College Senate Resolutions

4-28-1997

Computer Skills Proposal

The College at Brockport, College Senate

TO: President John E. Van de Wetering

FROM: The Faculty Senate Meeting on: **April 21, 1997**

RE: I.   Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
        II. Recommendation (Urging the fitness of)
        III. Other (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)
            For your information

SUBJ: ***Computer Skills Proposal***

Signed: _Anne H. Parsons_   Date Sent: _4 / 28 / 97_
(Faculty Senate President)

TO: The Faculty Senate

FROM: President John E. Van de Wetering

RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution

        a. Accepted. Effective Date: Fall 98

        b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on ___ / ___ / ___

        c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

    II, III.

        a. Received and acknowledged

        b. Comment: _____

_____

DISTRIBUTION: _Cover sheet only - full proposal_
available through Faculty Senate

Distribution Date: _5 / 21 / 97_ Signed: _____
(President of the College)

Resolution Disk::11-9697.res::ayk

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
COMPUTER SKILLS PROPOSAL

Introduction: This proposal represents the fruit of considerable discussion and consultation by the General Education Committee and serves to replace the current "Computer Literacy" or "T" requirement of the College.

Our proposal is predicated on a distinction between **basic or foundational computer skills** on the one hand and **more advanced skills or "literacy"** on the other.

We believe that **foundational skills** (i.e. manipulating windows, managing files, word processing, internet navigation) should be acquired early in our students' stay at Brockport, given the growing utilization of computer applications throughout the curriculum, and that they are appropriately addressed within the General Education Program. Our proposal outlines a new **exam-based format** for encouraging students to acquire these skills early and for certifying that they have done so.
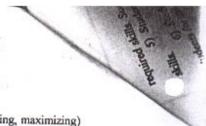
We believe that more **advanced skills**, which we refer to as **"computer literacy,"** are most appropriately addressed within the major field or department, for that is where specific applications are used. These applications are so varied and rapidly changing that a college-wide exit requirement at this level makes little sense. We are, however, recommending a college-wide review of such departmentally based "computer literacies" to ensure that our various major programs are providing graduating students with the advanced skills they will need for work or further study.

PART I: Foundational Computer Skills and The Computer Skills Examination (CSE)

A. **Purpose:** Brockport's Foundational Computer Skills requirement is intended to encourage students to acquire basic computer skills as early as possible so as to facilitate the use of these skills throughout their academic programs.

NOTE: This represents a change from the current requirement, which was largely intended to certify the possession of "computer literacy" upon graduation. In making this change, we are acknowledging that computer applications are increasingly pervasive in the curriculum and that most students will in fact develop more advanced skills, or "computer literacy," as they move through their various courses of study. What we seek to achieve with this requirement is rather to provide some basic skills foundation on which further applications and "literacy" can be built and to do so as early as possible.

B. **Foundational Computer Skills Requirement:** All students will be required to take and pass a Computer Skills Examination which will assess their ability in the following areas:

1) Basic computer manipulations
 --Starting windows, mouse operations
 --Manipulating windows (moving, resizing, closing, minimizing, maximizing)
 --Using menus, icons, buttons, text and other sliders, Help features
 --Managing files (directory and file searching, creating, renaming, deleting, copying files)
 --Controlling and customizing (Changing fonts, resolution, color, mouse sensitivity)

2) Word Processing
 --Entering, deleting, marking/moving text, word-wrapping, saving, exiting
 --Formatting (vertical spacing, margins, pagination, paragraphs, justification, centering)
 --Controlling fonts (size, style, treatment, underlining, accents & special characters)
 --Special effects (headers/footers, page breaks, widows, portrait/landscape)
 --Printing (printer configuration, connection)

3) Navigating the Internet
 --E-Mail (address conventions, composing, sending, saving, receiving, customs)
 --FTP (commands and options, binary vs text)
 --Telnet (commands and options, access restrictions, customs)
 --World Wide Web (hardware/software access modes, URLs, home pages, hypertext,
HTML, images, sound, using search engines)

The examination will include practical hands-on assessment of students' ability to perform basic computer operations in the above areas.

The examination should be taken by the end of the freshman year for students who enter Brockport as new freshmen or as transfers with 24 credits or less. All other students should take the exam no later than the end of the second semester following their matriculation at the college. Students who have not done so may have their registration blocked in courses for which passing the exam is a prerequisite

NOTE: This changes our Computer Skills requirement from a course-based to an examination-based requirement. Students will no longer be required to take a "T" course, though they may choose to do so as a means of preparing for the examination. It effectively eliminates the GE course requirement in this area and substitutes for it a required examination. Departments may wish to make passing the CSE a prerequisite or co-requisite for certain more advanced courses.

C. **Preparing for the Examination**: Students may prepare for the Computer Skills Examination in a number of ways:
 1) Some students will be prepared to take the examination based on their previous knowledge and experience.
 2) Students may choose to prepare for the examination largely on their own, making use of tutorials and HELP features of many computer applications.
 3) Students may pick up the required skills in some of their lower division General Education courses which teach and use these skills.
 4) Students may take a regular course which incorporates explicit instruction in the

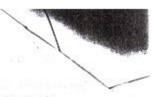required skills. Such courses will be labeled with a "T".

    5) Students may take one or more non-credit workshops which address the required skills.

    6) Students may take a one credit "quarter" course, explicitly designed to prepare students for the Computer Skills Examination.

D. **Constructing the Examination**: The Computer Skills Examination will be constructed by a group of knowledgeable faculty and staff members under the aegis and with the approval of the General Education Committee.

E. **Administering the Examination**: The examination will be administered at specified and widely advertised times and places each semester by a person or group of persons identified by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The results will then be entered into the DARS/Eagle system for purposes of advisement and certifying completion of the requirement.

F. **Implementation**: An "implementation group" of faculty and staff, under the leadership of Craig Lending (Biology) have been at work during the Spring 1997 academic year, considering the practical details of constructing, administering, and recording the results of the Computer Skills Examination. That process will continue throughout the 1997-98 academic year with **the new requirement scheduled to take effect for students entering the college in the Fall of 1998.** After three years of operation, the General Education Committee will review the requirement to determine if it is still needed. If the computer skills of our entering students are then judged sufficient for work at the college level, the requirement will lapse.

PART II: Computer Literacy and Departmental Curricula

    We affirm that the Foundational Computer Skills requirement, defined in Part I, represents only a modest platform from which real "computer literacy" can be developed. We further believe that those more advanced "literacies" and applications, both in higher education and in the workplace, are so varied as to defy certification by any across-the-board graduation requirement. It is, therefore, within departmental or major programs that they are best addressed and certified.

    We recommend a **college-wide, departmentally based review** of the computer literacies taught in and required by each of our major programs. Such a review would take place through the normal process of academic consultation: departmental committees, chairs, Deans, and the Academic Vice President. The purpose of such a review would be to encourage each department to define what computer skills its graduating students should have, to assess the extent to which those skills are now being taught and/or required, and to make appropriate curricular adjustments where necessary.

Such a review might have any number of outcomes:

a) Many departments already have embedded more advanced computer skills in their curricula and may feel no need to take further action.

b) Some departments may want to adjust their own curriculum to incorporate more advanced literacies, either through their own courses or co-requisites taught in other departments.

c) Some departments may choose to work cooperatively with closely related units in developing appropriate modules or courses.

d) New needs or opportunities for faculty development in computer applications may emerge from such a review.

e) Some departments might feel that the foundational skills, defined in Part I, are sufficient for their students