

11-12-2001

Changes to the MALS Program

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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SUNY BROCKPORT

Faculty Senate
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Resolution #07
2001-2002
FACULTY SENATE

TO: Dr. Paul Yu, College President

FROM: The Faculty Senate Meeting on: *November 12, 2001*

RE: ⇒ I. Formal Resolution (*Act of Determination*)
II. Recommendation (*Urging the Fitness of*)
III. Other, For your Information (*Notice, Request, Report, etc.*)

SUBJ: *Changes to the MALS Program*

Signed: *Jennifer M. Lloyd* Date Sent: *11/27/01*
(Jennifer Lloyd, Faculty Senate President)

TO: The Faculty Senate

FROM: Dr. Paul Yu, College President

RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution (circle)
a. Accepted. Effective Date: *12/5/01* or *first opportunity for publication*
b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on *1/1*
c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

II, III. Response to Recommendation/Other
a. Received and acknowledged
b. Comment:

DISTRIBUTION: *President's Staff Deans' Council, Karla Merrifield, Faculty Senate*

Distribution Date: *12/7/01* Signed: *Paul Yu*
(Dr. Paul Yu, President, SUNY College at Brockport)

FACULTY SENATE
SUNY College at Brockport

MAY 24 2002

350 New Campus Drive
Brockport, NY 14420-2925

Faculty Senate, 11/20/01
C:\My Documents\Resolutions\RESFORM.doc

MALS Program: Proposed Changes (changes in bold, underlined, italics)

Existing Program

Required Courses (9 credit-hrs)

(note: prefixes are used exclusively by MALS)

HUM 6XX: Humanities Seminar
NSM 6XX: Natural Sciences Seminar
SSC 6XX: Social Sciences Seminar

Elective Courses:

21 cr-hrs chosen through advisement

The following restrictions apply:

1. Courses must form a coherent Plan of Study designed to meet a student's personal and/or professional goals
2. No more than nine credit-hours may be taken in any single discipline area
3. No more than six credit-hours may be taken in any course bearing professional credit (B-suffix)
4. No more than nine credit-hours in independent study may be taken
5. At least six credit-hours must be taken at the 600-level

Minimum Admission Requirements:

1. Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or

Proposed Program

Required Courses (12 credit-hrs)

(note: prefixes will be used exclusively by MALS)

AHM 7XX: Arts & Humanities Seminar
NSC 7XX: Natural Sciences Seminar
SSC 7XX: Social Sciences Seminar
LIB 797: Project Portfolio

Elective Courses

18 cr-hrs chosen through advisement

The following restrictions apply:

1. Courses must form a coherent Plan of Study designed to meet a student's personal and/or professional goals **(a statement describing an organizing theme for the Plan of Study, signed by student and Program Director, will be a formal component of the Plan of Study)**
2. No more than nine credit-hours may be taken in any single discipline area
3. No more than six credit-hours may be taken in any course **deemed a professional course by the Program Director (generally, B-suffix courses)**
4. No more than **six** credit-hours in independent study may be taken
5. At least six credit-hours must be taken at the 600-
or higher **(or equivalent for graduate transfer courses)**

Minimum Admission Requirements:

1. Bachelor's degree from a ***regionally accredited*** college or

university

2. Completed College Application for Graduate Matriculation

3. Three letters of recommendation

4. A written essay describing reasons for pursuing the MALS
degree

5. An undergraduate and/or graduate GPA of at least 3.0

university

2. Completed College Application for Graduate

3. Three letters of recommendation

4. A written essay describing reasons for pursuing the
degree **and articulation of the intended organizing theme
for the Plan of Study**

5. **An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0, or a
graduate GPA of at least 3.0 based on at least six credit-
hours of graduate study at or above the 600 -level or
equivalent**

Justification for Proposed Program Changes

A. Major Program Changes

1. New program requirement: Addition of a 3-credit course, **LIB 797, Project Portfolio**.

Course Description: Project Portfolio will be a pre-graduation "culminating project" that entails both a reflective component and a knowledge application component. Students may not register for this course until they have completed all other M.A.L.S. degree requirements, or are concurrently registered for their final course requirements as specified in their Plan of Study (POS). The portfolio will include (a) a paper describing how insights and methodologies from the three M.A.L.S. disciplinary approaches (arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences) have contributed to an understanding of some issue or problem within contemporary society [relates to SLO # 1 - 3; see below], (b) a statement of the specific programmatic goals around which the student's POS was developed, (c) a reflective statement describing how the interrelationships between the areas of knowledge and skills acquired through one's POS have provided an integrative experience that has contributed holistically to one's personal and/or professional objectives as indicated above [relates to SLO # 4; see below], and (d) sample work from each student's required and elective courses.

Resource Considerations: Evaluation of portfolios requires human resources (the Program graduates approximately 20 students each semester, including summer). Course supervision (set-up, advisement, progress monitoring, grading, outcome assessment) will count as one course toward a faculty member's teaching load (for each semester, all students registering for Project Portfolio will be assigned to one section of LIB 797). It is anticipated that the faculty member involved will be the M.A.L.S. Program Director. Adjunct compensation to the Director's home department (to cover a course that would otherwise have been part of the Director's teaching load) will be at the discretion of the academic Dean.

Rationale:

- (a) The New York State Education Department Office of Higher Education specifies that "the requirements for a master's degree shall normally include at least one of the following: passing a comprehensive test, writing a thesis based on independent research *or completing an appropriate special project*". (my emphasis)
- (b) Data from the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (of which Brockport's program is a member) indicate that the vast majority (somewhere between 85% -93%) of M.A.L.S. Programs nationwide require a thesis or some culminating project. The addition of the proposed 3-credit hour LIB **797, Project Portfolio**, will bring Brockport's program more into the mainstream of other Liberal Studies program in the U.S.
- (c) The change is needed to more effectively meet the program's student learning outcomes (SLOs), and to carry out assessment in regard to these SLOs (see list below).
 - SLO # 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the unique perspectives of the arts and humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences as contributors to knowledge

- SLO #2: Demonstrate an understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of knowledge, and an appreciation of the value of a multidisciplinary approach to scholarship
- SLO # 3: Demonstrate an understanding of, and be able to provide examples of, the way in which insights and methodologies from the arts and humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences contribute to an understanding of one's self and nature within contemporary society
- SLO # 4: Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships between areas of knowledge and skill as acquired through one's Plan of Study, and be able to illustrate how these areas provide an integrated experience which contributes holistically to one's personal and/or professional objective
- SLO # 5: Demonstrate effective critical reasoning skills by evaluating and synthesizing knowledge from different disciplinary perspectives
- SLO # 6: Demonstrate effective communication skills through coherent and well organized written and verbal presentations

SLOs # 5 & #6 can be assessed through performance measures obtainable in the three existing (required) M.A.L.S. seminars (through term papers, special projects, essay examinations, and measures of student presentations and course participation). However, because of the variability across student POSs, and the cross-course nature of SLOs #1-4, these SLOs cannot be assessed in any existing course. Instead, they reflect overall outcomes of each student's individualized POS. The *Project Portfolio* is proposed both to insure and to assess these learning outcomes.

2. Change Program's elective-block requirement from 21 credit-hours to 18 credit-hours.

Rationale:

Although individualized curricula are a common feature of liberal studies programs, it is desirable to provide somewhat more structure to Brockport's program by increasing the ratio of required to elective courses. However, it is also desirable to maintain M.A.L.S. as a 30 credit-hour program. By reducing the Program's elective-block from 21 credit-hours to 18 credit-hours (while increasing the required-course-block from 9 to 12 credit-hours), both goals are accomplished.

B. Minor Changes

1. Change prefix for HUM 6XX (required course) to *AHM 7XX*

Rationale:

The prefix HUM has been used for seminars from both arts and from humanities disciplines. The proposed change to AHM will better reflect that fact. The change from a 600-level course to a 700-level course reflects the fact that the

seminar is restricted to students matriculated in the M.A.L.S. program.

2. Change prefix for NSM 6XX (required course) to NSC 7XX

Rationale:

The prefix NSM was originally intended for seminars from both the natural sciences and the mathematical disciplines. In fact, mathematics seminars are not offered. The proposed change to NSC will better reflect that fact. The change from a 600-level course to a 700-level course reflects the fact that the seminar is restricted to students matriculated in the M.A.L.S. program.

3. Change SSC 6XX (required course) to SSC 7XX

Rationale:

The change from a 600-level course to a 700-level course reflects the fact that the seminar is restricted to students matriculated in the M.A.L.S. program.

4. Change the number of allowed credit hours (elective) of independent study from nine to six.

Rationale:

The proposed program reduces the number of elective credit hours from 21 to 18 (while correspondingly increasing the number of required credits from 9 to 12). Nine credit hours out of 18 (half the elective credits) is considered proportionally too much for independent study projects.

C. Changes related to admissions and advisement aspects of the Program

1. Change language regarding bachelor's degree.

Rationale: Not all acceptable colleges and universities are four-year institutions (e.g., doctoral universities).

2. Change minimum admission requirements statement to require inclusion of a **formal statement of Plan of Study programmatic focus** as part of application materials and admission requirement.

Rationale:

This proposed change represents only new documentation for an existing program requirement. Currently, program applicants must provide a written statement describing their reasons for pursuing the M.A.L.S. degree, and upon offer of admission must develop (through advisement with the program Director) a Plan of Study (POS) that represents a coherent set of multi-disciplinary courses addressing some particular personal or professional educational objective for that individual student (this is a common objective of Liberal Studies programs across the United States). However, the application statements often address the programmatic focus too generally, and no formal document has been used to articulate and record the outcome of the POS advisement process. The codification of each student's programmatic focus into (a) a proposal statement during the application process, and (b) a formally approved addendum to the Plan of Study during the matriculation process, will serve two purposes: (1) as an aid to the application review process, it will clarify the appropriateness of the applicant as a candidate for the M.A.L.S. degree, and (2) for the purposes of assessment and outside program review, it will document the procedure and rationale by which POSs are developed, (the POS is not, in itself, self-explanatory in this regard, especially to individuals familiar only with professionally oriented, discipline specific curricula).

3. Clarify statement regarding Program's six-credit professional ('B') course limitation, to indicate **deemed a professional course by the Program Director**.

Rationale:

Some courses officially registered with the 'A' designation are, nonetheless, "professional" courses (i.e., they focus on professional training or application).

4. Clarify provision that six credit-hours of elective courses must be taken at the 600-level, to **refer to transfer courses** as well.

Rationale:

The policy needs to account for credit earned at other institutions as well as for those earned at Brockport.

5. **A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.** Specify that when an applicant's graduate GPA is used in lieu of the undergraduate GPA to determine eligibility for admission consideration, the graduate GPA will be based on at least 6

credit-hours of courses taken at or above the 600-level or equivalent.

Rationale:

Courses at the 500-level are often geared primarily to undergraduates and may not be as good predictors of success in the M.A.L.S. Program as 600-level (or above) courses. The requirement of "a minimum GPA of 3.0 based on at least 6 credits of graduate work at or above the 600-level or equivalent" above reflects current M.A.L.S. admissions practice. The proposed new language changes practice to policy.