

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

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October 2, 2015

Bruce Scott, EdD
Associate Dean
College of Education and Human Services and
Graduate College
Abilene Christian University

Re: Accelerated MSSW degree plan proposal

Dear Dr Scott:

Attached you will find the above proposal. It is being submitted for consideration by the appropriate College of Education and Human Services council. Please let me know if questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Paris', written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Paris, PhD

Professor, Graduate Program Director
School of Social Work
Abilene Christian University

Masters of Science in Social Work (MSSW)

Proposal for an Accelerated MSSW Degree Plan (AMSSWP)

Description

An increasing number of ACU departments and programs are offering qualified undergraduates the opportunity to integrate undergraduate and professional training by counting graduate course work toward both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Other prestigious universities are also following this path. Currently the number of graduate hours accepted toward ACU undergraduate degrees range from 6 to 24. The School of Social Work is proposing to offer an integrated degree plan for qualified undergraduate students to count up to 24 hours of MSSW graduate study toward elective hours in their BA or BS degree programs by use of University general electives.

The 24 hours of graduate course work will be chosen from required courses in the MSSW two-year curriculum (see *ACU Catalog*, pp. 156-157). Students who participate in this proposed degree plan may take up to nine (9) semester hours of graduate work, per term, in the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters after they have achieved 90 semester hours with an undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students will be advised to take no more than 12 hours including the graduate courses in a regular semester. Students will be awarded their BS or BA degree upon completion of 128 hours.

Rationale and advantages

The most important advantage of the AMSSWP is that it will change the relationship between undergraduate and professional study in social work at ACU. Beginning with degree advising in their second or third year all non-social work majors will be able to see their ACU career as a seamless program concluding in a respected professional credential. This is the professional aspiration most often expressed by undergraduates wishing to change their majors. For the students who choose the AMSSWP, we believe that the choice will change the way they view their undergraduate years from being "more school" to "professional training."

The fact that ACU undergraduates will be able to elect graduate courses will also enhance the challenge of their undergraduate experience.

Accelerated MSSW Degree Plan

We believe the AMSSWP is a unique opportunity for students that will be a strong advantage for recruiting students with non-social work undergraduate degrees who might otherwise choose competing graduate schools for their masters work. It will also be a strong incentive to ACU undergraduates to continue at ACU for their MSSW training. Our review of existing graduate social work programs finds no "competitor" institutions with similar programs for the potential pool of two-year non-social work students.

We have an advising and course scheduling plan that will integrate 6 graduate hours into students' degree programs starting in the Spring 2016 semester. Beginning in Fall 2016, the flexibility to add an additional 18 hours will allow us to create a true BS/BA integrated program so that students can achieve a master's degree and be eligible to apply for licensure in as little as 3 years. The AMSSWP will allow us to accomplish this within a developmentally sound "ACU experience."

Proposed Catalogue text — Accelerated Masters of Science in Social Work

For non-BSSW students who are committed to being a social work practitioner, the School of Social Work offers an integrated degree plan — the Accelerated Masters of Social Work (AMSSWP) — that permits qualified students to count up to 24 hours of graduate study toward both the Bachelor's degree and the Master of Science in Social Work. Students who meet the admission requirements for the AMSSWP may take up to 24 hours of graduate course work in their junior and senior years.

The 24 hours of graduate course work will be chosen from required courses in the Master of Science in Social Work curriculum. Students who participate in this degree plan may take up to 6 semester hours of graduate work in the Summer and 9 semester hours of graduate work in the Fall and Spring semesters after they have achieved 90 semester hours with an undergraduate GPA of 3.5. Students will be advised to take no more than 12 hours, including the graduate courses, in a regular semester. Students will be awarded their Bachelor's degree upon completion of 128 hours.

Interested students are encouraged to seek pre-admission to the AMSSWP after they have completed 30 semester hours by applying to the Graduate Program Director in the School of Social Work. Students must apply to the ACU Graduate School for full admission to the ACU MSSW program in the Fall semester after they have completed 60 hours and have a GPA of 3.50.

Graduate courses will count as general electives or electives in the student's undergraduate major and may not be substituted for required courses in their undergraduate degree.

In order to continue in the AMSSWP students must make no grade lower than B in the graduate courses and maintain a cumulative 3.5 GPA. Individual students' academic programs must be approved by the Graduate Program Director each semester a student participates in the AMSSWP. Final admission to the MSSW program will be based on the student's satisfaction of all graduate admission requirements.

Sample Curriculum of 18-24 hours graduate credit:

SOCW625: Human Behavior	3 hrs
SOCW641: Social Welfare Policy	3 hrs
SOCW615: Social Work Research Methods	3 hrs
SOCW626: Diversity	3 hrs
SOCW616: Program and Practice Evaluation	3 hrs
SOCW642: Policy Analysis and Practice	<u>3 hrs</u>

Total 18 hrs towards 64 hour 2 year degree

Remaining 6 hours to be added via curriculum revisions at a later date.

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement

This proposal will have no impact on the number of credit hours sold for undergraduate students, as it does not reduce the total number of hours required for graduation (128). It does, however, potentially impact the number of graduate hours sold, as students participating in this program will take 18-24 fewer hours in their graduate curriculum. This fall, only one ACU non-BSSW graduate enrolled in the two-year MSSW program; previous years have ranged from 1-3 students per year from ACU.

The School's projections for future years, if this proposal is approved, is for the number of students in this category to increase to 7-8 within four years. If all the increase in ACU recruiting into the two-year MSSW program were to come from this program, the increase in graduate tuition revenue (based on Fall 2015 rates) would still nearly triple over current revenues from this source (a minimum of 320 additional hours sold over a two-year period, versus current rates of 64-128 hours presently generated from this category of new MSSW students).

Submitted,



Wayne Paris, PhD, LCSW

Professor, Graduate Program Director

School of Social Work

Abilene Christian University

10/4/15

Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve

I = Information Item¹

R = Advise & Respond²

Course Number _____ or Degree Plan(s) Accelerated MSSW Degree Plan
State the requested change and reason. A memo may be attached if more space is necessary.

The attached proposal is the outline of a plan that would allow undergraduate non-social majors to complete their undergraduate major and attain 18-24 hours towards their MSSW degree at the same time.

Circle the number that corresponds to the requested change. Degree plan changes are on the second page.

Change to a Course		COUNCIL ³								
		Dept./School	College Academic	Deans	TEC	UGEC	UUAC	GRAD	Provost	President
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A		I			I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A		I			I	I
3.	Content (substantive change)	A	A	A		I			A	A
4.	Number of hours (lecture, lab, contact)	A	A	A		A			A	A
5.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I		I			I	I
6.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A		A			A	A
7.	Prerequisites	A	A	A		I			I	I
8.	Course fee(s)	A	--	A		--			A	I
9.	From U to G or G to U	A	A	A		A			A	A
10.	Cross list with another department: U or G level	A	A	A		A			A	A
11.	Department of record	A	A	A		A			A	A
12.	Open or close a course	A	A	A		A			A	A
13.	New course — See website for application and process. This change includes combining or splitting a course(s).	A	A	A		A			A	A

Note: When an academic unit does not have a council, the UGEC and/or UUAC will serve as its academic council, depending on the nature of the issue.

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Change to a Degree Plan		COUNCIL ¹							
		Dept./School	College Academic	Deans	TEC	UGEC	UUAC	GRAD	Provost
1.	University Requirements — Change in approved course content ⁶	A	A	A		A			A
2.	University Requirements — Add or drop a required course from the University Requirements chart ⁶	A	A	A		A			A
3.	University Requirements — Add or drop a course from a menu within the University Requirements ⁶	A	A	A		A			A
4.	University Requirements — Change hours within a menu on the University Requirements chart ⁶	A	A	A		A			A
5.	Major — Revision of major ^{4,5}	A	A	A		A			A
6.	Major — Adopt or change admission requirements	A	A	A		A			A
7.	Major — Add ^{4,5}	A	A	A		A			A
8.	Major — Discontinue (proposed by the department or college)	A	A	A		A			A
9.	Major — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	See below.							
10.	GPA — Revise major or cumulative requirement	A	A	A		A			A
11.	Minor — Revise course selection	A	A	A		I			I
12.	Minor — Add	A	A	A		A			A
13.	Minor — Discontinue (proposed by the department or college)	A	A	A		A			A
14.	Minor — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	See below.							
15.	Degree — Add	A	A	A		A			A
16.	Degree — Discontinue (proposed by the department or college)	A	A	A		A			A
17.	Degree — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	See below.							
18.	Any change to a graduate degree program	A	A	A		A			A

Provost-Proposed Change		COUNCIL ¹						
		Provost	Department	Dean	TEC	UUAC	Graduate	Faculty
1.	Major/Graduate Program — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	A	R	R		A		A
2.	Minor — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	A	R	R		A		A
3.	Degree — Discontinue (proposed by the Provost)	A	R	R		A		A

Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

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COUNCIL ³									
	Change to the Catalog Information	Dept./School	College Academic	Deans	UGEC	UUAC	GRAD	Provost	Faculty
1.	General requirements for graduation including course requirements that are common to all majors for all degrees ⁷					A		A	A
2.	Admission requirements					A		A	A
3.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension					A		A	A
4.	Requirements for graduating with honors					A		A	A
5.	Other academic policy changes					A		A	A

¹ Councils may request additional information about "Information" items. These items are approved as "Consent Agenda."

² The Dean and Department should respond to the Provost's recommendation to close a program in writing. Advise & Respond (R) requires that the voting body should receive the written responses at least one week prior to the vote.

³ All courses that meet University Requirements for general education must go through UGEC. Courses or degrees offered only to students seeking teacher certification must go through the Teacher Education Council. All undergraduate changes must go before the UUAC. All graduate degree plan changes must go through the Graduate Council.

⁴ A minimum of 30 hours is required for a major. A maximum is specified for each degree (e.g., BA, BS). The university minimum for elective hours is 6, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible.

⁵ Program or course changes that apply to any major that includes Teacher Certification will be reviewed by the college, the Teacher Education Council (TEC), and then the UUAC.

⁶ Courses that satisfy ACU's University Requirements (General Education) will normally have lower-level numbering, be free of prerequisites and co-requisites, appeal to more than one or two majors, and "not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession" (SACS 2.7.3). Departments may request exceptions to the first three criteria.

⁷ The UUAC approved the clarification that "general requirements for graduation" means the enumerated items in the "General Requirements for Bachelor's Degrees" section of the catalog.

Revised 10-16-13

Curriculum/Catalog Changes Signature Page

Department/School Chair(s)	
<u><i>Tr. H. H. H.</i></u>	<u>10/2/15</u>
Signature	Approval date
_____ Signature	_____ Approval date

College Academic Council(s)	
<u><i>Bruce Scott</i></u>	<u>10.28.2015</u>
Signature	Approval date
_____ Signature	_____ Approval date

Dean(s)	
<u><i>Bruce Scott</i></u>	<u>10.28.2015</u>
Signature	Approval date
_____ Signature	_____ Approval date

Teacher Education Council	
_____ Chair's signature	_____ Approval date

General Education Council	
_____ Chair's signature	_____ Approval date

Undergraduate Academic Council	
_____ Chair's signature	_____ Approval date

Graduate Council	
_____ Chair's signature	_____ Approval date

Provost	
_____ Signature	_____ Approval date

Faculty	
_____ Chair of faculty senate	_____ Approval date

President	
_____ Signature	_____ Approval date