



The University of Georgia

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean

March 3, 2015

Dr. William Vencill, Chairman
University Curriculum Committee
University of Georgia
Campus Mail

Dear Dr. Vencill:

We are pleased to provide this letter in support of the University Curriculum Committee's discussion of the proposed Experiential Learning requirement for UGA undergraduates. The Franklin College is in the midst of faculty governance discussions pertaining to the requirement, and we thought it might be useful to the University Curriculum Committee to offer a status report on those conversations and some preliminary feedback arising from them.

First, a brief history of faculty discussions of Experiential Learning in Franklin:

- August, 2014: Department head retreat session on the values and varieties of experiential learning in the arts and sciences, and opportunities to enhance and expand our curricular offerings
- September, 2014: Retreat notes and recommendations circulated to department heads, with a brief update on the evolving university-wide discussion of an experiential learning initiative
- October, 2014: Task force of department heads (one from each of the college's five divisions) named to consider and recommend college-level definitions and courses/experiences that would fulfill the proposed requirement for Franklin College
- November-December, 2014: Department head task force meetings and consideration of the proposed requirement, in various draft forms as the university-wide committee worked to craft language to circulate for campus-wide governance discussions
- January, 2015: Franklin Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee meeting to discuss the proposed requirement and strategies for convening Senate discussions in concert with the University Council governance discussions taking place in parallel, during spring term 2015
- February, 2015: Department head task force report complete and circulated to Franklin Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee. Senate Curriculum Committee circulated requirement draft and task force on Franklin implementation to all Senators with a request for feedback on the pedagogical value of the proposed requirement and challenges and opportunities related to implementation in Franklin
- March, 2015: Senate Curriculum Committee report synthesizing Senate feedback on the requirement prepared and submitted for full Senate consideration at March 18 meeting

Feedback from these various discussions of Department Heads and Senators to date indicates that faculty members understand the value of experiential learning to Franklin College undergraduates, especially in enhancing their critical thinking and analytical skills, pursuing interests beyond the classroom, and giving students real world experiences that contribute to positive educational outcomes. Faculty members have also raised concerns about the tight timeline for faculty governance conversations as well as the time and resources it will require to develop and scale up experiential learning opportunities for Franklin College students, especially in those disciplines that are furthest from pre-professional or applied in nature. Some of our departments already offer, or even require,

experiential learning opportunities for their majors; the Franklin College will need to ensure that students in majors that do not currently require experiential learning will have ample opportunities to meet the requirement through interdisciplinary opportunities, and/or through new curricula developed within their major program of study. Cost is a barrier to student participation in study abroad, for instance, and faculty time and resources for supervision of independent research or internships is another constraint that particularly affects departments with large numbers of students. These and related challenges will need to be worked out by our faculty in the coming months.

Finally, a word on our next steps in Franklin College:

First, as recommended in the Department Head task force report (attached), the college is creating an inventory of current curricular and (in a few cases) co-curricular experiences that would meet the requirement for our students, as a point of reference for ongoing discussions. This inventory will be complete by mid-March. It will be circulated to the Franklin Senate to further inform Senate consideration of experiential learning in Franklin, and it will also serve as a point of reference for gathering data on rates of current student participation, and where the gaps and opportunities are that will help the college build curricular capacity as needed.

Second, the Senate Curriculum Committee has placed experiential learning – and its report synthesizing Senate feedback on the proposed requirement – on the March 18 agenda for discussion and a vote. (This vote will take place just prior to the University Curriculum Committee discussion of the proposed requirement on March 20.)

Beyond March, the Senate will have the balance of the spring, summer, and fall of 2015 to consider and refine the “implementation plan” for experiential learning in Franklin College. With the learning outcomes in the requirement draft as a point of reference; the Department Head task force report; the inventory of current offerings; and data on current rates of student participation, the Senate will take up nuanced curricular questions, make recommendations for strategic investments that will help build college-wide experiential learning options, and vote on a formal “implementation plan” for submission to University Council for adoption and inclusion in the Bulletin for Fall, 2016, when the proposed requirement would first take effect.

We look forward to continuing to update the University Council on the Franklin College faculty governance process as it unfolds.

Sincerely,



Lewis (Chad) Howe
Chair, Franklin Senate Curriculum Committee



Alan T. Dorsey
Dean

Franklin College Task Force on Experiential Learning

Report to Dean Dorsey and the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee

February 19, 2015

1. Membership:

Jody Clay-Warner (Sociology), Doug Crowe (Geology), Lisa Fusillo (Dance), Tim Hoover (Microbiology), Martin Kagel (Germanic and Slavic Studies), assisted by Linda Bachman and Hugh Ruppensburg of the Dean's Office

2. Charge:

- A. Recommending college-level definitions of types of courses that would count;
- B. Gathering an inventory of existing courses, and data on enrollment patterns, to assess gaps and opportunities;
- C. Developing recommendations for expanding experiential learning curricula, including proposals for new resources as appropriate; and
- D. Assisting the dean and the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee on formal faculty consideration of the proposed requirement.

3. Activities:

The task force met three times, on November 18, 2015, December 17, 2014, and January 27, 2015, to discuss the proposed requirement and its ramifications for the Franklin College. Between meetings, members consulted with faculty in their departments and department heads in allied disciplines to assess current curricular offerings in a sample of Franklin College's academic programs. These consultations and examples informed the recommendations of the task force on what types of curricular, and potentially extra-curricular, activities might best align with Franklin College's mission and fulfill the learning outcomes articulated in the proposed requirement.

4. Recommendations:

Given the wide variation in disciplines in the Franklin College, some majors already require – or have elective courses – that would likely satisfy the requirement, while others do not. **The task force recommends that the Franklin College consider**

interdisciplinary experiential coursework (within Franklin College or through other UGA schools and colleges) as fulfilling the requirement for our students, rather than expecting each major program of study to adjust and/or add to its core requirements.

For each of the categories of experiential learning named in the proposed university-wide requirement, the task force recommends guidelines below, with reference to the requirement statements of learning outcomes. For credit-bearing courses that satisfy the requirement, credit hours may vary between 1 and 4 for an individual course.

A. Research and creative practice courses:

Requirement learning outcomes: "Graduates who fulfill the requirement through undergraduate research will demonstrate and describe how systematic and in-depth inquiry into a problem contributes to the discovery or interpretation of knowledge significant to their field of study."

Supervised research projects (including those offered through CURO) would count. Capstone research courses or senior theses involving original and/or independent research or creative production with faculty supervision would count. Upper-division courses involving in-depth independent inquiry and resulting in a significant research paper, presentation, or creative production would count. Laboratory courses with prescribed experiments would not count.

B. Study abroad or field school:

Requirement learning outcomes: "Graduates who fulfill the requirement through study abroad or field school will demonstrate an awareness of a culture and/or region distinct from their own and an appreciation of the possibilities for academic inquiry and application afforded by the specific off-campus setting."

Participation in any UGA-approved study abroad, exchange, or field school program of three weeks or more duration would count. Non-approved study abroad or field school programs, or UGA programs of less than three weeks' duration, would not count.

C. Service-learning:

Requirement learning outcomes: "Graduates who fulfill the requirement through service-learning will demonstrate the ability to identify a community need and strategies for addressing it through mutual learning, critical analysis, reflection, and collaboration with a community partner."

Courses that bear the S suffix for service-learning would count. The task force recommends that other existing courses that include significant service-learning components be submitted through CAPA to request the addition of the S suffix, and thus be flagged as meeting the requirement.

D. Internships:

Requirement learning outcomes: "Graduates who fulfill the requirement through an internship will have practiced skills or methods related to their field of study through supervised work in a professional or organizational setting."

The Franklin College has more than 30 "internship" courses established across about half of our majors, though only a handful of those courses are currently required for the major. The task force recognizes the wide variation in scope and format of these existing courses, and the demands they place on faculty to ensure appropriate rigor, substance, connection to classroom curricula, and reflection. It is likely that there will be a campus-wide effort to support broader and more consistent internship offerings through various kinds of resources (policy, financial, staff, other). The task force recommends that any of the existing internship courses – approved by supervising faculty in advance of the student's internship experience – would count for the requirement. Further, the task force suggests that departments that do not currently offer internship courses may wish to create them in anticipation of potential student demand. Internship experiences that students may pursue that do not bear academic credit could count toward the requirement, pursuant to the guidelines noted in Section F below.

E. Other approved experiences:

Requirement learning outcomes: "Graduates who fulfill the requirement through other approved experiences will have articulated, implemented, and reflected on a substantive application of their academic foundations to a real-world setting and/or challenge."

The task force is aware of a number of other credit-bearing experiential learning opportunities available to Franklin College students that would potentially fulfill the requirement. These could include courses or other structured and supervised involvement with the Debate program; the Reacting to the Past curricula; teaching practicum courses; or courses that involve performances or exhibitions.

F. Non-credit experiences:

The task force recognizes that in some cases, it may be possible to fulfill the experiential learning requirement outside of a credit-bearing course. These cases are likely to be the exception and not the rule. We recommend that each department determine whether or not they offer non-credit bearing options that meet the requirement and, if so, what specific experience this would entail. In keeping with the goals of the experiential learning requirement, students must demonstrate appropriate reflection and evaluation of the experiential activity. If a non-credit option is available, students must obtain approval of a faculty supervisor and submit a request to the Experiential Learning Certification Officer (likely to be a member of the Graduation Certification Office staff, who would not be in a position to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the individual student's experience) prior to engaging in the experiential activity. As with internships offered for credit,

individual faculty members may decline to supervise non-credit experiences; the burden would be on the student to identify and secure approval in advance from a faculty advisor who would be willing to evaluate the non-credit experience. The requirement language specifies guidelines for extracurricular activities satisfying the requirement as follows:

“When extracurricular activities are used to satisfy the requirement, students will be required to provide a substantive written document reflecting on how their experiences fulfill the learning outcomes. This document must be reviewed and passed as satisfactory by the Experiential Learning Certification Officer for the unit, or by an appropriate faculty member designated by the Certification Officer.”

5. Courses or experiences that would meet the requirement as described:

A. Categorical inclusion of CURO research courses; study abroad or field school courses of three weeks’ or more duration; S-suffix service-learning courses; internships taken for course credit.

B. Selected examples of research or creative production courses, not included in the categories above, that would meet Franklin College’s expectations for fulfilling the learning outcomes:

ARID 4150: special topics in interior design, with written and graphic presentation of results of independent work

BCMB 4960-4970: capstone independent research project required of majors

CHEM 3600 or 4600: supervised research courses

DANC 2300, 3400, 4400: composition and choreography, culminating in performances

ENGL 4810: literary magazine production

GEOG 4370: geographic information science, applied methods and data analysis

HIST 4990: capstone research seminar, senior thesis

MIBO 4900L, 4960H, 4600L: supervised research courses

MUSI 5910: senior recital course, culminating in performance

PSYC 4300, 4330, or 5850: advanced laboratory courses

SOCI 4900: supervised research in sociology

SPAN 4150: business Spanish

STAT 5010-5020: capstone applied statistics projects

THEA 2040-2050: performance courses

Upper-division seminars involving substantial term papers that require independent research in the library, laboratory, studio, or in the field

Fine and performing arts courses culminating in juried and/or public performances or exhibitions

C. Examples of non-credit experiences that could be included if appropriately supervised by faculty and approved per the guidelines noted above in 4.F.:

Non-credit participation in Debate Union activities and competitions

Non-credit participation in performing arts ensembles

Non-credit internships approved in advance, supervised and evaluated by a faculty member

6. Recommended next steps:

The task force recommends that the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee review and consider the university-wide requirement language and the draft guidelines noted above, for formal discussion and consideration through the Faculty Senate governance processes.

The task force recommends that these draft guidelines also be circulated to department heads and undergraduate coordinators. Each department should submit to Linda Bachman a list of existing courses offered in the department that would meet the spirit and the letter of the requirement as proposed. This list should note which courses are required for a particular major; which are electives; and which are open to non-majors.

The task force recommends that the compilation of existing courses be shared with the Curriculum Committee as a point of reference, and also used by the dean's office as a basis for gathering data on current student participation, major gaps in offerings, and priorities for developing new curricula as needed. This gap analysis will also clarify resource needs of various kinds.