

## **Proposal to Waive the B.A. Baccalaureate Competencies for a New Liberal Arts Advantage Dual Degree**

Submitted to the Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee  
Feb. 13, 2019

Members of the Agenda Council ask the Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee to consider the following proposal for a new Liberal Arts Advantage Dual Degree. The proposal advances this motion to be presented to the School of Liberal Arts' Faculty Assembly:

The School of Liberal Arts will waive the requirements of the SLA B.A. Baccalaureate Competencies for dual degree undergraduate students whose secondary major is in the School of Liberal Arts but whose primary major is in another School.

### **Rationale**

Currently, students who wish to add a second major in Liberal Arts face a number of curricular and financial constraints that make the pursuit of two degrees unfeasible for most students. The SLA B.A. Baccalaureate Competencies (see below) include a number of courses that are not part of other IUPUI Schools' general education requirements. By waiving the SLA B.A. Baccalaureate Competencies for all undergraduates with a primary major outside SLA and a second major inside SLA, the School will facilitate dual degrees and see an increase in dual-degree students and hence an increase in credit hours. (Note: This proposal does not apply to SLA B.S. degrees).

The goal of this curricular change would be to add credit hours, first, by converting some of the 479 SLA minors from other IUPUI Schools into dual degree students and, second, by recruiting new dual degree students by way of specific partnerships in advising, for example Finance (Kelley School of Business) and Economics (SLA) or Psychology (School of Science) and Sociology (SLA). A partnership of this kind already exists between Kelley and World Languages and Cultures, but so far our SLA Baccalaureate Competencies have been the sticking point.

The School already has dual degrees in languages and engineering that waive most of the SLA Baccalaureate Competencies (except 9 credits), and departments and programs have been contemplating adding new dual degree programs. Passing this motion would allow departments and programs to pursue partnerships across schools without having to push individual proposals with the specifics of the curriculum through school and campus-level curriculum committees.

The [campus' recent statement](#) of its support for the role of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, unanimously approved by the IUPUI Faculty Council at its September 2019 meeting, as well as the [Executive Vice Chancellor's public support](#) of that statement, provides a unique opportunity to move an ambitious idea like this one forward.

We propose calling this dual degree program the Liberal Arts Advantage and making it central to the School's marketing. Here's the appeal: "At IUPUI, students can complete a professional or a STEM degree and easily fit well-rounded training in the Liberal Arts. That's the Liberal Arts Advantage." We can make this appeal to students from other schools, prospective students, and residents throughout Indiana. We see this proposal as one of several new initiatives all linked to the phrase "Liberal Arts Advantage."

When this idea was introduced at the January 2019 Faculty Assembly, faculty asked important questions, which we try to answer here.

### **Which requirements would be waived?**

Following last year's revisions to the SLA curriculum, which will be implemented in Fall 2019, the SLA B.A. Baccalaureate Competency requirements include:

- First-Year Experience (1-3 cr.)
- Second Writing Proficiency (3 cr.)
- Analytical Proficiency (3 cr.)
- Life & Physical Science Lab (1-2 cr.)
- World Language and Perspectives (0-14 cr.)
- 1 Arts & Humanities (3 cr.)
- 1 Social Sciences (3 cr.)
- Advanced Courses (42 cr. in 300- and 400-level courses, of which 9 credits must be in Liberal Arts and outside one's primary major)

Not all of these Baccalaureate Competency (BC) credits must be SLA courses. Some students complete their First-Year Experience and Life & Physical Science Lab outside SLA. As few as 9 credits of the 42 Advanced Course credits must come from inside SLA and outside the student's primary major. Even these 9 credits are waived for students with a dual degree.

More importantly, each individual student is a different case. Students bring in dual credits and transfer credits that affect how many of the Baccalaureate Competencies they must complete. Dual-degree students with a primary major outside SLA and a second major inside SLA may still have to complete some of these requirements to fulfill their SLA major program or their primary School's requirements.

### **Can we project how many credit hours we might lose under this proposal?**

It is impossible to answer this question precisely. However, starting with the baseline of current dual-degree students with an SLA major, we estimated the likely credit hour losses that would result from this proposal.

As of Fall 2018, the School had:

- 193 double major students
- 113 have both majors in Liberal Arts
- 17 have their primary major in Liberal Arts
- 62 have their secondary major in Liberal Arts

For minors, the Fall 2018 numbers were:

- 479 students have a minor in Liberal Arts and major in another school
- 500 students have a minor in Liberal Arts and major in Liberal Arts

We started with two assumptions. First, all dual-degree students with a secondary major in SLA would accept the waiver and drop their SLA BCs. In addition, all dual-degree students with a primary major in SLA would also accept the waiver, change their primary major to a secondary major, and drop their SLA BCs. This is a worst-case scenario, but if students can eliminate one set of BCs, they likely will choose to do so. All told, we assume that all 79 current dual-degree students would choose to drop their *unnneeded* SLA BCs under this proposal.

The important word is "unneeded." Dual-degree students may not have to complete their SLA BCs, but they may still need to take some of the same courses to fulfill either their SLA major's requirements or the School requirements where their primary major is located. To estimate how many BCs are needed versus unneeded for the average dual degree student, we asked Sam Walters, Director of Advising, to analyze a sample of current SLA dual-degree students.

Ms. Walters selected a representative mix of 25% of the 62 dual-degree students with a secondary major in SLA (16 students with primary majors in different Schools). She selected 50% of the 17 dual-degree students with a primary major in SLA (9 students with secondary majors in different Schools). Then she ran Academic Advisement Reports for each of these 25 students. First, she listed all of the courses each dual-degree student would have to complete in fulfilling the SLA BCs without the waiver. Then she listed all of the BC-courses each student would still need to take as part of their SLA major or outside School requirements even with the waiver. We include Ms. Walters' detailed analysis in Appendix B.

Here is a summary chart of the 25 student sample population:

|                           | Credits SLA earns by requiring baccalaureate competencies | Credits SLA earns by waving baccalaureate competencies |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Primary Major outside SLA | 264-276   | 88-187   |
| Primary Major inside SLA  | 219   | 49-106   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>483-495</b>  | <b>137-293</b>   |

For some students, there is a range of required BC-courses, as individual students might choose to complete some required courses inside or outside SLA. Here are our findings:

1. On average, SLA would lose between 11.8 and 5.6 credit hours for each of the 62 current dual-degree students with a primary major outside SLA. (Calculation: Take the high total of 276 credits. Subtract 88 to get the high end of the range = 188. Subtract 187 to get the low end of the range = 89. Divide each total by 16 for the 16 students in the sample.)
2. Assuming 62 outside majors, the dual degree waiver would lose the School 729 credit hours at the high end and 347 credit hours at the low end. (Calculation: Multiply the average credit hour losses by 62 for the 62 students in this category.)
3. On average, SLA would lose between 18.9 and 12.6 credit hours for each of the 17 current dual-degree students with a primary major inside SLA and a second major outside. (Calculation: Take the total of 219. Subtract 49 to get the high end of the range = 170. Subtract 113 to get the low end of the range = 106. Divide each total by 9 for the 9 students in the sample.)
4. Assuming 17 inside majors, the dual degree waiver would lose the School 321 credit hours at the high end and 214 credit hours at the low end. (Calculation: Multiply the average credit hour losses by 17 for the 17 students in this category.)

*All told our projected estimate of the worst-case total credit hour losses for the School is 1,050 credit hours. It is important to emphasize that this figure is not credit-hour losses per year, but rather over the duration these students' undergraduate careers. This worst-case estimate is the sum of the high credit hour losses for both groups of dual degree students. (Calculation: 729 + 321 = 1,050.)*

### **Can we project how many credit hours we might gain under this proposal?**

This projection is even harder to estimate because we cannot predict how many new students might opt for a Liberal Arts Advantage Dual Degree if the waiver is approved. We offer instead a projection of what it would take to break even given the projected worst-case losses of 1,050 credit hours. Assuming the School gains 15 extra credit hours when a minor becomes a major, we would need to convert into dual-degree seekers 70 of the 479 students who currently have a minor in Liberal Arts and major in another School.

At Purdue University, the College of Liberal Arts has already implemented a similar dual-degree waiver that they call Degree+. Since its implementation in Fall 2018, 200 students have declared their intention to pursue a second degree in Liberal Arts. They have seen a large number of minors converting to majors. Popular combinations are languages and science; health and business; communication studies, sociology, and political science with engineering. Overall, all departments have benefitted from this program.

### **Should we prevent students who declare a primary SLA major from switching to a secondary SLA major to avoid the Baccalaureate Competencies?**

Currently 17 students have a primary major in SLA and a secondary major in another School. Although average projected credit hour losses are relatively higher per student for this group, the small size of the group mitigates these losses. More importantly, we view such a prohibition as neither feasible nor ethical.

### **Should we we waive all of the Baccalaureate Competencies or only some of them?**

This question raises important philosophical issues about the integrity of the School's priorities as expressed in our curricular requirements. The faculty devoted extensive discussion last year to the wisdom of reconfiguring certain BCs from languages to history. But the current proposal raises two different questions.

First, are certain BC requirements more important than other requirements? There are strong arguments to be made for each of our BC-courses. For example, a second Writing course is foundational to developing the abilities of clear, persuasive communication we prize in Liberal Arts. Cultural immersion in another language can challenge provincial ways of thinking and accustomed cultural assumptions. The distancing of historical inquiry relativizes established social norms and calls into question presumably unchanging truths. Interdisciplinary training in both Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences cultivates the well-roundedness we seek in our students. How do we decide which of these or other curricular priorities are the critical ones to require of all dual-degree seekers while we waive the other BCs as secondary?

Second, in sacrificing these important BC courses, what other courses and training might dual-degree students gain? Under the Liberal Art Advantage, these dual-degree seekers as a group might not be taking some of the lower-level Gen Ed courses in the BCs, but as individuals they will be taking many more advanced courses in their new majors. In effect, there will be a shift from lower-level Gen Eds to higher-level courses in majors. To take one example, while some dual-degree students will lose out on language instruction up to a second-year proficiency, dual-degree students in World Languages and Cultures will have much richer learning and more immersive experiences in their majors. The same movement into advanced coursework will occur in the other majors that dual-degree students declare. As the School has made it a priority to increase majors, along with minors and certificates, partly to increase enrollments in upper-level courses, we believe this tradeoff makes practical and pedagogical sense.

See Appendix A for sample Dual Degree Maps prepared by Sam Walters, as they give a sense of how much Gen Ed and advanced coursework dual-degree students would be completing in SLA.

**Should we require a minimum number of SLA credit hours for a Liberal Arts Advantage dual degree?**

In some of the dual-degree programs already established by the School, students are required to take a minimum number of credit hours from the BCs. One merit of this "soft waiver" of BCs is the nudge it gives students to choose SLA courses when they can choose among a variety of Schools' courses in fulfilling a specific curricular requirement. Nevertheless, we propose a "hard waiver" because we believe that the simplicity of a full waiver of all SLA BCs will communicate a powerful message to students and make the School's many advantages in each of our majors as visible as possible.

Although this proposal would waive all BC requirements, we would still list all SLA courses as electives for dual-degree students to select in fulfilling campus requirements and their Schools' requirements.

At Purdue University, after implementing this program last fall, advisors note that students continue to take Liberal Arts courses that are not required if they fit into electives for their primary plan. The Degree + initiative, which waives 57 credits of BC in Liberal Arts, works well with other initiatives that Purdue has taken to increase their undergraduate enrollment. For example, degree-in-3 in Liberal Arts leads students to consider adding a second major or to start a graduate program early.

As the analysis in Appendix B illustrates, dual-degree students will end up taking some—often a significant—proportion of SLA BC courses anyway. In practice, a hard waiver will not eliminate all BC courses, and it will have a much more punchy effect in attracting new students to the Schools' many majors.