

## Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

### MEMO

**To:** The UVM Faculty Senate

**From:** Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair

**Date:** January 3, 2019

**Re:** Items approved by the Curricular Affairs Committee that do not require a Faculty Senate vote

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#### Request for an online degree completion program – BA in Anthropology; Minor in Writing or English

The College of Arts and Sciences submitted a proposal to establish an online degree completion program designed for students who have earned some college-level credits, but do not yet have a bachelor's and are not currently enrolled at a college or university. Upon successful completion of the program, students will receive a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a major in Anthropology and a Minor in either English or Writing. The online degree completion program will allow students to finish a bachelor's degree outside the traditional four-year undergraduate model, and provide students from across the region access to high-quality education. It is designed to serve older, non-traditional students who seek career advancement or personal enrichment. The online delivery mechanism will better meet the needs of adult students who typically work full time, and help them balance education, work, and family. Similar programs that allow non-traditional students to complete undergraduate degrees outside of traditional four-year residential models exist at many R1 institutions in the US; several were listed in the proposal. The proposers indicated that these programs report strong completion rates with ~80 to 90% of students completing bachelor's degrees.

The online degree completion program does not establish a new curriculum, but rather utilizes existing courses that have previously been offered online during the summer. All requirements for the existing Anthropology BA and English or Writing minor as well as the University requirements, including the General Education Requirements, must be completed for students to graduate with a BA. While the full breadth of Anthropology, English, and Writing courses are not currently available online, the major and minors can be completed entirely online. Online offerings also exist for many of the General Education courses. The proposers indicated that they hope to expand the number of online courses available to degree completion students and eventually provide more minor options. The online classes will be taught by the same faculty that teach the face-to-face versions, and expectations for the courses will be the same. Online courses will be offered in the fall, spring, and/or summer semesters. On-campus degree students will not be allowed to enroll in the online course options except during the summer term, in which they are already able to enroll.

Students will apply to the online degree completion program as transfer students through the standard mechanism and will be held to the normal admissions standards. To enter the program, students must have successfully completed at least 60 college credits that includes the CAS general distribution requirements. (The proposers note that many courses that fulfill the CAS general distribution

requirements are available online during the summer.) The Anthropology major requires 34 credits, both minors require 18 credits, and the remainder of the 120 credits minimum required for graduation come from the University General Education requirements. Students who have been enrolled in a degree-seeking program full time at UVM within the last two years are not eligible for admission unless waived into the program by the Dean. There will be targeted advising to address the particular needs of distance students, including how to do research or connect to campus resources remotely. Full-time students entering with 60 previously earned college credits will be able to complete the program within two years.

The online degree completion program provides a way for UVM to address the educational and instructional needs of non-traditional students and the community at large. Programs such as this benefit students who would be considered “under-served,” and thus fit well with UVM’s mission to make higher education more accessible. More specifically, the online completion degree capitalizes on the strengths of the Anthropology BA, one of the University’s most heavily enrolled majors, and expertise of faculty who have received training in online course delivery.

Letters of support were included from the Dean of Continuing and Distance Education, the Chair of the Department of Anthropology, the Chair of the Department of English, and the Interim Chair of the Philosophy Department. The online degree completion program was also approved by the CAS curriculum committee, faculty, and Dean.

#### Request for a direct entry program for the existing Master of Science in Clinical Nurse Leader

The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a request from the Graduate College in conjunction with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) to add a direct entry program option (DCLN) for the existing Master of Science in Clinical Nurse Leader (MS-CLN). This request was also approved by the MS-CLN Program Director, Department of Nursing Chair, CNHS Curriculum Planning Committee, Dean of CNHS, Graduate College Executive Council, and Graduate College Dean.

Currently, there is a Direct Entry into Professional Nursing (DEPN) program that allows students who have a bachelor’s, but do not have the appropriate nursing background to complete pre-RN licensure requirements as a first year in the respective degree program. The graduate-level curriculum meets pre-RN licensure nursing requirements, but students are not licensed as Registered Nurses until they complete the first year courses and successfully pass their RN licensure examination. The Direct Entry into Clinical Nurse Leader (DCLN) will utilize the curriculum already in place for the existing DEPN. Capacity in all of the pre-licensure courses is such that no additional sections will need to be added.

Offering a pre-licensure academic experience for admission into the MS-CNL program of study is intended to increase the availability of a quality graduate education for nurses prepared to assume leadership roles within health care systems in a variety of settings, to expand knowledge of the discipline of nursing, and to acquire the foundation for graduate study and continued professional development. Increasing enrollment in the DEPN suggests that there is interest among students with bachelor’s degrees who lack the necessary training in nursing to pursue graduate-level degrees in nursing.

### Request to create new concentrations in the Public Communications Major

The Department of Community Development and Applied Economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Science (CALs) submitted a request to create three new concentrations in the Public Communications major – Strategic Communication, Communication Design, and Community Media + Journalism. Additionally, the number of credits for the major will be increased from 32 to 34. *[Note that the credit number change does not require review or approval by the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee.]* The new concentrations were also approved by the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics, CALs Curriculum Committee, and CALs faculty.

Over the past ten years, growing enrollment demand and faculty expertise in the Public Communication major and Applied Design minor has led to increased strategic communication, community media, community journalism, and communication design courses. Currently, Public Communication majors can select from courses across these diverse areas to complete the five restricted elective courses required for the major. The three new concentrations were identified based on current course offerings, faculty expertise, and student interests/co-curricular activities. The goal of the concentrations is to maintain a wide selection of courses while also providing students with more structure for the restricted electives in their major program. Descriptions of the new concentrations provided by the department are below.

- *Strategic Communication* encompasses the activities of disciplines including public relations, social marketing, campaigns, and advertising. A PCOM concentration in Strategic Communication will focus on communication theories, skills, and practices needed to create and share effective, relevant, and responsible messages aimed at supporting individual, organizational, and community change.
- *Communication Design* encompasses the activities of disciplines including visual communication design, human-centered design, experience design, graphic and multi-media design. A PCOM concentration in Communication Design will focus on theories, methods, and practices needed to understand community needs before designing, implementing and evaluating messages.
- *Community Media + Journalism* encompasses the activities of disciplines including news writing, video, audio, digital media, and data visualization techniques employed to empower audiences and support responsible traditional mass communication and new media channels. Community Media + Journalism focuses on the theories, skills, and practices needed to analyze situations, audiences, and message effects with the goal of creating relevant and responsible communication that empowers audiences.