

Watered down report approved by council

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After half a semester of debate concerning proposed basic education requirement changes, members of the University Council dodged the issue Monday, deciding to accept a substitute motion that leaves final curriculum decisions in the hands of individual schools and colleges.

The substitute motion, proposed by Stanley Werbow, acting dean of the College of Fine Arts, tacitly approves the basic education requirements forwarded in the James Vick Committee on Basic Education Requirements report but makes the proposed changes advisory instead of mandatory.

"It's (the Vick Committee report) been accepted, but it's lost all of its teeth," said James Vick, professor of mathematics and chairman of the committee.

PRESIDENT PETER Flawn was not present at the Monday meeting because of a previous appointment with the House Appropriations Committee. Council Secretary H. Paul Kelley, director of the Measurement and Evaluation Center, chaired the meeting.

"President Flawn was a known backer of the (Vick) proposal. I think his absence affected the vote," said Larry Nettles, student representative on the council and third-year law student.

"The whole thing's been negated," said Susan Russell, a junior in Plan II and a member of the Vick committee.

"The Vick committee proposals are approved in principle," Werbow said after the motion passed 36-17. The motion allows schools and colleges to decide what degree plan is best, Werbow said. He said he decided to submit the motion in "the last few days."

IN OCTOBER 1979, Flawn authorized the Vick committee to formulate suggested changes to University basic education requirements, in hopes of stopping graduation of students unable to read and write well.

The Vick committee proposals were:

- 12 hours of English plus E306, which would have become an admissions requirement. Six hours could be fulfilled by upper-division courses certified to have a substantial writing component.
- Three hours of social science beyond the legislative requirement.
- Three hours of mathematics.
- Nine hours of natural sciences, at least six of which must be in the same subject.
- Three hours of fine arts and humanities.

Introduction of the proposed changes prompted an outcry from schools offering professional degrees which include more than 80 hours of upper division courses. To make room for the new basic required courses, core degree courses would have to be cut or degree plans expanded, opponents said.

Werbow said his position as acting dean of one of the schools whose degree plans would be most affected by the Vick requirements had influenced his Monday motion.

The newly adopted policy, three paragraphs long, recognizes the "valuable contribution" of the Committee on Basic Education Requirements, favors the establishment of entrance requirements that will ensure entering students success and recommends that each college review the requirements of its undergraduate degrees and bring requirements within the spirit of the committee's report, the motion states.

"**AN INTERIM** report to the president will be expected from each dean by the first class day of the 1981 spring semester and a final proposal for modification of degree requirements by the first day of class of the 1982 spring semester," the motion states.

Dave Edwards, professor of government, said adopting the motion "ratifies tendencies we've already seen for the centrifugal erosion of the common core" of educational courses.

"You can be an optimist and think they'll (University schools and colleges) do a lot, or you can be a pessimist and think they won't do anything. The reality lies in between," Vick said after the meeting.

IN OTHER council business, James Kinneavy, professor of English, raised for reconsideration the Department of English proposal to shift the required third semester of undergraduate English from the sophomore to the junior or senior year.

The proposal will ease the teaching strain in lower division courses and will give students an opportunity to learn writing skills at a more mature age, Kinneavy said.

Edwards said the already poor writing quality of upper division students who have taken required English courses would be exacerbated by cutting out lower division courses.

"It's time we stopped fooling ourselves that somehow shifting an already inadequate lower division course upward will somehow improve the student's experience," Edwards said.

At 4:15 p.m., a lack of quorum was declared and the meeting adjourned without a vote on the Kinneavy proposal.