Proposal:
Modification of Requirements for CLAS Certificates
Helena Dettmer, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum
Marc Armstrong, Associate Dean for Graduate and Online Education
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Proposal Summary
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences proposes removing two of the current requirements for a certificate: 1) The requirement that certificates are interdisciplinary and 2) the requirement that a baccalaureate degree must be completed in order for a student to be awarded a certificate.

Background Information

Requirements for a CLAS Certificate
Currently, certificates are offered by three or more departments or areas, engaging students in a focused study of an interdisciplinary topic. Certificates generally require a curriculum of around 18 to 21 s.h. of course work and may not duplicate an existing major, minor, or another certificate. (For other policies concerning certificates not related to this proposal, please see this page.)

As the current policy now states, CLAS certificates cannot be awarded without the completion of the baccalaureate. A student who has already earned the baccalaureate degree may enter UI as a non-degree seeking student in order to complete a certificate. This is permissible as long as the student is not enrolled in a graduate or professional program or has not completed such a program of study.

Approval Process for CLAS Certificates
Proposals for new certificates are first reviewed by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum who confers with the Dean on the matter. The proposal is then placed on the agenda of the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Committee (UEPCC). If recommended for approval, the certificate is placed on the Faculty Assembly agenda and then moves to the Office of the Provost. Regent approval is not required.

Sample CLAS Certificates
Certificates approved and implemented by CLAS may be found in the General Catalog. Certificates approved recently include the Event Planning Certificate; the Large Data Analysis Certificate; and the Social Science Analytics Certificate. Other colleges at UI also offer certificates, including the Entrepreneurial Management Certificate (College of Business); the Human Rights Certificate (College of Law/UI Center for Human Rights), and the Wind Energy certificate (College of Engineering and CLAS).

Rationale
The intent of removing the undergraduate baccalaureate requirement is to provide wider access to CLAS certificates for those not yet holding or pursuing the undergraduate degree but who are looking for additional educational opportunities. Many of these students will be non-traditional and active in the workplace or will be place bound, with the certificate pursued as an online option. The removal of the baccalaureate degree, in other words, would allow a greater access to education, a strategic goal of the College and the University.
It is widely reported that employees will change jobs, and even entire fields, several times during their careers\(^1\), with additional professional training often required. This training typically does not require a worker to pursue an additional degree. Removing the baccalaureate as a requirement would allow UI to become a more vibrant participant in offering additional educational programs for students pursuing career development opportunities or personal interests but not a degree.

The removal of the requirement for interdisciplinarity additionally allows CLAS and its departments to offer particular courses related to specific, focused skills which the off-campus population might find beneficial. Many departments will continue to find interdisciplinarity effective for certificates.

**Enrollment Standards**

Students wanting to earn a certificate as a non-degree seeking student must be admitted to UI and CLAS according to the admissions standards already approved by the College and the Regents, as follows:

- **Students still in high school** who wish to apply to the university as a non-degree student must have a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher.
- **Students who have taken course work at another college** must present a cumulative grade-point average of 2.50 or higher.

As the Admissions’ site states, “Credit earned as a non-degree student may be applied at a later date toward an undergraduate degree. Students may enroll for a total of three consecutive sessions as a non-degree student before reapplication is necessary” ([http://admissions.uiowa.edu/future-students/nondegree-students](http://admissions.uiowa.edu/future-students/nondegree-students)).

Students wishing to earn a certificate as a degree-seeking student must meet all current UI admissions standards, as set by the Regents. (For these standards, see [http://admissions.uiowa.edu/future-students](http://admissions.uiowa.edu/future-students).)

**Implications of the Proposal**

1. Most CLAS certificates are self-sustaining and are often built from existing courses from several departments with the capacity for additional students and thus certificates generally do not require many additional resources. Such interdisciplinary certificates also help students to see how disciplines work with each other and the ways knowledge and tools from one field are enhanced by work in a second or third one. Many departments will continue to find interdisciplinarity useful and important for the core content of a certificate, and thus it will remain optional for a certificate.

2. Some departments would find it beneficial to be able to offer a certificate that is more focused in a particular area. Removing these requirements will encourage departments to think creatively about programming and how to reach students not yet enrolled at UI, enhancing the service the College provides to non-traditional and place-bound students.

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\(^1\) Further reading:
[http://www.bls.gov/news.release/nlsyth.nr0.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/nlsyth.nr0.htm)
[http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405274870420680457546816216280587790](http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405274870420680457546816216280587790)
[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/01/business/smallbusiness/01webcareers.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/01/business/smallbusiness/01webcareers.html?_r=0)
3. By appealing to more than one population of students, certificates may become more sustainable and self-supporting. Seat availability will need to be managed carefully for each population so that online students may complete the certificate in a reasonable number of semesters (with this defined by the credits hours of the certificate). Additionally, the period for continuing as a non-degree student might need to be extended by the College to 4 semesters, a question that will be discussed in the future if this proposal should be approved.

4. The College might see students leaving UI not with a degree but with a certificate. The Registrar has been consulted on this matter and would be able to implement this change if approved by the College.

5. The College currently allows each department to decide if courses approved by the College and the Regents are offered online, on campus, or in both modes; likewise, the administrative home of a certificate decides if the certificate will be offered on campus, on-line, or in both modes. This decision is made by the department since those teaching the courses best understand course content and the best ways to offer that content. Some departments are currently planning to offer their certificates both online and on campus, with students allowed greater choice of when and how to take courses. Other departments first offer a certificate on campus and slowly build toward offering it in both modes, as we see with the recent Event Planning Certificate. It can take time for departments to create the appropriate courses and to hire needed instructors.

6. Departments planning to offer online credentials must meet with the College in order to clarify implementation details, and all such online credentials must have the same requirements as those offered on campus (though on-campus students will most likely have a greater selection of courses and two or more degree options). Admission to a certificate will be handled by UI Admissions and CLAS, following the model of the online major in Political Science.

Summary

The mission of CLAS includes educating those in Iowa and elsewhere who are at different stages of their educational journey, some not needing or wanting the baccalaureate degree at the time that they enter the University of Iowa. We hope that by extending the option of completing a certificate to those without the baccalaureate, these students will gain tangible benefits from being associated with CLAS, perhaps returning at some point to earn a degree.