

Approved by the FSCUE on October 4, 2011
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Plan for communicating University Seminars can count as electives to majors and minors

For some time, there has been discussion of the perceived difficulty of completing minors or additional majors under SAGES. In Spring 2011, a suggestion was made that a potential approach to alleviating the problem would be to codify a process for identifying SAGES University Seminars that count as electives in majors and/or minors. While it has always been permissible for students to petition departments to allow University Seminars to count as electives in majors or minors, this option has been poorly understood and is not well known to both students and faculty.

In order to better publicize the opportunity to have University Seminars count as electives and to codify the process, it is recommended that:

- 1) Departments or programs should be asked whether any of the existing University Seminars could serve as electives for majors and or minors under their auspice,
- 2) If department or program faculty approves one or more University Seminars as electives, they would communicate this by memo to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and
- 3) Means would be identified to allow students/advisors to recognize which University Seminars may count as electives in majors/minors

Each of these points is explained in greater detail below:

Departments or programs would be asked whether any of the existing University Seminars could serve as electives for majors and or minors under their auspice. Faculty in departments/programs would consider whether any University Seminars would be suitable as an elective to majors and/or minors under their auspices. Departments may choose to limit the number of University Seminars that may count toward major and/or minor electives. University Seminars would still not count toward general education breadth requirements. To support the consideration of such approval, SAGES would provide a summary of all University Seminars offered in the last five years including the course number (e.g. USNA 226), course title (e.g. Evolution of human behavior), course description, and instructor(s). For more information about the course (for example, for a syllabus) the department could ask SAGES for the material or ask the seminar instructor (since in many cases the instructor is in the department). In the future, the approval process for a new course would include departmental consideration of the appropriateness of listing the seminar as an elective for the major and/or minor, and this would be submitted on the Course Action Form.

If department or program faculty approves one or more University Seminars as electives, they would communicate this by memo to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. A list of University Seminars

deemed suitable as electives for a major/minor by vote of faculty in departments, would be communicated to Jeffrey Wolcowitz, Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Means would be identified to allow students/advisors to recognize which University Seminars may count as electives in majors/minors

Several mechanisms exist to allow recognition of University Seminars approved as electives in majors/minors

- 1) Once approved as an elective to a minor or major, the University Seminar would appear in a student's
 - A) Academic Requirements in SIS if they had declared the major and/or minor, and
 - B) "What if" degree audit report available in SIS.

- 2) Other ways that these courses might be recognized include
 - A) Listed as a course note on the Schedule of Courses (e.g. "USSY 292 F is an approved elective for the English minor" (does not require filing a CAF),
 - B) Shown in the Course List - a drop-down menu in the Schedule of Courses (currently includes a list of Departmental Seminars, Global and Cultural Diversity courses, etc),
 - C) The list of major and minor requirements in the General Bulletin,
 - D) A maintained list at the SAGES website, and/or
 - E) A maintained list in departments and programs.

A publicity campaign would be undertaken by SAGES and Undergraduate Studies to alert students and faculty to the opportunity to count select University Seminars in majors and/or minors and how to discover which seminars count for which majors and/or minors.

The steps described above do not require a vote to change SAGES in as much as SAGES is not altered. The steps merely codify a process for identifying and communicating those University Seminars that can count as approved electives. Faculty in each department/program retain the authority to decide whether to allow such electives in principle and to decide which, if any, University Seminars are approved electives.

Larry Parker, chair

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