

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 1, PARAGRAPH E OF CORE CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Beginning in the fall of 1988, students shall demonstrate ability in a foreign language equivalent to that which can be normally gained through two years of high school study of one language. Those failing to do so must satisfactorily complete remedial work in a foreign language at USC.

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 2, PARAGRAPH 1 OF CORE CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Each college shall distinguish between lower division and upper division students and devise criteria for admission to upper division status. We recommend that such criteria include as a minimum the successful completion of university and major core courses and a GPA of 2.0 on either these courses or all courses attempted.

RATIONALE BEHIND CURRICULA AND COURSES COMMITTEE CORE PROPOSAL

In formulating its proposal for a core curriculum campus-wide, the Curricula and Courses Committee implicitly accepted the rationale behind Lightsey Commission recommendations three and four, to the effect that general education should impart "skills and knowledge useful to students for the remainder of their lives. These skills serve both as a foundation for specific disciplinary skills and as a freestanding body of knowledge valuable beyond graduation" (p. 56). The alterations we have made to the proposed Lightsey core curriculum proposal were intended not to challenge that concept, but to realize it as fully as practical considerations would allow.

It should be understood from the start that a core sequence prescribed for every college and major on the Columbia campus can only comprise the very minimum foundation and body of knowledge that we might hope the baccalaureate student to possess. Most USC colleges now insist on far deeper commitment to knowledge in some or all of the core areas than this proposal requires. We therefore would encourage all colleges and departments to view this core as a scaffolding upon which to construct a sequence of general education courses that form an

interrelated and significant whole relevant to more intensive work in the upper division sequence of the student's major program. We in no way intend to imply that the core alone contains all the general education a student will ever need. Nor do we intend to usurp the function of individual colleges in deciding which areas to emphasize for the maximum benefits to their students.

We do, however, feel that a university graduate should have at least a minimal knowledge of some specific subjects, regardless of their future specialization and career goals. Writing skills, historical perspectives, and mathematical facility were judged essential for the educated person. And while one purpose of specifying courses in these areas is to assure competence in particular areas of weakness a consensus of the committee has perceived in incoming students, we have also mandated a furthering of knowledge beyond minimal proficiency for those students who enter with above-average skills.

When entering proficiency exempts students from normally-required general education courses, we would hope that the freed hours be employed in building upon that proficiency rather than being dispersed among random electives. We have in fact required such a practice for students who exempt themselves from introductory courses in English and Mathematics. We also emphasize proficiency testing for proper placement in general education subjects and for validation of high school courses required for admission. If the knowledge in students' heads does not match the courses on their transcript, then we do not feel it wrong to require remedial work, as is now done with students placed in English 100 as a result of below-average performance on the Writing Placement Test. This is the rationale behind that part of our proposal dealing with foreign language proficiency in students who have been required to take two years of high school foreign language as a prerequisite to admission to the university.