

University Senate

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY SENATE BILL COVER SHEET

SB: 23/24-11 Associate's Degree Requirement Update to Reflect New LAC (ELAC) Changes

Sponsoring Parties: Academic Affairs Committee

Submitted By: Greg Kane

Semester in which proposed changes would become effective: Fall 2024

Text of Bill: See Attached

Introduced in Senate on 4/2/24

Returned to Committee on _____

Resubmitted to Senate on _____

Amended by Senate on _____

Tabled by Senate on _____

Approved By Senate on _____

Disapproved by Senate on _____

Sent to University President on _____

University President Deadline _____

Presidential action reported to Senate on _____.

Referred to _____ for implementation on _____.

Official Signatures



William Lugo

On 4/16/24

University Senate President



Elsa Nunez

University
President

Reasons for Disapproval (below)

☒ Approved On _____

4/22/24
Date

☐ Disapproved _____

Date

LAPC - Associate Degree Proposal

The current AS (Associate in Science) degree includes the following requirements:

LAC Tier I	Up to 28 credits
LAC Tier II	9-10 crs selected from 3 Tier II categories
Concentration	15 crs
Electives	Up to 14 credits
Total	Minimum 60 credits

Proposed Revision of Eastern's AS degree to incorporate the new ELAC requirements is as follows:

LAC 100/101 and LAC 200

Two foundational courses in Math and Writing

Three Disciplinary Perspective courses, one in each discipline category.

Associate's degree students will have to take 3 credits of Disciplinary Perspective courses at Eastern to fulfill residency requirements.

Concentration	15 crs
Electives	Up to 14 credits
Total	Minimum 60 credits

Actual implementation of this revised AS degree requires an understanding of what type of student pursues an associate degree at Eastern and his/her reasons for doing so.

TRADITIONAL-AGE, full-time student

- a. **First-time freshmen** without any transfer credit usually are "testing" the waters of higher education based on their or their parents' expectations that they attend a 4-year school. Reasons include:

- desire to participate in a residential experience vs. community college
- uncertainty as to financial ability and/or personal commitment to attend for 4 years
- preparation for transfer to larger institution (e.g. UConn) or another school that offers major not available at Eastern
- advantages of small campus and classroom size to complete liberal arts requirements prior to transfer to more expensive private/selective institution for final two years

In many cases these students can be convinced to continue at Eastern for their 4-year degree because of their positive experiences. For this reason, first-time freshmen should be encouraged to take advantage of the FY Liberal Arts Colloquium as well as the Health & Wellness course (to be used for electives) to help insure their future success here or elsewhere.

- b. **Transfer students** most often are trying to either salvage their college career due to academic/financial/personal difficulties at their previous school(s). They are looking for a short-term goal of an associate degree, which requires that they complete a minimum of 15 credits in residence at Eastern (sometimes in one full-time semester). Usually their transfer credits would include liberal arts courses that could help fulfill their LAC requirements and also allow them to focus on a specific concentration area. Other reasons include:

- need to seek full-time employment in the area of their concentration due to changes in their financial (loss of their financial aid/job or parent's job) or family situation (parents' divorce and/or health crises, student getting married and/or having child). These students are encouraged to continue on a part-time basis after their associate degree and many do.
- plans to attend specific programs outside Eastern (e.g., prospective RN students who want to meet the prereqs by attending Eastern versus a community college and complete their AS degree here in the process). Once here at Eastern, some change their minds due to their positive experiences and continue on as full-time students to complete their bachelors degree.

NON-TRADITIONAL, part-time and full-time students

Non-traditional refers to a broad range of students usually over the age of 25, who have not gone directly from high school to Eastern as full-time students. Also included are students under 25 for whom full-time study is not possible due to family/personal/financial situations and who live within commuting distance to Eastern. While the community colleges provide those over-25 and under-25 with less expensive, more focused associate degree options, they choose Eastern instead:

- a. **Previous Eastern students** often want to return and complete their education at Eastern because they have continued to identify with the university. The AS degree provides them with a more doable, short-term goal that can improve their professional/financial situation while also moving them along to their bachelors here.
- b. **Adults** with significant professional/other background may find their lower-level course choices at a community college not challenging enough and want more intellectual stimulation that Eastern offers. Also this can include the perceived prestige of obtaining the associate from a "university" instead of a community college.
- c. **Adults** attracted by Eastern's nontraditional programs such as CLL and CLEP that enable them to earn up to 30 credits of nontraditional learning toward their AS degree (and late bachelors degree).

CHALLENGES OF LAC IMPLEMENTATION

The availability of LAC courses to meet the proposed AS degree requirements would not be a problem for full-time first-time freshmen and transfer students with under 30 credits. However, those transfer students looking to complete in one full-time semester might not be able to complete the Tier I courses to then become eligible for Tier II in one semester. The question of how transferred coursework with the same numbering (e.g., SOC 1) or similar electives (e.g., SOC IXX) needs to be addressed...as it needs to be addressed for transfer students with many credits.

LAC courses need to be available in evenings year-round to insure part-time students can complete the required Tier I and Tier II courses. Also both 100 and 200-level Tier I courses need to be offered in the evening to provide attractive options for adults.

Adults seeking the intellectual challenge/stimulation of Eastern might find the 100 and 200-level courses required for Tier I too restrictive...and what substitution options at more advanced level or in specialized topics might be available to them.