

Dec. 11, 2012 CAC Agenda -- Addendum #4

Proposal and rationale for CLAS B.A. foreign language requirement

On May 8, 2012 the following motion was passed unanimously by CUSA regarding the non-English language requirement for the B.A.:

Students must either:

- 1. demonstrate the equivalent of the initial four semesters of study in a single language other than English*
OR
- 2. demonstrate the equivalent of the initial three semesters of study in one language AND the equivalent of the initial semester of study in a different language.*

Learning Outcome

According to the latest version of the KU Core (<http://kucore.ku.edu/updates.shtml>; visited 10/25/12), two semesters of the proposed four-semester FL requirement would map onto Goal 4, LOs 1 and 2:

Requires two units that may be

A two-course non-English language sequence that includes culture content, or a one-semester non-English language course and a significant study abroad experience, or

Two approved courses or educational experiences, one meeting the criteria for each of the two learning outcomes, or

An approved course or educational experience meeting the criteria for one of the two learning outcomes, and a significant study abroad experience

Non-English languages and the Bachelor of Arts degree

The B.A. degree at KU requires four semesters of exposure to a non-English language and, through that non-English-language learning experience, exposure to the cultures which that language profoundly informs and molds. Participatory competency in non-English languages and cultures is ever more essential as the global community becomes increasingly central in our lives and requires that we interact with other cultures, economies, peoples, and nations. As the KU core states, “participating in 21st century society means acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world beyond our immediate experience and culture,” “reexamining our own lives in a global context,” and “enabling [our students] to engage with the languages, cultures, customs, beliefs, and/or behaviors from the world’s various communities,” tasks which can only be accomplished meaningfully with participatory knowledge of the non-English languages that drive those communities and cultures. KU regularly teaches more world languages than any university between the Mississippi River and the West Coast. Non-English language capabilities are integral to the B.A. and liberal education, the aims of which are to develop a citizenry broadly informed and capable of critical inquiry and appraisal, to provide fundamental

knowledge and understanding of human complexities unattainable without participatory knowledge of non-English languages, to enable our students to communicate effectively in a global economy by means of at least one language other than English, and to ensure that they have the cross-cultural linguistic tools more and more necessary to succeed in an interconnected and multilingual world.

Non-English language learners from semester one through semester four gradually and progressively become effective participatory users of that language, which brings them into communication with others both within and across communities. These communities can be **local** (e.g., in the city of Lawrence, the state of Kansas, and the United States, with their diverse ethnic populations; note too that American Sign Language currently fulfills this requirement), **international** in the many countries whose languages are taught at KU, or **virtual** (whether in real time or across temporal and spatial distance, as with the study of ancient civilizations whose languages, thought, and cultures continue to impact and mold the present). Non-English language learners develop the ability to analyze authentic cultural texts, documents, artifacts, and products (written, oral, aural, visual, digital), to reveal, create, problematize, and delve into meaning as only participatory users of the language can. In this way, non-English language study enables the learner to reflect critically on language itself as a dynamic, unique, and central component of the human experience and cultures. Non-English language learners reflect on and gain insight into both their own and the target language and culture, and they become better equipped to live, work, communicate with others in languages other than English, and thrive in the global and increasingly multilingual market place.

"Because Americans use the world's dominant language, and we have a culture that has been internationalized and globalized, we think we're in the dominant position. The truth is the reverse. Because we think in the English idiom the whole world has a window into how we think and who we are--they get us, but we don't get them. We are an open book to the world, and the world is a closed book to us" (Col. Rich Outzen, U.S. Army; *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, 2012). The aim of studying non-English languages and through them, other cultures, is not just to acquire a protocol, digest, data set, or fact set relevant to this or that culture, but to understand aspects of the culture that are accessible and verifiable only through participatory competency in a language that founds the culture's profile, routines, behaviors, beliefs, outlook, and vision. Acquisition of one non-English language facilitates the acquisition of further languages, allowing our students in the B.A. program to broaden their knowledge base of other cultures during the course of study at KU, and deepening their ability beyond studies at KU to add new intercultural skills to their profile and thus adapt to new challenges and demands in the global marketplace.

The Bachelor of Arts degree is unique at the University of Kansas in its commitment to both breadth and depth of knowledge. It is intended to give graduates the greatest flexibility and choice in future study or career. Any other degree program in the University, without an equivalent foreign language requirement, serves other purposes. The Bachelor of Arts degree would be substantially changed if this non-English language requirement were waived or changed.

Bachelor of Arts majors in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences generally do not prepare students for licensure or certification in a particular field. However, many students who begin in the Liberal Arts and Sciences go on to professional schools at the undergraduate, graduate, or certificate level. In addition, graduate study for the M.A. and Ph.D. in many fields in the liberal

arts requires research skills and participatory competency in one or more languages other than English.

Explanation of the alternatives for satisfying the CLAS B.A. non-English language requirement

The CLAS non-English language requirement, in the spirit of the KU Core, fosters respect for human diversity, understanding of the world beyond our immediate experience and culture, and global awareness. A very wide range of languages is offered at KU. Students seeking the B.A. may satisfy the non-English language requirement by taking four semesters of one non-English language, or may take three semesters in one non-English language and one semester of another non-English language. Students who have studied a non-English language in high school may seek to place out of one or more semesters of that language. If they place out of one semester of the non-English language that they studied in high school, for instance, they will only need to complete three semesters of that language or three semesters of a different non-English language in order to satisfy the CLAS B.A. non-English language requirement. Completing at least four semesters in one non-English language leads to higher competency in that language and greater depth of knowledge of its culture; on the other hand, choosing to study two non-English languages instead of one gives the student exposure to two different non-English languages and cultures, and thus fosters breadth of knowledge. Both options for satisfying the CLAS B.A. non-English language requirement are significant ways of valuing diversity.