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The New Look in Arts and Sciences

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THE MAN IN CHARGE OUTLINES THE CHANGES, THE REASONING, THE OBJECTIVES

NEW degree requirements for the College of Arts and Sciences became effective with the opening of the 1959 summer session. All students matriculating in the University the summer of 1959 and thereafter, who work for a degree in the College of Arts and Sciences, must follow the new plan.

Students previously enrolled in the University, whether or not they have yet entered the College, may elect to graduate under either the degree plan in effect prior to the summer of 1959 or the new set of requirements.

Neither the total hours required for graduation nor the specific courses which the several departments or schools demand in the field of concentration have been changed. The modifications occur exclusively in the area of prescribed work, both high school and college, which all degree candidates must satisfy.

At the college level, 1 additional course in science or mathematics, 2 additional courses in the humanities, and 1 additional course in the social sciences are required.

In the science and mathematics area, a student must now take at least 3 courses (12 or more hours) with 1 course each from the following: a biological science, an earth science, a physical science or mathematics (excluding intermediate algebra, trigonometry, and solid geometry).

Formerly, the science requirements were 5 hours of a biological science and 5 hours of a physical or earth science.

At least 2 courses (5 or more hours) of social science are now required, rather than 1 course as in the past. To satisfy this requirement, the student must select 1 course each from 2 of the following: anthropology, economics, geography (courses in climatology, cartography, and the introductory course in physical geography are excluded), government, psychology, and sociology.

In the humanities, at least 3 courses (8 or more hours) must be selected with 1 each from 3 of the following: history (excluding United States or individual state history), literature (classical, English, or other modern literature in the original or translation),

philosophy, history or appreciation of one of the fine arts.

This is in rather sharp contrast to the former requirement of only one course which failed to include any option from the fine arts.

The other basic requirements remain unchanged: 6 hours of English composition, 3 hours of United States government, 3 hours of United States history, 2 courses in 1 foreign language, and 4 semesters of basic physical education or air, military or naval science.

HIGH school requirements are now slightly less specific and are grouped in "blocks" designated by standard subject matter titles. Three units of English and 2 units of 1 foreign language continue as in the past. Instead of the previous 1 unit of science, 1 of geometry and 1½ of algebra—4 units of mathematics and science are now required of which at least 2 must be college preparatory mathematics, i.e., algebra, geometry, trigonometry (arithmetic, business mathematics, general mathematics, or comparable courses are not acceptable).

In the field of history and social sciences the requirement remains at 2 units, but the specific stipulation of 1 unit each in United States history and world history has been dropped. Two additional units in any of the above subjects are also required which reduce the free electives from 4 to 3.

College courses, comparable in subject matter to units not included in the student's high-school program, must be completed in University College (which coordinates pre-major work) prior to admission to the College of Arts and Sciences, at the rate of 3 credit hours for each unit or fraction thereof. Previously, 5 hours per unit or 3 hours per ½ unit were required.

A small *ad hoc* committee broadly representative of the College worked nearly three years on these revisions. Faculty opinion and cooperation were continually sought.

Each department or school was asked to submit a statement of its liberal arts functions. Two articles on admission trends and one on liberal education were distributed to the faculty. Two questionnaires, one on prescribed high-school courses and one on prescribed college subjects, were also sub-

mitted to the faculty.

Two series of faculty seminars were held at which various aspects of the proposed revision were discussed. The committee also examined the degree requirements of several state institutions, especially those of the 23 liberal arts colleges of state institutions in the Mississippi Valley.

In summary, it may be said that these changes, the first since 1945, are in general accord with practices at comparable institutions in this area. It is believed they will tend to reduce over-specialization, correct certain excesses of the elective system, and assure a broad cultural foundation.

The executive committee of the College, which reviewed the report of the *ad hoc* committee before submitting it to the faculty, expressed the belief that the new requirements will more fully achieve the liberal arts objectives of the College than those we had.

THERE was general consensus that these objectives as stated in the bulletin are still valid, i.e.: *The College aims through its basic, general courses to introduce students to an understanding of the complex world in which we live—its physical and biological structure; to a knowledge of man's political, economic, and social development; and to an appreciation of his mental and spiritual inheritance, his music and art, his philosophy and literature.*

It should be clearly stated, without minimizing the significance of a wise distribution of course work, that the faculty of the College is cognizant of the fact that a quantitative approach to a liberal education is by no means the whole story.

They are aware that how a course is taught and under what circumstances are even more important. In the last analysis, whether or not the newly adopted requirements will achieve the objectives hoped for will depend upon the teacher, the physical facilities of classroom, laboratory and library, and the student. The least of these is not the student.

No college can *give* the student a liberal education. All that it can do is to provide an environment in which he can find it for himself.