals in a foreign language which will prepare them for more advanced study, if necessary or desired. Students should be required to demonstrate proficiency by taking an examination. Those who pass would have no further foreign language requirement. The foreign language requirement would best be met at the entry level. In 1988, 64 % of incoming freshmen and 43 % of transfer students had taken two or more years of a single foreign language. We expect the percentages of students with this level of foreign language to rise, and thus anticipate that relatively few students will have to take a significant number of hours of a foreign language.

Students should be competent in mathematics. In particular, students should have the ability to interpret charts and graphs, understand equations and deal with arguments based on statistics. Science students will typically acquire these abilities in math courses as part of the coursework in their major. Courses should be developed to assure that non-science majors acquire these skills. Courses should be at a level that requires two years of high school algebra, or equivalent, preparation.

Other courses can also be appropriate to this core area, but are not listed as requirements. For example, courses in communication, public speaking or logic could be taken to meet the State Regents' requirement of 40 hours of general education courses.

Core Area II: Natural Science. An understanding of natural science is important to an

appreciation of the world in which we live. This is especially true now that scientific advances are occuring at an unprecedented rate. We believe that two courses in natural science should be the minimum for all undergraduates, and that at least one of the courses should have a laboratory component. Courses in botany, general biology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, microbiology, physics, and zoology could all be appropriate in this core area. We recommend as most desirable the taking of courses both in the biological and in the physical sciences, but will accept two physical or biological science courses, provided they are not offered in the same discipline (for example, two chemistry courses would not satisfy the natural science requirement but a course in chemistry and a course in physics could).

Core Area III: Social Science. Students can gain a better understanding of human behavior and its relationship to social issues by taking a course in this area. Political Science 1113, American Government, is a required course in this core area. A course in anthropology, communication, economics, political science, psychology and sociology could be appropriate as a second course.

Core Area IV: Humanities. The "Understanding of Artistic Forms" component of Core Area IV is intended to improve students' understanding of the aesthetics of a particular art form. Courses in art, art history, drama and music appreciation as well as English genre courses in poetry, drama and fiction could be appropriate.

The Western Civilization and Culture component of Core Area IV includes as a requirement either History 1483 (American History from 1492 to 1865) or History 1493 (American History from 1865-present). The second course in this area should acquaint students with major ideas and works that have contributed to western culture. Courses in anthropology, architecture, art history, classics, English, geography, history, history of science, modern languages and literatures, philosophy and political science could be appropriate.

The non-Western culture course is intended to broaden students' perspectives so that they can better appreciate the contributions of other peoples and also have a better context in which to understand their own culture. Courses in a non-Western culture, global history or culture courses with a significant non-Western component, and courses in Afro-American and Native American culture could be appropriate.

Senior capstone experience. The senior capstone course should be the culmination of the undergraduate experience and an important part of the general education of all undergraduates. Appropriate capstone experiences could include: an intensive experience in the major such as a senior thesis or research project; a senior seminar course in the major; an interdisciplinary course or SLEP-like seminars that deal with major issues. The capstone experience should include a written product. The intent of the capstone experience is to challenge the student to address a subject intensively and independently, in ways that courses normally do not require, at a senior level of performance.

Respectfully submitted,

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