May 22, 2014

William Powers Jr.
President
The University of Texas at Austin
MAI 400
Campus Mail Code: G3400

Dear President Powers:

Enclosed for your consideration is a proposal from the Educational Policy Committee to change the Twenty-four of the Last Thirty Semester Hours rule in the General Requirements section of the Undergraduate Catalog, 2014-2016 (D11521-11523). The proposal was approved by the Faculty Council at its meeting on May 5, 2014, and then by the General Faculty by no-protest on May 19, 2014. Final approval of this legislation resides with UT System.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dean Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

Enclosure

DPN:dlr

xc: Gregory Fenves, executive vice president and provost
    Charles Roeckle, deputy to the president
    Patricia Ohlendorf, vice president for legal affairs
    Janet Dukerich, sr. vice provost

Electronic copies via email:
    Hillary Hart, chair, 2013-14 Faculty Council
    Mary Rose, chair, Educational Policy Committee
    Del Watson, assistant to Janet Dukerich
    Brenda Schumann, associate registrar
    Cely Smart, assistant registrar
DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY


On behalf of the Educational Policy Committee, Professor Mary Rose (committee chair, sociology) submitted the following proposal recommending changes to the twenty-four of the last thirty-semester hours rule in the General Requirements section of the Undergraduate Catalog, 2014-2016.

The Secretary has classified this proposal as legislation of major interest to the General Faculty. The Faculty Council will discuss the proposal at its meeting on April 14, 2014, and will vote on the legislation at its meeting on May 5, 2014. Afterwards, the voting members of the General Faculty will consider the proposal on a no-protest basis. Final approval resides with the president with formal notification to UT System.

Dean Neikirk, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

Posted on the Faculty Council website (http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/) on April 8, 2014.

Background and Policy Rationale

This legislation emerged from the Policy Implementation Group, a committee appointed by Senior Vice Provost David Laude and chaired by Shelby Stanfield. The committee recommended to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) that UT Austin’s General Requirements for Graduation should be adjusted in light of changes that have occurred in recent years.

UT Austin has a sixty-hour residency requirement for all graduates (see 2a below). In addition, all colleges and schools have residency requirements that govern how much of a student’s major must be completed in residence. On top of these policies, the University requires students to complete twenty-four of their final thirty hours in residence (this rule pre-dates the sixty-hour rule). According to a major report on increasing four-year graduation rates, and according to discussions with advising staff, the twenty-four of thirty rule can make it difficult for some students to graduate on time because some may wish to complete certain non-major courses at places other than UT Austin and may find themselves doing so at the end of their college career, rather than at the beginning. Whereas community (or other) college transfer students are permitted to apply courses taken before coming to the University toward their degrees, a student opting to do a semester at a community college in their final year is currently prohibited from transferring in those very same courses. This struck EPC as an arbitrary limitation on the timing of when students can complete some courses in other locations. By a unanimous vote, the EPC supports the proposal to adjust the Undergraduate Catalog as described below. In addition, EPC identified minor editorial changes that needed to be made to more correctly describe a program in the School of Nursing.

Proposed language appears on the next page.

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1 Some have suggested that UT should do all it can to encourage students to take core courses here at UT. Associate Dean Larry Abrahm from UGS, who serves on the EPC, agrees but also notes that currently there are already limits on courses that students aim to transfer after they have been enrolled at UT. He notes: “When students transfer from another Texas public institution (2 year or 4 year) to UT, state law and THECB rules require us to accept for our core requirements any courses which fulfilled the parallel core requirements at the "sending" institution. However, once a student enrolls as a degree-seeking student at UT (emphasis added), courses taken subsequently at other Texas public institution will only be accepted as fulfilling our core requirements if they are found to be essentially the same as a UT course fulfilling that core requirement. How the "sending institution" valued the course with respect to the core is not a factor. So there is a higher bar for courses taken near the end of the degree program.”
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

To receive an undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin, a student must fulfill the Core Curriculum requirements and all requirements for the degree as set forth in a catalog under which he or she is eligible to graduate and any special requirements of the college or school and department offering the degree, as well as the following minimum general requirements:

1. The student must have a grade point average of at least 2.00 on all courses undertaken at the University (including credit by examination, correspondence, and extension) for which a grade or symbol other than Q, W, X, or CR is recorded. Additional requirements imposed by a college or school, if any, are given in the college’s chapter of this catalog.

2. The student must fulfill the following requirements regarding coursework taken in residence. Residence credit includes only courses taken at the University of Texas at Austin; it does not include credit by examination, courses taken by extension or correspondence, and online courses that are recorded as transfer credit. Coursework in University-approved affiliated study abroad programs (international provider programs) is treated as residence credit for requirements 2a [and 2b] below. However, coursework in University-approved affiliated study abroad programs may not be used to fulfill requirement 2b[e].

   a. The student must complete in residence at least sixty semester hours of coursework counted toward the degree. (This requirement is waived for students in the [Accelerated Track for the] Associate Degree in Nursing to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ADNBSN), a degree program for registered nurses who hold associate's degrees or diplomas in nursing.)

   [b. Twenty-four of the last thirty-six semester hours counted toward the degree must be completed in residence.]

   [e]. At least six semester hours of advanced coursework in the major must be completed in residence.

Additional requirements imposed by a college or school, if any, are given in the college/school sections of this catalog. Many degree plans include residence rules in addition to the above University-wide requirements; the appropriate academic units have the discretion to determine applicability of University-approved affiliated study abroad credit toward all college- and school-specific requirements for coursework in residence. Course equivalency and University approval of study abroad courses are determined by the appropriate academic units.

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2 These editorial changes were made at the request of a member representing the School of Nursing to more accurately describe the program in question.