

UNC Swim Test Might Be Eliminated

University officials said the revised curriculum could be approved by the Faculty Council in spring of 2003.

By Brook Corwin
Staff Writer

UNC's swim test, one of the University's oldest and most debated graduation requirements, might soon become a thing of the past.

A campus committee charged with revising the UNC undergraduate curriculum has removed the swim test requirement from the preliminary draft of a new curriculum that was unveiled in April.

Under the current curriculum, students must satisfy two physical education requirements and pass the swim test, which consists of swimming 50 yards and then staying afloat in the water for five minutes.

Only students with legitimate physical or psychological excuses are allowed to not take the swim test.

The new curriculum requires only

one physical education course, and no swim test is required for graduation.

After final revisions are made, the curriculum must be approved by the Faculty Council.

The final curriculum proposal is expected to go before the Faculty Council by spring 2003.

It will be implemented for the 2003-04 academic year at the earliest.

The University's curriculum was last revised in 1980.

Officials on the steering committee for curriculum review said they eliminated the requirement because it did not fit into the framework of an academic education.

"There are lots of skills that students need," said Tom Tweed, associate director of the undergraduate curriculum and member of the steering committee.

"Our charge as a committee was determining what are the most fundamental components of a general education ... not about identifying all the skills necessary in real life."

But Meg Lanchantin, director of UNC's physical education program and a proponent of the swim test, said most other life skills — such as driving a car or

balancing a checkbook — are already taught at the primary education level, while swimming is not a requirement.

"I feel as educators we have a responsibility to not only teach students the

importance of survival skills but also to ensure that they are able to use those skills," Lanchantin said.

The swim test first appeared at UNC in the early 1940s when the campus became a training site for Navy midshipmen during World War II. The midshipmen were all required to pass the Navy's swim test.

Eventually the requirement spread to UNC students, and by 1947 all students were required to pass the exam in order to graduate from the University.

Originally a more rigorous exam that required being able to swim several different strokes, the test was given its current format during the 1970s.

UNC is one of only a handful of institutions nationwide that has passage of

the swim test as a graduation requirement.

Fred Mueller, chairman of the Department of Exercise and Sports Science, is one of many faculty and staff members who has taught UNC swimming courses designed to help students pass the test.

Mueller said his experience teaching such classes has made him a strong proponent of keeping the test as a requirement.

"Many of our students never have the opportunity growing up to get in the water," Mueller said. "It's a really gratifying experience to see them learn to swim ... and I bet if you asked those students now, they'd be in favor of the test."

Tweed said the physical education department will continue to offer beginning swim classes and that the committee still hopes students will take advantage of those courses, even if the swim test is not a requirement for graduation.

"We certainly are not saying whether learning to swim is important," Tweed said.

"The question is whether swimming should be a part of a good educational framework."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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TOM TWEED
Undergraduate Curriculum Associate Director

Funding Change Delayed 1 Year

Lawmakers said they will wait until the 2003 session to move enrollment growth to the continuation budget.

By Rohit Patel
Staff Writer

UNC-system administrators and legislators say that a change to how university enrollment is funded will not occur this session but that the policy change will remain a top priority for legislators in the future.

Funding for enrollment growth is allocated through the state's expansion budget, which serves mostly to provide revenue for items not funded in previous years.

Some legislative leaders and system officials are hoping to move enrollment growth to the state's continuation budget, which carries over from year to year.

The difference is that in tough budget times the N.C. General Assembly is hard-pressed to fund expansionary items, and University enrollment growth falls in that category.

Doubt over whether the legislature would find the \$66 million needed for enrollment growth for next year prompted the UNC-system Board of Governors to approve an 8 percent

tuition increase for in-state students and 12 percent increase for out-of-state students in March to fund about half that total.

Just days before the BOG approved the increase, Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, D-Dare, and House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, sent a letter to the BOG vowing to support moving enrollment funding from the expansion to the continuation budget.

But Jeff Davies, UNC-system vice president for finance, said this move will probably not be made until next year.

Davies said he is not concerned that the move will not be made this session.

"The parties involved in this process realize that the first real opportunity we have to move enrollment growth to the continuation budget won't be until next year," he said. "The timing is such that it is just not possible right now."

BOG Chairman Brad Wilson said that if enrollment growth is not shifted to the continuation budget, the BOG will be forced to consider other tuition increases in the future to fund enrollment growth.

Amy Fulk, Basnight's press secretary, said there is a positive consensus in the Senate regarding the switch from the expansion to continuation budget.

"A lot of senators agree on switching enrollment growth to the continuation budget, and so far there has been no strong opposition to this plan," she said.

Both the Senate and the House budgets provide the \$66 million in enrollment funding that UNC-system administrators requested.

Danny Lineberry, Black's press secretary, said that the move has not been discussed formally in the House and that it is doubtful that it will occur this session.

Sen. Walter Dalton, D-Rutherford, chairman of the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, said he is also eager to see a change occur.

"It is important to switch enrollment growth to the continuation budget in order to continue the access of our schools to prospective students."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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