Approved as Amended

Proposed Change in GER
Proficiency Requirement

Current:

Completion of the English Composition Requirement must be demonstrated by writing an essay examination at a level of achievement to be determined by the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee, or by earning a grade of C or higher in English 112.

Proposed:  *(Proposed new language is underlined)*

Completion of the English Composition Requirement must be demonstrated by one of the following:

a) Writing an essay examination at a level of achievement to be determined by the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee

b) Earning a grade of C or higher in English 112

c) Transferring in a grade of C or better in a course equivalent to English 102 or a higher level expository writing course that has English 102 or its equivalent as a prerequisite.

Effective Summer 1996
MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 29, 1996

TO: Professor Ronald Weber, Chair
    Academic Program and Curriculum Committee

FROM: George S. Baker, Chair
       University Committee

RE: Credits to Degree

The Provost, in a memorandum dated February 2, 1996 to the University Committee, cited actions taken on campus with respect to the University Committee's recommendations for reducing credits to degree. The University Committee has reviewed the actions of the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee (APCC) in this regard and find some problematic.

Quoting from the memo:

"Recommendation #2a: Satisfaction of a proficiency requirement at one campus should transfer as satisfaction of the requirement at UWM.

The APCC voted to address the issue raised in #2a by requesting that the English department consider allowing students who have taken composition courses at other institutions to submit a portfolio of written work for consideration in determining whether a student meets the UWM writing proficiency requirement."

The University Committee finds the APCC-suggested remedy will have little effect on credits to degree and, while a step forward, is not responsive to the major problem the English proficiency requirement poses to transfer student recruitment and retention. We also wish to remind the APCC that the methods of satisfying the English Proficiency Requirement is the responsibility of the APCC and not the English Department. We should also remember that the goal is to raise the level of critical thinking and writing of our graduating student body and not to put an isolated requirement at the freshman/sophomore level. Consideration of writing in the major as well as in an English course may bear better results than concentration on a first year English composition course alone. The University Committee reaffirms its recommendation for transfer of satisfaction of a proficiency requirement.

"Recommendation #2b: We should accept the Regents' mandate that the spirit of accommodation shall be implemented by recognizing general education/liberal arts
requirements in terms of broad academic areas. This means that courses recognized as satisfying GER requirements at another UW campus should be recognized as satisfying the requirement at UWM, whether or not we have a similar GER approved course.

Similarly, the APCC found #2 to be too broad. Instead, it endorsed the changes being implemented under the revised UWS transfer policy."

The University Committee feels that the Regents' mandate is broad (i.e., UWS System Transfer Policy, December 1995 I.A. Lines 6-10).

"The spirit of accommodation shall be implemented by recognizing general education/liberal arts requirements in terms of broad academic areas (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, etc.), as well as specific courses."

Our statement is certainly no broader than this. A frequent source of confusion is the mingling of specific program distribution requirements and campus-wide GER breadth requirements in the minds of many. Satisfying the campus GER breadth requirements does not automatically satisfy the distribution requirements of individual programs or colleges. in most cases at UWM, it does not.

"Recommendation #5: Upper level courses with prerequisites that carry GER credit should be accepted for GER credit.

The APCC amended this to read: Upper level courses with prerequisites that carry GER credit may be approved for GER credit by the APCC."

This would appear to be of little content. Current rules allow the APCC to approve any course for GER credit. The recommendation was made with the transfer student in mind. We believe that applying it only to courses transferring into UWM and not allowing both the course and its prerequisite to count toward the GER breadth requirement would be in the spirit of the GER.

In conclusion, in the opinion of the University Committee, the actions of the APCC falls short of satisfying the "spirit of accommodation" mandated by the Regents in promoting a "seamless" transfer of students from one UWS institution to another. We are requesting that the University Committee be put on the agenda for a brief presentation of our opinion in an early meeting of the APCC.

GSB/jvr

cc: Kenneth L. Watters, Provost and Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs