

From: Klarup, Doug
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2008 1:37 PM
To: Roszkowski, Christie
Subject: CAA 08-35 Comment

To: CAA
From: Doug Klarup, Chair, Department of Chemistry

I'm writing in regard to CAA agenda item 08-35, which proposes to increase the foreign language graduation requirement from two to three semesters. The faculty of the Department of Chemistry is against passage of the proposal; our concerns include the following:

--the curriculum for many science majors, including chemistry, already is very full. Most students are busy all days of the week with lectures on MWF and multiple long lab periods on TR. The additional four hours this proposal would add to each student's load, coupled with the inevitable scheduling conflicts between science labs and four day a week foreign language classes, will extend time to degree for many students.

--for students who do not complete the proposed language requirement while in high school, the logical time to finish the sequence will be during their freshman or sophomore years. During these years, however, chemistry students must follow a heavy schedule of demanding chemistry, math, and physics prerequisites if they hope to finish our degree on time. This will likely force these students to postpone finishing the foreign language requirement, essentially requiring them to start the foreign language sequence from scratch (a very burdensome prospect). Of course this situation exists under the current requirement, but it will worsen if three semesters of foreign language are required.

--in many cases for our students every free semester hour, including the four semester hours endangered by this proposal, is essential for completing minor requirements, broadening student exposure in fields of personal interest, or participating in undergraduate research projects or departmental honors programs. Is the loss of these options worth it? We feel the content and flexibility sacrificed by an additional four hours of foreign language is not in every student's best interest.

--encouraging additional study in foreign language can be accomplished either through specific departmental requirements, or by allowing optional tracks within the general education curriculum. This latter route could potentially serve more students more effectively.

--finally, the institutional comparative data cited in the proposal is confusing at best. A cursory web investigation suggests that what has been presented applies only to subsets of students at these institutions. This aspect of the proposal requires significant clarification.

Thank you.

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