

CAA – April 17, 2008

**-- Correction of typos:**

- a. p. 1 FLS . . . 2201G
- b. p. 3 same thing

**-- How I got here?** Before talking about the proposal itself I want to outline how I have come to be before you with this particular proposal.

Over the last year and a half I have taken this proposal in one form or another to the Deans Council, the Administrative Councils of each College, the Council of Chairs and have offered to meet with the Curriculum Committees of all colleges. I have met with the Curriculum Committee of CEPS. And I have had untold numbers of conversations with individual faculty members and administrators across the campus. The proposal you have before you has grown out of those meetings. Its essence has not changed. Details of implementation, however, have as a direct result of these consultations.

My point is simply that this proposal should not be viewed as a proposal from me as an individual or from a single department or academic unit. My department has formulated and animated this initiative because ultimately the delivery of academic content and evaluation of students who meet the requirement prior to coming here or through some other means – these things will fall to us.

However, this proposal which is in one sense a work in progress is presented as a proposal to the entire university as a means of implementing and supporting university wide goals. This proposal will effect and enrich all of us and all of our academic programs.

**-- Summary of proposal:**

We are essentially asking that the current Foreign Language Graduation Requirement be raised from 2 semesters of a single language to 3 semesters.

This new requirement could be met in several ways:

1. Completion of FLF/FLS/FLG/FLL/FLR/FLX 2201G;
2. Documentation of completion of an equivalent course at another institution;
3. Documentation of completion of at least three years of high school study of a single foreign language with a grade of C or better;
4. A score of 3 or higher on the AP exam in any foreign language;
5. A score of 60 or better on the CLEP test in French, German or Spanish (Note: We would be willing to expand this list but these are currently the only languages offered in the CLEP program);

6. An approved score on a proficiency exam approved and administered by the EIU Department of Foreign Languages;
7. Documentation of proficiency in a language other than English at or above the level expected in a third semester course at EIU

(Note: This last option is used primarily by international students and heritage speakers of a wide variety of languages.)

What these options represent is a more specific and expanded codification of practices that we have adopted over the years and implemented in some cases as informal policy. Our goal is to provide the widest possible array of ways that a student could employ to meet this requirement.

**Goals:**

The goals we hope to accomplish with the expanded requirement have been stated in the “Rationale” section of the proposal:

1. Support and strengthen the university mission;
2. Support and strengthen Study Abroad
3. Internationalization of the curriculum
4. Increased enrollment in upper division language classes
5. Bring EIU in line with other institutions.

As I continue this presentation I will address these goals in more detail. First, I would like to add a few more and address them briefly:

1. To enhance and support the goals set forth by VPAA Lord as First Choice initiative and President Perry’s stated goal of moving EIU to become Best of Class

I want to emphasize that I do deep down understand the concerns that various constituencies on the campus have for holding down costs and maintaining as best we can reasonable time to degree. However, I submit that to become a First Choice and Best of Class institution we need to be something other than the most reasonably priced pretty good education you can get in Illinois. We’re already way better than pretty good and we are reasonably priced in a very competitive and very diverse marketplace. I am not contending that this proposal alone will make EIU everyone’s First Choice or the Best of Class institution that it deserves to be. Nor do I contend that this proposal is the only way to move toward this goal or for that matter to reach the goals we have laid out in our rationale. However, it is to me unarguably a step in the right direction. Truly to reach any of these goals we need . . .

1. To bolster and enhance recruitment of high quality, high potential students.

2. To find ways to compete with other institutions for them.

Numerous research projects have established the potential importance and benefits of foreign language study or bilingual knowledge and abilities prior to and during a student's university career.

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If you read through the excerpts I have provided from various journals and Web sites you will see that foreign language study and knowledge of a second language has the documented potential to

1. correlate positively with both SAT and ACT scores – a correlation dependent on the number of years of language study
2. enhance a person's ability to formulate scientific hypotheses and science problems;
3. develop mental processing skills required for mathematics
4. enhance listening skills, memory and communication skills;
5. develop greater cognitive skills in mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking and higher order thinking.

Sounds like the sort of student we need at EIU.

I would like to suggest that the best way to compete for the students we want to have at EIU is to guide them toward validated and valuable paths within their high school preparation and to move them as best we can along similar paths once they are here. Increased and continued foreign language study should be among those paths.

**Objections and issues:** The Council has received an impressive number of communications primarily from the College of Education and Professional Studies and the College of Sciences. Before opening the floor for further questions, I want to address to the best of my ability as many of the issues raised as I can.

Many of the communications have common themes:

1. Concerns for recruitment and need to compete with other institutions – I think I've addressed this issue as best I can though I'm always open to further discussion.
2. Concerns related to time-to-degree particularly for majors with content heavy curricula.

College of Education – I sympathize entirely with the concerns and understand that the imposition of state mandates is a problem. Education degrees are often not four year degrees which, I assume is why Education is not part of EIU 4.

However, it is suggested that for transfer students and freshmen coming in with no foreign language in high school “time to degree will be extended one semester to fulfill the foreign language requirement which equates to a significant increase in cost to the families.” A similar argument has been presented by Rita Pearson. It is simply untrue. We are asking only for one more four semester hour course which translates to an additional cost of four hours of tuition and fees. This is not a “one semester” extension of a university career. It is at most a ¼ semester extension.

College of Sciences – Majors like Political Science, Economics, Geography, Psychology, Sociology would not be significantly impacted by the addition.

Others with hefty majors of 73-77 hour majors will feel a greater pinch. But let's look at some of them and as a point of departure count hours:

Premise: A student arrives with no high school foreign language.

<u>Physics:</u>	<u>Chemistry 71-77</u>
72 hours	75 (mid range)
40 Gen Ed	40
<u>12 Foreign language</u>	<u>12</u>
124	127
- 4 physical science	-4 physical science gen ed
- 3 FL? 2201G Hum Gen ed	-3 FL? 2201G
<u>- 3 math gen ed</u>	<u>-3 math gen ed</u>
114	117
<u>-8 high school language</u>	<u>- 8</u>

Biological Sciences

76

40

12

128

-7 physical and biological science gen ed

- 3 math gen ed

- 4 FL? 2201G humanities gen ed

114

-8 for high school language

106

Ultimately counting required hours to degree suggest that is nearly a full semester of wiggle room in these programs.

I understand there is the issue of labs and scheduling. I don't have a solution for that except that when this proposal comes on line my department will begin scheduling late afternoon and evening classes to better accommodate these majors. Ultimately this is not an academic issue. It is an advisement and scheduling issue that will require cooperation between a number of entities across the campus.

### 3. Sign language as an alternative.

Here are the figures from Records delineating how many students transferred English 110-111 (sign language) from Lake Land College presumably to meet the Foreign Language Requirement.

2004 -- 140 = 5.6%

2005 -- 118 = 4.7%

2006 -- 112 = 4.5%

2007 -- 32 = 1.3%

I think the first thing to notice here is the apparent decline in sign language as a significant way of meeting the requirement. The second thing to notice is that this is not a very impressive argument given the percentages. I should mention that I used John Stimac's numbers from his written comment to CAA (1000 transfers and 1500 true freshmen = 2500 new students each year) to calculate the percentages.

Nonetheless this is an important option I suppose for the students who are involved. It has been stated that it would be difficult to find a three semester sequence in sign language. This is true. However, such a sequence does exist.

One of the communications cites Illinois State – I have not had the opportunity to check that out. John A. Logan College offers a complete Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP) which does include a three semester sequence -- IPP 141, 142, 143. This option is, however, not the most realistic or practical.

When Communications Disorders dropped sign language from their offerings, it fell to my department and in particular to me to decide when sign language courses were appropriate and when they weren't. I was asked in essence to do something that fell somewhat beyond my expertise. However, I set three standards: (1.) it had to be American sign, (2) the courses had to be at least 3 sem hrs, (3) there had to be a strong component of deaf culture associated with the courses. This formula seemed most closely to approximate what we do in our courses. Over the years, I have only twice deviated from these standards in individual cases where students had been grossly ill informed and poorly advised but who had in good faith thought they were meeting the imposed standards. It has been a matter of informal policy, convention and history that sign has continued to be accepted after it was no longer offered on this campus. You will notice that currently in our catalog it nowhere states that sign language may be used to meet this graduation requirement.

What I would like to do is propose that we continue this policy with the addition that the requirement can be met either by a three semester sequence in sign language or a two semester sequence such as ENG 110-111 at Lake Land plus a one semester course dealing specifically with deaf culture, for example, SGN 110 from Waubensee Community College which is readily available through the Illinois Virtual Campus as an on-line course. I have recently been told that Lake Land is considering adding a third semester level deaf culture course to their curriculum.

If it will put some fears to rest, I would be glad to write these options directly into the final version of the proposal.

#### The 900 pound gorilla: Cost

This is also not an academic issue which is why there is no “business plan” in the original proposal as some have suggested there should be. Nonetheless, the link between cost and the accomplishment of academic goals is impossible to ignore.

This proposal will cost money. However, it must also be mentioned that any proposal to enhance the goals of First Choice and Best of Class will cost money. For that matter any proposal for any university wide change will require either new resources or reallocation of existing ones.

The College of Arts and Humanities and more specifically the Department of Foreign Languages will be competing with other units for resources. But this is really no different than what goes on every day now. There may be a difference of degree but not, I believe, to the degree that has been suggested.

One of the communications to the CAA suggests we would need 48 sections of 2201G and 8 new fulltime positions to meet the projected demand. I would contend otherwise. Through shifts in teaching assignments and in some cases increasing workloads and providing some summer offerings and all within UPI contractual constraints and with the hiring of 2 to 3 ACF faculty, my department should be able provide as many as 27 sections of 2201G. Granted this is less than 48 but 48 would be needed only if we were to implement this change next fall. 48 is at best a worst case scenario. We have a two year time frame to work within before the hordes arrive which brings us to our next issue . . .

#### Informing high schools and community colleges of the change

During the conversations I had last year with various units and administrative councils, it was made very clear to me that my desire to implement this proposal in FA08 or 09 was unrealistic. On three occasions FA2010 was suggested as a more workable solution and in order to provide high school and potential transfer students to meet the requirement before coming here. I still think this is workable and will greatly reduce the demand for additional resources within my unit. In addition, history would indicate that through reasonable enrollment management policies within my department, the demand will continue to diminish over 3 to 5 year after implementation. That is what happened with implementation of the previous 2 semester requirement. And I might add that the percentages of incoming students meeting and needing to meet that requirement were almost identical to the figures we have projected for this change.

In reality this shift would be even less of a problem for transfer students since they can opt to use any catalog up to three years before coming to EIU. This would mean that for incoming transfer students with an AA degree the window of implementation for this requirement would be up to 5 years rather than the proposed two.

Finally . . .

#### Better or rather other ways of achieving internationalization

Several were mentioned:

1. More anthropologists (Gary Foster) – I agree
2. An additional course focused on foreign culture

3. Allowing the third semester to be an introductory course in another language rather than three in the same.

4. Offering language courses for “business or travel”

All of these increase hours to degree and require additional resources to be invested somewhere.

Ultimately there are many ways that the goal of internationalization or global competency can be enhanced. But this proposal is how we see best to do this. If others have other ideas, they should be lining up behind me to propose them to this council. I would probably write letters to support them.