




January 22, 2008

TO: Curriculum and Academic Programs (CAPC)  
Academic Senate

FROM: Elizabeth D. Capaldi   
Executive Vice President and Provost

RE: Required freshman seminar course

We request approval for a freshman seminar course (one student credit hour) offered under a **single** prefix/number required for all first-time freshmen. (ASU 101 will be reviewed by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Committee on January 31, 2008.) The course would be required in the first semester. The course is being offered to improve academic performance, student retention rates and student graduation rates.

The course must contain orientation material that provides tools for student success. Students, even the best ones, have difficulty adjusting to a large college environment; and thus educating them about study skills, managing stress, the concept of academic integrity and resource aids available around the campuses helps considerably with their success. In addition, modules that provide academic content are required. This could be content on some of the unique characteristics of ASU (sustainability, social embeddedness, entrepreneurial/creative approaches, and global engagement); or alternatively, students can learn about unique academic features of their college. Research has shown that freshmen seminar courses that introduce academic content generally achieve superior student retention results.

Finally, it is necessary that the course be required for all first time freshmen because our research shows ASU students from all ability levels are retained unpredictably at lower levels than expected. Problems with stress, academic integrity, lack of academic focus, lack of academic expectations and the like effects students with high ability as well as lower ability. Research also shows that freshmen seminar courses of this nature that are required tend to improve student success more than freshmen seminars that are electives because freshmen generally do not anticipate problems and hence do not voluntarily take these type of courses with the frequency they should. For more detailed information about ASU 101 as a retention instrument, read [ASU as a Retention Tool](#) (attached).

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