

## **Task force on CAS requirements**

### **2023-2024 Executive Summary and Recommendations**

We first looked at requirements for colleges of arts & science at benchmark universities. We found that all of them required courses in the humanities, the social sciences, and natural sciences, and all required three or four courses in a world language other than English.

We had lots of discussion about the language requirement. We noted that both the number of students taking language placement tests and the enrollment in the 202 courses has decreased. What is the goal of the requirement, and should the requirement change? Foreign language curricula are unique in that they provide intercultural communication skills, one way we learn about other cultures. We do think the study of foreign language is a vital part of our liberal arts curriculum. We are open to further discussion of possible changes to this requirement.

Nearly half of the faculty in CAS responded to a survey about the requirements in Fall 2023. Most people say we should change our requirements, but when asked about each requirement individually most people want to keep them – except that people want to reduce the number of natural science credits. The most controversial requirements were CAS-W and language.

More than half of the LDAs participated in focus groups in Spring 2024. We heard that CAS students sometimes have trouble with the language requirement, the extra natural science hours, and the distribution requirements within the cognates. Many LDAs had stories of students from other divisions who looked into double majoring in CAS but could not because of our requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Remove the CAS-W requirement. Some departments find it very hard to deliver this well, and the need for the requirement is lessened now that there is an Advanced Writing requirement in the Miami Plan. Many faculty indicated that their department would keep the requirement would keep a class on writing in the major.
- Probably remove the CAS-QL requirement. Many have forgotten its purpose and no longer differentiate it from the Formal Reasoning requirement.
- Reduce the hours for CAS-D, Natural Science, from 10 to 9 to make the requirements for all three cognates the same.
- Remove the need for the CAS advanced hours, as many believe students meet it automatically.
- Propose that languages at the 202 level and above work toward approval as a Miami Plan Global Inquiry courses. Continue discussion about reimagining the language requirement.
- Improve our marketing. Even some of our LDAs find the current requirements confusing and random. We could make the CAS requirements less intimidating by listing them as the Miami Plan plus extra requirements, making it clear how much double-dipping is possible. We could create themed minors that encompass our requirements, whether for our own students or for those from other divisions. We could stress the employability that comes from the additional CAS requirements; what are our students gaining from them?
- Remember that, throughout this process, many people have asked us to fight to keep the CAS requirements and to fight for the liberal arts.