Memo Jan. 21/10

From: Fire Services Administration – (LaRon Tolley – 8-8697)

To: Faculty Senate

RE: Program request P00324

**Proposal:** Requesting elimination of the Minor requirement for Fire Services Administration degree students.

**Reasoning**: The Fire Services Administration degree is a unique degree that is delivered primarily to adult learners that are currently employed within the fire and emergency service professions. The typical part-time student is over 30 years old and is “mid-career” and needing to complete their degree for advancement and promotional purposes. This is a specialized degree similar to the 16 other degrees offered at WOU that currently do not require a minor.

**Arguments supporting the request:**  
(1) Over 97% of all FSA students are distance students that under current policy must complete a WOU approved minor but take all the coursework at other institutions due to unavailability of complete minors for distance delivery from WOU.

(2) Statistical results from 2007 graduate survey indicated that “completion of minor” was a significant drawback to an otherwise valuable college experience for Fire Service Students

(3) WOU is the only one of the seven National Fire Academy regionally affiliated Fire Service Administration schools that currently requires a minor

(4) EOU, WOU’s “cooperative partner” in the FSA program in Oregon, does not require a minor and in fact, uses this as a marketing / recruitment tool luring WOU admitted students into their program . . . ( 20+ students in the past two years.)

**Summary:**

Elimination of the minor requirement will not only enhance the major by allowing students to take more FSA courses beyond the 48 credit hours**,\* SEE ADDENDUM** it will also retain students and their tuition revenue at WOU. It will also provide a clearer path for students from entry to graduation.

On an administrative level, elimination of the minor will significantly reduce advising time and resources within LAS, as well as significantly reducing the time consuming and paper wasting minor / transfer approval processes currently employed.

ADDENDUM

RE: Program Request – Elimination of minor for Fire Services Administration Degree

**Clarification of the composition of the current major:**

The Fire Services Administration degree is probably best described as an Applied Baccalaureate degree or a degree completion program where the majority of students are already mid or dual-career individuals that are focused on their professional development as a part-time student.

* The current FSA major is comprised of 72 credit hours not just 48 as indicated in the original memo.
* 24 of the 72 are the prerequisite – lower division - professional / technical courses that must be completed within a “fire science” program through a community college.
* The remaining 48 credits within the major can be satisfied by taking a minimum of 21 “core” credits of upper division FSA courses plus 27credits of “electives” which may be additional FSA courses or approved Business and/or Social Science courses.
* A minimum of 45 credits are needed to meet WOU “residency” requirements.
* The cooperative agreement that exists with EOU allows mutual acceptance of each other’s courses as “resident” hours.
* When a student realizes that they must complete a MINOR, including a minimum of 15 -21 upper division credit hours somewhere other than WOU, they often choose to take the minimum number of FSA courses required here and finish all the remaining upper division courses at EOU and elsewhere. Whether they end up graduating from WOU or EOU, the maximum number of upper division credits that students take from WOU is 45.
* The FSA degree program currently has 28 courses providing 115 upper division credits. Even after accounting for some duplicate courses based on the delivery system, without the minor requirement, a Fire Service Administration degree student at WOU could conceivably complete ALL 62 upper division credits needed entirely within their FSA major at WOU.

This is a case of “addition by subtraction”. . . By eliminating the minor requirement: the FSA major is enhanced, student retention goes up and tuition revenue goes up.

If you have further questions – please call me

LaRon Tolley - ext. 88697