



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** December 9, 2014  
**TO:** Brent Notbohm, Chair, Faculty Senate  
**FROM:** Faith Hensrud, Provost *FH*  
**RE:** First Year Seminar Funding and Requirement

In May 2014, as part of program prioritization, the funding for the First Year Seminars was eliminated. While there has been demonstrated value from these courses, with UW-Superior's fiscal situation, the First Year Seminar (FYS) is not fiscally sound as a required program. Costs associated with the program included a 50% reassignment each semester for the First Year Seminar Coordinator; a summer stipend for the FYS coordinator, and the direct cost of instruction.

FYS has continued as a requirement for new students for FY 2015; however, it is slated for a budget reduction of \$56,460 in FY 2016. This reduction includes the summer salary for the first year seminar coordinator, and salary for up to 10 sections of First Year Seminar taught as overload or with adjunct coverage for courses. This reduction becomes effective in Fiscal Year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015).

As a result, it will not be possible to continue with a First Year Seminar requirement in its current format that mandates all incoming students complete a 3 credit General Education FYS course in their first semester as a UW-Superior student. This requirement included Transfer and Distance Learning students entering with 20 or fewer credits and all students entering via the Access Program.

The First Year Seminar requirement was approved by the UAAC in March 2010 and Faculty Senate in April 2010 in accordance with the proposal outlined below:

**Proposal for Implementation of Phase 2: First Year Seminar**

*The First-Year Experience Advisory Committee proposes:*

- 1. Beginning in 2012, all incoming first-year students will be required to complete a 3 credit General Education FYS course in their first semester as a UW-S student. This requirement will include Transfer and Distance Learning students entering with 20 or fewer credits and all students entering via the Access Program.*

2. *That we maintain the current first-year seminar model for the 2012-2014 catalog. Under this model we will continue to offer a series of 3 credit academic course under IDS rubric with each seminar designated as fulfilling an appropriate general education category.*
3. *That we revisit the model during the 2013 academic year to determine whether to continue with this model or whether to implement a free-standing first-year seminar core requirement.*

*(Passed by UAAC in March 2010 and Faculty Senate April 20, 2010)*

The reduction of funding for FYS means that we can no longer offer the 30 sections of First Year Seminar that would be required. The bulk of the FYS courses have been taught within the load of faculty across the institution. If the FYS is to continue in any format, it will need to be at a reduced cost to the institution. A number of issues will need to be resolved by the end of the Spring 2015 semester. I am charging the Faculty Senate to review the requirement passed in 2010 and develop a sustainable model for the FYS if it is to continue under a new model.

Specifically, the faculty will need to consider the following:

1. The FYS requirement cannot continue in its current format as a three credit required FYS for all incoming students with 20 or fewer credits. It is not fiscally sustainable. Action will be needed to repeal the approval of a required FYS. FYS courses may be planned for the Fall 2015 semester; however, students will need to know prior to the SOAR sessions, whether or not they are required to enroll. This action should take place early in Spring of 2015.
2. If the requirement for FYS is removed, a group should be tasked to consider whether or not the first year seminar will continue as an elective program within the First Year Experience, and be offered by those Departments that choose to participate. A few of the options to consider include reducing the credits for FYS from 3 to 1 credit or making the FYS optional as part of an academic department or program. A new model for FYS will need to be developed.
3. As a new FYS model is developed, it will be important to review the ramifications for General Education as FYS courses were expected to be embedded within General Education.

As you determine the best model for the FYS it will be important to consult with the Associate Dean, Suzanne Griffith and the First Year Experience coordinator, Jen Bird. The work of the group charged must be completed no later than the end of the Spring 2015 term.