

# Results of graduation requirement study draw mixed response

*Some University faculty members oppose committee's findings, offer modified proposals*

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College-educated men and women should be able to "tear a question open and riddle it with light," abolitionist Wendell Phillips wrote in the late 19th century when classics and liberal arts were the basis of a college degree.

Since then, college graduates have veered away from liberal arts programs switching to professional degree plans that concentrate on one subject such as engineering, business or fine arts.

University faculty and administrators, concerned that the trend toward specialization in degrees means students are not being educated in the basic subjects, authorized a special study by the University Council's Committee on Basic Education to write stiffer graduation requirements that would ensure that University students receive a broader education.

The results of the study, presented during the January meeting of the University Council, stirred a flurry of response from faculty who oppose the changes or propose alternate proposals.

**IMMEDIATE PROTEST** was raised by a professor of drama, and alternate proposals were

presented by spokesmen from the Department of English and a professor of art.

The proposal, if approved by the council comprised of administrators, faculty and students, will narrow the span of courses that satisfy graduation requirements and will be a return "in spirit but not in fact" to the broad classical education of the 19th century, said James Vick, professor of mathematics and chairman of the Basic Education Committee.

"The committee was quite concerned that there was increasing specialization," Vick said. One of the concerns of the 15-member committee is that students are graduating without being able to write well, he said.

"The general feeling was that we need to evaluate the academic standing (of the University). It's been a good while since basic requirements have been studied," Vick said.

On the other hand, members of a fine arts education committee do not believe the evaluation was thorough.

**MANY DEGREES** in the fine arts require more than 80 hours in degree-related upper-division courses. The additional upper-division courses proposed by the Vick committee could mean ad-

ding hours to fine arts degrees.

"Our feeling was that the research for the report was not as thorough as it might be," said Lita Guerra, associate professor of music and chairwoman of the College of Fine Arts committee on educational policies and curriculums.

The position of the fine arts committee is that until the Vick committee defines what comprises a well-rounded student, goals for producing such students cannot be set, said Paul Gaffney, associate professor of drama.

"I'm not of the position that it (a definition) is impossible," Gaffney said.

Until the definition is arrived at, Gaffney said, "We just don't want to see any one school's programs tinkered with."

The new requirements are:

- 12 hours of English plus E306, which would 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 science, at least six of which must be in the same subject.

- Three hours of fine arts and humanities.

Changes in school programs could be triggered by new required upper-division writing courses. Highly technical departments — such as the Department of Mathematics — do not have upper division courses that meet the writing requirements and will have to develop new courses or add six hours of upper-division writing courses to degree plans, Vick said.

Upper-division writing courses developed would be certified by a standing committee, the Vick proposal states.

A "more modest" basic course requirements revision has been suggested by the Department of English, said Neill Megaw, professor of English.

The proposal, presented by James Kinneavy at the Faculty Senate meeting last week, would delay the second required composition course from the second semester of the freshman year to the junior or senior year and would require that the subjects of the themes be relevant to the student's degree.

"I look upon this as a supporting statement to the Vick committee recommendations. We are not at all taking issue with the committee," Kinneavy said.

Delaying the freshman course will give students an opportunity to study English when they are more mature and will "solve staffing problems," Kinneavy said.

Some University freshmen do not go on to receive an undergraduate degree. Under the proposal, students who would normally have taken a second-semester English course their entering year will have left the University before taking the course as seniors.

Though Megaw said he did not expect the University Council to endorse his suggestion, he is proposing a series of independent study courses, in which students would be assigned real-life problems, such as the recent Iranian hostage crisis, and asked to find information and come up with solutions.

Further basic course revisions have been proposed by Terence Grieder, professor of art.

Under Grieder's proposal, two courses would be added to current required courses. The added subjects would be entitled, "The History and Philosophy of the Sciences" and "The History and Philosophy of the Arts." The purpose of the courses would be to educate rather than train students, Grieder said.