

January 24, 2011

**COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL DEANS****RE: American History and Institutions Requirement**

During fall quarter 2010, the Division was asked to waive the American History and Institutions requirement for two undergraduates who had completed all other requirements for graduation. Before addressing the management of requirement waivers, I believe it is important to document and communicate the origin and history of the requirement at UC Davis.

The University of California, California State University and the California Community Colleges require fulfillment of the American History and Institutions requirement. For UC, the American History and Institutions requirement ensures that every graduating student will have a minimum knowledge of the history of the United States and an understanding of the political, economic and social interrelationships of its way of life. The requirement was originally monitored at the UC level and is incorporated as policy through [UC] Senate Regulation 638 <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/manual/rpart3.html#r638>.

We understand responsibility for assuring the requirement is fulfilled was re-delegated to campuses in the 1980's. The Davis Division and campus Registrar assured publication of the requirement and the methods by which a student could fulfill the requirement in the course catalog. Further, the requirement is one of the few still monitored by the campus Registrar.

A student receiving a high school education in the United States typically satisfies the requirement before admission to UC. Many campus Academic Senate Divisions have ruled that a student studying at UC under a student visa is exempt from the requirement. On February 5, 1988, the Davis Division Committee on Educational Policy (now known as Undergraduate Council) adopted the following policy:

“Foreign students, regardless of the type of visa they hold, must meet the University’s American History and Institutions requirement for graduation.”

I seek your assistance in insuring that all involved with advising students are aware of the requirement. The petitions received by the Division in fall 2010 impact students that had filed for graduation and participated in graduation ceremonies only to learn subsequently, after the degree certification process was complete, that they had not graduated. I am certain we all agree that we need to improve our internal processes to assure this does not happen again.

To assist in reminding the campus community about this requirement, the current catalog language that outlines the requirement and methods by which a student may satisfy the requirement is available in the on-line catalog at:

<http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/UCDWebCatalog/ugraded/univreq.html>.

Additionally, we wish to emphasize that given the variety of means by which the requirement may be satisfied, the Division should not be asked to waive the requirement.

Given our desire to recruit international students, I will ask the Undergraduate Council to review the 1988 policy to evaluate whether it is still appropriate for the UC Davis campus. I will share their finding when it becomes available.

Once again, I would sincerely appreciate your assistance in distributing the information contained in this memo to all of your units.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. G. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Powell, Chair  
Davis Division of the Academic Senate  
Chair & Professor: Chemical Engineering and  
Materials Science  
Professor: Food Science & Technology

cc: Chancellor Katehi  
Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor Hexter  
Executive Council membership