

DRAFT ACTION MEMORANDUM:

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

To adopt a revised "Plan for General Education at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa" included here as Attachment A .

II. RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE

If approved, the revised plan will take effect for students entering the University in August 2001. Adoption of the revised plan is requested by June 30, 2000 to allow time for implementation of the new requirements and the updating of catalogs and brochures informing prospective students of the change.

III. ISSUE/PURPOSE

It is appropriate for the faculty of a university to review and update requirements for general education periodically. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa plan was last updated in 1986. The revised "Plan for General Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa" is intended to address the following concerns:

- A. The "General Core Requirements for UHM" document now included in Board of Regents policy is very prescriptive. The faculty need the flexibility to develop specific course requirements in general education within the framework of a broad plan approved by the Board of Regents.
- B. The number of courses required by the current "General Core Requirements for UHM" puts Mānoa out of line with comparable universities. In addition it increases the likelihood that students will be unable to complete their baccalaureate degrees in four years. The lengthy program may deter some students from enrolling at UHM.
- C. The new General Education plan allows greater flexibility with regard to course offerings satisfying General Education Requirements. As well as allowing for greater internal flexibility this reduces some of the hurdles faced by transfer students from outside the UH system.
- D. The plan makes it possible to expand option for fulfilling the Basic Skills requirements and thus should help to avoid graduation delays caused by oversubscription of required courses.
- E. The current "General Education Requirements for UHM" does not reflect the uniqueness of the University of Hawai'i; this is addressed in the new plan.

IV. SIGNIFICANT FACTS/BACKGROUND

- A. Board of Regents Policy Section 5-2.e. recognizes the importance of general education in postsecondary education and requires that unit plans for general education developed by faculty and administration be approved by the Board of Regents and attached to Section 5.
- B. In 1986 the Board of Regents adopted the current "General Core Requirements for UHM".
- C. Recognizing the need for periodic review of general education requirements, the Mānoa Faculty Senate began such a review by appointing members to a General Education Force in September 1998.

Steps in developing the revision included:

1. The Task Force reviewed literature on general education reform, examined data from students, alumni and faculty regarding current requirements, and examined requirements at other universities during Fall 1998.
 2. The Task Force held fora on campus and collected data from faculty and students, met with the WASC accreditation team to discuss WASC requirements, and developed a framework for a proposed revision of the general education requirements during Spring 1999.
 3. The Task Force developed a more detailed proposal, held four open fora to discuss it, made revisions and presented a final proposal to the Faculty Senate in Fall 1999.
- D. The Mānoa Faculty Senate called a meeting of the Mānoa Faculty Congress to discuss the proposal in November, then approved a resolution to reform the UHM General Education Requirements on December 8, 1999. (Attachment B is an Implementation Plan which shows the comparison of these new requirements to current UHM general education course requirements.)
- E. The specific requirements passed at that time were abstracted into a "Plan for General Education at UH-Mānoa" to provide flexibility for future adjustments within this broad plan.
- F. The Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i and the Graduate Student Organization were each invited to have a student representative on the Task Force. Students attended and spoke at many of the fora, Faculty Senate meetings and Faculty Congress meetings discussing the proposed revisions.
- G. Other campuses have been kept apprised of the development of revised requirements through discussions at the All Campus Council of Faculty Senate Chairs. In addition, the draft Plan has been circulated through this body to other campuses.
- H. The proposed "General Education Plan for University of Hawai'i at Mānoa" meets Board of Regents policy by:
1. providing opportunities for all students to develop and demonstrate competence in communication (both oral and written) and quantitative skills through Foundation Requirements which include competence in written communication and symbolic reasoning, reinforced by Special Graduation Requirements in the areas of written and oral communications.
 2. introducing the content and methodologies of the major areas of knowledge:– the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences – and providing opportunities to develop competence in critical analysis of data and argument through Diversification requirements.
 3. developing the intellectual skills and social attitudes that will help students become effective learners, workers and citizens through Special Graduation Requirements as well as through Foundation and Diversification requirements.
 4. emphasizing development of appreciation for cultural diversity through the Foundation requirement focusing on global and multi-cultural perspectives as well as through Special Graduation Requirements that include second language proficiency.

V. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. The revised general education plan will make attendance at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa campus more attractive to students by providing both coherence and flexibility in their education.
- B. The revised general education plan will better prepare students for continued study and for life in the 21st century.

VI. ALTERNATIVES

- A. Retain the current "General Education Core Requirements for UHM.

This option will result in continuation of the problems transfer students face and those that all students face in trying to meet all requirements within a four year full-time academic program.

- B. Approve the recommended "Plan for General Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa".
 - 1. This option will provide greater student flexibility and greater ability of students to complete their undergraduate programs in a reasonable length of time.
 - 2. It will provide an education which emphasizes the unique location and culture of Hawai'i by requiring all students to have some knowledge of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific issues.
 - 3. It will update the general education of students to include increased emphasis on writing and speaking ability.
 - 4. Facilitate transfer of students from other campuses of the University of Hawai'i system as well as from outside of the system.
 - 5. It will provide flexibility for future updating of general education within a Board of Regents approved framework.

VII. ACTION RECOMMENDED

It is recommended that the Board of Regents adopt the proposed "General Education Plan for University of Hawai'i at Mānoa" dated Spring 2000 to replace the current document "General Education Core Requirements for UHM".

Attachment A: Plan for General Education at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Attachment B: Implementation Plan: Proposed Changes in UHM Undergraduate Degree Requirements.