May 31, 2011

TO:    Paul DeLuca, Provost
       Jocelyn L. Milner, Associate Provost and Director, Academic Planning & Analysis

FROM:   Elaine M. Klein, Chair, University General Education Committee

RE:     Update to March 24, 2011 UGEC report to UAPC

On March 24, 2011, I presented the annual report of the University General Education Committee (UGEC) to the University Academic Planning Council. In that report, the UGEC asked the UAPC to endorse the principle that students complete the Quantitative Reasoning, Communication, and Ethnic Studies Requirements with courses taken on a graded basis. (Until we have more information about use of Pass/Fail to meet “general breadth”, the UGEC deferred seeking the same endorsement for that aspect of the requirements.) As noted in the report, the UGEC request stems from concern that a small number of students use courses taken “Pass/Fail” specifically to meet the Ethnic Studies Requirement.

To follow up on my discussion with the UAPC, I provide here a compilation of academic policy concerning the use of the pass/fail option and undergraduate degree requirements. These were provided after consulting all UW-Madison schools and colleges offering undergraduate degrees, as well as after careful reading of the 2009-2011 Undergraduate Catalog (from which quotations are taken).

- **Agricultural and Life Sciences**: “Courses graded with the pass/fail system cannot be used to satisfy any of the university, college, degree program, or major requirements.”
- **Business**: Students may not use pass/fail courses to meet pre-business and liberal studies requirements; all of the General Education Requirement are contained within these categories of requirements.
- **Education**: Only elective courses may be carried on a pass/fail basis. University General Education Requirements are not considered “elective”
- **Engineering**: All students must take 15/16 credits of liberal electives, which include a 3 credit Ethnic Studies course. Effective Fall 2011, pass/fail may not be used for any required for-degree liberal studies electives.
• **L&S:** “Only elective work may be carried on a pass/fail basis. Courses carried on a pass/fail basis cannot fulfill any other college requirements except for the 60 intermediate/advanced level credits and 108 Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) credits needed to graduate.”

• **Medicine and Public Health:** “Students may not take general school or program requirements on a pass/fail basis.”

• **Nursing:** “No required courses may be carried under the pass/fail option.”

• **Pharmacy:** “No course that meets any B.S.-Pharmacology & Toxicology course requirement may be taken pass/fail.” This includes the “non-major curriculum graduation course requirements”.

Thanks to the recently approved changes in College of Engineering requirements, there is now considerable consistency of practice concerning the use of pass/fail work to satisfy degree requirements. We greatly appreciate the thoughtful attention the College of Engineering has given to this matter.

The UGEC has had several discussions in which members considered the implications of a *de facto* campus-wide policy in which GER courses are taken on a graded basis. Committee members wisely observe that the UW-Madison General Education strategy has been to preserve in UAPC-approved policy those curricular features on which individual schools and colleges come to agreement. Formally adopting aligning practices as policy ensures consistency across all schools and colleges, helps us to communicate clearly with advisors and students, and eases student transfer between colleges.

In light of the alignment of individual school/college policy in this area, the UGEC asks that the UAPC endorse, as campus-wide policy, the principle that only courses taken on a graded basis may be used to satisfy the General Education Requirements.

cc: University General Education Committee
    Gary Sandefur, Dean, L&S