

Reference Number: F05-237

Senate Approval Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2005

San Francisco State University has a long-standing commitment to providing all of its students a general liberal education. This educational philosophy is reflected in the structure of the undergraduate curriculum at SFSU, a curriculum that requires all undergraduate students to complete a program of study that covers basic areas of academic competence, ensures coursework in a broad range of content areas, and promotes flexibility and depth of thought. At present, this core university-wide curriculum consists of forty-eight units of general education (12 units GE Segment I, 27 units GE Segment II, 9 units GE Segment III), three additional units of writing, demonstrated competency in American history and government (either by passing examinations or by completing courses or by a combination of these two, for a total of 0-6 units), and the basic information competence requirement (for which no units are given).

An essential part of the process of providing students with the best possible general liberal education is periodic university-wide consideration of what the specific goals of general liberal education are, and how these goals may be best achieved. The two Commissions on University Strategic Planning at SFSU are examples of such a process. In particular, specific curricular goals were identified by the CUSP II process as university-wide priorities central to the undergraduate educational mission of SFSU, namely, goal one (social justice), goal two (writing across the curriculum), and goal four (international competence).

Another essential part of the process of providing students with the best possible general liberal education is periodic systematic review of the structure of the existing university-wide curriculum that supports liberal education. Regular and systematic review of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements provides universities with an opportunity to engage in the sustained self-reflection central to the vitality of general education, and together with such self-reflection provides the basis for determining the best possible university-wide curriculum for supporting the goals of general liberal education and the educational mission of the university.

External calls for accountability and improvement in undergraduate education¹ are consistent with SFSU's understanding of the role and importance of curricular review in improving undergraduate education. In support of the review of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements, San Francisco State University presents these guidelines for assessing, by means of external review, the appropriateness and value of the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements currently required of all SFSU undergraduate students.

Principles of the External Review of University-Wide Baccalaureate Degree Requirements

The ultimate goal of the process within which the external review is embedded is to reach university-wide agreement upon university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements that will best support academic excellence at SFSU, and to devise a plan for the implementation and ongoing

administration² of this program of study. Five principles guide the external review of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements at SFSU:

1. a commitment to academic excellence, and the expectation that university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements will reflect this basic value;
2. a commitment to providing all university graduates with a general liberal education;
3. a commitment to systematic, thoughtful planning as the source of University goals;
4. a commitment to shared faculty governance as the appropriate framework within which to conduct curricular review and to institute curricular change, and the expectation that a collaborative faculty-based and faculty-driven review of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements will result in a broadly shared collective vision of what liberal education means to SFSU and what students should learn from a liberal education program; and
5. a commitment to the development of processes designed to improve the retention of students and facilitate student progress to the baccalaureate degree, and the expectation that improving the University's retention of students and facilitating their progress to graduation will help to ensure that public funds are used most effectively for the goals of providing greater access to Californians who seek a university degree and of increasing the chances that all such students will be able to complete a University degree.

Stages of External Review of Graduation Requirements

The review shall proceed in four stages:

1. a self-study of graduation requirements,
2. selection of an external review team,
3. the external review itself, and
4. the University's response to recommendations made in the external review.

A five member Coordinating Committee will be charged with conducting a self-study of the current university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements. The Coordinating Committee shall consult regularly with relevant University committees (e.g., General Education Council, University Committee on Written English Proficiency, History/Government Committee) to generate an objective and factual account of the extent to which SFSU liberal education competencies are reflected in current graduation requirements.

A five member External Reviewers' Liaison Committee will be charged with recommending premier scholars in liberal education for membership on the external review team and with producing a structured review form to guide the external reviewers as they assess university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements.

Both the coordination and the independence of the Coordinating Committee and the External Reviewers' Liaison Committee are important. Coordination of the committees is important because the work of the two committees will be done simultaneously, and some of that work may need to be coordinated between the committees. Independence of the committees is important to help ensure that the collection of data relevant for the review is independent of the review itself. Therefore, these two committees shall overlap by at least one member, namely, a faculty member specifically selected by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate to sit on both committees; they shall overlap by at most two members, if the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs chooses the same individual as his appointee for both committees.

Following the external review, a Graduation Requirements Task Force will be charged with developing a plan for implementing changes to the current university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements based on a review of the self-study and the external reviewers' recommendations, and broad consultation with the campus community. Its members shall also develop a plan for the administration of the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements, for their regular review, and, where necessary, their revision in order to continually improve SFSU's ability to ensure its students obtain a high-quality liberal education.

Charge to the Committees and Membership Composition

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee, in consultation with relevant committees across campus, is charged with completing the self-study of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements. The Coordinating Committee shall compile the following information:

1. the principles and policies of SFSU's program of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements;
2. the content of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements at SFSU, including General Education requirements, the three additional required units of writing, the American history and government requirement, and the information technology and competency requirements;
3. the content of first-year experience courses;
4. the specific learning outcomes associated with each of the sub-categories within the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements;
5. the competencies all SFSU graduates are required to demonstrate;
6. data from assessments of student outcomes related to university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements;
7. data collected from focus groups and faculty and student opinion surveys about university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements;
8. options that exist for demonstrating the required competencies;
9. the proportion of the baccalaureate degree program reflected in university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements;
10. the process for selecting courses identified as appropriate to a specific requirement category and the development of a desired competency;
11. the structure, mission, and membership of all committees concerned with university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements (e.g., General Education Council, University Committee on Written English Proficiency, History/Government Committee);
12. a description of CUSP II goals relevant to university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements (e.g., social justice, writing, and international competencies);
13. relevant CSU documents³;
14. recent scholarship on liberal education program design; and

15. additional information deemed important for the review by the Coordinating Committee.

The Coordinating Committee shall invite independent self-studies from university committees concerned with university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements (e.g., General Education Council, University Committee on Written English Proficiency, History/Government Committee). The Coordinating Committee shall use these self-studies to develop its own independent comprehensive self-study of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements, and shall include them in its final report.

Committees who accept the invitation to conduct their own self-studies shall be invited to present their self-studies to the Academic Senate. Upon completion of its comprehensive self-study, the Coordinating Committee shall present its report to the Academic Senate.

The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the following faculty and administrators:

- The Chair of the Academic Policies Committee
- One faculty member from the General Education Council
- One member appointed by the Provost & VP of Academic Affairs
- The Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- One faculty member appointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, who will also serve as a member of the External Reviewers' Liaison Committee

External Reviewers' Liaison Committee

The External Reviewers' Liaison Committee is charged with recommending premier scholars in liberal education for membership on the external review team and with producing a structured review form to guide the external reviewers as they assess university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements. The External Reviewers' Liaison Committee shall:

1. consult broadly with faculty at SFSU, and consider the extensive experiences of other universities who have revised university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements in the last decade and the recent scholarship on liberal education program design to identify premier scholars;
2. contact the scholars to determine their availability for visiting SFSU to conduct the external review;
3. recommend an external review plan to the Academic Senate for approval.
4. recommend a short list of possible reviewers to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate for approval;
5. consult broadly with SFSU faculty and faculty at other institutions who recently revised their university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements to formulate an external review plan that will guide the external reviewers' assessment; and

The Academic Senate will submit its final list of reviewers to President Corrigan for his endorsement, and President Corrigan will invite the scholars to participate in the external review.

The External Reviewers' Liaison Committee shall be composed of the following faculty and administrator:

- The Chair of the Academic Senate
- The Chair of the General Education Council
- One member appointed by the Provost & VP of Academic Affairs
- One faculty member jointly appointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate and the Provost & VP of Academic Affairs
- One faculty member appointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, who will also serve as a member of the Coordinating Committee

Graduation Requirements Task Force

The Graduation Requirements Task Force is charged with developing a plan for implementing changes to the current university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements based on a review of the self-study and the external reviewers' recommendations, and broad consultation with the campus community. Its members shall also develop a plan for the administration of the university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements, and for their continual improvement. The Graduation Requirements Task Force shall:

1. conduct a thorough review of the self-study and the external reviewers' recommendations;
2. study the viability of implementing each of the external reviewers' recommendations at SFSU, and how the implementation of each recommendation could be administered, monitored, and adjusted and improved over time;
3. use an open and consultative process that draws input from the broadest possible spectrum of faculty, students, staff, recently graduated alumni, and other members of the campus community in the development of its plan;
4. prepare a revised philosophy of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements for SFSU based on its review of relevant documents, its study of the viability of possible changes to baccalaureate degree requirements, and its consultation with the campus community;
5. develop a viable revision to the current university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements that reflects this revised philosophy;
6. report to the Academic Senate at the beginning of each semester and consult regularly with the Office of Academic Affairs; and
7. present its report for proposed revisions to university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements to the Academic Senate for review and action via the appropriate Senate committee.

The Graduation Requirements Task Force shall be composed of the following faculty and administrators:

- Nine faculty members, one from each college and the Library to be elected by the respective unit
- The Chair of the Academic Policies Committee
- The Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- The Chair of the General Education Council, or a faculty member appointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate if the Chair of the General Education Council is unavailable
- One student services professional elected by the Student Services Professional electorate
- The Director of the Advising Center or designee
- One student representative
- One member appointed by the Provost & VP of Academic Affairs

Proposed Timeline

Year One (2005-2006)

- **Members of the Coordinating Committee and the External Reviewers' Liaison Committee are appointed in Fall 2005 and a meeting schedule is established for AY 2005-2006.**
- **Members of the Graduation Requirements Task Force are selected in February 2006, and a meeting schedule is established for AY 2006-2007.**
- **The External Reviewers' Liaison Committee presents its short list of possible members of the external review team**

to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate by February 2006.

· **The Academic Senate forwards the names of liberal education scholars recommended by the External Reviewers' Liaison Committee for the external review team to the President by early March 2006.**

· **The President invites members of the external review team to campus for the external review in March 2006.**

· **The Coordinating Committee presents the self-study of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements to the Academic Senate for approval in March 2006.**

· **The External Reviewers' Liaison Committee presents the plan for the external review to the Academic Senate for approval in March 2006.**

· **The external review team visits campus in April 2006.**

Year Two (2006-2007)

· **The external review team submits its recommendations to the Academic Senate in September 2006.**

· **The Graduation Requirements Task Force reviews the recommendations and presents its report to the Academic Senate by March 1, 2007 for subsequent review and action.**

Year Three (2007-2008)

· **The revised program of university-wide baccalaureate degree requirements is submitted to the SFSU Bulletin in Fall 2007 for publication in AY 2008-2009 Bulletin, and applies to students entering SFSU beginning in Fall 2008.**

<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/geguidelines.pdf>

<https://www.csun.edu/~getf/home.htm>

<http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-595.pdf>

http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Committees/GEAC/geac_agenda_sept2005.pdf

*****APPROVED by the Academic Senate at its meeting on November 15, 2006*****