

October 18, 1996

TO: Twin Cities Campus Faculty Colleagues

FROM: Council on Liberal Education

RE: Semester Course Proposals for the UMTC Liberal Education Curriculum

BACKGROUND

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities liberal education requirements apply to all students entering a baccalaureate degree program in the fall quarter of 1996 and later. Liberal education requirements are fulfilled by taking approved courses in biological sciences, physical sciences, mathematical thinking, social sciences, and humanities and arts, as well as in four thematic areas: cultural diversity, international perspectives, environment, and citizenship and public ethics. Liberal education requirements must be completed along with collegiate requirements, which vary from college to college. As the Call for Proposals is issued, planning is underway to implement the liberal education writing requirement. Because the requirement entails major funding, it will remain in the proposal stage until after the biennial request is made to the State Legislature. If funded, the LE writing requirement will consist of the following parts:

1. one semester length first year writing course with tracks for different types of students (e.g., students whose first language is not English, native speakers of English who need additional preparation, "mainstream" students,
2. one semester length second year writing course for students in need of further instruction, and
3. two designated "writing intensive" courses linked to major and liberal education requirements.

Students may be exempted from first and second year writing courses upon presentation and approval of a writing portfolio.

Until the above requirement is implemented, the collegiate writing requirements will continue to be in effect. The undergraduate writing requirements vary by college on the Twin Cities campus. In general, students are required to complete a freshman writing skills requirement, generally one to two formal composition courses, and an upper division composition course on writing in the student's discipline. The writing requirements are listed in the bulletin for each Twin Cities campus college.

At the time this Call is issued, an additional liberal education requirement is under consideration. If implemented, the new Twin Cities "Expanding Worlds" requirement will require students to receive academic credit for one of the following experiences:

1. study abroad,
2. academic internship/work experience,
3. community service, or
4. an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) project.

Alternatively, students may submit a petition for a special academic project in fulfillment of this requirement.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR SEMESTER LENGTH LIBERAL EDUCATION COURSES.

The semester system will be implemented on the Twin Cities campus in fall quarter 1999. In preparation for this change, the Council on Liberal Education (CLE) is seeking proposals for semester-length liberal education courses.

This call for proposals contains the following components:

1. a summary of the semester liberal education requirements,
2. a discussion of CLE policies regarding the submission of course proposals, and
3. a description of each core and theme category in the liberal education curriculum, to aid you in designing courses that fulfill the requirements.

I. Summary of UMTC Diversified Core and Designated Themes Liberal Education Requirements under the Semester System

DIVERSIFIED CORE

Physical and Biological Sciences

A minimum of 2 courses totaling at least 8 credits, including:

- Physical Science -- One course with a laboratory or field experience, and
- Biological Science -- One course with a laboratory or field experience.

Social Sciences and Humanities

A minimum of 15 credits distributed as follows:

- Social Science -- at least 6 credits.
- Humanities -- at least 6 credits, including 1 course in literature and 1 course in "other humanities."

Historical Perspectives

A minimum of 1 course of at least 3 credits. A course fulfilling the historical perspectives requirement may also apply toward the social science core requirement or the humanities core requirement, or a designated theme requirement.

Mathematical Thinking

A minimum of 1 course of at least 3 credits.

DESIGNATED THEMES

A minimum of 1 course of at least 3 credits in each of the following thematic areas:

- Cultural Diversity
- International Perspectives
- Environment
- Citizenship and Public Ethics

II. General Policy Guidelines Concerning Proposed Courses

1. Courses in the liberal education curriculum should be of high quality, offered frequently and predictably, and of sufficient number to facilitate the timely academic progress of undergraduate students. Instruction by regular faculty members and the availability of small group or individual learning opportunities in large classes contribute to a high quality education. We urge that, in the long term, all courses in the liberal education curriculum have both of these characteristics.
2. Course proposals from all instructional units on the Twin Cities campus, including those in professional schools or colleges that traditionally were not expected to contribute to liberal education, are strongly encouraged. The liberal education requirements include a diversified core in which the number of approved courses is limited. The limited number of approved courses allows students to experience a common curriculum. The Council intends to maintain the reduced size of the diversified core but invites faculty participation from across the Twin Cities Campus. In its review of proposals the Council will pay attention to the criteria, the willingness of the unit to offer the course at least once a year, and the size and mission of the instructional unit.
3. Courses at several instructional levels are necessary and encouraged. Many of the courses admitted to the diversified core will be at the "lower division" (1xxx and 2xxx) level. However, the Task Force on Liberal Education in its report urged that about one-third of the diversified core be taken after a student has reached the "upper division" stage. Thus, 3xxx level courses with characteristics of diversified core courses should be proposed. Some multiple level (1xxx, 2xxx, and 3xxx) courses may be appropriate, but such dual-listed courses should include a clear differentiation in assignments, expectations, and instruction (e.g., separate discussion or laboratory sections) between the levels. The Council does not expect that many 4xxx courses will be admitted to the diversified core. Designated theme courses should include opportunities at the 1xxx, 2xxx, 3xxx, and 4xxx levels. Students will satisfy this requirement with a combination of courses in the diversified core, the major, and electives.
4. An approved course may meet up to two requirements. It may count for a diversified core requirement and a designated theme requirement, or two designated theme requirements. A course fulfilling the historical perspectives may also meet one of the social sciences or humanities or a designated theme requirement.
5. A copy of the course syllabus must be included with each proposal. The course syllabus is a critical part of the proposal and may determine whether a course is approved for liberal education requirements. The syllabus should clearly indicate how the LE criteria are fulfilled by the course through the stated course objectives, course topics dealt with during class meetings, and required readings.

III. Descriptions of Diversified Core and Designated Theme Categories

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR COURSES IN THE DIVERSIFIED CORE

Courses in the diversified core curriculum promote students' educational breadth across academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. They also foster in students a range of capacities characteristic of liberal learning. Characteristics of liberal learning include habits of disciplined learning, intellectual curiosity, and independent thinking; critical thinking and expression; esthetic sensitivity; and essential skills such as writing, speaking, and calculating.

All courses shall promote educational breadth by considering all of the following in the discipline or interdisciplinary field under study:

- a. **Ways of Knowing.** Introduce students to the "ways of knowing" in the discipline or field of knowledge—the kinds of questions asked, kinds of experiences explored, kinds of skills utilized; the types of theories employed; and the ways in which insight, knowledge, and data are acquired and used. Describe how the central ideas and/or expressive forms of the discipline or field of knowledge have changed with time and cultural context, demonstrating that "knowing" is an active, ongoing process.
- b. **Disciplinary content.** Set forth at a basic level the factual information and theoretical and/or artistic constructs that form the foundation of the discipline or field of knowledge, and describe how those facts and constructs

were acquired.

- c. **Writing.** Include a writing component as appropriate to the discipline (e.g., a final paper, essay examinations, or other graded writing assignments), even if the course is not intended to meet the separate writing skills requirement.

SECONDARY CRITERIA FOR COURSES IN THE DIVERSIFIED CORE

Proposals should discuss how courses incorporate one or more of the following secondary objectives, as appropriate to the field at hand: habits of disciplined learning, intellectual curiosity, and independent thinking; critical thinking and expression; aesthetic sensitivity; or essential skills, such as writing, speaking, and calculating.

In addition, proposals should illustrate the field or discipline's relationship to other fields; show ways in which this field of knowledge relates to and is of value to other fields of knowledge and to the development of ideas and values in human society in general; and show an awareness of how contemporary life has been shaped by the student's culture and other cultures.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR COURSES IN THE DIVERSIFIED CORE

Physical and Biological Sciences. Comprehension of physical and biological principles; an appreciation of the diverse methods of scientific inquiry and experience applying some of these methods; and consideration of the personal and social implications of science and scientific perspectives.

All courses in the physical and biological sciences must include a laboratory or field experience. The Council encourages submission of courses with two or more lab contact hours per week. Courses with fewer lab contact hours per week may be submitted but will require a detailed explanation as to why more lab contact hours cannot be offered, e.g. insufficient resources, special nature of the experience, and so on. A laboratory or field experience must emphasize hands-on engagement by students in multiple aspects of scientific inquiry. Lab experiences may be extended over a term with fewer contact hours per week or concentrated into longer but fewer lab periods during a term (e.g., nine labs of two hours each). The nature of scientific inquiry is broad, and the Council will encourage proposals for courses that cover a variety of approaches to represent this diversity. At a minimum, all laboratories or field experiences should engage students in the generation of scientific questions; collection, analysis and interpretation of data; and the principled critique of alternative explanations and knowledge claims.

Social Sciences. Knowledge of how social scientists describe and analyze human experiences and behavior; study of the interrelationships among individuals, institutions, structures, events, and ideas; understanding the roles individuals play in their cultural, social, economic, and political worlds.

Arts and Humanities. Understanding of approaches to the human condition through works of art, literature, and philosophy; knowledge of how artists and humanistic scholars work; an ability to make esthetic judgments in accordance with relevant criteria.

Historical Perspectives. Understanding of historical inquiry, including the nature of historical questions, the kinds of data utilized, techniques of analysis and interpretation, and the knowledge that is the product of this inquiry.

Mathematical Thinking. The goals of the mathematical thinking core requirement are acquisition of mathematical modes of thinking; ability to evaluate arguments, detect fallacious reasoning, and evaluate complex reasoning chains; and appreciation of the breadth of applications of mathematics and its foundations. Courses that satisfy the mathematical thinking requirement can be from a variety of disciplines that introduce and emphasize mathematical modes of thinking rather than computational skills. Courses are encouraged that pique intellectual curiosity and are rooted in clear applications.

CRITERIA FOR COURSES IN THE DESIGNATED THEMES

Cultural Diversity. The purpose of these courses is to increase students' understanding of the role of gender, ethnicity, and race in structuring the human experience in the United States; the contributions of different groups to the social and cultural fabric of the United States; and the traditions and values that are representative of a diverse American population.

To qualify for designation, a course must :

- a. primarily focus on historical and/or contemporary perspectives on issues of social and cultural diversity in the United States, with special attention to issues of race, ethnicity, or gender; and, as appropriate, include examination of social class, age, disability, religious diversity, and affectional orientation; and
- b. offer students an opportunity to critically examine issues of social and cultural diversity through instructional options and materials that foster exploration and discussion.

Courses that meet this requirement would include those that examine a dimension of the lives and experiences of women or of a particular ethnic group, such as African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and so on. A second type of course explores issues of race, class, or gender in a comparative framework. These courses might examine the relationship of race, class and gender to beliefs and practices; American race relations; issues of cultural pluralism; sociological perspectives on race, class, and gender; and American cities as settings for cultural pluralism. Finally, courses that include issues of race, gender, or ethnicity as a major theme of a broader study of America, for example American history, cultures, or geography.

International Perspectives. The broad purpose of these courses is to increase students' understanding of the ways in which they are part of a rapidly changing global environment dominated by the internationalization of science and scholarship, information, culture, business and finance, labor markets, and political events.

To qualify for designation, a course should either:

- a. deal explicitly with important cultural, political, economic, diplomatic, scientific, technological, or other interdependencies in today's world or the world of the past, or
- b. examine significant differences in culture, politics, economics, diplomatic relations, science, technology, or other areas across national or broad cultural boundaries, either diachronically or synchronically.

The first type of course should have as its primary focus transactions or interchanges among nation-states or other international actors (international agencies, international organizations, multinational corporations). A few, although by no means exhaustive, examples include: international migration, diplomatic history, international diffusion of science and technology, international trade, diffusion of agricultural technology, international communication, cultural diffusion, and international law.

The second type of course should have as its primary focus comparisons of different nations or cultures. Examples include: comparative literature, comparative economic systems, ethnomusicology, study of a world region (if states or peoples of the region are compared), comparative agricultural development, comparative health care and medicine, comparative politics, and the history of the development of science across world regions.

The Council strongly urges faculty members to propose courses dealing with the non-Western world.

Citizenship and Public Ethics. Liberal education has, from its inception, gone beyond academic inquiry and professional training to prepare students for responsible citizenship. The requirement in Citizenship and Public Ethics enables students to reflect upon and determine a clearer sense of their present and future civic relationships and their obligations to the community. Responsible citizenship includes among other things the capacity to discuss, deliberate, and participate in public affairs as well as to reflect upon the ethical dimensions of public and professional life and

one's involvement in it.

In order to meet the requirement in Citizenship and Public Ethics approved courses will have the following components:

- a. a consideration of issues and themes of citizenship, public affairs, and public ethics in the abstract, as these relate to the discipline or field of knowledge in question;
- b. an application of these abstract issues and themes to concrete instances;>
- c. the inclusion of class discussions and writing components that would be designed to help students develop their own civic judgment, skills, and capacities for ethical deliberation.

Course themes might include the past and present meaning of "citizenship" and/or the various rights and obligations that citizens may be said to have in their communities. On a concrete level, these themes might be discussed with specific reference to the civic and ethical responsibilities of people in specific careers. Courses should be structured to present a wide spectrum of views that encourage students to develop their own positions.

To meet the criteria listed above, course proposals for the Citizenship and Public Ethics requirement should indicate how the course will address some or all of the following topics: professional ethics and debates about the public responsibilities in one's profession or field; the relationship of the citizen to her or his community, the political process, and the public world; the debates in a democracy over rights, duties, obligations, welfare, or international aid to other countries; the current or historical patterns of power, political interaction, and conflict among racial, ethnic, religious, and other groups; and the complexities and possibilities of public collaboration and problem-solving in a society of immensely diverse interests, perspectives, and values.

Environment. The relationship between humans and the natural environment is characterized by the interaction of biophysical and cultural and social systems. The enormous range of knowledge that bears on each environmental issue invites and lends itself well to multidisciplinary courses and intercollegiate cooperation. We encourage a diverse set of courses at both the introductory and advanced preparation levels that raise environmental issues of general importance and are informed by three fundamental ideas: humans and the natural environment interact and are interdependent; humans are at once biophysical, social, and cultural organisms; and the natural environment is defined both biophysically and culturally.

Courses proposed to satisfy the environmental education theme must meet these criteria:

- a. Focus on the interaction (or interdependency) of humans and the natural environment and use significant issues of interaction for illustrative and explanatory purposes, and
- b. Consider both cultural and social (e.g., economic, artistic, legal, literary, political, philosophical, social, and/or religious) systems and customs, and biophysical principles (i.e., the underlying physical and/or biological sciences).

A wide range of courses might be proposed to demonstrate the interdependence of biophysical principles and sociocultural perspectives. Courses from the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences can all be considered for this theme as long as they meet the criteria above. Such courses might study issues such as natural resource management; the environmental implications of agricultural, commercial and industrial activities; models of land use, development and planning; broad theoretical or philosophical concerns such as development vs. conservation and preservation; the attitudes and beliefs expressed toward the environment by various cultures.

Courses with a practicum. Courses that include a practicum (e.g., applied field research, clinical work, internship, service learning, study abroad) provide a valuable learning experience for students. The Council encourages submission of such courses to satisfy the thematic requirements.

October 23, 1996

To: Twin Cities Campus Advisers

From: Council on Liberal Education

Re: Minnesota Transfer Curriculum - Students Missing One Course

A question has come up regarding students who have not completed the MTC at their previous institution before enrolling on the Twin Cities campus. The agreement between the University of Minnesota and MNSCU states that students who complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC) at one of the participating institutions and transfer to another participating, have fulfilled the liberal education requirements at the second institutions.

Louise Mirrer, chair of the Council on Liberal Education, has determined that students missing one course for the MTC at their previous institution may complete it within their first two quarters on the Twin Cities campus or within their first semester beginning fall 1999 and after. They can then transfer the MTC to the Twin Cities campus and thus fulfill the UMTC LE requirements.

Students need to request the exception by their first quarter on the Twin Cities campus. Students are responsible for sending an official transcript from their previous institution to the Office of Admissions so the MT tracking flag can be entered onto their University record.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Laurel Carroll at 624-1320.

February 4, 1997

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

From: Council on Liberal Education

Re: Resubmission of Proposals Not Approved by the Council on Liberal Education

The Council on Liberal Education will not approve inappropriate or incomplete course proposals to meet Liberal Education requirements. Courses that are not approved by the Council may be revised and resubmitted. To help in this process, the Council offers examples of approved course proposals. On request, a Council member will meet with faculty to discuss in detail the reasons for the denial and to make recommendations for revisions. If a course is denied a second time, the Council will require a one-year hiatus before resubmission. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

If you have any questions, please you may call Laurel Carroll, Administrative Aide to the Council on Liberal Education at 4-1320 or email at l-carr@tc.umn.edu.

The liberal education (LE) requirements are fulfilled by taking approved courses in biological sciences, physical sciences, mathematical thinking, social sciences, and humanities and arts, as well as the four thematic areas; cultural diversity, international; perspectives, environment, and citizenship and public ethics. To have courses reviewed for the LE requirements, departments must submit course proposals with a copy of the course syllabus and bibliography to the Council on Liberal Education (CLE). Courses proposed for the diversified core and/or the designated themes must meet the criteria, both general and specific, for the LE requirement(s) listed in the CLE policy guidelines. The course syllabus must clearly demonstrate how the proposed UMTC LE requirement(s), is being taught in class and through the readings.

The Council expects that faculty will submit courses appropriate for the proposed LE requirement(s). However, the Council does realize that faculty members may not understand the type of documentation needed or may submit a

course for an inappropriate requirement. When a course is denied, the Council will state the reason for the denial, sometimes making recommendations, e.g., whether the course is more appropriate for another UMTC LE requirement, and allow faculty to resubmit courses. However, some courses are being repeatedly resubmitted, sometimes for the same LE requirement, sometimes for a series of requirements, often with few changes to the proposal.

Because of the time and commitment required, both on the part of faculty and the Council, the Council is trying to reduce submission of inappropriate or incomplete course proposals. To achieve this goal, the Council is establishing a new policy. If the Council denies a course, the course may be submitted again. The Council will offer examples of approved course proposals. If the faculty member requests it, a council member will be accessible to explain in detail the reasons for the denial, and what, if any, remedy is possible. If the course is denied a second time, the Council will require a one-year hiatus before the course can be submitted a third time.

The Council hopes by this new policy to cut on both on the time spent on course review and on the time being spent by faculty members submitting inappropriate or inadequate course proposals.

February 14, 1997

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

From: Council on Liberal Education

Re: Update on the UMTC LE Requirements -- Core Curriculum

This memo is an update of the February 5, 1997 memo regarding the core curriculum. As part of the semester conversion for fall 1999, the Council on Liberal Education is reviewing its policy on courses submitted for core requirements.

The current policy is that all courses proposed to meet core requirements are reviewed by a college's curriculum committee before being forwarded to the Council for consideration. The Council will continue this policy under semester conversion. Departments should therefore indicate on electronic course approval forms their wish for a given course to be forwarded to the CLE by their colleges.

In reviewing current policy on core requirements, the Council has decided to place increased emphasis on the colleges' primary responsibility for identifying and defining the UMTC-LE core. The Council will continue to determine whether a given course meets core-approval criteria; however, colleges will be expected to play a central role in achieving the more general goals of the core requirements-i.e."a Diversified Core Curriculum structured around discipline-based and interdisciplinary fields of knowledge, guided in its development by clearly stated educational objectives, and consisting of a limited number of courses developed specifically to serve those objectives. The broad purpose of this curriculum should be to help students engage the full agenda of liberal education." The Council will continue to advise colleges on specific needs (e.g., lacunae) within the core requirements.

The intent of the Liberal Education Task Force, as well as the current Council, is that the core be composed of a smaller number of courses. The Council invites the development of courses specifically designed or revised to meet core requirements; courses that are "representative of the discipline as a whole." Departments should not submit courses already "on the books" simply because they appear to meet criteria.

The number of courses approved by the Council will take into account student needs. The Council will not set an absolute limit on the number of courses allowed per department. A department submitting a high number of courses for the core will need to explain why the needs of the discipline should not be met by a smaller number of core courses. Approved core courses will remain in the core for three to five years. Departments, programs, and/or colleges will then decide whether to resubmit a given course or retire it from the core.

Two questions that departments and colleges should consider when developing core courses are:

- If this course were the only course a student took in a core area, would it provide the student with an understanding in the ways of knowing within the discipline and an understanding of the central ideas and/or expressive ideas of the discipline?
- If the course is being offered at the upper division level, how does it provide an introduction to ways of knowing in the discipline?

If you have any questions, please contact Laurel Carroll at 624-1320 or l-carr@tc.umn.edu.