

April 18, 2010

TO: Beth Morling, Chair  
Undergraduate Studies Committee

FROM: Eric Rise, Chair  
Breadth Requirement Subcommittee

The Breadth Requirement Subcommittee, by a vote of 7 to 1, proposes the following revisions to the resolution and supporting documentation establishing a University breadth requirement (approved April 20, 2009).

1. Replacing the word “rubric” with “subject area” to describe the four-letter course designations.

RATIONALE: “Subject area” is the designation used by the University Registrar.

2. Changing the requirement from “one course from each area” to “3 credits from each area.”

RATIONALE: The original resolution assumed that all breadth courses would be 3 credit courses. As it turns out, some 1-credit courses were approved. This change makes it clear that total credits, not number of courses, will determine fulfillment of the requirement.

3. PROPOSED CHANGE: Adding language stating that Advanced Placement and transfer credits may be used to fulfill breadth requirements.

RATIONALE: This reflects university practice but was not stated explicitly in the original document.

4. Allowing students pursuing more than one major or degree to use courses from their major(s) to fulfill breadth requirements.

RATIONALE: The primary purpose of the University breadth requirement is to encourage students to explore disciplines outside of their own majors. The requirement is quite modest (only 12 credits) and should not impose a hardship for most students.

We recognize, however, that double majors may be disadvantaged by the requirement. Moreover, it may be counterproductive to the goals of the requirement. We would hope that exploration outside the major discipline would encourage further inquiry--additional course work, a minor, or even a second major. We believe that pursuing a second major or degree constitutes another route to broadening one’s academic experience, and that the requirement should not deter a student from doing so.