

ACADEMIC SENATE

OF

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN DETERMINING WHAT CONSTITUTES A BACCALAUREATE LEVEL COURSE

(from report dated November 7, 1986)

Because baccalaureate level coursework is intended to contribute to the student's attainment of the objectives embodied in the baccalaureate degree, courses which are designated as baccalaureate level will meet, as one of several standards, the criterion of having a "bridging" function, helping to move the student from the skills and knowledge expected at entrance toward the competencies expected at graduation.

In areas of the curriculum for which the Intersegmental Senate Committee has identified expected entry-level competencies (e.g., English, mathematics, natural sciences), baccalaureate courses shall not replicate the skills and knowledge which are entry expectations but instead will require for satisfactory completion the prior attainment of such skills and knowledge. As comparable statements are developed in other areas of the curriculum, reference to entry-level expectations will be useful in helping to define baccalaureate level.

Various graduation expectations, such as those expressed in the goals of general education, the objectives of the various majors, in the standards for competency, and those expressed in such generalized expectations as "intellectual growth", also will influence the judgment as to what constitutes baccalaureate level coursework. Courses designed by qualified faculty to help qualified students move toward the attainment of those expectations generally will be of baccalaureate level. In such courses faculty judged by their peers to be qualified to teach the courses shall have the determining voice in the decisions as to content, instructional methodology, instructional support resources, and methods and standards for assessing performance. Qualified faculty shall construct and teach baccalaureate courses in ways which assure that the level is appropriate for enhancing the knowledge and skills of the adequately prepared student, and appropriate faculty entities shall have primary responsibility for making course level determinations.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING BACCALAUREATE LEVEL COURSES

There are four significant elements involved in this determination: the institution, the learner, the course, and the instructor/pedagogy. Course content alone will not determine acceptability for baccalaureate credit. The criteria are phrased in terms of expectations from each of the parties.

A. Institution

1. The course shall be taught by a qualified instructor.
2. Qualified faculty, as judged by their peers, shall make the decisions as to course content, instructional methodology, instructional support requirements, and methods and standards for assessing student performance.
3. Adequate instructional support resources shall be available to all students who enroll in the course, including facilities, library

materials, and access to qualified faculty outside of class meeting times.

B. Learner

The learner shall be required to bring to the course:

1. a level of intellect, skill, prior knowledge, and maturity consistent with entry-level collegiate expectations and the stated prerequisite(s), if any, for that course:
2. learning skills and a vocabulary necessary for the completion of a baccalaureate level course:
3. the capacity to think critically and to understand and apply concepts.

C. Course

1. The course shall:

- a. be aimed more at understanding theory and concepts which are grounded in the fundamental academic disciplines rather than at the acquisition of immediate technical skills.
- b. treat subject matter with an intensity and pace that establishes an expectation for significantly greater learner independence than that required at the secondary level.
- c. require the student to continue development of communication skills appropriate for higher education

2. Coursework that:

- a. enhances understanding of intellectual, scientific, and cultural concepts and traditions generally may be considered baccalaureate level.
- b. enhances understanding of occupational and professional fields usually requiring experience in higher education as prerequisite to employment in such fields may be considered baccalaureate level
- c. provides instruction in occupational fields not usually requiring experience in higher education as a prerequisite to such fields may be considered baccalaureate level if the emphasis is upon providing a general introduction to the field, (focusing on an understanding of the field) rather than only upon the development of technical skills required for immediate employment.
- d. is remedial or college preparatory shall not be considered baccalaureate level

3. Successful completion of the course shall move the student toward acquiring competencies expected of university graduates.

D. Pedagogy

1. There shall be opportunity for student-faculty interaction of a kind and variety commensurate with achievement of course objectives
2. The method of evaluation of student performance and achievement in courses shall discriminate among levels of quality and among attainments appropriate to both entry and exit expectations.

(Approved by Academic Senate California Community Colleges, April, 1987)