

# Proposal to Revise Hamline Plan Requirements – “c” (Computer-Intensive)

Revised January, 2013

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## Part One – Hamline Plan Designation

The Hamline Bulletin provides the following description of the current C requirement:

“Every college graduate needs to understand computers and how they function in various careers and professions. Computer applications for web design, spreadsheets, simulations, and data analysis, to name a few, are integral to all fields. Every Hamline student takes at least one course designed to emphasize the way the computer is used and applied in a discipline. Often this course is taken within the student's major field of study.”

To our knowledge there is no defined list of learning outcomes for this Hamline Plan component, but the C course proposal form indicates that a class in this Hamline plan area should

- ensure that skills acquired “extend beyond the student’s experience at Hamline”, suggesting that students learn how to use technology, as has been done by others in the past, and how to use technology independently in the future,
- include a minimum of 15 hours of "hands on" computer work for each student, and
- ensure that students demonstrate, “in a concrete and documented way, their skills or knowledge of the computer technology used in the course”, through a final project or other assessed outcomes.

Courses satisfying the current C are aligned with overarching Hamline learning outcomes, specifically those outcomes stating that each Hamline student will learn to “solve problems in innovative, integrative, analytical, and ethical ways” and “use information and technology competently and responsibly”. While the information literacy component of this learning objective is not explicitly met through current computer-intensive courses, our taskforce is pleased to see that information literacy is being explicitly addressed by the “Q” taskforce. As for the expectations that students will be competent and responsible in their use of technology, using that technology to solve problems in ways that are innovative and ethical, our taskforce believes that the current letter is insufficient to fully support those learning outcomes for Hamline graduates.

During our conversations with faculty inside and outside of this taskforce we have heard two consistent questions:

- 1) How can we ensure Hamline graduates have exceptional technological skills that are relevant to their chosen field of study, to support their success in the workplace and in future academic work?
- 2) What kind of technology-oriented knowledge, if any, is critical to the education of a liberal arts student of today?

Our taskforce believes that the current C insufficiently addresses these questions as a) it does not support extensive technology-oriented skill development within a major/program, requiring only one course that is typically at the 1000 level and often outside of major and b) it is defined so broadly that it fails to tie the C to a liberal arts education in a meaningful and coherent way. In response to these concerns, we have a two-part proposal:

**Proposal 1:** Our taskforce proposes that each program/major identify (as many already have) one or more learning outcomes that identify technological skills appropriate to that field of study. Given the substantial variation in the technology needs of each discipline, faculty within each program/major are in the best position to integrate these skills into relevant courses and assess student learning, in the context of that discipline. These objectives are expected to vary dramatically. Legal Studies may choose to focus on the use of technology to effectively and efficiently search case history, extract appropriate data, and manage evidence and citations. Economics, on the other hand, might require students to use statistical software to support regression analysis and other forms of econometric modeling. This means that the “c”, as it is currently defined, would be dissolved and embedded in program curriculum and assessment.

**Proposal 2:** Our taskforce explored the potential intersection of technology/computer knowledge and liberal arts education. Our recommendation (supported in a separate “D” proposal) is to create a new general education requirement representing “Creative Problem Solving with Digital Tools”. Please see the D proposal for more details on this concept.