Double Degree Proposal

Existing policy language in the CLAS catalog:

Double Degrees in CLAS and a Professional School
Students who wish to work simultaneously for a degree from CLAS and a degree from one of the professional schools may do so, with the expectation that all general education requirements are met for both degrees.

This description of KU degrees is dated in that it still discusses “general education requirements”. Additionally because of current CLAS policies students only rarely pursue double degrees.

Proposed revision to the CLAS catalog:

Double Degrees in CLAS and a Professional School
Students who wish to work simultaneously for a degree from CLAS and a degree from one of the professional schools may do so, with the expectation that the student will complete the KU Core, the specific degree requirements for both degrees, major requirements for both degrees, and elective requirements. The pursuit of any pair of degrees that are in the CLAS and a professional schools will all be considered Double Degrees, even when the degree earned is of the same type in both Schools (for example if a student is earning a BA in the CLAS and a BA in a professional school).

Here is a simple representation of the degree requirements that would apply for students pursuing a double degree:

- KU Core requirements
  - CLAS degree requirements
    - Major requirements
  - Professional School degree requirements
    - Major requirements
Let's consider a BA in CLAS, how many hours would a student be required/likely to take in the College?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Education Requirements”</th>
<th>CLAS hours taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KU Core</td>
<td>≈18 hours (50% of core)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree requirements</td>
<td>20 hours (for BA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major hours</td>
<td>30 hours (on average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CLAS hours</td>
<td>68 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make double degrees far easier to obtain we would also need to change the CLAS graduation requirements.

**Current Policy Language: Hours Required for Graduation**

To be eligible to graduate from CLAS with any of the 3 degrees (B.A., B.G.S., or B.S.), a student must successfully complete at least 120 credit hours, 45 of which must be junior/senior hours (courses numbered 300 and above), **and 100 of which must be completed in Liberal Arts and Sciences/School of the Arts course work**. The required 120 hours are divided into 4 categories: the KU Core, College specific degree requirements, major, and elective requirements. The total hours are increased by enrollment in Math 2 or any developmental course numbered below 100. The total also is increased by enrollment in excess of 64 hours of community college credit, 4 hours in physical education activity courses, 6 hours in music organization courses, and any repeated courses for which a student has already received credit.

**Recommended Policy Language: Hours Required for Graduation**

To be eligible to graduate from CLAS with any of the 3 degrees (B.A., B.G.S., or B.S.), a student must successfully complete at least 120 credit hours, 45 of which must be junior/senior hours (courses numbered 300 and above). The required 120 hours are divided into 4 categories: the KU Core, College specific degree requirements, major, and elective requirements. The total hours are increased by enrollment in Math 2 or any developmental course numbered below 100. The total also is increased by enrollment in excess of 64 hours of community college credit, 4 hours in physical education activity courses, 6 hours in music organization courses, and any repeated courses for which a student has already received credit.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- *What will the impact be on College student credit hours (SCHs) if we make these policy changes?* We cannot know the answer to this question. We have asked Marcia Powers to examine what data is available to help us answer this question. She is still working on trying to meet our request. What she has told me is that based on her analyses so far she is convinced that removing the 100 hour rule will not negatively impact the number of SCH hours generated. In her estimation, the most negative
impact that she expects to see is no impact on SCH in the College. Further, she has indicated, that the most likely outcome is that this policy change will increase CLAS SCH. The data that we do have clearly indicates that since its creation (in 2008) the “100 hour rule” has not lead to the retention of CLAS SCH. Since its creation, CLAS hours have declined significantly.

- **Why don’t we eliminate the “100 hour rule” only for students working on double degrees?** This is one proposal that has been carefully considered. However, it would be very difficult to execute this kind of policy for many reasons. First, it is often the case that a student would complete their two degrees at different times. We cannot withhold conferring one degree until the second degree has been completed, and we would not want to do this. But what should we do if the first degree completed is the CLAS degree, particularly if the student then leaves KU? There is no good solution to this very likely situation. Second, what happens if a student begins to complete two degrees but along the way decides to stop pursuing the professional school degree? At this point the student might be a junior or senior and they now have to take many more CLAS hours to finish their single degree. This would be a big problem and this situation has already caused students to leave the University with no KU degree. We already have a situation that is much like this when students try to transfer from a professional school degree program into the CLAS. When this happens it is common for the student to ask their advisor “what CLAS classes do I need to take to complete my degree in X CLAS department?” It is always a challenging conversation because the CLAS advisor has to tell the student you need to complete 50 more hours in the College (for example), but we don’t have any specific requirements you need to meet, we just need you to complete CLAS classes. This is exactly the kind of difficult conversation we are hoping to avoid with this policy change. These are just some of the concerns that have been raised regarding this kind of approach.

- **It is very likely that the total number of hours that a student will ultimately take to complete a Double Degree in the CLAS and a Professional School will be more than 120 hours. Is this “okay”?** Our peer institutions have policies that allow for double degrees and in their promotional material they often indicate that the student will need to take more than the minimum/required credit hours so that they can graduate with two different bachelors degrees. Based on existing practice at other institutions, it seems reasonable to believe that students understand the value and advantage to being able to complete two strong university degrees. Many students are likely to be willing to take the credit hours needed to complete the degree programs that they desire. It is important that the degree and major requirements are effective and reasonable, but we are quite vigilant about these issues already.
• **Do we need to do something to “split” the KU Core hours?** Dean Anderson and others have already indicated that this way of thinking about the KU Core requirements is neither necessary nor feasible. It is very challenging to imagine a way to effectively create a way to equally split the KU Core hours. What the College instructors will need to do is make sure that we are offering exciting and interesting courses that meet KU Core requirements and which draw students to our classes. Mandating a split of the KU Core hours is not possible given the way our systems work.

• **Why not just reduce the CLAS student credit hour requirement to a smaller number of hours?** This alternative has also been carefully considered and discussed. This more conservative way to address the concerns of allowing for double degrees also has some disadvantages. First, it still utilizes the approach of requiring a relatively arbitrary number of CLAS hours. This kind of general hours requirement is hard to justify, because these requirements do not seem to support specific educational goals. This kind of requirement is already being used “against us” in promotional information being provided by regional competitors. Additionally, it is not clear how we would choose the right number of required CLAS hours that would effectively make double degrees more feasible. As is illustrated above, we can already anticipate that students will do 50+ hours in the College when they complete the CLAS degree requirements and their major requirements. Once you add in some KU Core hours, you are at or above 60 hours in the College. If we reduce the requirement to 80 hours, for example, we may again make it difficult for students to pursue the double degrees that they want. It seems a more principled approach to make sure that the CLAS degree requirements and major requirements include all of the courses that we think are critical to gaining a strong liberal arts and science training.