4-19-2010

MALS Change Restrictions on Electives

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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TO: Dr. John R. Halstead, College President
FROM: The College Senate: April 19, 2010
RE: I. Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
II. Recommendation (Urging the Fitness of)
III. Other, For Your Information (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)
SUBJ: MALS Change Restrictions on Electives (routing #42 09-10GC)

Signed: ____________________________ Date: __/__/____
(Steven Lewis, 2009-10 College Senate President)

Please fill out the bottom portion and follow the distribution instructions at the end of this page.

TO: Steven Lewis, The College Senate President
FROM: John R. Halstead, College President
RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution (circle choice)
  a. Accepted - Implementation Effective Date: Fall 2010
  b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on ___/___/____
  c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation
II. III. Response to Recommendation or Other/FYI
  a. Received and acknowledged ___/___/____
  b. Comment:

Signed: ____________________________ Date: ___/___/10
(Dr. John R. Halstead, President, The College at Brockport)

DISTRIBUTION
Upon approval, the College President will forward copies of resolutions to his staff who will, in turn, forward copies to their staff. The College Senate Office will post resolutions to the College Senate Web at http://www.brockport.edu/collegesenate/resolutions.
**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:** FEBRUARY 28

Incomplete proposals or proposals received after the deadline may not be reviewed until next semester.

**INSTRUCTIONS** – please, no multiple attachments – each proposal must be submitted electronically as one document:

- Submit only complete proposals. Include support letters from department chair and dean.
- Proposals must be prepared individually in Word format using committee guidelines available at brockport.edu/collegesenate/proposal.html.
- Fill out this cover page for each proposal and insert it electronically as the front page of your document. ([collegesenate/proposal.html](http://brockport.edu/collegesenate/proposal.html))
- Email whole proposal with cover page as one document to senate@brockport.edu and facprez@brockport.edu.
- All updates must be resubmitted to the Senate office with the original cover page including routing number.
- Questions? Call the Senate office at 395-2586 or the appropriate committee chairperson.

1. **PROPOSAL TITLE:** Please be somewhat descriptive, ie. *Graduate Probation/Dismissal Proposal* rather than *Graduate Proposal*.

   MALS – Change restrictions on electives

2. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

Students in the MALS Program, at the time of admission, develop a Plan of Study (POS) which is built around a programmatic theme of their choosing. The current POS includes six (18-credits) elective courses which are subject to several restrictions including:

   a. cannot choose more than three courses from any one discipline,
   b. cannot choose more than two professional courses (designated as B-courses in Brockport), and
   c. must choose at least two 600-level courses.

Instead of rigid restrictions, we seek to create a program that emphasizes flexibility in course selection and, enforce integrity and quality through advisement. We believe such an approach will reinvigorate the program.

3. **WILL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AFFECTING BUDGET ARE NEEDED?** _X_ NO  __ YES  EXPLAIN YES

4. **HOW WILL THIS EFFECT TRANSFER STUDENTS:**

No effect on transfer students

5. **ANTICIPATED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Fall 2010

6. **SUBMISSION & REVISION DATES:** PLEASE PUT A DATE ON ALL UPDATED DOCUMENTS TO AVOID CONFUSION.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Submission</th>
<th>Updated on</th>
<th>Updated on</th>
<th>Updated on</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24, 2010</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

7. **SUBMITTED BY:** (contact person)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kulathur S. Rajasethupathy</td>
<td>MALS</td>
<td>5760</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kraja@brockport.edu">kraja@brockport.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **COMMITTEES TO COPY:** (Senate office use only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standing Committee</th>
<th>Forwarded For Approval To</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Enrollment Planning &amp; Policies</td>
<td>Committee for approval</td>
<td>2/14/10, 3/25/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_Faculty &amp; Professional Staff Policies</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>3/29/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__General Education &amp; Curriculum Policies *</td>
<td>GED to Vice Provost</td>
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<tr>
<td>__Graduate Curriculum &amp; Policies</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>4/5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Student Policies</td>
<td>College President</td>
<td>4/28/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_Undergraduate Curriculum &amp; Policies</td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* follow special Gen Ed procedures for submission of General Education proposals at “How to Submit Proposals” on our Website.

**NOTES:**

2009-2010-30res.doc
Rationale:
The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) Program is a 30-credit graduate program. The Program in its current form has been in existence since fall, 2003. The 30-credits are comprised of 12-credits of required, 700-level, seminar courses, and 18-credits of graduate-level elective courses. While the seminar courses are offered by the Program, students meet the elective course requirements by taking courses from other departments on campus or through transfer credits. The elective courses must relate to a specific area of interest of the student and are chosen under advisement. Furthermore, the choice of electives (whether through Brockport or transfer credits) is also subject to several other constraints including:

a. cannot choose more than three courses from any one discipline,
b. cannot choose more than two professional courses (B-courses), and
c. must choose at least two 600-level courses.

Over the last six years of the Program’s existence, we have observed though anecdotally, that the above restrictions have caused needless difficulties to the students. The student population of the MALS Program is highly homogeneous and they are mostly teachers from the local school districts. They are also on a time bound plan to complete their degree. The lack of sufficient number of 600-level courses at a time that is convenient to them has been a serious impediment in their timely completion of the degree. Departmental restrictions combined with B-designations for courses further seriously limit the availability of courses. NYSED’s requirement of 12 discipline-specific credits for professional certification conflicts with our “no more than three courses in any one discipline” policy forcing students in the Program to take additional courses. The net result has been the flight of students to other programs, particularly the online programs, posing an existential threat to the Program. Under the circumstances, we propose that the restrictions (a) and (c) above be eliminated. We are not seeking the removal of restriction (b) above as its removal leads to the possibility of a student graduating with a majority of B-courses (professional courses as opposed to Liberal Arts). To avoid that anomaly, we would like to retain the restriction (b) above and maintain the liberal character of the program. For a quick reference of a complete list of current and proposed changes, please refer to the side-by-side comparison given below. This is a revised version of the first submission dated February, 2010. Revisions are highlighted in red.

1. A comparison of the current and proposed Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Program</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Proposed Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LST 700-719 –Topics in the Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LST 700-719 –Topics in the Arts and Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LST 720-739 –Topics in the Natural Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LST 720-739 –Topics in the Natural Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LST 740-759 –Topics in the Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LST 740-759 –Topics in the Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LST 797 –Project Portfolio</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LST 797 –Project Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Courses:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Elective Courses:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At least 2 electives must be at the 600</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students should choose a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>combination of electives that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent a focused area of interest from the College’s offering of graduate level courses chosen by advisement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No more than 2 courses (6 cr.) may reflect content intended for application in a specific professional setting (B courses).</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• No more than 6 credits may be taken as independent study</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No elective may be taken on an S/U basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No internships allowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Written approval of the Program director is required for any change to a POS</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer Policy: a maximum of 12 cr. earned at other colleges and universities may be transferred into the Program with the Director’s approval. Students must earn a B or better for any transfer course.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• At least 15 credits must be at the 600 level or above</td>
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</table>

2. **A discussion regarding “Mission”, “market”, and “Quality”. Specifically address the following issues:**
   a. **How does the proposal reflect the campus mission focus?**
The revised program is focused towards student success. Instead of rigid restrictions, emphasis is placed on flexibility. The proposed program still requires ‘advisement’ as an important requirement in elective course selection. This assures integrity and quality of the program. It also maintains the essential character of a Liberal Studies Program by allowing only at most 6 credits from B-courses. Dropping the 2-course minimum from the 600-level courses for electives, in effect, amounts only to making it a one-course minimum as the Program will still meet the institutional graduation requirement of minimum of 15-credits from 600-level courses.

b. What are the market demand factors that this proposal responds to? Include program competition from other regional colleges.

Significant drop in student enrollment is a compelling market factor. The reasons for this drop are two-fold:

a. Students’ difficulties in finding the right courses at the right time (see ‘rationale’ above), difficulty in planning and executing the Plan of Study (POS), concern over time to degree are one set of factors.

b. Students who are already employed seek convenience over cost. So, students in the Program, tend to favor geographically closer institutions (better still online institutions/programs). Teachers are generally financially compensated by their school districts in the amount equivalent to SUNY tuition charges. So, it is relatively easy for them to pay the balance themselves and enroll in nearby, even if high-cost, private schools. Thus, our cost advantage is nullified.

c. How the program quality addressed in this proposal?

See (a) above.

3. Description of new courses: No new courses are involved.

4. Staffing: No change in staffing needs.

5. Additional cost (SUNY): No change in additional cost is anticipated.

6. Effective Date: Fall 2010
7. **Academic administration commentary.**

   a. *Letter of review/comment from the Graduate Dean:* attached.
   b. *Letter of review/comment from Dean of the School:* attached.
   c. *Letter of review/comment from Department Chair:* author of this proposal.

8. **Resources, facilities, and non-teaching staff needed to implement the program.**

   i. *Statement of review and comment from Drake Library.*
   ii. *Statement of review and comment from Academic Computing Services.*

   No new requirements in resources, facilities, and non-teaching staff needed to implement the program.

9. **Letters of support from cooperating departments, agencies, institutions, etc., including a statement of probable/likely impact on departments.**

   Not Applicable.
Date: February 9, 2010

To: Graduate Curriculum and Research Committee:
College Senate

From: Dr. Susan Rachael Seem
Assistant to the Provost for Graduate Education & Scholarship

Subject: Program Revision: MALS

Please accept the brief memo in support of the proposed minor changes in the Masters of Liberal Studies program. As I understand it the proposal allows for desired flexibility for students in development of their plans of study under advisement. Removing the restriction of “no more than three courses in any one discipline” allows more flexibility in course selection for all students. More specifically the proposed changes allow students who are interested in teacher certification to meet New York State Education Department’s requirement of 12 discipline-specific credits.
February 19, 2010

To: College Senate

From: P. Michael Fox, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Re: Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MA-LS) Program - Proposed minor changes

I strongly support the attached proposal summarizing some minor structural changes to the College’s Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MA-LS) program.

I believe that one of the reasons that the MA-LS program has suffered such a precipitous decline in recent years is related to the excessively rigid restrictions currently imposed on elective selection. This proposal represents an effort to reverse that situation. I am convinced that providing a more flexible curriculum will enhance student options and improve the desirability of this once thriving graduate program to increased numbers of graduate students. Continued careful advisement by the program administrator will ensure that programmatic integrity is maintained in elective choices.

For informational purposes although it requires no action by the College Senate, we also plan to make increased use of on-line and hybrid instruction in this program in the near future as a means of broadening the program’s availability to graduate students.

I hope that the College Senate will approve this proposal. If there are questions, please refer them Dr. Kulaith Rajasekha or to me.