Western Michigan University
Faculty Senate
Memorandum of Action

MOA – 19/01

Revision of Undergraduate Catalog to Define Practice for Majors, Minors, and Cognates

Name of Council(s)/Committee(s):
Undergraduate Studies Council

Approval Date:
9 April 2019

Implementation Date:
Upon Administrative Approval

RECOMMENDATION:
Revise item number 2 in the current General Requirements, Bachelor's Degree within the Graduation Requirements of the Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Bruce Ferrin, Chair, Undergraduate Studies Council

☐ Approve □ Disapprove □ Other Action

Comments:

Amended and Approved by the Faculty Senate on 9 May 2019.

Richard A. Gershon, WMU Faculty Senate President

☐ Approve □ Disapprove □ Other Action

Comments:

Jennifer P. Bott, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

☐ Approve □ Disapprove □ Other Action

Comments:

Edward B. Montgomery, WMU President
Western Michigan University
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Revision of Undergraduate Catalog to Define Practice for Majors, Minors, and Cognates

RATIONALE
In order to ensure consistency over time and throughout the University, revisions to the General Requirements, Bachelor’s Degree within the Graduation Requirements of the Academic Policies section in the Undergraduate Catalog are necessary to clearly define the practice for majors, minors, and cognates. Two clarifications are needed; one to establish procedures for majors not requiring a minor and another to clearly state what courses may be shared between majors and/or minors.

Major requirements are specific and are clearly outlined in the catalog; “majors must be a minimum of 24 hours and require a minor to graduate.” However, some majors do not require a minor and do not have a statement in the catalog indicating that no minor is required. Therefore, it is being proposed that all majors require a minor, unless the lack of a minor is approved through the curriculum process. If no minor is required, the catalog language, submitted in item 12 of the Request for Program Improvements form, for the major must clearly state that no minor is required.

Currently, the catalog states, “courses required in one major and/or minor may not be counted again to satisfy requirements in another major and/or minor.” Historically, many programs/curriculums have been allowed to share courses with other major and/or minors even though no policy exists that approves this practice. Therefore, it is being proposed that only courses used in cognates may be shared to fulfill major, minor, or other degree requirements. Cognate courses would need to be clearly defined in the catalog.

RECOMMENDATION
Revise item number 2 in the current General Requirements, Bachelor’s Degree within the Graduation Requirements of the Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Catalog.

CURRENT POLICY (additions in bold and deletions with strikethrough)
Undergraduate Catalog
Academic Policies
Graduation Requirements
General Requirements, Bachelor’s Degree
Any curriculum leading to a bachelor’s degree consists of at least 122 hours of credit. The student must meet the following requirements or their equivalent.

1. The requirements in at least one of the University approved curricula must be fulfilled before graduation.

2. The student must complete a major with a minimum of 24 hours and, if required by the curriculum, a minor with a minimum of 15 hours. A minor is required unless the major states otherwise. Specific departmental major and minor requirements may exceed these minimums; please refer to the departmental sections in this catalog that identify the specific major and/or minor requirements. Students interested in the elementary and secondary education curricula should refer to both the departmental sections and to the College of Education and Human Development section that list the major and minor requirements for elementary and secondary teaching curricula. Courses elected to satisfy requirements in one major and/or minor may not be counted again to satisfy requirements in another major and/or minor. However, courses used in cognates may be used to fulfill a major, minor, or other degree requirements at the discretion of the department granting the major and/or minor. Some students may be
excused from the requirement of declaring a regular major and/or minor field if they satisfy the requirements of their curriculum as set forth in the catalog, or the curriculum as modified by substitutions approved through normal channels.

3. Each student must complete the required General Education program. Students who are graduating with an Associate of Science degree from Michigan two-year colleges and start WMU prior to Fall 2014, are signatory to the Michigan Transfer Agreement, will automatically have fulfilled the first and second year General Education requirements. General Education requirements of two courses at the junior and senior levels will continue to be required.

4. A minimum grade point average of 2.0 must be obtained in any major or minor(s) presented for graduation. Individual colleges, departments, or programs may have additional University approved requirements including a higher minimum grade point average.

5. A student must also have an overall University grade point average of 2.0 or higher to graduate. If a student fails to meet minimum University academic standards, he/she is placed on academic probation or is dismissed.

6. Each student will fulfill all requirements of the Intellectual Skills Development Program as outlined in this section.

7. Minimum residence requirements. All candidates must present a minimum of 30 hours through Western Michigan University. Ten of the last 30 hours must be taken through Western Michigan University. Correspondence credit and credit by examination may not be used to satisfy any of the minimum requirements. Individual colleges and departments may have additional residency requirements.

8. A maximum of 8 hours of general physical education (PEGN) courses may be counted toward graduation.

9. Students transferring from an accredited two-year institution must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours of the academic work required at an accredited four-year, degree-granting institution. Exceptions to this policy, for specific programs, can be approved only if there is a formal Memorandum of Understanding and articulation agreement, as approved by the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council, between Western Michigan University and the participating accredited two-year institution.

10. Students may graduate under the WMU catalog in effect at the time of their initial registration or any succeeding catalog providing the catalog is not more than ten years old upon the completion of requirements for graduation. Students who have been gone from the University for ten years or more must enter the University under the catalog in effect at the time of re-entry. For exception, see special policy under “Graduation Requirements-Bachelor of Science in Engineering” listed in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences section of this catalog.

In cooperation with community colleges, a student who transfers to Western Michigan University within three years upon leaving the community college may elect to graduate under the WMU catalog in effect at the time of the initial registration at the two-year institution.

PROCEDURES FOR TRANSITION

1. The Registrar’s Office will automatically update the catalog by adding the word “cognate” to majors that currently have a list of supporting courses. This change will not require a curriculum proposal because the terminology in the catalog would not be changed other than adding the word “cognate”.

2. Majors currently referred to as “curriculums” will need to determine if cognate courses need to be defined, and list them separately from the major in the catalog language. Separating the courses from the major into cognates would enable the courses to continue to be shared with other majors and/or minors. The Registrar’s Office will distribute a form (appendix A) to each program to be completed if the program determines the major should be revised to separate major courses from cognate courses.

3. Majors that are currently referred to as “curriculums” and do not require a minor, will have catalog copy automatically updated by the Registrar’s Office to include the following statement: “No minor is required for this major.”

4. The Faculty Senate will revise the Request for Program Improvements form such that a request for a new program or changes to a current program indicate if a minor is required, or not.
APPENDIX A

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Office of the Registrar

MAJOR AND COGNATE FORM
2020-2021 Catalog

Please return this form and attached catalog copy to:
Kelley Oliver, Associate Registrar
Registrar's Office – Mail Stop 5256
3210 Seibert Administration Building

TO: College Representative
College

PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN BELOW:

Option 1:

___ The major should not be revised. All courses should continue to be listed as part of the major and therefore cannot be shared with other majors and/or minors.

Option 2:

___ The major should be reorganized to separate major courses from cognate courses.

If Option 2 is selected, please highlight on the attached catalog copy which courses should be moved to the cognate section in the catalog copy. Cognate courses are often outside the department of the degree program. Cognate courses may be shared with other majors, minors, and degree requirements.

Approved by:

__________________________
Name

__________________________
Title

__________________________
Date