

C O P Y

February 29, 1980

MEMORANDUM TO: President Donald W. Zacharias

FROM: James L. Davis
Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: 54 Hour Requirement for Baccalaureate Degree Students

I have made a careful review of a recent question which has arisen concerning the upper division 54 semester hour requirement for baccalaureate degree students. Until very recently I had not been advised of the second sentence of the following statement which is found on the inside cover of the 1976-77 Western Kentucky University Bulletin Catalog issue, published in Fall, 1976:

"All statements in this publication are announcements of present policy only and are subject to change at any time without prior notice. They are not to be regarded as offers to contract except as stated on page 52."
(emphasis added)

On page 52 in that catalog the following topics are discussed: Curriculum Requirements; Academic Standing; Course Requirements; Residence Requirements; and the Degree Program. In the "Course Requirements" paragraph, a statement is made that "A minimum of 32 semester hours must be completed in senior level courses . . ." (those at the 300 and 400 level).

Based on a recommendation from the Council of Academic Deans, the Academic Council, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President, the Board of Regents adopted the new 54 hour requirement on April 29, 1978, and all students entering Western in the fall semester of 1978 were notified in writing of this new policy by the Office of Scholastic Development (as part of the university's orientation program). However, the regular 1979 catalog, which included a description of the new 54 hour requirement, was not published until November of 1978, three months after the beginning of the 1978-79 academic year.

Because the language used in the 1976-77 catalog suggests a commitment to students, it is my belief that Western should not expect those students who entered the university prior to the publication of the 1979 catalog to meet the new 54 hour requirement. Therefore, I recommend that the existing policy, approved on April 29, 1978, by the Board of Regents, be amended to read as follows:

Proposed Changes in Course Requirements for Baccalaureate Degrees. For more than a year, committees of the Academic Council and the Council of Academic Deans have studied possible changes in the course requirements for baccalaureate degree students. Following extensive study and discussion, the Academic Council approved a change in the course requirements policy statement which is to be included in the next University Catalog. This policy is to become effective for all students graduating after August, 1980. This policy will apply to baccalaureate degree students who entered Western Kentucky University after January 1, 1979.

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The proposed new policy statement is as follows:
"At least one-third of the course requirements in the major, minor, and area of concentration must be earned at Western. A minimum of 54 semester hours must be completed in courses numbered 300 and above. At least one-half of the semester hours required for the major, minor, and area of concentration must be earned in courses numbered 300 and above." The Academic Council also provided that provision should be made to permit certain program areas to petition for an exception to these requirements. A committee of the Academic Council will have final approval responsibility for granting exceptions to the policy. Students enrolled in programs which have received an exception to this policy will automatically receive an exception to the policy. In conjunction with this change a slight change was authorized in the catalog statement concerning the numbering of courses.

At the February 26, 1980, meeting of the Council of Academic Deans, I requested the deans of the five undergraduate colleges to ask each of their department heads to analyze the 54 hour requirement in their academic program areas to determine what problems, if any, might be present relative to the requirement for students majoring in particular academic programs. The deans will submit written reviews and recommendations to me by March 11, 1980, based on the findings of their department heads. I will furnish you a report after I have received this information.

If you have any questions on this matter, please contact me.

JLD:ds

cc: Dean William Hourigan
Dean Robert Mounce
Dean Robert Nelson
Dean Marvin Russell
Dean J. T. Sandefur