

Charge to ad hoc Committee on 120-Hour Graduation Requirement

Charge Given by: Cindy MacGregor, 2017-18 Chair of Faculty Senate

Rationale and Background

Nationwide, as state appropriations have declined, the burden of college costs has been shifted increasingly on students through tuition increases. Affordability of a college education has, consequently, been a pressing issue for universities to consider in various aspects of their requirements and costs. Many public universities require 120 hours for an undergraduate degree; Missouri State University requires 125. Changing the minimum graduation requirement is consistent with the university's focus on affordability, which aligns with the action plan goal of increasing graduation rates.

Faculty are charged with overseeing the curriculum for degree programs, thus, a possible change in graduation requirements rightly falls to the faculty to investigate. Mike Foster, 2016-2017 chair of Faculty Senate, met with all of the College Councils to investigate the appropriateness of changing the minimum undergraduate graduation requirement from 125 to 120 hours. Two issues emerged: first, faculty did not want a reduction in graduation minimums to include a mandated reduction in general education requirements, and, second, faculty did not want a reduction in graduation minimums to include a mandated reduction in program specific requirements.

Initial investigation also demonstrates the majority of existing programs require students to take hours simply to reach the minimum requirement of 125 hours rather than supporting the program of study in the baccalaureate degree. If adopted, this change would allow departments the freedom to eliminate extraneous hours if they choose to do so. It would not oblige any department to reduce the hours in any program requiring more than 120 hours.

Purpose of ad hoc Committee:

The ad hoc Committee on the 120-Hour Graduation Requirement will investigate the appropriateness and feasibility of changing the MSU minimum undergraduate graduation requirement from 125 hours to 120. The question for the committee to answer is: *Should MSU reduce the minimum graduation requirement for a bachelor's degree from 125 to 120 hours? If so, under what conditions should this change be implemented?*

Possible conditions to consider include:

- No mandated changes to general education
- No mandated reductions in requirements for any existing program
- Existing programs students can complete with 120 or fewer hours be changed by the Registrar's office without program faculty submitting individual curricular changes.

Materials to use:

- Programs of Study that Require more than 120 hours to complete
- Programs of Study that Require 120 or fewer hours to complete required courses
- Report regarding number of hours completed by recent graduates
- Undergraduate catalog
- Other resources, as needed, from the Provost Office or Registrar's Office

Membership of ad hoc Committee:

The Chair-Elect of Faculty Senate will serve as Chair of this committee. Additional members of the committee will be one ranked faculty member from each of the colleges (7 members), plus a representative from the Provost Office and a representative from the Registrar's office.

Tom Dicke, Chair-Elect of Faculty Senate

Gary Webb, CoAg

Pedro Koo, COAL

Rebecca Woodard, CHHS

Jef Cornelius-White, COE

Jun Luo, CNAS

Kevin Pybas, CHPA

Richard Gebken, COB

Rob Hornberger, Registrar

Chris Craig, Associate Provost

Expected Product:

The expected product from this ad hoc committee is a report to be presented to Faculty Senate NLT the December 7, 2018 session. If the committee supports a change in required hours for graduation their report should include a Recommendation in the form of a Senate Action calling for a minimum of 120 hours required for completion of a Bachelor's degree. Any conditions (as per examples above) should be included in the Senate Action. Furthermore, this Senate Action would include revised undergraduate catalog language to be included in the 2018-19 MSU Undergraduate Catalog.

Deadline for Report: NLT November 16, 2017; To be reviewed by Faculty Senate Executive Committee.