UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY BILL 19-3

A BILL ESTABLISHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MEETING THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANDATE IN GRADUATE STUDY

Legislative History:
1. 3-21-89, after a long period of work and discussion the Graduate Council developed a new policy for the treatment of public affairs education at the graduate study level.
2. 3-27-89, the policy was placed in bill form.
3. 10-6-89, submitted to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee who approved the bill for submission to the Faculty Senate.
4. 10-13-89, the bill was introduced in the Faculty Senate. The policy was changed to University Assembly Bill 19-3.
5. 10-27-89, submitted to the Faculty Senate for 2nd reading as UA Bill 19-3 and PASSED.
6. 11-9-89, submitted to the Student and Staff Senate for their action.

Section 1. Purpose

The goal of this bill is to establish a more effective policy and procedure for implementing the Public Affairs mandate of the University in graduate study.

Section 2. Policy

The Public Affairs mandate of graduate education can be met as specified by Schools. The PACs are only one means of fulfilling the public affairs learning mandate.

Section 3. Implementation

A. Schools shall develop ways to appropriately meet the public affairs mandate in their M.A. program requirements.

B. Primary direction over the ways to meet the mandate shall be by the Deans and School curriculum committees.
C. The Graduate Council shall require that periodic programs reviews indicate how the public affairs mandate is being met in the program’s M.A. degree curriculum.

Section 4. Effective Date

This bill will take effect in the 1990-91 Academic Year.

Rationale

The mandates of SSU are to address public affairs within the framework of a liberal arts curriculum and to stress practical experience, professional development and innovative teaching. One means to implement the public affairs mandate is the requirement of Public Affairs Colloquia (PACs) – 6 hours for undergraduates and 4 hours for graduate students.

The Graduate Council accepts the continuing importance of the public affairs mandate, but considers the PAC requirement an unduly narrow requirement for fulfilling the goals of the mandate. Many courses of study in programs and schools fulfill the public affairs mandate without designation as PACs. It is properly a program and school responsibility to identify and, if necessary, offer suitable courses to students that inform them about public issues, teach them to formulate and implement public policy, and produce the skills of citizenship for the community.

One reason for concern about the PACs is that they have not been differentiated as to graduate level and undergraduate level substance. The Graduate Council, cognizant of concerns expressed in the North Central Association Report about SSU, has sought to encourage distinctions between undergraduate and graduate level courses. However, the competition for instructional resources and the short supply of staff makes a clear distinction in graduate level PACs difficult to achieve.

A continuing difference between undergraduate and graduate education at SSU is that undergraduate education should be broadening and liberalizing. Master’s degrees are primarily aimed at deepening mastery of a discipline or profession. PACs that suitably broaden the understanding of an undergraduate are not necessarily the best way for graduate students to engage in a specialized part of a discipline or profession. Therefore the Graduate Council recommends an alternative approach to meeting the public affairs mandate.