



**COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**
Academic Programs and Services
120 Schaeffer Hall
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1409
319-335-2633 Fax 319-335-3755
clasps@uiowa.edu
www.clas.uiowa.edu

Directors of Undergraduate Studies
Meeting Notes from February 20, 2019

1. The following announcements were briefly discussed:
 - A short report on undergraduate curricular changes and other significant changes occurring in the department or program is now due. Helena Dettmer mentioned that these reports help her to educate others on the good work of the departments, with many innovative practices shared. She would like to make a list of these to give to the DUS group in the near future.
 - Reminder: The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation site visit will be on March 25-26. See these pages for more information:
<https://uiowa.edu/accreditation/article/hlc-criteria-accreditation> Open forums will most likely be held on these two days; likewise, HLC may want to meet with specific departments or areas. Those visiting UI with HLC will make those requests just before the site visit, most likely.
 - The sole use of a new clicker program named **Top Hat** will be effective Summer 2019:
<https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/news/tip-your-top-hat-new-clicker-service>
UI Professor Quick Start Guide:
<https://support.tophat.com/s/article/Professor-University-of-Iowa-Quick-Start-Guide>
2. The group next discussed the CLAS policy that "Credit hours to complete a major should comprise a **reasonable proportion** of course work that must be taken in residence at the University of Iowa." See <https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/majors>

Discussion mainly focused on the fact that the flexibility of this policy is very important since each discipline and/or department or program has different goals and needs, with some willing to accept more transfer credit, particularly if those hours function as prerequisites or as foundational for the major. These majors require significant hours and transfer credit can help the student as well as the department. In other areas, such as art, a review of a portfolio is required to make sure the student is placed in the right level of courses and receives the needed foundational courses to make up any related gaps in learning.

It was noted that sometimes students wanted to earn the UI degree without doing UI work and thus some departments have decided to create a core of required courses that must be taken at UI. This is also acceptable, and the College has thus decided to keep this transfer credit policy for the major as flexible as possible but asks departments and programs to review their current transfer standards to ensure that they are appropriate since some have been in place for many years.

Action Step for DUS

The College requests that each department or program reviews the number of hours for the major that must be taken at UI and explicitly states this rule in the General Catalog for each of its majors, starting with the **next edition** of the Catalog (2020-2021) since the deadline for this current Catalog has passed. Decisions should be based on what is best for students transferring from another institution **and** on what ensures the quality of the degree and its UI perspective/approach.

- Each department may make its own choices in these matters though CLAS suggests that a minimum of around 50% of the semester hours for the major be taken at UI. This is a guideline but not a requirement.
- The bottom line should be a concern for student success: what courses and how many credits must be taken at UI to make sure the student is successful in the more advanced courses in the major?
- Please consult with Helena Dettmer as questions arise.

Part of the context for this discussion is the new Iowa State Department of Education initiative requiring a Iowa community college (CC) major to require 18 s.h. rather than the current 15 s.h. in order to be included on the CC transcript. The Department of Education wants these additional 3 s.h. to also count for the equivalent majors at the three Regents' institutions.

Departments in the future may be asked by the UI Admissions liaison to the community colleges to increase transfer credit for various UI majors. Once these additional credits are approved as CC transfer credit for the major, the department would no longer review the credits individually for each student; instead, the requirement would be noted as fulfilled in the student's degree audit in same way GE courses are handled. In some cases, departments may find this to be a convenient and welcomed addition; in others, it may not be appropriate. Any request should be carefully considered.

The group also discussed the many ways UI now protects the integrity of its degree, ie, assuring that the UI aspect of it is represented:

- A maximum of **60 semester hours** of degree credit from two-year colleges is accepted toward the minimum of the 120 semester hours required for graduation. More than 60 s.h. will not be accepted. However, if a student has finished a requirement for a major but that brings the total to 63 s.h. for example, the requirement can be counted as completed even though the credit hours will not be applied to the 120 for graduation.
- Students must satisfy the UI and CLAS residence requirements, regardless of the amount of transfer work that is accepted. **The CLAS residence requirement is 30 s.h.** Note that the CLAS hours also count toward the UI residence requirement that may be met using one of three options:
 - ✓ At least 90 s.h. must be completed after admission to the University of Iowa.
 - ✓ 45 of the final 60 s.h. for the degree must be completed after admission to the University of Iowa.

- ✓ Final consecutive 30 s.h. for degree must be completed after admission to the University of Iowa.
- There is no limit on the number of credit hours that may be transferred from four-year institutions, with hours applicable to the major reviewed by the related department on a case by case basis. (UI only accepts transfer credit from accredited institutions.)

The group then discussed how one should define the major and the courses required for it. That is, does it include prerequisites and/or foundational courses not offered by the administrative home of the major but by another department?

- The answer to this questions can be found in how the department or program has defined the major in the General Catalog and the major’s relation to prerequisites or to these foundational courses offered by other departments than the home of the major.
- However, CLAS does generally ask that departments be as transparent as possible about these matters so that students understand the total hours needed to complete a major.
- For that reason, prerequisites and foundational courses not offered by the major’s administrative home are generally counted for the major.
- DUS’ might want to review the language used it their related majors.

[This example from the Catalog <http://catalog.registrar.uiowa.edu/>, for example, shows that the Chemistry Department has clearly defined **supporting courses as part of the major**:

The Bachelor of Science with a major in chemistry requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including **69 s.h. of work for the major (20 s.h. in foundation chemistry courses, 27 s.h. in advanced chemistry, and 22 s.h. in supporting course work)**. Students must earn at least 20 s.h. in advanced chemistry courses at the University of Iowa.

Biology uses a different method of defining the major but it is still clear that courses taught outside of Biology are part of the major:

The B.S. with a major in biology requires the following course work.

Code	Title	Hours
	Chemistry/Mathematics/Physics Foundation Courses	29
	Biology Core Courses	15
	Track Courses	29-38
	Total Hours	73-82
Course List		

3. The group next discussed an issue students have recently raised with the College. That is, even the most conscientious students seem to be confused about how participation is graded. The group

then discussed some strategies related to participation that have worked well for them, with students no longer complaining or worrying about participation grades as a result:

- Ask students to grade their own participation efforts every other week using a standard rubric that clearly states what participation is and what “counts.” Students are quite honest about their own participation and this has resulted in a full range of grades in the participation area with no complaints by students.
 - Create a structure in larger courses that defines participation more narrowly and that enables all students to participate, such as making participation the simple act of the student writing one question about the reading or lecture each session. Showing that the questions are important is also key; they can be answered quickly by students working in pairs; through group discussion; by the use of clickers etc; or by calling on students. Because participation is structured and is partially written, it can help all students to participate.
 - Create and share a rubric for participation and remind students of it frequently.
 - Survey students several times to see if they have gained a better understanding of participation through the instructor’s discussion of it; this might raise awareness and encourage students to better remember and understand the policy rather than simply report this lack of understanding on the ACE forms—early intervention might help.
4. The DUS group had a robust conversation about students using phones and laptops in the classroom for reasons not related to the course and thereby creating distractions and hurting the learning of others as well as (at times) the instructor’s management of the class. This is especially true in large courses where the student might not feel a personal obligation to the group or where the student is taking the course for a GE or another requirement of less interest to the student. But technology can also cause problems in smaller courses that then become a flash point. One faculty member shared a tough no-tech policy, reporting that enforcement created hard feelings, creating perhaps more of a problem for the class learning climate than the original issue. Large courses with TAs sometimes ask TAs to roam the room and to politely ask students to put away the laptop/cell if it is being used for non-class purposes. Since clickers are now on cell phones (and remain so with Top Hat) and since many students use laptops for note taking, it can be hard to separate approved usage to banned usage—one can ask students to turn over the cell if not being used as a clicker but this is hard to enforce. Collecting all phones in a large course is time consuming and might create worry about loss and theft. Still, if students are attending the lecture they should be paying attention and not distracting others. Those who are distracted by others also have an obligation to speak up but that too is discouraging if the student is not supported by the instructor or the institution. Do students have a right to a learning space that is focused on learning? If so, how can that focus be created? The group moved to education as a possible solution, with instructors telling students why listening and practicing concentration are so important, explaining to students these are skills that need practice and time to develop and are also key to success in the workplace and for any career. The classroom can be seen then as practice for future success which may motivate some students. If students see this importance of how they are learning as well as what they are learning, it might motivate students to treat the experience with a more focused respect.
5. Unfortunately, the group ran out of time and did not discuss absences and strategies for handling them.