

TO: Brothers
FROM: Cohen
DATE: 12/12/85
SUBJECT: Course Requirements Proposal: Suggestions.

Barb

The following notes are keyed to the proposal as included with the Senate agenda for the 12/4/85 meeting. I have included a grab bag of ideas, not all of equal importance (or cogency, perhaps). I am especially interested in the rephrasing of part C (Natural Sciences) and in the stress on History. I should like to see something like the parallel I have indicated for the Social and Natural Sciences. My comments on math are, I think, correct, but I shouldn't like to make them a sticking point.

Above all, I don't think that Arts and Sciences needs any special defense in any of this. That's what differentiates a university and a trade school, and if that can't be acknowledged, we might as well give up.

(NOTE INSERTED: As I read over the following it seems awfully pedantic, but if I take the time to word things more moderately I will never get it done, so I hope you will forgive and accept.)

A. HUMANITIES: A knowledge and understanding of literature, philosophy, and the arts, both as search for meaning and expression and as shared cultural experience.

Comment: Appreciation can't be taught: You can lead a student to knowledge, but you can't make him like it. Or, if you could, you shouldn't unless you fancy yourself Big Brother.

12 hrs. min . . .

B. SOCIAL SCIENCES: An understanding of the purposes and limitations of the social sciences, and a knowledge of human individuals and society, past and present, as described by the social sciences.

Comment: See above. Also, to include psychology.

12 hrs. min, including at least one approved course in the History Department.

Comment: Don't let the students say they "already had" history in the public schools. History taught at an adult level is more important for the survival of civilization than any other subject.

C. NATURAL SCIENCES: An understanding of the purposes and limitations of the natural sciences, and a knowledge of the physical world as described by them.

Comment: Math is a tool, not a science. It should be as required as grammar. Therefore, the approved science courses should be based on satisfactory knowledge of the University entrance requirement in math. There is a problem here with the Secr. Stud. program as described on p. 34 of the catalog. I think the way out is to excuse these students from the science requirement; there is no need to weaken the rest of the university because of this weak link. (Also, p. 34 refers to Math 531, which is not listed in the catalog.)

12 hrs min . . . (but delete the math).

continued--

Restrictions:

1. Any approved course, whether or not in the major or minor, should be accepted.
- 2., 3. . . . OK.

Implementation:

1. I suggest a special Senate Committee on University Core Courses to do this. This might be at the start a sub-committee of the A S & E Committee. This is a topic important enough to everyone to have a committee devote itself completely to the task.
2. Criteria:
 - a. The courses should be offered in the appropriate departments of the College of Arts and Sciences or of the College of Fine and Performing Arts.
 - b. The courses should develop written and oral communication and mathematical skills wherever appropriate, including use of the library as a resource.

Comment: The term "wherever appropriate" is the key. Also, note inclusion of math.
3. Approval for inclusion in the Core should be based on considerably more care than is appropriate in the general case of Curriculum Committee work. Submission of a course should be accompanied by a syllabus, an explanation of the importance of the course as part of the general education requirement, and a list of appropriate faculty and facilities. These supplements should be circulated to the Faculty as a whole. Note that this is not only to prevent the admission of inappropriate courses to the list but--and more so--to advertise the faculty of the appropriate courses and their desirability.