

Subject: Cutting Gen. Ed Credit Hours

Date: Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at 11:45:47 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Tucker, Mathew

To: Jarman, Jeffrey

CC: Sternfeld-Dunn, Aleks, editor@thesunflower.com

Dr. Jarman,

I'm writing to you today in regards to the proposal to cut gen. ed. credit hours and with the request that you share this letter with the Faculty Senate in your next meeting:

To the Faculty Senate,

As an undergrad, it took me close to 10 years to finish my degree. And aside from the training that I received, in my field of study, the thing I am most proud of is the well-rounded education that I received in the process. An education that covered a litany of topics outside of my field of study. An education that had me reading about the conflicts between Israel and Palestine one semester and analyzing the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Sartre the next. It is an education that I lean on each and every day.

That said, I don't know that I would have taken some of those courses had they not been required. I, like many students, was not mature enough to always see the benefits of a broader education. Benefits that I now see and get to enjoy. It is for this reason that I plead with you, the faculty, do not deprive our students of their education. Do not be complicit in the dumbing down of our student's education. Moreover, I ask that the faculty goes one step further and advocates for the expansion of gen ed requirements. I ask that we live up to the ideals of academia. That we see the value in a broad and diverse education. That, if YOU the faculty deem a course necessary to a degree field, you require it; but, you do not cut gen. eds. to make room for it!

Yes, I know this is a small change and that the modern university system is going to have to evolve with the times in order to stay relevant. But this is not the way to change.

(An aside: to that end, and considering that one of the primary arguments for such reductions is the rising costs to students, instead of reducing credit hours why not pro-rate the cost of credit hours against their course number? That way, gen eds are less expensive.)

So I ask... Don't do this. Don't reduce gen. ed. credit hours by 21%. Instead... Tell our students they have to take more math, more philosophy, history, art, music, science, lit, poli. sci, etc. Not less. Tell them they need to take Proofs or Calculus. Tell them they need to complete each sequence of general science. That they have to sit through lectures on The Republic, have read Frankenstein, and learned why Common Sense was important to the American Revolution. Require them to take courses that force them to debate the merits of uncomfortable topics. Require them not just to be familiar with a foreign language, but also challenge them to learn an instrument. Require they receive a well-rounded education.

In closing, I'd like to ask you two questions:

1. what does it mean to for us to be an institution of 'higher education,' if we're willing to lower our standards, in this way, for what it means to be well educated?
2. how can we claim to be a leader in education and an institution ready and willing to lead the charge into tomorrow, if we're willing to sacrifice courses we once deemed principle to an education, along the way?

A concerned grad. student and GTA,
Matt Tucker

PS: I have cc'ed to this, Dr. Sternfeld-Dunn and Kylie Cameron, the Editor-in-Chief of The Sunflower.