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A Special Studies Paper on The General Mathematics Requirements at Ouachita Baptist University

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A SPECIAL STUDIES PAPER ON
THE GENERAL MATHEMATICS REQUIREMENTS
AT OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

A Research Paper
Presented to
Miss Kathryn Jones
Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Credit
in the Honors Program

by
Linda Gamble
December 1970

The object of this paper has been to study the opinions of graduates and present students about the required math hours (presently three hours) at Ouachita Baptist University. It has formerly been my opinion that this may be insufficient math background for many of our students going out seeking jobs. Many times the student, while still in college does not realize he may need more math but it may show up on graduate tests, in his occupational work, or personal matters such as income tax calculations, book-keeping, or budgeting.

To compile the opinions of students on this subject a form letter, such as the one included on the 5th page of this report, was sent to a number of present OBU students whose names were chosen at random. Also, a different form (also included) was sent to former graduates of Ouachita to compare their opinions with the students and my own.

After sending a number of questionnaires to graduates, I received only a portion in return because so many addresses were incorrect. Of those returned, 53% felt that six hours of the 45 hours of General Education hours should be math, 6% said

nine hours, and 41% said three hours. Some of the courses that these graduates have found they need and listed on this form were Statistics, Geometry, General Business Math, Calculus, and practical Algebra.

In the students opinion 53% thought there should be more than three hours of required math. More than half of these were seniors. Several people I have talked to feel that there should be another course during one's senior year. Two-thirds of the students that were math majors answered no for additional math requirements. The other majors represented were practically even in there opinions. One Home Economics major gave me this answer, "With only three hours of math for the whole four years much of it is forgotten. I really don't think one mere course is sufficient to prepare one for a lifetime of math use."

Over 25% of the students that responded made extra comments concerning the general education math now offered. They felt it is too easy and simple to be the only course required for graduation. Many felt that if a student needed to take these applied courses that they should not be

the only credit required of them but that a harder course should follow.

Several students said they would like more Financial Math, methods of keeping records, taxes, and Business Math. Others thought it should depend on one's major and that some fields, such as Home Economics, should have math courses related to their field only.

I am convinced that mathematics is very important to more than math majors. There are many students now in their junior or senior year at Ouachita that can not find an average or a deviation.

Some results of forty-nine summer graduates this past summer on Graduate Record Examination tests showed an average of 423. The national mean is 500. I heard several seniors last year remark that the majority of the GRE test is Math and English. Could it be that we are 77 points below the national mean because our students are weak in math.

I have written several colleges in the area. At Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe the general math requirement is six hours and includes mostly logic. At Northwestern University in Natchitoches, La. the requirement is six semester hours - two courses that range from general math to advanced math and trigonometry. At Panola Junior College at Carthage, Texas the

requirement for Associate of Arts Degree is 6 hours, Associate of Science Degree is 9 hours and in any field in education is 6 hours. These are just a few of the colleges and all require six or more hours in math.

Comparing our math requirements with the other required courses shows;

English - 6 hours

History - 6 hours

Math - 3 hours

Science - 8 hours

Humanities - 8 hours

Religion - 6 hours

Social Studies - 8 hours

Math will possibly be used as much or more in life than any and all of these subject yet only one half or less hours are required of math than all the others.

Mathematics is related to all subjects in some way. It seems awfully important to me that a student receive as much math background as possible while he is in school.

This is a survey of your opinion of the math courses you take as General Education credit. This is an individual study and your help will be appreciated. Just answer the questions and put in the campus mail box.

Classification _____ sex _____ major _____

List the math courses you have taken in college.

What others do you plan to take?

Do you feel that the math course/courses you have or will take will be sufficient for the occupation you are preparing for?

If not, what other courses in math do you feel you should have?

Should more than 3 hours of the 45 hours of general education courses you must take be math?

Other comments:

This is a survey concerning the math course/courses you took in college as general education requirements. This is an individual study and your help will be appreciated.

Linda Gamble
Mathematics Department
Ouachita Baptist University

Your occupation _____ sex _____

What is your major? _____

List the math courses you had in college.

List the high school math courses you had.

Do you feel the college courses have been sufficient math background for your work?

If not, what other courses do you find you need?

How many of the 45 hours of general education should be math courses.

Other comments:

Thank you