

## Faculty Senate Agenda Item

Date: October 24, 2005 (approved)

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: The Transformational Experience Graduation Requirement

Description: The attached document describes the transformational experiences graduation requirement, endorsed in principle by the University Council in December, 2004. The key concern of the UC was faculty load and budget implications.

Since that time, the VPAA has worked with the academic deans and others to estimate costs of the program. Our best estimate is that the program will require an \$850,000 increase to the University annual operating budget by the time the program is fully implemented, allocated roughly as follows:

- (1) \$160,000 for study abroad scholarships
- (2) \$105,000 to replace the CSI grant (funding for student research)
- (3) \$50,000 for administrative costs to coordinate community service experiences
- (4) \$25,000 for marketing and OOE
- (5) \$510,000 for faculty load (new positions, adjunct replacements, overloads, stipends, etc.)
- (6) As the library is the heart of the University and essential to student and faculty research, resources not included in the above budget will be necessary to support the development of the library over the span of implementation of the TE program.

Item (5) represents a good macro-level estimate of the cost to adjust for faculty load based on the Faculty Handbook formula for load assignment for independent study. However, the appropriate micro-level (department/school level) allocation of these funds is much harder to estimate. Further, appropriate assignment of teaching loads varies by department and school, and must be handled by those chairs and deans directly responsible for the programs. The best method for adjustment may vary from unit to unit, and will certainly depend on student demand for the various TEs. Therefore, as the transformational experiences program is implemented over the next four years (2006-2009), a committee chaired by the VPAA and consisting of academic deans, department chairs, and faculty senate leadership will work together to determine how to fairly compensate for changes in faculty responsibilities. The future direction of the library, and subsequent budget recommendations, will be evaluated through a process that will fully involve faculty.

The University has already set aside \$600,000 in its annual base budget in preparation for the TE requirement. The additional necessary funding will be added to subsequent budgets.

Requested Action: Faculty Senate approval of the transformational experience graduation requirement, to take effect for all new students entering in Fall 2006, except those transferring in with at least 64 hours of transfer credit, to take effect Fall 2007 for all new entering students, including transfer students

Originated by: Ron Wasserstein, VPAA

## The Transformational Experience (TE) Graduation Requirement at Washburn University

Every baccalaureate degree-seeking undergraduate will complete at least one of the following four transformational experiences (TEs) prior to graduation: (1) scholarly or creative activity, (2) community service, (3) leadership, (4) international education.

The specific requirements for each of the four TEs are outlined below, but the following are common to all four:

- (1) Every student will work under the supervision of a mentor. One aspect of this mentorship will be to assist the student to understand how the TE fits into the student's overall educational goals. Upon consultation with his or her mentor, the student will submit a written proposal for the transformational experience to the mentor for approval before the work or activities are begun.
- (2) An essential component of every transformational experience is a report presented in a manner, and to an audience, appropriate to the project. The report will address the significance of the project, the impact the experience had on the student, and the extent to which the project has fit into the student's overall educational goals.
- (3) In addition to the possibilities listed below, students may work with mentors to propose activities they believe will satisfy one of the four TEs. A committee of faculty will review such proposals to determine whether they will satisfy the TE graduation requirement. In such cases, individual academic units (schools or the College) may establish their own review committees that would make a recommendation on the proposal and forward it to the appropriate university-wide TE committee.

### (1) The Scholarly or Creative Activity Transformational Experience

*Purpose: Students who have engaged with faculty members to advance knowledge, to create music or art or literature, or to participate in other experiences that require a high level of intellectual stimulation or achievement, graduate from the University prepared to solve increasingly complex problems and to sort through complex and sometimes contradictory information in order to gain fresh insight.*

The scholarly or creative activity transformational experience is a significant scholarly or creative project to be completed under the tutelage of at least one faculty member, and to be presented in public. The format of the project may vary but it must be an independent project that is not part of a structured (faculty-planned) course. Thus, the project can be part of a capstone course in which the students create or develop their own projects, but not a course in which the students simply follow the instruction of an instructor. While the nature of these projects varies by discipline, the project should result in a significant commitment of scholarly/creative effort on the part of the student, as judged by the student's faculty mentor.

Students will submit a preliminary proposal to a faculty member who serves as their project supervisor. (In many instances, the proposal will also be reviewed by other faculty members serving as a project committee.) The proposal should

- (a) introduce the subject of the project and discuss the background that led to the central question to be answered or goal to be accomplished;
- (b) describe how the project can contribute to the student's scholarly or creative development and (for scholarly work) how it may contribute to a field of study;
- (c) include relevant sources (where appropriate), method of study or design of work, timeline, and any resources or materials that would be needed;
- (d) indicate that Institutional Review Board approvals have been obtained where necessary; and
- (e) suggest the presentation format and audience for the final product.

The proposal will help ensure that the student is focused and well prepared to complete this TE.

Students who choose the Scholarly and Creative Activity Transformational Experience must present their work in a public forum appropriate for the type of work completed.

Students will also submit a final report that describes

- (a) the process the student went through;
- (b) how the project involved discovery or creation (of ideas, subjects, connections) and reflects depth or innovation;
- (c) the results of the project;
- (d) where the work was (or will be) presented; and
- (e) how the project has affected them and fits into their educational goals.

## (2) The Community Service Transformational Experience

*Purpose: Students who have engaged with faculty members and other students in significant, meaningful community service, and who have been guided to reflect on the power and purpose of these experiences, graduate from the University as citizens who are not resigned to accepting the community as it is but have a vision for how they can help make the community better.*

Students participating in the community service transformational experience are required to complete 150 hours of service. A mentor will guide each student through this TE. While engaged in direct service, students will meet with a mentor and other students at least four times per semester to reflect on their experiences. These meetings will help students to develop a service focus complementing their interests and academic pursuits.

Each student will conclude the experience with a final report that not only describes what took place but what was learned from the experience, and how the experience has affected the student's view of the community and his or her role in it. An oral presentation of these findings is also required. Typically, this oral presentation will be

given to other students who are considering the community service TE as a possibility for themselves.

### (3) The Leadership Transformational Experience

*Purpose: Students who serve in leadership roles are transformed by improved self-understanding derived from practical experience and examination of inspirational examples of selfless leadership service; they graduate from the University as citizens who recognize the abundance of leadership opportunities and are ready to accept the mantle of responsibility that comes with these opportunities.*

Students electing the Leadership Transformational Experience will 1) complete with a grade of “C” or better at least 3 semester hours of college coursework consisting of an academic study of leadership (e.g., LE100, NU479 or any other course, provided that the unit offering the course endorses it as an academic study of leadership); and 2) serve in one or more functional leadership roles for a minimum of 150 hours.

Students will work with a mentor and Leadership TE Committee to include in their functional leadership roles a specific focus on 1) how to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own leadership skills and 2) how a leader becomes an effective change agent. Students will complete their experience by providing both written and oral reports that address what they learned about themselves and their own leadership skills, and how this learning has impacted their view of leaders and leadership.

Students who complete any of the certificate programs in the Leadership Institute will have satisfied the Leadership Transformational Experience requirement.

### (4) The International Education Transformational Experience

*Purpose: Students who have studied abroad or been thoroughly exposed to the richness of history and culture beyond our shores graduate from the University ready to contribute to a fast-paced global society in which information is delivered instantly around the world.*

The International Education TE is most directly satisfied by a study abroad experience. Washburn University supports three types of study abroad programs

- Type 1: Study in a foreign institution with which Washburn maintains exchange agreements. Washburn University currently has exchange agreements with some “sister” universities in such places as Spain, France, Austria, Japan, England, Sweden, Taiwan, China, South Africa, Thailand, Ireland, Australia, and Romania. In addition, Washburn belongs to several consortia including CONAHEC, a group of over 20 schools in Mexico and Canada, and the Magellan Exchange, which provides additional opportunities in, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Finland.

- Type 2: Study in a program offered by another accredited U.S. college/university or approved consortium/program.
- Type 3: Participate in a study-abroad program or internship coordinated and taught by Washburn faculty or for Washburn credit, in programs offered occasionally by some schools or departments (e.g.: School of Nursing, Department of Art, Department of Political Science, and others). Mostly, these are short term programs (one to four weeks).
- Besides these types, in some cases and under Washburn faculty supervision, students can also study abroad in other foreign institutions with which Washburn does not have an agreement. Other types of foreign study or experience (for example, involvement in a humanitarian project abroad) would be considered as well.

To identify an appropriate experience, students will work with a faculty member or the study-abroad coordinator. Students will write a research paper on a relevant topic prior to their international experience to help prepare for the experience. At the end of the experience, a written final report is expected. This report will describe how the student's experiences have impacted his or her view of the world. An oral presentation about the student's experiences is also expected.

Experiences other than the ones listed above may also satisfy the international education TE. Therefore, students who would like to satisfy this requirement through experiences other than those listed above may work with a faculty mentor to submit a proposal to the International Education TE committee. The proposal should introduce the scope of the proposed activities and describe how these activities contribute to the student's development of international awareness and understanding.

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 (The following is provided for clarification, and is not part of the proposal itself.)

Three frequently asked questions about the transformational experiences requirement:

1. Will these increase the number of hours students have to take to graduate? It will not. Students will usually be able to enroll for credit for their experience, but they will not have to do so. Thus, if students have room for elective hours, they can pick some of them up this way.
2. Will every major or program be required to provide at least one of the transformational experience as part of the major? No. While a TE may be built into several major programs, no program is required to include one. While some students will want to do a research or creative project within the major, there are also plenty of opportunities in the other three TEs for students in such majors.
3. Our major already requires something that is the equivalent or nearly the equivalent of a TE. Will our majors have to do something ELSE in addition to our requirement? No. The point of the TE requirement is to ensure that EVERY Washburn baccalaureate student gets the opportunity to have at least one of these experiences. If students in certain programs already are involved in such an experience, so much the better.