

Faculty wants foreign language mandatory

By Chris Streppa

UNCA's Faculty Senate is considering adding a six-hour Foreign Language requirement and a three-hour Fine Arts requirement to UNCA's general education curriculum.

If approved, these requirements will apply to all students enrolling under the revised catalog.

Nearly 10 percent of all UNCA students now take a foreign language, but it is to fulfill a major, not a general education, requirement.

The Task Force proposal would require all students to take two three-hour courses combining language skills with cultural awareness. They could choose between Spanish, French, German, Latin, and classical Greek.

"The value of a foreign language requirement is that it breaks down the monocultural and monolingual barriers," says Associate Professor of Spanish Marcel Andrade.

He explains that a nation's language is a reflection of its culture, and he believes students benefit when they reach beyond the world they grow up in.

"We should not be liv-

ing in a world of isolation," agrees Professor of Economics Shirley Browning. Unfortunately, he adds, the United States is "the only major industrialized country in the world [where the educational system] does not respect the learning of another language."

Browning supports the Task Force proposal because he believes the study of a foreign language and culture is "critical to a solid liberal arts education."

He adds that the requirement should be more than an academic exercise. It should also provide students with the "everyday communications skills" they need to travel.

They should be able to read newspapers, he explains, or order a meal, with assurance that they'll receive something resembling what they asked for.

But Arts Major Celeste Pipitone believes it's "really impossible" to teach a foreign language to students who are already "set in English."

If it's going to be a college requirement, she argues, begin teaching it in the first grade. "It should be an elective at our age," she insists,

"not a requirement."

Political science major Jerry Sloan says he enjoyed his German classes, but he also disagrees with the proposed requirement.

Six semester hours will only give students background, he maintains, not proficiency. Besides, he argues, "a foreign language is something you have to really want, or it will shoot down your grade point average."

Rennie Shealy, an UNCA student seeking teacher certification, agrees that foreign languages "stump a lot of people."

But her travels throughout the country convinced her "the day is coming when people in any area of public service will be required to speak a second language."

Shealy believes a six-hour requirement will allow students to "pick up enough to get by." And she adds that it can "open a door within your major" because it's valuable knowledge in almost any field in the job market.

She also supports the proposed three-hour fine arts requirement which, according to the Task Force, would expose students to "artistic creation and aesthetic experience."

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either of two ways-- cynically or as puppets, said Sabo.

Young people chose to act as puppets in the 1984 election, according to Sabo.

Sabo said people responded to political advertising saying the Democrats would increase taxes \$157 a month by voting Republican.

What the advertisement did not report was that the increase would affect only people with yearly incomes of \$50,000 or more said Sabo.

Yet the viewers took the advertisements at face

value and did not vote for the Democrats. This response was especially noticeable among young voters, the "social conscience of the country," who approach politics with the attitude of 'How does it affect me?,' said Sabo.

Sabo stressed this focus on the individual's welfare rather than the nation's well-being as an indication of the new "me" generation.

This is significant because it changes politics into a spectator sport. People simply enjoy watching the race and cheering on their favorite

politicians, according to Sabo. Nationally voters chose Reagan, but Democrats won the many of the Congress

and state legislature races. This gives the Democrats "continued strength at grassroots level," said Sabo.

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the arts do not have a high position in our society or a strong place in public education."

Assistant Professor of Art Joz Vandermeer agrees that the university system in the United States centers on "practical" education.

"The focus," he says, "is not on what can I do, but on how can I use it to make money?" He believes exposure to fine arts can provide balance between the aesthetic and practical sides of life and "help make us whole human beings."

Looking at the situation from the student side, pre-law major student Charles Wardlaw believes students "are already getting enough of that kind of exposure in humanities." While he agrees it would be a "great elective," he admits he would resent the requirement.

On the other hand, Associate Professor of Philosophy Deryl Howard expresses the sentiment of many educators when he says that "the benefit of a liberal arts education is that it expands a person's dimension of experience which expands the person."

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