



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Memorandum

To: Council on Academic Affairs
From: Ad-Hoc Committee on Upper Division Hours Requirement
Date: April 9, 2009
Re: Policy Proposal

Members of Ad-Hoc Committee: Dean Allen Ault, Faculty Senator David May, Honors Director Linda Frost, Student Senator Lindsay Cross, Chair Liz Throop

This committee was appointed by the Council on Academic Affairs to explore the possibility of changing the minimum number of upper division hours required by the University—currently 43—to earn a bachelor's degree. This Ad Hoc Committee believes that the upper division hours University requirement should be reduced to 42 hours (so as to be divisible by 3). Each of us has consulted with various constituencies over the last 60 or so days and the following groups agree that 42 hours is the best solution possible, one that maintains rigor and the integrity of an EKU bachelor's degree:

- student government
- Faculty Senate
- Chairs
- Transfer Office
- Different levels of administration, including consulting with deans
- Random faculty members and students

One group has not agreed with the proposed 42 hours and would like to reduce upper division hours to 36:

- Assistant/Associate Deans

It is our considered opinion, having heard all arguments for and against lowering the upper division hour requirement, that the vast majority of members of the EKU community do not believe lowering the requirements below 42 hours will enhance the educational experience of our students.

Concern that a requirement of over 36 hours would unduly strain a significant portion of the student transfer population led to a consultation with the Associate Deans about this issue; all agree that no policy



should be put in place that would require exemption routinely . However, in that meeting, it was noted that approximately 100-130 students required such University waivers in 2004-2005 (the last year for which information was available). The number of students affected by this minimum requirement who would constitute or has constituted a significant portion of the ECU student population is very small—approximately 5% of graduating students per year (given that there were 2195 undergraduates in the 2007-2008 academic year [based on a figure of 120 waivers signed]; waiver-needing students constituted approximately 0.8% of the total ECU student body) .

We believe that ECU must stand for rigorous programming; we do not consider requiring what amounts to three semesters of advanced academic work onerous. We further suggest that those programs in which students are enrolled and which constitute the majority of these waivers may need to be reassessed to insure that their course offerings are appropriately sequenced, guiding students through a curriculum in which upper-division courses build on the knowledge base and skills acquired in more introductory major requirements. We believe that upper division courses ought to be more rigorous and involve more advanced study than lower division courses. We also believe that most of our faculty colleagues agree with our characterization of upper division courses and we are confident that they provide such courses regularly.

We propose, therefore, that the number of upper division hours required for a bachelor's degree at ECU be 42 (so that it is divisible by three [the average number of credit hours in a course], we are willing to reduce the number of hours from the current requirement by one).

