

**Listed below are comments on the Step 4a, GEP Structural Components Proposal sent to the committee by email or gathered during conversations with the committee over the summer.**

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In looking under foreign language (pg 6 comment). Stating that perhaps we can ask students to come in with 2 years of foreign language from high school, due to our own potential fiscal constraints. I believe public schools are experiencing the same staffing issues as we are facing and if we were to require this, then aren't we just passing the buck to them?

I think with the numerous small high schools, that this request would be unrealistic to expect.

Rory Suomi

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Hi Don –

Don't know if I'm missing a bigger picture here, but here are my thoughts. Shoot me something back if you have comments on my comments, and especially if I'm overlooking something here.

- At the "Foundation Level," "First Year Experience" is an experience, not a fundamental skill like the other three items in the Foundation Level box, nor is it a fundamental skill. It perhaps is a means to that end, but seems to me it doesn't belong here.

- Also at the "Foundation Level," as valuable as I think a foreign language might be, I am not going to recommend it universally for our students. I would prefer it stricken.

- Under "Investigation," are not "Historical Perspectives" part of "social and behavioral studies?" And are not "Arts" part of "Humanities?" I would argue there ought to be lumping of these categories, and a box for "Quantitative studies" or "Mathematics" ought to be a separate box under the "Investigation" heading. I don't believe mathematics fits under "natural sciences."

- I don't buy into at this time that the cap of the GED ought to be "Becoming a Global Citizen." I don't know what "inclusive excellence" means.

- Among the "GEP Learning Outcomes", three out of four are about knowledge and skills. The fourth doesn't belong with the other four because it seeks to enforce a personal attitude: "Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability." While I would hope that this is true for our students, I don't think we should try to force adoption of an attitude by our students. If we teach students that there the evidence is slim supporting racial intelligence differences or that the evidence supporting creation in 7 days is pretty shaky and they want to believe in white supremacy or in the literal biblical teaching, we gotta let them.

George Kraft

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Don,

I have two comments about the GEP program.

- 1) Undergraduate research should qualify for experiential learning.

2) Change “Writing in the Major” to “Communicating in the Major” – To claim that only written communication in the major is an important goal is misguided; verbally communicating in your discipline to those skilled and unskilled in your discipline is equally important.

Robin

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Hello Don -

As you may remember, I have not been able to get to the GEP meetings - only due to a teaching conflict. However, I just wanted to pass on to you and the rest of team that the "Step 4a" is very exciting in many ways, from my viewpoint. We have been having department-wide discussions on learning outcomes within the major - and the capstone seminar plus the "writing-in-the-major" idea goes along with our thoughts in our subgroup. The overall structure is very well done! It is inspiring and refreshing. I look forward to the next discussions on specific learning outcomes - and course offerings.

This note to you and the committee perhaps is not that helpful because you may be looking for constructive suggestions to change or add on to your work - but personally, I can't see any!

Thanks to all of you for all the hard work!

David

David M. Hastings  
Professor of Saxophone  
Music Department

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Hi Julie,

I thought I would email you the thoughts that popped into my mind regarding GPERC while in our combined meeting yesterday. Here they are:

1. Would the University consider adding American Sign Language, Hmong, and/or a language from one of the Native American tribes in Central Wisconsin? I have had numerous requests from students for these three areas over the years.
2. Would the University consider adding an interdisciplinary requirement to the curriculum as a means of helping students connect the interconnectivity of their learning? Even though faculty and students were leery of the interdisciplinary studies requirement at the Colleges when it was first incorporated, it became a favorite of students and the faculty who elected to teach the “IS” courses or combos of courses were very energetic about it. Some of the favorites that we had included: a 3 credit course titled, “The Philosophy of Science”, which could be taken as either Humanities or Natural Science credits and was co-taught by a Physics and Philosophy instructor; American Indian Studies; Engineering Fundamentals in Theatre (co-taught by the engineering and theatre departments – students from both areas worked together in designing the set for the spring play); an interdisciplinary course that students could choose from two of three courses plus a one-credit special seminar that explored how being a woman in U.S. society impacted the likely of being poor (classes from History, Sociology, and Literature were the three courses students had to choose from).
3. If you need a faculty member to talk to you about the process of assessing prior learning from previous experience for the Experiential Learning component, Tim Krause of WDMD was the

UWSP rep who attended the UW System's spring workshop on how to train faculty to train other faculty on assessing prior learning.

Thanks,  
Laura Polum

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Hi Julie,

Thank you for your fine presentation on the General Education update at the Joint Department meeting earlier this week. It was most informative. It also looks like a very monumental task for you and the entire committee. I commend all of you for working on this most needed project.

However, I do wish to make a comment. In regard to the general education requirement that may result in all degree students needing to take a foreign language, I do wish to point out that such a requirement would most likely create a hardship or an impossibility for students with language-based learning disabilities. Often, these students experience great difficulty with the English language, and find any foreign language to be a barrier to their educational pursuits.

As you are aware, Currently the University does have in place a substitution process for students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree. The student can formally request substitution for the foreign language requirement. The number of requests are very few. With a change in foreign language as a requirement, I sense that substitution requests would be substantial in number. In our past reporting period (2007-08), the Office of Disability Services served 347 students.... 102 of those students have learning disabilities. The numbers will most likely increase in this next reporting period.

If foreign language is required in the future, the University will need to look at a more functional means of requesting and allowing course substitutions. Otherwise, students with language-based learning disabilities will experience a direct barrier to completing a degree.

Also, please note that the same situation would occur should students completing the Bachelor of Arts degree be required more or higher math requirements than Math 100. Currently, there is a substitution course (a modified math 100 ) in place for qualified students with math-related learning disabilities. This substitution course does satisfy the Math 100 requirement for Math 100.

I am not advocating that the committee change their course of thinking relative to foreign language and math requirements. But I am asking that the committee consider students with learning disabilities and other related disabilities that impact on foreign language and mathematical skill limitations as they continue with revising the general education requirements. A system is in place for the degree requirements as they stand. If changed, it will be important to look for alternative academic adjustments that would allow students with learning disabilities to continue successfully in their educational endeavors.

Please pass my concern on to the committee for their consideration. Thank you for listening.

Jim

**Jim Joque**

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**From:** Wall, Sterling  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 03, 2009 2:10 PM  
**To:** Loy, Marty  
**Cc:** Fernando, Nisha  
**Subject:** RE: Input from Heads on General Education Program proposal

Please see numbers 3 and 6 below especially.  
 Sterling Wall

What is your unit's general reaction to the new GEP structure? What are the positives/negatives?

**REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THOUGH I PERSONALLY LIKE THE FLOW STRUCTURE THAT THEY HAVE DEVELOPED LEADING FROM FOUNDATION TO INTEGRATION.**

2. How do you see this GEP structure generally affecting your major students? Do you think the GEP as proposed will enhance their overall education in your major while enhancing their general education?

**AS SOMEONE SAID ONCE, THIS MAY NOT NECESSARILY CHANGE MUCH, BUT IT HELPS TO ORGANIZE THEIR EXPERIENCE INTO A MEANINGFUL INTEGRATION.**

3. How does your unit feel about the Foreign Language requirement? Should language be a requirement for every student at UWSP? (Currently, three UW campuses require foreign language either as an entrance requirement or for graduation.)

**I THINK WE SHOULD REQUIRE FOREIGN LANGUAGE OF ALL STUDENTS. I DO SEE THE STAFFING ISSUES, AND THEIR PROPOSAL THAT STUDENTS BE ACCEPTED WITH TWO YEARS FROM HS, OR TAKE ONE YEAR HERE, MAKES SENSE.**

***I WOULD MAKE ONE OTHER SUGGESTION, WHICH IS THAT STUDENTS BE ALLOWED TO COUNT EXPERIENCE IN A FOREIGN SPEAKING COUNTRY TOWARDS THIS REQUIREMENT. NOTE THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS REQUIREMENT WAS TO OPEN THEIR MINDS AND ENHANCE THEIR PERSPECTIVE. TRAVELING IN A FOREIGN SPEAKING COUNTRY WILL DEFINITELY DO THAT, EVEN IF THEY NEVER LEARN TO CONJUGATE A VERB CORRECTLY. BY MAKING SUCH AN ALLOWANCE WE WOULD BE OPENING ONE MORE AVENUE BY WHICH STUDENTS COULD DEVELOP THIS DESIRED COMPETENCY, AND, WE WOULD BE SUPPORTING ONE OF THE STATED GOALS OF THIS INSTITUTION IN HAVING MORE STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD.***

4. For each of the following requirements, please consider: Can you support this requirement? Do you have current courses that could be adapted to fit this category? Would there be interest in your department in developing new courses to contribute to this category?

YBE First Year Experience - MA

Themes - YES

Writing in the Major - (OUR CURRENT WE COURSES) YES

Experiential Learning – YES STUDY ABROAD, FCS 290, TEACHING INTERNSHIP)(PRACTICUM,

Capstone Seminar - YES 367 AND 366 AND PRACTICUM IN FIELD WORK AND TEACHING)(HD

5. Are there any categories for which you have specific suggestions for appropriate learning outcomes? I COULD MENTION SOME THAT WOULD MATCH THOSE COURSES BELOW, SUGGESTED AS PART OF #6, SUCH AS “BE ABLE TO BALANCE A BUDGET, PLAN FOR RETIREMENT, UNDERSTAND AND CREATE A BALANCED DIET, EXERCISE PROGRAM.....”

6. Are there any components that you feel should be added to this proposal? Any that should be eliminated? Reasons?

**YES. UNDER THE INTEGRATIVE LEVEL OF THE GEP, THERE NEEDS TO BE SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT OF A WELL ROUNDED, HEALTHY PERSON. PERHAPS CALL IT “HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES”, UNDER WHICH I COULD SEE COURSES FOCUSING ON THE SINGLE LARGEST CHALLENGES OF OUR DAY FOR INDIVIDUALS: FINANCIAL LITERACY, HEALTHY LIVING, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WELL BEING.... IF WE ARE PLANNING ON CREATING GLOBAL CITIZENS, THEN WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE SPECIFIC LIFE SKILLS THAT ARE AT THIS CURRENT TIME CREATING SEVERE STRESS ON OUR NATION, ECONOMY, AND COMMUNITIES. THESE TYPES OF COURSES ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED AS ELECTIVE AND OPTIONAL, AND YET THEY ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR NATIONS HEALTH AT THIS TIME, AS MEASURED PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY. CAN WE DO ANYTHING LESS THAN DO OUR VERY BEST TO PREPARE OUR STUDENTS IN THE AREAS THAT WILL MOST AFFECT THEIR OWN REAL LIVES POST GRADUATION, REGARDLESS OF MAJOR?**

**Sterling**

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Don and Greg,

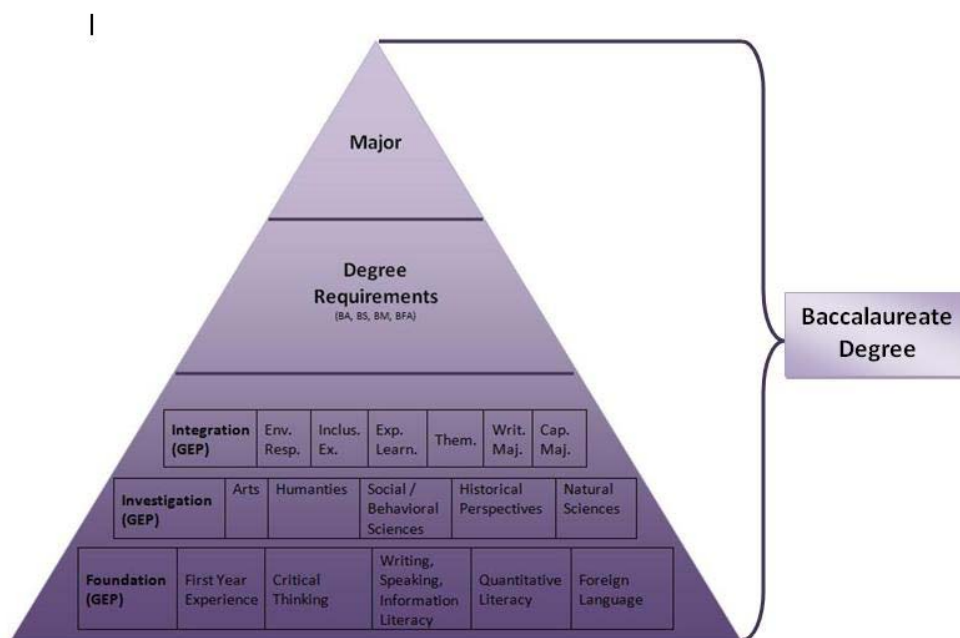
Sorry I didn't get around to responding to Step 4 earlier! I still need to think about many things, but for now I have three thoughts: one minor thought, one point of moderate importance, and area of confusion.

The Minor Thought: Different Diagram?

Perhaps, instead of the following diagram:



We might use a diagram like this:



Obviously nothing much hinges on this, but I'm a visual thinker and the pyramid (for me) does a better job capturing the following sentiment from the committee's document: Among the clearest trends in general education is to create programs that function as cohesive curricula. ... it should require students to move logically from the introduction and development of these outcomes toward their potential mastery; and finally, it should be connected as seamlessly as possible to the degrees and majors that students pursue.

Moderately Important Thought: Include "Critical Thinking"

As you might have noticed in the pyramid diagram, I **sneaked "critical thinking" into the Foundation level of the GEP**. I would like to see specific reference to critical thinking here because because such reference would help to match the structure of the GEP with the GEP Learning Outcomes, where critical thinking is mentioned. More importantly, I think that mentioning critical thinking here will ensure that it doesn't get lost, as critical thinking is very liable to do if we give the impression that it's dispersed equally throughout the GEP and so doesn't require specific attention or acknowledgement.

## Area of Confusion: Integration

After two quick readings of the Structural Component document, I'm still a bit puzzled by what the "Integration" category amounts to, and I don't have a clear idea about how it will get fleshed out in practical terms. This may, however, be my fault and I'll think about this some more.

Thanks! I'll probably have more feedback later.  
Dona Warren

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Hello, Don and Greg!

Here are my responses to the questions related to Step 4a. These are my own, personal, responses and don't necessarily represent the opinion of the Philosophy Department as a whole.

### **1. What is your unit's general reaction to the new GEP structure? What are the positives/negatives?**

Here some of my reactions at the moment:

- I very much like the three-part structure of the proposal - Foundation, Investigation, and Integration. This framework should help everyone involved in the GEP, and most especially our students, to understand how integration builds upon knowledge and how knowledge builds upon skills. Very nice!
- I, like George Kraft, am not enthralled by the title "Becoming a Global Citizen," for the capstone level. It seems a bit contrived to me. I'm willing to concede that there might not be anything better in the offing, but I'd be interested to see if we could come up with something else
- I'm a bit unclear about what the "integration" level of the GEP will look like in practice.
- Although understand and sympathize with the need to provide our students with an integrated educational experience, I'm still not completely comfortable with the Gen Ed structure stipulating major requirements. What would happen if we removed the "capstone seminar in the major" and the "writing in the major" requirements from the Gen Ed structure and let individual programs decide if they wanted to require such courses? (My department does offer course of both types and will continue to do so, but might the "Gen Ed" requirements be kept separate from major requirements, just as a matter of principle?)

### **2. How do you see this GEP structure generally affecting your major students? Do you think the GEP as proposed will enhance their overall education in your major while enhancing their general education?**

I hope that the new Gen Ed structure will enhance the general education of our major students, but I don't anticipate that it will affect the overall education in our major, except to the extent that our major students may have a more coherent educational framework within which they can situate the knowledge and skills acquired in my department.

### **3. How does your unit feel about the Foreign Language requirement? Should language be a requirement for every student at UWSP? (Currently, three UW campuses require foreign language either as an entrance requirement or for graduation.)**

Rory Suomi makes a good point in the emailed comments when he notes that it might not be feasible to require our students to take two years of foreign language in high school, but I would like to see us explore ways in which we can require all UWSP students to have some experience with a foreign language. A “soft” entrance requirement (which would allow students without the background to fulfill this requirement by taking a year of language here) is one way to ensure that students have a background in a language and I’m inclined to support this suggestion of the committee. I also like Sterling’s suggestion that experience in a non-English speaking country could count as one way to retroactively fulfill this soft entrance requirement.

**4. For each of the following requirements, please consider: Can you support this requirement? Do you have current courses that could be adapted to fit this category? Would there be interest in your department in developing new courses to contribute to this category?**

**First Year Experience**

I’m unwilling to speak for my department here because we haven’t discussed this issue as a group, but I think that I *personally* might be able to adapt my Introduction to Philosophy course to satisfy this requirement, and I would be willing to explore the possibility of developing a new FYE course.

**Themes**

I believe that Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Anthropology would be able to contribute here. Laura Polum, in her emailed comments, mentions a course that we already regularly offer, the Philosophy of Science, and I’m not sure if this *particular* class would be appropriate as a theme course because it often addresses theoretical issues of specific relevance to our majors. I would need to discuss this with the professor who teaches the class. Regardless of that, however, it’s certainly worth considering some course along these lines, and I think that we could explore the possibility of interdisciplinary courses between Philosophy and Physics, Philosophy and Psychology, Philosophy and History, and Philosophy and Fine Arts, just to mention a few. The disciplines of Religious Studies and Anthropology are also be fertile ground for interdisciplinary connections. Naturally, I don’t want to commit my colleagues to anything specific at this stage, but I can say that we would like to be involved in this conversation.

**Writing in the Major**

We already have a number of writing intensive classes in our department (although, as I noted above, I have some concern about the GEP stipulating major requirements).

**Experiential Learning**

My colleague, James Sage, has been extensively involved in promoting service learning on campus. At the moment, however, I’m not sure how my own courses could easily incorporate an experiential learning component.

**Capstone Seminar**

We already have capstone seminars for our majors (although, as previously noted, I have some concern about the GEP stipulating major requirements).

**5. Are there any categories for which you have specific suggestions for appropriate learning outcomes?**



I have the following suggestions for the humanities outcomes:

**Humanities:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the “big ideas” that shape individual and societal worldviews, including theories about the ultimate nature of reality, knowledge, and value.

**6. Are there any components that you feel should be added to this proposal? Any that should be eliminated? Reasons?**

I believe that “Critical Thinking” should be added to the “Foundations” level. My reasons are threefold.

First, the first approved learning outcome states that students will “[d]emonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.” Reference to quantitative and communication skills already appears in the foundation of the proposed GEP structure. By mentioning critical thinking there as well, we will ensure that the GEP objectives map easily onto the GEP structure.

Second, if critical thinking is not mentioned in the foundation level, there is a real danger that it will vanish through a process of systematic distribution and dilution. People may assume that critical thinking is naturally “picked up” in almost every class and so doesn’t require specific mention or instruction. But this is incorrect. Most students do need explicit instruction in reasoning skills, and I think that almost all students could benefit from such instruction. By placing critical thinking in the foundational level, we acknowledge the importance of attending to this set of skills. We also prepare the way for future conversations about how these skills might be best developed. Should we require all students to take a course devoted, in whole or in part, to critical thinking? Should we allow a course to bear both critical thinking and subject-matter credit (a course in history and critical thinking, for example)? Placing critical thinking in the foundation level does not in any way force particular answers to these questions, of course. It simply allows us to raise and address these important questions in a natural way.

Third, I’m delighted to see that critical thinking is already playing a part in the committee’s thinking, as the committee has asked in what course we could assess critical thinking and has advanced some possible critical thinking learning outcomes. A reference to critical thinking at the foundational level will “ground” these questions and the subsequent answers.

Thank you for asking such good questions!

Dona Warren  
Department of Philosophy  
(Philosophy, Religious Studies, Anthropology)

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Hi, Don,

Thank you for requesting input on GEPRC Proposal, step 4. I've appended my suggestions below.

This GEP review is very important for all of our students and programs. Kudos and thanks to you and your committee for all of your effort on it.

John

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I would urge the committee to consider changing the name of the Foundation area "Foreign Languages" to "Cultural Awareness". I believe this broadens the intent of this foundational area and is still inclusive of the study of other languages. I do not believe that a year of foreign language should be required, but I do think that "Cultural Awareness" should be studied in the first and subsequent years.

"Critical Thinking" should be included as one of the major goals in "Integration: Becoming a Global Citizen".

I do believe that a lab should be required for GEP science courses.

Regarding the "Capstone seminar in the major", I think this should be changed to "Capstone seminar in the major or faculty-mentored research experience". Not all students become involved in undergraduate research and a capstone seminar would be beneficial for those students. But, for those students who do undergraduate research, that IS a capstone experience that involves discipline-specific reading and writing, designing and conducting experiments, etc.

I think words such as "learning about how discoveries are made" or "learning how to create an environment in which innovation can take place" should be incorporated into the GEP guidelines. For our students to contribute to tomorrow's global society, they need to be ready to "discover" and come up with "innovative" ideas and ways of approaching problems.

John

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**Comments from the School of HPHD** (Marty Loy, Kelly Schoonaert, Annie Wetter; in addition to the email from Sterling Wall forwarded earlier).

**GEPRC members present:** Nisha Fernando, Julie Schneider

**June 9, 2009**

1. There is a clear discrepancy/disconnect between the approved Program Learning Outcomes (4 bullets on p.3) and the overall GEP structure. The first two bullet points seem to link to 'Foundation' and 'Investigation' levels respectively, but the last two bullet points of learning outcomes get lost in the rest of the structure (in 'Integration'?).
2. There is also a discrepancy in the terminology used in the two places. In the learning outcomes, 'environmental sustainability' is used whereas in the GEP structure, the term 'environmental responsibility' is used. Which one is most appropriate and should be used (mind, though, that the program learning outcomes are already approved by the Faculty Senate)? Also, different disciplines may view and define these terms differently. 'Responsibility' seems to indicate a personal choice/action but 'sustainability' seems to suggest much more (global, health, community, etc), which is probably most appropriate for the Gen Ed program.
3. Where is 'social equity' and 'personal accountability' in the structure? What exactly is meant by 'Inclusive Excellence' and does that include social equity and personal accountability? If so, it should be defined as such (more explicitly).
4. Silver bullets can be looked from a positive angle because it promotes interdisciplinary learning.
5. The 'themes' box is quite unclear. What is the main intention of the 'themes' category? What is the exact purpose of having students select a theme and then courses to fit into that theme? If they are interdisciplinary, how exactly might it work? Also, faculty might propose several more themes (or none at all), in which case who decides on what basis which themes to keep and which to discard? Can a student take interdisciplinary courses of his/her own choice without having to select from a list like this? How will these courses be assessed? Will there be learning outcomes for each theme?
6. Some components at the 'Integration' level can in fact be built up from the first year itself. Experiential Learning, Writing in the Major, and the Capstone course can be continued up as a scaffolding /running thread from the first year/'Foundation' level onwards (*attached*). For example, HPHD has capstone portfolios that essentially contain work from all for years in the program.
7. Also, several junior and senior level courses (not just one) can be considered together for a capstone.
8. How is a capstone a Gen Ed course if it is offered through the major?
9. Another similar thread can be 'Applied Knowledge and Skills' – applied work from first year onwards that becomes a 'capstone' at the top level.
10. FYE can be conducted at the college level, rather than at the program level, so that students (including those who are undeclared/undecided) get exposure to a different program, not just one, while getting the general FYE ('what does it mean to be a college student, what is essential to know, etc). At a former institution, Kelly Schoonaert said that the FYE was co-taught by faculty/staff and Residence Hall Directors.
11. Overall, the structure in this version of the proposal works well with a clearer direction of where the new GEP is going. The visuals/diagrams helped a lot in understanding the logical order as well as the details.
12. Everyone agrees the with foreign language requirement – that it should be a mandatory requirement for all students. More than the language itself, it is important that student get that

international exposure through a foreign language class. HPHD is ok with students getting the requirement waived/transferred if they have had 2 years of FL in high school, provided that there is proof of sufficient exposure (given the differences in high school curriculums and standards).

13. The School of HPHD can support writing in the major, FYE, experiential learning, and capstone seminar. Themes – not clear at the moment.
14. Re: the “Inclusive Excellence”: HPHD faculty already currently includes a diversity element in all their courses.
15. How will this affect non-traditional and transfer students?
16. RE: B.A.><B.S., HPHD doesn't feel there is a need for a distinction between the two.
17. WE is labor and time intensive if done right. Training would be necessary if a “Writing in the Major” program is adopted.

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**From:** Demchik, Michael  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 17, 2009 7:52 PM  
**To:** Houghton, John  
**Subject:** RE: Gen. Ed. Review

Hello John,

I am providing some feedback on the GEP papers for you. I may be a bit of a bad mood right now (so excuse any negative sounding comments, they are not meant that way).

I am going to provide input page by page for GEP structural components.

Page 2

How does ANY of the Integration section lead to the stated goal of Becoming a Global Citizen? Writing, Capstone, etc....is not global citizenship in my opinion.

What is Inclusive excellence....If it is this Making Excellence Inclusive initiative, we should actually have specific requirements for it, however, the themes associated with this Integration section seem unlikely to actually do this.

Looking at the overall coverage on this page, I am concerned that it lacks specifics to the global citizenship role...Now this is only my opinion, however, in an ideal world, this requires a SOLID understanding of economics and international trade, a SOLID understanding of the impact of international policy and law, a SOLID understanding of culture and a SOLID understanding of economic geography, a SOLID understanding of international resource management (resource being looked at broadly, not just natural resources but human, capital etc.)....

Page 3 The grammar in the two paragraphs after the mission statement needs work. Also, how are we going to impact “global citizenship must begin at home...” this seems counter to our purpose.

In my opinion, we are not a “global society” yet, nor is that a goal that we should even aspire to at all. We are Americans participating in a global economy maybe; however, we are not a global society. This is a bit more than semantics in my opinion. Also, in the third paragraph, it says “the

generosity to empathize...”, that could be interpreted as extremely arrogant (i.e. ethnocentric and elitist). We do not need the “generosity to...” that implies that the other person is inferior...that is bad. (as a note, I have re-written this comment repeatedly, as I want to communicate my point without calling the person that wrote it an elitist...however, I need to start working on another project now and must send it like it is).

“the more students are encouraged to step outside their familiar.....” how is this to be accomplished? I am guessing that it will not be directly through the curriculum, I would think that this should be pretty specific with real deliverables, not vague and untenable.

Page 4: The diagram...I have previously mentioned this and will not say more on it except that it presupposes far more differentiation that I think would exist in an ideal world. I talk about history, international and domestic trade, culture etc. in most of my classes. If I were to partition it out, then I would not. This sounds like a Venn diagram not three distinct circles.

“Having acquired this knowledge and basic skills, students would then proceed into more specialized coursework aimed at developing the personal, social and environmental responsibility by which we have defined global citizenship at UWSP.” I do not agree with several issues mentioned. I believe that there HAS to be a professional component to this. In my understanding of what is done at an university, we are not solely in the business of making better citizens, global or otherwise.

Page 5. Capstone seminar....While I think that CNR may be served well by a capstone course, I do not necessarily think that other majors need this. I think this should be at the discretion of the people planning the major.

Page 6 “Quantitative literacy” This is a useful idea but the wording misses something that has been a main focus of math education researchers and a failure of much of these student’s past math education. Math is a tool. It should be taught that way (at least according to the math education researchers). Operations are important to the use of that tool but not even remotely the focus (however, operations are generally the focus of math education in many k-12 school systems and this has resulted in the failure of students to learn how to use math). The specific deliverables for this should be expanded but the idea in my opinion should be simple...introduction to the use of math as a tool...operations and concepts are nice, but understanding HOW to use them is more important than the tools themselves. This section should be written by someone whose research is “how people learn math.”

Foreign language requirement: I might seem an odd person to say that I do not agree with this (being that I am bilingual in speaking and writing and multi-lingual in reading), but I do not think this is essential. I would rather see these credits go into something like international economic geography, culture associated with major world religions, etc. This will have a bigger impact than students stumbling through a language that they may then never know. I think it is WONDERFUL for someone to speak many languages; however, I think it is ESSENTIAL that they understand the impacts of foreign policy, economic policy, international trade etc.

Page 7. I find it disconcerting that on page 5, it says “if we are to succeed in this endeavor...it is vital that we set aside constraints of the status quo...” and then on page 7 we define the investigation stage nearly exactly as it has been defined going back to the monastic origins of university education.

Page 8 ...”personal accountability, social equity and environmental sustainability.” While I understand the importance of these ideas, this borders on social engineering. While I agree that universities do some social engineering, I do not think this should be a main focus of a program. What is meant by “personal accountability” and “social equity” and “environmental sustainability?” I might be able to wrap my mind around personal accountability. That sort of means if I screw up, I admit it. Or maybe it means, not to leave the lights on when I leave a room and then blame coal miners for mining coal to feed the power plants that I used to run that light...or something like that. Social equity is something that is completely unachievable in the current global setting. It either means that the American standard of living has to crash (which means a lot of poor get poorer and a lot of rich stay rich) or it means that the rest of the world has to gluttonously consume resources like the US does. Both seem frightening to me. Last is environmental sustainability. I think this is a wonderful goal to strive for; however, it appear to me that this has barely even been described and when it is, I usually do not even remotely agree with it (i.e. I have been called an environmental rapist a few times by being a forester...I do not want that thought process promoted....I have been called part of the problem when I wanted to use chemicals to fix an invasive species problem....).

These are my thoughts on what I read,

Have a good day  
Mike Demchik

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Comments from L&S Chairs Meeting  
June 11, 2009  
Step 4a Proposal

GEPRC members present: Nisha Fernando, Randy Olson, Julie Schneider, and Greg Summers.

The group discussed the proposal for an hour and a half, raising many issues. Among the topics discussed, two drew the most attention:

#### Writing in the Major:

There were mixed feelings about the writing-in-the-major proposal, although everyone wanted more details on how it might be implemented. Chris Yahnke, in particular, pointed out that most faculty see this as simply putting the old WE into the departments, which they oppose. More details could alleviate this fear.

Bob Enright (Sociology) expressed similar concerns about the writing-in-the-major. Jim Brummer (Chemistry) said that his faculty were excited about the proposal, since they do a lot of writing in their courses already. Renee Craig-Odders (Foreign Language) noted that writing-in-the-major could be problematic for her department, since little course work in their program is in English.

There was general discussion about using the “Theme” courses to teach writing instead.

Renee Craig-Odders suggested that students might be allowed to choose a writing option in various courses. This would spread out the work load involved in teaching writing.

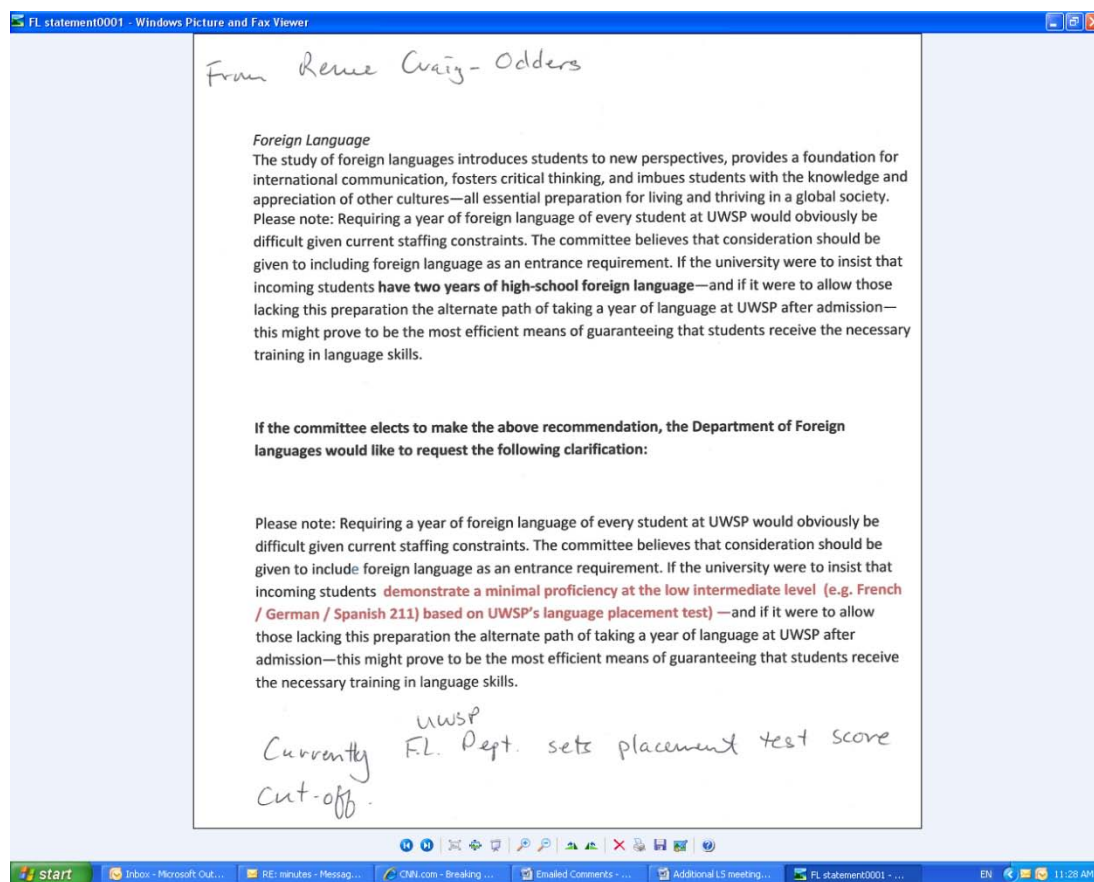
Some people feel this could be an “unfunded mandate” which will result in larger class sizes of writing intensive courses and could diminish the quality of the writing instruction. GEPRC members explained that this would not be limited to just 2 courses as it is currently, so that writing practice could be spread out over more courses.

It was also noted that the committee needs to articulate Writing in the Major more. It needs to be clarified that Writing in the Major doesn’t necessarily mandate dedicating a single course or two in the major (which seems to be where opposition to Writing in the Major is coming from). It can be distributed among several courses based on what the major decides is suitable. This will eventually solve the need for high-enrollment classes to ensure quality writing; instead it can be done in several, low-enrollment classes within the major. As Jim Brummer pointed out, currently there are several courses in Chemistry where writing is a major component, although they are not designated WE courses.

#### Foreign Language:

Keith Rice (Geog./Geol.) and Jim Brummer (Chemistry) expressed doubts about the foreign language requirement, arguing that most of their students would be better served with additional math and science. Both were dubious of the utility of a foreign language, pointing out that one year did little to provide students with proficient speaking ability. Others argued that this was not the point of a foreign language. Rather, language served as a fundamental introduction to culture and was important for all students. Rice disagreed and suggested that if cultural awareness was the point of studying language, then the languages should be grouped with other course with a similar purpose where they could serve as an option to fulfill this requirement.

A few people expressed their concern that requiring foreign language for admission and/or for Gen Ed will limit our admissions. They also think it will be extremely difficult to staff enough first year foreign language courses if all students are required to validate, based on a placement exam, whether they have achieved 2 years equivalency of high school foreign language. Renee Craig Odders submitted a proposal from the FL dept. (see insert below). They are proposing that students be required to either have completed 2 years of a high school foreign language or have to complete one year at UWSP if they have not. She also mentioned that each institution has the ability to set the cut-off score of the UWS placement test for foreign language placement. NOTE: per discussion with Cathy Glennon in Admissions on 6/17/09, this would affect only about 10% of incoming (freshmen?) students. Approximately 80% of all admits have completed 2 years of a high school foreign language.



### Miscellaneous:

Numerous other issues were raised during the conversation.

- Bob Enright (Sociology) wondered what happened to Non-Western courses. This precipitated a conversation about the meaning of Inclusive Excellence.
- Charles Clark urged the committee to drop the phrases “Inclusive Excellence” and “Becoming a Global Citizen,” both of which he argued were meaningless.
- There was general discussion about the stair-step approach suggested in the diagram of the GEP and how this might be implemented in practice. (How, in other words, do we keep students from putting off Foundation courses until they are seniors, as frequently happens now?)
- Several people liked the overall structure of the program, including the Themes category.
- Dale Rohm (Math) argued that Capstone Seminars are inappropriate in his department, since students split into several specialties by the time they are seniors.
- Many people argued for interpreting Experiential Learning as broadly as possible, in particular to include student research experiences.
- Will the Records office be able to program all of the changes in time for fall 2011 implementation?
- How will this affect transfer students?
- Who will have the authority to teach skills (communication, for ex.)



- The GEP should not dictate Writing in the Major or capstone requirement. That should be up to the dept.
- Need to be careful that the “experiential learning “ requirement does not cut into the local job market given the current economic situation.
- Admissions currently uses the term “experiential learning” to mean “prior learning”. We should consider changing this term so as not to confuse the two.
- Some seemed to think that each ‘box’ in the GEP structure corresponds to a particular type of course(s) or to a certain number of credits (this seems to come from being used to the current GEP structure) and that ‘Foundation’ corresponds only to First Year level courses. The committee needs to clarify these aspects more in the next draft to avoid pre-conceived ideas.
- The committee should clearly explain (even more, as it seemed) that this draft is only about the structure of GEP, and nothing else. Course and credit assignments will be developed eventually in future steps. Logistics about who will monitor and oversee the implementation of the structure, what courses will be assigned to what category and by whom, how many credits will be assigned for each ‘box’ and as such are not considerations at this stage.
- The committee may need to consider providing a clarification why certain requirements for the GEP are embedded in the Major (such as Writing, Capstone, etc).

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Gen Ed Responses from:

Communication – Jim Haney, Rhonda Sprague

Generally positive

Lack of understanding of Theme approach. Cited UW-O approach to first year theme tied to graduation speaker and honorary degrees. (Women Mercury astronauts) Every class could have a theme.

Writing in the major and Capstone experience should not be part of the Gen Ed proposal. They are not appropriate to Gen Ed. Gen Ed should not dictate to majors.

Concern about resources available for Capstone particularly with large number of students in the major.

General Ed needs to be as separate as possible from majors to encourage diversity of experience.

Disagree with Foreign Language requirement. Believes it does not do what is claimed. International experience requirement would be more valuable and valid. Does one year of foreign language really make you a better educated person? Can you really communicate?

Themes: resource issues. How? Who? Should be outside major.

Learning outcomes:

Add “reduce or manage speaking anxiety.”

Add “consider ethical implications and utilize appropriate ethical strategies in written and spoken communication.

Add “and speaking” to the bullet about critiquing communication.

Add “Demonstrate ability to integrate appropriate technology into oral presentations.”

#### Music – Patty Holland

Good at first glance

Need stronger exploration of historic context (Susan Bender)

Concern that FYE might delay progress through major requirements (Bender)  
Stress reading as important.

Foreign Language, practical concerns including might students chose to go elsewhere.

BA/BS/BFA/BM not good thing. Diminishes the identity of UWSP degree.

Capstone, problematic with small majors – not enough for “seminar.”

Music could accommodate writing in the major.

FYE would work as major requirement.

#### Art and Design – Diana Black

Categories make sense.

FYE could work with flexibility of it being based in or out of a department. They do not have an FYE but see the need and have courses that could be used as delivery source.

BFA’s have capstone experience BA’s do not.

Unclear on themes. Should have presentation of material at end. (paper, poster session, etc.)  
Feels like prep track for grad school.

Writing in the major not a problem. Most studio teachers already include significant writing, more so in BFA than BA.

Foreign Language requirement, yes.

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Representative: Laura Ketchum-Cifti, and Susan LeBow

Date: June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers met with Laura Ketchum-Cifti, Director of the University Centers, and Susan LeBow, Assistant Directors of SIEO, to discuss the current proposal regarding the structure of UWSP's General Education Model. There were several areas where they felt the need to supply feedback: First Year Experience (FYE), Experiential Learning, Foreign Language Requirement and language on Educational Outcomes. Susan and Laura had some questions regarding the nature of the FYE and how that would be implemented. Susan had helped design and implement the New Student Seminar several years ago and had some constructive feedback. She said that during her research she found that successful FYEs had to have the Student Affairs piece and could not be freshman level courses that had simply added a session or lecture on how to succeed in college. Laura also thought that the FYE was a little too academic and needed that Student Affairs infusion and suggested that we consider a co-taught FYE with Student Affairs professionals and Faculty with outcomes for that Student Affairs piece. Laura thought that "healthy relationship-building" was missing from the learning outcomes. They both thought that having upper-class students in the NSS was critical to their implementation and that those NSS sections that didn't have upper-class assistants were less well attended and overall less successful than those that did. They also cautioned that there should be compensation for Student Affairs professionals who do choose to co-teach (unlike the NSS.) They liked the idea of having a common reading that would involve students, faculty, staff and the community with a speaker invited to a culminating event. They both agree that the NSS has to have credit attached. They also wanted to say that we should consider some sort of sophomore experience as well, that addresses a different set of needs developmentally

With regards to the Experiential Learning component, they are in support and thought there was great opportunity for the UC to have students participate in this. They aren't sure whether it should have credit attached to it because different experiences have different levels of responsibility and are not comparable. Perhaps just having it as a requirement to check off is a good compromise. They did express concern about how it will be assessed. They also supported the concept of having a variety of experiences count towards this they did not think that our community would be able to support service learning or volunteer opportunities for 10,000 students.

They were very supportive of requiring a foreign language of all UWSP students and thought this critical to meeting the outcome of developing global citizenship.

Laura wrote her Ph.D. thesis on educational outcomes and thought that some of our outcomes and our language in the proposal could be changed to more reflective of the literature of Kuh. In particular, she thought that the phrase "Practical Competence" would better reflect what we intend our students to gain than the word "skills." See PDF/ Appendix C: Educational Outcome Clusters (Kuh 1993)

Overall, the UC staff was favorable of the proposed structure and outcomes. They did emphasize the crucial need for FYE and EL oversight.

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Student Affairs Department: Office of Residential Living

Representative: Joe Totman, Kris Hoffenberger and Julie Zsido

Date: June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers met with Joe Totman, Director of the Office of Residential Living, and Kris Hoffenberger and Julie Zsido, Assistant Directors, to discuss the current proposal regarding the structure of UWSP's General Education Model. There were several areas where they felt Residential Living would be impacted and could comfortably supply feedback: First Year Experience (FYE), Experiential Learning, Capstone, Writing in the Major and the Foreign Language Requirement (FLR). Residential Living had some questions regarding the nature of the FYE and how that would be implemented. They also felt that there was opportunity for some more specific student staff positions to be able to help with this experience and also wondered what role Student Affairs would play in this FYE. At this time, we let them know that the details of the FYE have yet to be determined.

Residential Living thought that they could support the Experiential Learning component of General Education and that Residential Living had many student staff positions within the residence halls and in their main office whose responsibilities could fulfill this requirement. They thought that with proper guidance and expectations, that there would be enough qualified supervisor staff in place to help with oversight of these experiences. They also thought that they may even have opportunities for Capstone. Residential Living does have some more involved student staff positions within the Central Office that could serve in this capacity with proper oversight by the academic department. They all thought that the reflective pieces that are submitted by student staff do demonstrate that the students need more writing- so the more writing the better. In addition, they expressed some concern about the FLR and that they wondered if there would be some students that couldn't pass this type of course. The option to have some substitution courses for those language disabilities would be necessary. Overall, Residential Living was favorable of the proposed structure and outcomes.

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Student Affairs Department: Tutoring-Learning Center

Representative: Bobbie Stokes, Director

Date: June 16th, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

Bobbie likes the overall structure of the Gen Ed proposal. The key will be selling it to faculty. She thinks the sequential nature of the diagram set in upward-pointing arrows does not describe the recursive nature of learning. The term "Foundations" is too static. She would rather see something like "Transitioning to the University Community". Where will students get a general overview of academic disciplines and their different "ways of knowing"? We suggested that might come in the Freshmen Seminar. She also feels that "Skills", in "Foundation: Developing Fundamental Skills" sounds too remedial. She suggested "Habits of Mind". She also feels this doesn't belong at just the foundation level, but rather should be developed with increasingly difficult mastery at all levels. She also feels that the learning outcomes for the "Investigation" level are too logic-based. She feels we left out rhetorical knowledge and the many ways of knowing and creating knowledge in the Humanities and the Arts.

Other comments:

Disciplines at the university are still very separate because of the different methods of inquiry used and therefore "cross-disciplinary" is a more accurate term than "interdisciplinary".

She agrees that all students who graduate from UWSP should have studied a foreign language at some point, but agrees that requiring students to prove 1 year of college-level proficiency through placement testing and making up the deficiency could hamper our admissions and cause staffing difficulties.

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Student Affairs Department: Admissions

Representative: Cathy Glennon, Director; Cheryl Kawleski, Admissions Counselor

Date: June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

**B.A.><B.S.:** Cathy worries that degree requirements set outside of the GEP could be confusing to students if they are not explained along with the GEP requirements. Students will feel that there's a hidden layer of gen ed.

**Foreign Language requirement:** If students are required to prove through placement testing that they have 1 year of college level FL proficiency, Cathy and Cheryl agree that this will negatively impact admissions. They prefer UW-Milwaukee's policy that if you have not completed 2 years of FL in high school, you have to take 1 year of FL at the college level. Those that have taken 2 years of high school FL do not need to take a placement test to prove it. They looked at UWSP admissions over the past few years and an average of 90% of all students (not sure if these are freshmen only or include transfer students) have taken 2 years or more of FL in high school. They said it will be important to let high school guidance counselors know if we implement this requirement.

**First Year Seminar:** Great idea. All research shows this helps with retention. Cathy and Cheryl both feel this would also help with recruitment to be able to say we offer this. They thought a Transfer Seminar would be great, too, but that maybe students who have completed 90 or more credits could be exempt. Another thing to consider would be if a transfer student had already taken a FYS somewhere else. Would they be exempt?

**Writing in the Major:** Great alternative to current WE. Students need more writing instruction. This would also help with recruitment.

**Experiential Learning:** Also a great idea and would help with recruitment. We might need to consider renaming our current "Experiential Learning" option to "Prior Learning" so as not to confuse the two.

**Transfer students:** Reducing the # of Gen Ed credits will help transfer students. They've heard that some advisors advise against transferring to UWSP because of what appears to be a high number of gen ed requirements. We'll need some to have some flexibility for transfer students so that those who plan to transfer to UWSP in 2011 and 2012 and are basing their course choices at their current institution on the current UWSP GDR, will have the option to follow the new or old GDR. Cheryl told us she has to update the Transfer Information System 5x/year. When the new GEP is approved, she will need to update the complete GEP.

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Student Affairs Department: Disability Services

Representative: Jim Joque, Director

Date: June 16th, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

Jim likes the current structure of the gen ed proposal. Jim's concerns were already expressed in his 5/21/09 email (attached). He provided us with the 2007-08 Annual Report ('08-'09 not yet completed) so we could get an idea of the type of students the DS office serves at UWSP (attached).

The current GDR categories affect students with disabilities: Foreign Language, Math, Communication and Aerobic Activity Wellness. There are currently alternatives in place for accommodating students who cannot complete these requirements due to their disability. Until a decision is made about what exactly the foreign language and math requirements will be, he has no further comments at this point; however, if they increase substantially from the current requirements, he may need to revisit the

accommodation procedures if a larger number of students are affected. If we decide to have a FL requirement, we should have provisions in place for those who didn't have the opportunity to take this in high school as well as those with disabilities that exclude them from being successful in such courses. He asked that we remember to consult with him as we continue our work on the proposal so that he can begin those discussions if necessary. He also wanted to know how the substitution policy would operate in an outcome based model. We discussed the possibility of a pass/fail option for foreign language for students with a FL learning disability.

Jim also expressed concern that a foreign language or higher level math admission requirement could negatively impact the admission of disabled students. He also wondered how we are going to deal with transfer students in an outcome based criteria system and that this should be kept in mind as we continue through course designations.

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Hi Julie,

Thank you for your fine presentation on the General Education update at the Joint Department meeting earlier this week. It was most informative. It also looks like a very monumental task for you and the entire committee. I commend all of you for working on this most needed project.

However, I do wish to make a comment. In regard to the general education requirement that may result in all degree students needing to take a foreign language, I do wish to point out that such a requirement would most likely create a hardship or an impossibility for students with language-based learning disabilities. Often, these students experience great difficulty with the English language, and find any foreign language to be a barrier to their educational pursuits.

As you are aware, Currently the University does have in place a substitution process for students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree. The student can formally request substitution for the foreign language requirement. The number of requests are very few. With a change in foreign language as a requirement, I sense that substitution requests would be substantial in number. In our past reporting period (2007-08), the Office of Disability Services served 347 students.... 102 of those students have learning disabilities. The numbers will most likely increase in this next reporting period.

If foreign language is required in the future, the University will need to look at a more functional means of requesting and allowing course substitutions. Otherwise, students with language-based learning disabilities will experience a direct barrier to completing a degree.

Also, please note that the same situation would occur should students completing the Bachelor of Arts degree be required more or higher math requirements than Math 100. Currently, there is a substitution course (a modified math 100 ) in place for qualified students with math-related learning disabilities. This substitution course does satisfy the Math 100 requirement for Math 100.

I am not advocating that the committee change their course of thinking relative to foreign language and math requirements. But I am asking that the committee consider students with learning disabilities and other related disabilities that impact on foreign language and mathematical skill limitations as they continue with revising the general education requirements. A system is in place for the degree requirements as they stand. If changed, it will be important to look for alternative academic

adjustments that would allow students with learning disabilities to continue successfully in their educational endeavors.

Please pass my concern on to the committee for their consideration. Thank you for listening.

Jim

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 Student Affairs Department: Multicultural Affairs Office and Office of Non-traditional Students  
 Representative: Ron Strege, Director  
 Date: June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
 General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers

Julie Schneider and Shari A. Summers met with Ron Strege, Director of the Multicultural Affairs Office, to discuss the current proposal regarding the structure of UWSP's General Education Model. The two areas where he felt he would be comfortable providing comment were: Inclusive Excellence and Non-traditional students. At UWSP, we have 1400 nontraditional students. He thought that a smaller General Education Program would be of great advantage in helping non-traditional students complete their degrees as well as make us more attractive to potential non-traditional students. His experience with non-traditional students is that many of them already have internships and experiential learning opportunities lined up and in fact, it was his opinion, that more non-traditional students seek and complete these types of experiences because they are more connected to the working world.

With regards to Inclusive Excellence, he thought that this should be an umbrella over the entire General Education and that multiple courses should meet the outcomes. He thought Marty Loy's approach, where Marty had requested everyone in his department to infuse a diversity perspective in every course, would be a good model. It is his thought that this overall reaching approach may be more effective than the "one course does it all" model. He also wondered if we should broaden the current "Minority Studies" racial/ethnic definition to include socio-economic equality.

We also asked Ron if the higher level General Education Themes would be an impediment to non-traditional students and he did not think it would be. He also thinks he could provide opportunities for those students that his office serves for their culminating capstone; , however it will be good for all students.

Overall, Ron was favorable of the proposed structure and outcomes. At this point, he said he will help us any way he can.

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Warren, Dona

**1. What is your unit's general reaction to the new GEP structure?  
 What are the positives/negatives?**

The department of Philosophy (inclusive of Philosophy, Religious

Studies and Anthropology) met on June 23 to discuss the next proposed step in the revised GDR. As a group we came to strong agreement on the points discussed below. We hope that you'll find our comments helpful.

We appreciate the focus on skills and knowledge that can be found in the Foundation and Investigation levels of the proposal. We have some concerns, however, about the First Year Experience and the Integration level. We'll address both sets of concerns below:

#### Concerns about First Year Experience

A First Year Experience, in various formations, has been effective on other campuses and we are interested in exploring the extent to which a First Year Experience can work at UWSP.

Because the introduction of a First Year Experience would be a significant and important departure from anything previously attempted here, however, and because the issues that surround a FYE deserve sustained conversation in their own right, we would like to see the First Year Experience be tabled *at this time* with the understanding that the question of introducing a FYE will be the subject of a separate discussion after other elements of the new Gen Ed have been put in place.

We believe that such a phased discussion and implementation will have a number of benefits. It will allow us, as a University, to more effectively focus our collective energies on other essential aspects of Gen Ed revision, including the integration of assessment with the Gen Ed, the restructuring of the course approval process, the suggested introduction of a Gen Ed Director, and the inevitable recertification of all Gen Ed courses. Taking up the issue of a First Year Experience at a later time, perhaps after a more permanent mechanism for monitoring and modifying the Gen Ed Curriculum is in place and other components of the Gen Ed curriculum are up and running, will also enable us to more thoughtfully envision and implement a First Year Experience that is right for this campus, consistent with the larger Gen Ed program, and sustainable given our financial and human resources. Furthermore, if the FYE bears only one credit, introducing it at later time will not significantly expand the General Education program.

During our discussion, we considered different ways that a FYE could be implemented. One option was to allow appropriate three credit



courses at the foundation level to satisfy the FYE requirement. Approved courses would be structured to incorporate the aims of the FYE and would be required to remain small (50 students or less) so that freshmen can experience closer student-professor and student-student interaction. Of course, these designated courses would be open only to freshmen, and enough sections would need to be offered so that all freshmen could find seats.

#### Concerns about the Integration Level

We believe that the Integration Level may be too ambitious in a number of ways.

Requiring students to take three courses in a theme will consume a disproportionately large percentage of a trimmed-down Gen Ed program, and we would rather see six of those nine credits devoted to insuring that students receive a solid grounding in the skills and knowledges found at the foundation and investigation levels. This is especially appropriate, we believe, because many of our students are still in the process of acquiring the basic disciplinary knowledge presupposed by thematic attempts to cross or transcend those disciplines. Perhaps “Development and Application” may be a more attainable culminating level of our Gen Ed curriculum.

If the University does require students to take one interdisciplinary course, we would encourage the committee (or whatever body eventually oversees the Gen Ed curriculum) to ensure that cross disciplinary courses benefit from the expertise of the appropriate faculty on campus. If a cross-disciplinary course isn’t co-taught by faculty in the disciplines involved, we could require the faculty member teaching the course to get approval from the departments that house the relevant disciplines.

Additionally, if all students are required to take an interdisciplinary course, the University must take steps to insure that the implementation of such a requirement does not fall upon departments as an unfunded mandate. Faculty who teach interdisciplinary courses will need to be given the resources necessary to do such courses justice. Such resources may include professional development opportunities and (naturally) the guarantee that taking on such a course will not result in four separate preparations in any given semester.

As a department, we raised questions about the place of the “NW” requirement in the revised GDR program. If we wish to maintain that our overarching goal is to foster “global citizens,” then it seems incongruous to eliminate the NW requirement. Some members of our department thought that the committee intends to keep the current NW requirement and is implicitly including it within the “inclusive excellence” category, but that was not clear from your document. We hope that the Committee recognizes the importance of the learning objectives associated with the current NW requirement, and will ensure that these objectives have a place in the revised Gen Ed program.

We would encourage the Gen Ed committee to reconsider some the terminology invoked at the integration level and to find alternatives for “Global Citizenship,” which we fear will sound dated in the relatively near future, and “Inclusive Excellence,” which we find unhelpfully vague.

Although we embrace the desire to give our students a unified and coherent educational experience, we are uncomfortable with the prospect of a General Education program stipulating requirements in the major, such as a writing in the major and a capstone seminar requirement. It appears to us that such a stipulation could easily present departments with a dilemma: either departments will be compelled to tailor those requirements in a way that insures the unification of those requirements with the Gen Ed program, in which case departments may be asked to structure their classes in a way that is not authentically related to their specific educational objectives, or else the departments will be able tailor those requirements to meet the needs of their majors, in which case there is no *a priori* guarantee these courses will serve their intended purpose of providing students with a unified educational experience. For example, writing (as traditionally conceived) may not be the dominant mode of communication in certain disciplines. If this is the case, then either the writing in the major requirement will impose an unnatural obligation upon those majors – which is surely not a desirable outcome - or those majors will be allowed to structure the requirement in a way that suits their programs – which would weaken its coherence with the writing requirement at the foundational level of the Gen Ed curriculum. To avoid these difficulties and to ensure disciplinary autonomy, we would prefer to see these components of the Gen Ed stricken in order to allow departments the greatest possible latitude in structuring their own major programs. We believe that departments are the best

assessors of the discipline-specific educational needs of the major.

**2. How do you see this GEP structure generally affecting your major students? Do you think the GEP as proposed will enhance their overall education in your major while enhancing their general education?**

We predict that the GEP structure will have mixed results for our major. With a lighter general education requirement, our students will be able to take more courses in the major and more easily complete a second major, but we are concerned that a reduced general education requirement could negatively impact recruitment into our major programs. Because few students are exposed to our subjects (Philosophy, Religious Studies and Anthropology) in high school, most of our majors first encounter our disciplines in general education courses. Naturally, a reduced general education requirement will expose fewer students to our subjects.

**3. How does your unit feel about the Foreign Language requirement? Should language be a requirement for every student at UWSP? (Currently, three UW campuses require foreign language either as an entrance requirement or for graduation.)**

Because studying foreign language simultaneously serves multiple important pedagogical ends, including cultural awareness, basic communicative skill in a second language, and an enhanced awareness of the structure underlying one's first language, we are in favor requiring all graduates from UWSP to have some experience studying a foreign language – assuming, of course, that the Foreign Language Department is capable of accommodating this requirement.

There is merit in taking experience or minimal proficiency with a foreign language as a soft entrance requirement that students without the necessary background can remediate here. Not only would such a soft entrance requirement send a strong message about the quality of students we would like to attract, it would also alleviate some pressure on the Foreign Language Department and “free up” four or eight credits of the general education requirements for other uses.

**4. For each of the following requirements, please consider: Can you support this requirement? Do you have current courses that could be adapted to fit this category? Would there be interest in your department in developing new courses to contribute to this**

**category?****First Year Experience**

See above.

**Themes**

The department, inclusive of the disciplines of Anthropology, Religious Studies and Philosophy already offers many themed courses on topics such as science and society, gender and sexuality, human rights, and ethics, for example. Thus clearly we believe that themes are an effective way to teach. Most of these courses satisfy current GDR categories and are popular picks among our students. However, we do not recommend the addition of a nine credit requirement in which students take courses on a single theme in three different disciplines. One concern expressed is that these themes make artificial separations between topics that are deeply interlinked. For example, gender issues, human rights issues and ethics are interdependent topics; any course in science and society would also be a course in ethics and human rights. It would be artificial and not pedagogically helpful for students to be forced to take three courses in one thematic area to the exclusion of others.

Further, the heavy credit emphasis this proposal places on interdisciplinary studies is predicated upon the assumption that our students already have sufficient knowledge of how individual disciplines themselves work. The abbreviated “integration level” does not allow sufficient coursework in a variety of disciplines to prepare students adequately for such an ambitious interdisciplinary program of study as proposed in the “mastery level” of the proposal.

**Writing in the Major**

See above.

**Experiential Learning**

We did not address this issue at our departmental discussion.

**Capstone Seminar**

See above.

**5. Are there any categories for which you have specific suggestions for appropriate learning outcomes?**

We did not address this issue at our departmental discussion, but I (Dona Warren) would like to encourage the Committee to directly target specific departments in its efforts to articulate particular learning outcomes. We, for example, would welcome an invitation to participate in the formulation of learning outcomes for the humanities and critical thinking. Science departments can be asked to contribute learning outcomes for the Natural Sciences, and so on. Such targeted requests – directed to particular departments for the specific purpose of framing identified learning objectives – are apt to generate copious amounts of very helpful feedback, in addition to relieving the Committee of an impossibly large burden and increasing the likelihood of University buy-in.

**6. Are there any components that you feel should be added to this proposal? Any that should be eliminated? Reasons?**

See above.

Dear Greg and Don,

I wanted to add a further note of specificity to the Philosophy Department feedback, sent to you by Dona Warren. Since this concern is particular to my area of teaching, I felt brief elaboration might be helpful. The issue pertains to the NW requirement, addressed as follows (in red) in the Philosophy Department feedback:

"As a department, we raised questions about the place of the "NW" requirement in the revised GDR program. If we wish to maintain that our overarching goal is to foster "global citizens," then it seems incongruous to eliminate the NW requirement. Some members of our department thought that the committee intends to keep the current NW requirement and is implicitly including it within the "inclusive excellence" category, but that was not clear from your document. We hope that the Committee recognizes the importance of the learning objectives associated with the current NW requirement, and will ensure that these objectives have a place in the revised Gen Ed program."

Allow me to echo the concern that without some sort of designation that requires students to learn about non-European non-hegemonic societies, the stated goal of our university to foster "global citizenship" rings rather hollow at best. I suppose it is possible that the intent for the "inclusive excellence" category is to include requirements that parallel the NW designation, though the vagueness of the title might make this component invisible to those not directly involved in the university.

One of the most important tasks that we carry out in the humanities is to stretch and deepen the accuracy of our students' understanding of how the world around them works. The lived cultural

context with which the vast majority of UWSP students arrive in our classroom is, most immediately and quite narrowly, Euro-Christian. If students have no exposure to cultures, systems, and ideas outside this purview, we are not only falling short of the stated aims of our university, we are truly doing them a disservice as a university in Central Wisconsin. (PLEASE NOTE: I am not at all wed to the Non-Western label for designating non-European, non-hegemonic systems. I in fact find the non-Western label rather politically contrived and would be happy if we could find more suitable terminology.)

I am aware of a number of excellent NW courses currently taught across campus. Speaking from my own experience, I have been teaching REL 100, "Intro to Asian Religions," every semester for eight years. It is a "silver bullet" course that fulfills humanities and NW requirements and, as such, classes fill to capacity, roughly 100 students a semester, almost instantaneously. As a result, I end up teaching a good many students who otherwise would have little exposure or -- initially -- interest in Asian traditions. It is one of my favorite classes to teach for this reason, as I know I am introducing the students to crucial concepts and ways of thinking that will alter the way they think about and receive the larger world around them. I have good reason to believe, furthermore, that this "horizon-broadening" is not simply fulfilling own agenda. I require students to write reflection papers three times a semester and have found repeatedly how much they appreciate the course. I can't tell you how many times students have expressed a sense of relief that they can now venture out from Central Wisconsin without being perceived by others as being insulated and naive. The fact that students harbor fears that others will perceive them as provincial is something we as a university can easily note and, if we structure things carefully, remedy.

If NW requirements -- or their approximation -- were removed from the Gen Ed requirements, I will probably end up teaching to the choir. I suppose this would have curricular implications for religious studies but, more importantly, those uninclined to learn about Asian religions will never know how much they would have enjoyed -- and perhaps garnered a sense of relief from -- learning. And, I fear, we would not be doing our job as a university.

Thanks for your consideration and for your work on this process,

Corinne Dempsey

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**From:** Doruska, Paul  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 07, 2009 1:25 PM  
**To:** Houghton, John  
**Subject:** RE: Gen. Ed. Review

John,

Here are my personal thoughts regarding the GEP as you sent out in late May. These are my comments alone and in no way reflect the views of the collective forestry faculty.

Paul

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1. *What is your unit's general reaction to the new GEP structure? What are the positives/negatives?*

I strongly support the idea of themes. In the past GDR classes were taken to fit a given category and as a result, the categories (or more appropriately the acronym, i.e. SSI, for the category) dominated any

discussion of the matter with students. As long as the category was filled it mattered not what the class was – that was always an awkward conversation. With themes, the focus will rightfully be on the subject matter and give the students some options to find something they enjoy and understand why they are taking it rather than taking something just to satisfy an acronym.

I am unsure about the limit of only 1 course at the 100-200 level for a few reasons. First, by definition 300+ numbered courses have being a junior or senior as a pre-requisite (page 42 of the 09-11 catalog). While we all skirt the issue every once in a while and recommend a sophomore to take a 300-level course, or there are some cases where a 300 level course is recommended in the sophomore year when following a program track, this might exacerbate the issue.

Second, once you get into 300+ numbered courses, there are often (and rightfully so in my opinion) some pre-requisites involved. Might that be the case with the GEP? If so, there could be some hidden (or unexpected) credits associated with the GEP in taking such pre-requisites. If the courses that compose a theme are such that any pre-reqs are satisfied within the GEP, that would be good – however, scheduling issues always occurs. I would be very careful with potential pre-requisite strings for GEP courses and maybe having only 1 at the 300+ level is better than having only 1 at the 100-200 level as proposed.

Third, see the argument made in (2.) below.

*2. How do you see this GEP structure generally affecting your major students? Do you think the GEP as proposed will enhance their overall education in your major while enhancing their general education?*

The Integration box in the proposed structure has much potential – that’s positive.

The “liberal education” stressed by the GEP is, almost by definition, weak on math and the sciences at the foundation level. That concerns me being in a science based program, and a math arena within that – that’s a potential negative.

I’m also wary about placing too much of the GEP at the 300-400 level or expect it to be completed while a junior and senior for a number of reasons. First, professional-based majors need those semesters to instruct the profession. Those subjects often have a 2-year pre-requisite cycle, so there is not too much room for more subject matter. I think the risk is high for the professional majors on campus that one’s overall education will be weakened by an enhanced general education.

My thinking is that a GEP should be somewhat transferrable between universities, so transfer students coming here can have a majority of their lower-level coursework transfer in and for our students transferring elsewhere, the same will hold. The GEP document itself includes the following: “Yet if we are to succeed in this endeavor and create a program that will serve our students well for several decades, it is vital that we set aside the constraints of the status quo in order to imagine what is possible.”

I think we must remember that “our students” may not be here for all four years. Some will leave after starting here, some will finish here after starting elsewhere. I suspect that trend to increase in the future.

As a result, I do not believe it is wise to have a 4-year GEP and have many links between its components, as then the GEP becomes too specific to one's university. A cursory look at the plans in place kind of lean that way. I think there are advantages to thinking in terms of two 2-year segments of a GEP for that reason.

3. How does your unit feel about the Foreign Language requirement? Should language be a requirement for every student at UWSP? (Currently, three UW campuses require foreign language either as an entrance requirement or for graduation.)

I'd prefer to see a foreign language/culture requirement as opposed to just a foreign language requirement. Studying and gaining respect for cultures can be just as important and perhaps more important than studying a language with respect to being a global citizen. International study programs could fit in nicely here.

I disagree with respect to the foreign language entrance requirement. That's potentially putting a decision about what colleges they might attend on high school students during the summer between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade – that's WAY too soon. Also, there also is absolutely no quality control of the subject matter in the high school preparation unless a minimum score on an AP exam went with the requirement. Lastly, think again of transfer students and non-trads – a growing segment of all university students and part of "our students". They would most likely be disadvantaged by such a requirement.

4. For each of the following requirements, please consider: Can you support this requirement? Do you have current courses that could be adapted to fit this category? Would there be interest in your department in developing new courses to contribute to this category?

☒ First Year Experience

☒ Themes

☒ Writing in the Major

☒ Experiential Learning

☒ Capstone Seminar

No comments here.

5. Are there any categories for which you have specific suggestions for appropriate learning outcomes?

No comments here

6. Are there any components that you feel should be added to this proposal? Any that should be eliminated? Reasons?

As outlined earlier, I'd prefer to see a foreign language/culture requirement as opposed to just the foreign language requirement.

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**Paper Science and Engineering Department  
Faculty/Staff Meeting Minutes  
June 15, 2009  
Conference Room**

Present: Gerry Ring, Kelly Klaas, Don Guay, Karyn Biasca, Danielle Mortag

Meeting was called to order at 10:00am

I. Discussion

Meeting began with Don Guay presenting the proposed General Education Program (GEP) Structural Components. The Faculty Senate is looking for feedback from each department through a series of questions. Discussion began around three major areas: Foundation, Investigation, and Integration:

A. Foundation:

- PAPR 105 could be converted into a first year experience course for PS & E majors and also for undeclared majors. Karyn Biasca also suggested that the course morph into an Introduction to Engineering course, presenting all different engineering disciplines.
- Foreign Language is likely to become an entrance requirement (two years). If students do not have two years, they will need to take courses at UWSP. This may encourage them to take the placement exam to justify the foreign language requirement.

B. Investigation: no comments

C. Integration:

- Capstone Seminar and Writing in Major are already very well incorporated in the major.
- PAPR 103 can be adjusted for learning outcomes in Environmental Responsibility.
- CO-OP and study abroad opportunities serve as Experience Learning components.
- To incorporate Themes our department could collaborate with other departments such as Forestry, Chemistry, and Business to establish a suite of courses around a central theme (e.g. teaching students to design, market, and sell the paper they produce).

D. Other Discussion:

- How do we avoid making the General Education program seeming like a series of hoops? During advising, we need to tell students that General Education will benefit students; we should never tell them to take a course simply to get it out of the way.
- How do we steer away from jeopardy courses (courses that are easy and fit requirements)? New learning outcomes will help students and advisors focus on how/why a particular course is important rather than which course will involve the least effort in satisfying a general requirement.
- The global citizenship idea seems to be a component we as a university achieve better than peer institutions.
- Developing themes presents an opportunity for the students to complete a 3 course series in 3 different departments but requires a great deal of collaboration from those departments.

II. Questions

1. *What is your unit's general reaction to the new GEP structure? What are the positives/negatives?*
  - The GEP structure is very well thought-out and logical.
  - Positives: If the departments collaborate, the GEP will serve to be an integrative program.
  - Negatives (concerns): How will the program work? Has this worked elsewhere?
2. *How do you see this GEP structure generally affecting your major students? Do you think the GEP as proposed will enhance their overall education in your major while enhancing their general education?*
  - The proposed GEP may ease the credit load for the students if kept at 45 credits. The proposed model should also help the implementation of ABET, assuming that the outcomes are assessed.
3. *How does your unit feel about the Foreign Language requirement? Should language be a requirement for every student at UWSP? (Currently, three UW campuses require foreign language either as an entrance requirement or for graduation.)*
  - Requiring foreign language may be beneficial as that may encourage more students to apply.
  - Foreign Language should be a requirement if we are going to integrate the global citizenship component.
4. *For each of the following requirements, please consider: Can you support this requirement? Do you have current courses that could be adapted to fit this category? Would there be interest in your department in developing new courses to contribute to this category? (answers listed respectively)*
  - First Year Experience – Yes, we can adapt accordingly
  - Themes – Yes, PAPR 103 and 445 could both be adaptable, may need to develop summer paper manufacturing course.
  - Writing – Yes for all questions.
  - Experiential Learning – Yes for all.
  - Capstone Seminar – Yes for all.
5. *Are there any categories for which you have specific suggestions for appropriate learning outcomes?*
  - Social & Behavioral Sciences, The Arts, and Humanities categories: “demonstrate an understanding” is another way of saying “understand,” which is not an assessable verb. Wording should be more specific, such as “Explain the major principles...” or “Describe and critique creative expression in a specific work of art.”
  - Quantitative Literacy: The wording in the outcomes seems to general, no level of ability is assessed.
  - Critical Thinking: “Claims of truth” does not seem to be the best wording to describe critical thinking in our discipline.
6. *Are there any components that you feel should be added to this proposal? Any that should be eliminated? Reasons?*

- It is not necessary to have a separate box for critical thinking as critical thinking is involved in every other component.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:35am

Minutes submitted by: Danielle Mortag

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Here are some thoughts in reaction to the draft and the comments I've seen so far:

### First Year Experience

- As described, this would serve a number of useful purposes, so I am for it in theory. In response to George Kraft's observation that the name refers to an "experience" rather than specific knowledge or skills, I think that's a matter of the name rather than what it would offer (if one reads the description on page 5 or the sample outcome statements). Perhaps we could call it something like "Academic Literacy."
- A more significant concern about the FYE, it seems to me, is rather the problem of staffing. Even if it's just a one-credit course (and there are some ambitious goals here for a one-credit course), it's going to require several FTEs. Does anyone have any thoughts on how we can make this happen given our financial plight?

I think a **Foreign Language** requirement is a very good idea—not only because it's useful to know another language, but because learning another language, even just a little bit, can significantly change a person's perspective. Language is fundamentally constitutive of how we think and perceive and even what we can think and perceive. Even one semester of FL study can really prime the mental pump to be open to other cultures and experiences.

### Critical Thinking

I think Dôna is right that we should start thinking now about how Critical Thinking fits in. Is it going to be a specific requirement—students will need a course or courses that explicitly teach critical thinking skills? Or are we going to integrate it into other components of the GEP—for example, make some attention to CT a part of every course that will be offered at the "Investigations" level.

I hate the term "**inclusive excellence**." I know it taps into System agendas, but it's smarmy and, maybe more importantly, I doubt it means anything to very many students (or even faculty members, to judge from the comments so far). Has "diversity" gone out of fashion? Maybe someone can come up with something better. Including it in the GEP program, however, is very important, and it should include both non-dominant cultures within the US and other parts of the world.

I question the value of having a distinct component called "**experiential learning**." Here, I think, is where George's comment about the FYE really does apply. Experiential learning is a pedagogical method, not a knowledge or skill or disposition to acquire. We might at least rename it to focus more on the goal: this is where students are to apply or use what they have learned. Could we call it "Application of Knowledge and Skills" (or something less pedestrian, but I hope you get my point)? And more importantly, I don't see the purpose of separating it out from the other stuff in the top layer. Is the idea to have a specific course (internship, etc.) for this purpose? Or could we integrate this into the other components—e.g. make it part of the "theme" cluster or part of the capstone course? I also wonder if it's necessary for students to be "outside the classroom" in order to be "applying knowledge

and skills.” Obviously that’s one way of doing it, and there’s value in using knowledge and skills in specifically non-academic settings—but can’t one “apply knowledge and skills” within the academic disciplines? In my discipline, for example, it’s useful to take one’s writing and thinking skills to workplace settings through an internship. But a student could also write a substantial paper on a topic of the student’s devising, or a collection of poems, and be doing the work of the discipline—isn’t that also “applying knowledge and skills”? (And then there are things like Editing and Publishing—a course, in a classroom, in which students are doing real-world work.)

I really like the “**theme**” idea. As I understand it, the point is to consider one topic from the perspective of three different disciplines, which will give students a better sense of how the discipline of their major is giving them a particular set of skills—thinking skills and not only concepts and information—which are different from the tools of other disciplines, and also a sense of how different disciplines complement each other when we talk about large and important topics like poverty or the health care system or war. Assessment of this component might involve each student writing a reflective paper about how the three courses he/she took do this. Here’s one question we need to think about as we get to the point of structuring it. Will each “theme” consist of three specific courses, or a list of courses from which students could choose? The latter would be much more flexible, though the former would allow for very specific connections between the courses.

I think the **Writing in the Major** is a very good idea, but as the previous comments make clear, we need to be asking not just “should we do this” or do we want to do this” but “what will the parameters of that program need to be in order to make it feasible?”. WE as we have it now is dysfunctional because some programs can’t, or aren’t willing to, offer enough WE sections to meet their majors’ needs—so obviously a Writing in the Major program will have to look very different from WE, at least in some departments. What could it look like? Also, I caution against defining the “in the Major” part of Writing in the Major too narrowly. There are some courses that are useful for students in other majors (e.g. Environmental Writing, offered by English but very appropriate for CNR students). While there is a limited amount of space in such courses, I think it would be a mistake to make them “not count” for those students who do take them. We should allow programs to identify courses in other departments that are appropriate options for their students.

I know we’re thinking about the overall structure and goals of the GEP at this point, but I perversely looked ahead to the stage of matching these components to course requirements, and as I figure it the total number of credits the current draft would require is in the neighborhood of 56 (and that’s making a few lowball assumptions). Unless we are prepared to have a program that large, we will need to be thinking in terms of cutting or, better, condensing what’s in this draft as we refine it. Here are a few thoughts to get that discussion moving, I hope.

- I think we could integrate the experiential learning piece into some other piece, such as the capstone course, or the theme cluster (i.e., make sure every theme has at least one course that includes “application”).
- I have no problem with allowing courses to “double dip”—e.g. count as a science course in the “Investigation” layer and also as the “Environmental Responsibility” course, or as a course in the theme cluster and also as the diversity course, provided it genuinely meets the goals of both. I would prefer this to an attenuated credit requirement at either the Foundations or the Investigations level, which I fear we will have to resort to otherwise.
- I also suggest allowing one course to overlap between the Investigation layer and the theme cluster. In fact, I think we should encourage this and work to make as many courses as possible allow for it. Instead of having two completely separate layers (you take your courses in Humanities,

Sciences, etc., then take three more courses, related to each other but unrelated to anything else), we should encourage students to see the theme as building on the courses they have already taken: you take your courses across the disciplines and then choose a theme that you have already been introduced to in one of those courses and explore it from the perspective of two other disciplines. Voilà: three fewer credits, and a more organic, integrated program.

A few thoughts on the assessment questions:

- We pretty much have to do assessment of the Investigations layer within courses, though I think we should have overarching outcomes to work with (as in the sample outcome statements GEPRC has come up with). If someone takes a literature course, we can't expect them to be able to talk meaningfully about philosophy (or even necessarily a work of literature that's very different from what they've studied)—but we should have a shared sense across the humanities of the kinds of things we hope students will get from taking a humanities course.
- The fundamental skills are different, though. We can, and maybe should, do assessments within the courses students take to lay the foundations (Freshman English, etc.), but ideally these skills will continue to develop as students progress. I would really like to know whether students who are nearing graduation can communicate clearly and think well. For that, the assessment tool would have to be separate from any course, or we'd need some flexible approach that would allow us to look at products (maybe from capstone courses) that would demonstrate communication and reasoning in a wide variety of ways.

FWIW

Mary Bowman  
English Dept.  
x4338

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Student Affairs Department: Student Academic Advising Center  
Representatives: Angie Kellogg, Director; Advisors: Andy Held, Carol Lanphear-Cook, Laura Polum, Kami Weis; Dan Kellogg, Records and Registration Director also attended  
Date: June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider, Greg Summers and Shari A. Summers

The Advisors in the Student Academic Advising Center made the following comments on the current General Education Structure proposal:

Overall Impressions: They liked the developmental approach to the structure. Traditional academic disciplines are represented, but more skills are now also included as expressed in learning outcomes for the Freshmen Seminar, Experiential Learning, Capstone. They also liked the visual representation; will make it easier to explain to students and parents. They also agreed that it gives UWSP an identity as compared to the current Gen Ed that appears to just be a disconnected list of courses. They wondered if the different levels represent freshmen (Foundation), sophomore (Investigation), Junior/Senior (Integration) years.

Freshmen Seminar: They strongly support a Freshmen Seminar. Has there been any discussion to link it with Freshmen English? Would like to see a Transfer Seminar, too.

Experiential Learning: They strongly support an Experiential Learning requirement. They wondered what types of experiences would count for Experiential Learning.

Themes: They like the Themes idea. Will force students to be more intentional about their Gen Ed course choices. Laura Polum (see her 5/21 email) described a similar requirement at UW Marathon County and how it was well-liked by students and how some faculty really enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues. Some wondered if majors would require a theme and thought that might be too limiting.

Degree types: They wondered who and when this will be decided. They still have concerns that this will either become a hidden Gen Ed requirement or that majors will have different degree requirements in their majors that will make it difficult for students who change majors as well as undeclared students who might fulfill one major's degree requirements that they were initially considering and later change their mind and then have to fulfill different requirements for another major. This could also negatively impact double majors. They also wondered who will determine the Associate Degree requirements.

Inclusive Excellence: They wondered what this exactly entails. They agreed that if it's learning outcome-driven, it could be embedded at many levels of the Gen Ed program. Angie worried that if the definition is too broad, it could dilute and diminish the ability of courses to teach about difference as well as allow students to avoid reflecting on their own prejudices and attitudes.

Impact on undeclared students: They hope that the reduced # of credits does not force students to declare earlier. Hopefully it will allow them a little extra time to explore majors by taking elective courses.

Impact on transfer students: Laura and Kami, former advisors at UW Colleges, wondered how this will impact UW College transfer students. It's important that we communicate these changes to our UW Colleges feeder schools.

#### Other comments:

Students need to learn to articulate what skills and knowledges they've learned from their Gen Ed and major courses as well as their extra-curricular experiences when preparing to enter the world of work. Where will this be addressed? If in the capstone, will faculty know how to teach that?

What about "Personal Finance Literacy"?

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Student Affairs Department: Career Services Center

Representative: Angie Kellogg, Director; Staff: Lorry Walters, Laurie Martin-Keefe, Patti Tomlinson, John Zach

Date: July 7, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Greg Summers

Career Services staff likes the new structure. They think it emphasizes that the Gen Ed is not just about knowledge in traditional academic disciplines, but also about skill development. For those faculty that oppose the word "skills" because it sounds too tech school oriented, the term "competencies" could be used. They emphasized that students cannot articulate what they learned in their Gen Ed courses and

extra-curricular activities and how the skills they developed are valuable in the workplace. It is imperative that students learn how to articulate this. They need to be able to look back and describe what they've learned as well as look ahead and see how they can use these skills in a variety of career fields.

This new structure is much more intentional than the current one and the staff hopes that faculty communicate to students why the skills and knowledges are important so that students don't view this as just another list to check off. Faculty will have to support this and communicate their support and excitement about the Gen Ed to students. They also need to be rewarded for putting more energy into the Gen Ed program.

The staff hopes that faculty read the LEAP report and become familiar with the types of skills employers are looking for so that they can communicate this to students. Dept. should consider consulting with Career Services staff to find out what skills employers are telling them they want students to have when designing their capstone course.

They strongly support the Freshmen Year experience. One staff member worried about the "one-size-fits-all" approach since students will come in with varied needs and experiences. Some will need extensive remedial work, others may be well-prepared for college. It will be difficult to serve all students needs and abilities in one course.

They strongly support the Experiential Learning and Capstone requirement. It's important that Exp. Learning include reflection.

One suggestion was that incoming students take an "Adult Competencies" test as freshmen and then again in the capstone course as seniors to measure whether they've achieved them or not.

One staff member noticed that there was not a Wellness-type requirement. Currently the Career Exploration course satisfies a Wellness requirement.

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Student Affairs Department: Records & Registration

Representatives: Dan Kellogg, Director; Staff: Ed Lee, Julie Benson, Patty Patterson, Pat Birrenkott, Joyce Roth, Amy Riggs, Judy Slowinski

Date: July 7, 2009

General Education Committee Representatives: Julie Schneider and Greg Summers

The following concerns were expressed by the R&R staff that writes the programs for the current DARS (degree audit reporting system) and by the graduation auditors:

If the new Gen Ed needs to be implemented by Fall 2011, that means all the changes need to be completed in the DARS by April 2011. In addition, before that, all the courses will need to go through Curriculum Committee for approval. The staff is very skeptical that they can complete this in such a short time frame. It took 3 years the last time major changes were made. This may also result in an increase of the # of programs they will have to maintain. If additional staff were hired to assist with this, they would need enough time to train them before they could start working on it.

If the Capstone and Writing in the Major requirements are not a part of Gen Ed, will they need to be coded into the major? That means all majors will have to be revised. If they're not, there is no way to keep track of whether students completed the requirement or not.

Will there be additional "completion by certain # of credit" rules, i.e. do students have to complete the different levels sequentially?

Staff who were around in the 80's the last time there were major changes to the GDR said that prior to that, each college had its own set of Gen Ed requirements and that B.S. students had to take a year of foreign language and B.A. students 2 years. In the 1980's, all colleges adopted the same GDR requirements and the FL requirement was reduced to 1 year for B.A. students and none for B.S. They hope that when the degree types are defined, they are not hidden in the major, but rather listed separately so that students know what they need to take. They would prefer there were no differences between the degree types. If embedded in the majors, they worry each major would create a different set of requirements, making it difficult for students to change majors w/o having to take additional degree requirements. They also questioned who will verify that the degree requirements have been completed if they're not embedded in the Gen Ed.

How will placement results interact with the new Gen Ed? They reminded us that currently only placement results are recorded, not what a student has completed in high school (referring to the idea that 2 years of high school foreign language be a Gen Ed requirement).

They are concerned how this will affect transfer students, UW Colleges students, Associate Degree seekers and students returning for a 2<sup>nd</sup> major.

Currently students can choose which catalog year they want to pursue for their Gen Ed. It won't be possible for students to do this with the new Gen Ed because it will be so different from the current one.

The Themes look difficult to code. Would be difficult to list the name of the theme completed on a DPR. They reminded us that there are 2 different documents to code: the DPR and the transcript.

Faculty and Academic Staff advisors will need training on the new Gen Ed. R&R staff said that there are many faculty who do not understand the current GDR and expressed concern that they won't take the time to learn the new one. Since R&R staff field many questions re: the Gen Ed requirements, they want to be kept in the loop and be offered training before the new Gen Ed is implemented.

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To the Committee:

I have long experience working with outcomes, and while the pedagogical debates highlighted by responses already received by the committee are fascinating, my note is limited to issues of method and process.

Committee documents indicate the selection of a long-range outcome, four areas of more immediate outcomes, with individual learning outcomes to follow.

One test of any outcome is whether it can be measured. If not measurable, either because it can't be or no reliable instrument exists to do the measuring, outcomes often need to be revised or eliminated.

During the GEP process, however, it seems long-range and intermediate outcomes have been pre-approved. From practical experience, I can report this approach often leads to problems. The same



applies to developing learning outcomes and the even more difficult synthesis of specific course content in relation to those outcomes. If outcome and measurement issues are not considered as a whole, I can almost guarantee future complications.

To avoid this, it will be necessary to consider if current measurement instruments exist for each general, intermediate, and learning outcome (as well as individual courses if they are to be assessed). If not available, the committee will also need to consider how will they be created? While possible, creating measurement instruments from scratch can be an overwhelming. Next, who will do the measuring, how often will the data be collected, and will there be staff training to accomplish this? A structure and clearly assigned tasks will require an organizational plan.

If all of the above is in place, the next step is to establish outcome targets. This is the most difficult task in the outcome process. A discussion of targets may come later in your deliberations, but like other aspects of developing outcomes, it is a mistake to separate one element from the others. Targets are used to measure numerical objectives for a desired outcome. For example, what will be the measurable target for demonstrating critical thinking? Does the committee have in mind a percentage of students who must demonstrate a specific level of critical thinking? If so, this becomes the outcome target.

I always describe this aspect of outcomes as “art and politics.” The art and politics comes into play because the target is mostly an artificial number designed to satisfy stakeholders. Stakeholders might be students, faculty, administration, the state legislature, and the public at large (I’m sure there are others). The outcome target must be high enough to satisfy the stakeholders and low enough to be achievable. Each of the outcomes must have a target attached and this is one of the most difficult and sensitive aspects of outcomes development. But if no targets are chosen, then on what basis can we claim an outcome level is a success or that the university believes that this course load is worthwhile? For example, if 75% of students achieve a 75% level of critical thinking, is that good or bad? Without targets, no one will know. Do any benchmarks exist or will we be making them up as we go along?

In addition, the committee is asking for outcomes to be established at the level of each discipline. For example, in a memo asking for feedback it states:

*What outcomes should define the Humanities, for example? To what extent should students in a natural science class be able to apply the scientific method? In which courses should we assess critical thinking, communication, and writing?*

The problem is that courses taught in each of the academic areas are technically **outputs** and not outcomes. That is, they are part of an internal process that hopefully leads to the four established areas of outcomes. Outputs, however, are not traditionally measured partly because it becomes an unnecessary burden to measure each detailed aspect of each output. It is going to be difficult enough to measure the 11 outcomes contained in the four different areas. Does the committee expect that in addition to the 11 general outcomes, each class output also be measured? If so, who will develop and approve these assessments and who will administer this incredible maze? Has anyone calculated the time/effort burden such a system would entail? And more generally, if each class output leading to an outcome is instead treated as if it were an independent outcome, will each “class outcome” have a target of measurable achievement? If not, how will the assessment of the class be judged? If there are measurable targets for each class, who will select the target and the measurement instrument?

Above all, I assume the committee realizes that outcomes, even when measurable and having targets, do not prove anything. Outcomes are not equivalent to a double bind experiment in medical trials or the experimental model used in many areas of research. The only way to prove that the GEP structures achieve an outcome is to take an identical (or at least comparable) group of students who do not take this course load and compare results to a group that does. This does not appear to be the approved approach. An “outcomes only” approach will still provide useful information, but the university would be exaggerating if it makes any assumptions that achieving an outcome target is directly validated by taking a particular set of courses. Nor should it be assumed that an output in a particular class leads to a particular GEP outcome target. Outcomes simply do not provide this level of methodological proof.

For example, cultural knowledge (assuming that its definition can be agreed upon and adequately measured) does not necessarily lead to global citizenship. Outside variables such as a change in parenting, a change in high school curriculum, or a change in the US world position that encourages or discourages global citizenship can, among many other variables, influence this outcome. Obviously, the variables are potentially endless and the only way to control for them is to apply the experimental model. Otherwise, it is truly a leap to assume that taking specific courses will lead to a specific result.

Moreover, it is certainly conceivable that rather than leading to global citizenship, an increase in cultural knowledge might lead to less, not more, personal accountability and social equity. In my class on the Sociology of Globalization, I almost always have at least a couple of students who absorb the information and conclude that the “rest of the world is weird and crazy” and have become more nationalistic rather than global in their outlook. While I do not share that conclusion and it is a small minority view in the class, I recognize this possibility. Unintended consequences are always a risk with outcomes. The committee assumes the GEP structure will necessarily lead to a pre-determined end result. There is nothing within the outcomes process that can show this to be true. And if a class output does not lead to a desired outcome it may be due to faulty assumptions regarding outcomes, rather than something wrong within the class itself.

Other factors also may have a significant impact on outcomes. Factors such as the race/ethnicity, gender, income, geographic location (birthplace), or GPA among many other differences of students enrolled in various courses or majors may influence outcome results. Will these be taken into account? There are two general ways to deal with this problem. The first, and not what I recommend for the university, is the No Child Left Behind approach which generally requires all sub-groups achieve a specific outcome target, or the second approach is to realize that different groups will have more or less difficulty achieving outcomes and adjust targets accordingly.

Overall, and despite the lack of methodological proof, departments and individual professors will be induced by enrollment competition within a shrinking number of GEP approved classes to participate and be willing to have their courses assessed in relation to selected outcomes. Constrained by budget crises, what other choice is there? While the development of learning outcomes will no doubt create intense debates over pedagogy (as well as self-interest), one result is that professors will be obliged to “teach to the test.” Much like the No Child Left Behind measurements (which according to news reports Congress is currently rethinking, if not abandoning) departments and professors will be under pressure to show “achievement” toward an outcome (a kind of “No Pointer Left Behind”), all the while no such proof is possible and the definition of each learning outcome will at a minimum be arbitrary. This burden may not only affect whole departments, especially those that offer high number of “service courses” to the university, but may broadly affect junior faculty that are asked to teach these classes.

Finally, I have never seen outcomes used in a “constructive” manner. That is, in each case the process always starts with language that states the purpose is simply to make the program better (in our case the language may be something like more flexibility in program development, or the ability to try new upper-level courses, or innovative department directions). And in every case, outcomes end up being used to make programmatic decisions where to expand or decrease resources. This is particularly problematic given the budget constraints we now all face.

I apologize for the length of this note and especially apologize if you have already covered and dispensed with some of these issues.

Gary Itzkowitz  
Professor of Sociology &  
Director, Community Research Center

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Hi GEPRCs,

I did a little tinkering with possible learning outcome statements recently and though I would offer these for the committee to include in the mix. You may already be well beyond this, but just in case.

For Humanities (these may also work for Arts, in case those end up getting grouped together):

- Analyze or critique a cultural artifact (such as a literary or philosophical text, a work of art, etc.) using appropriate concepts from the relevant discipline (form, structure, genre, etc.).
- Explain the meaning, value, or significance of a cultural artifact.
- Identify values, beliefs, or cultural norms represented in a cultural artifact, and compare/contrast these with other values, including the student’s own.
- Describe how a cultural artifact relates to the context of its production (e.g. its place in intellectual history, its influence on other artists, etc.) and/or its relevance to the student’s own life and times.

For the “Theme” cluster of courses:

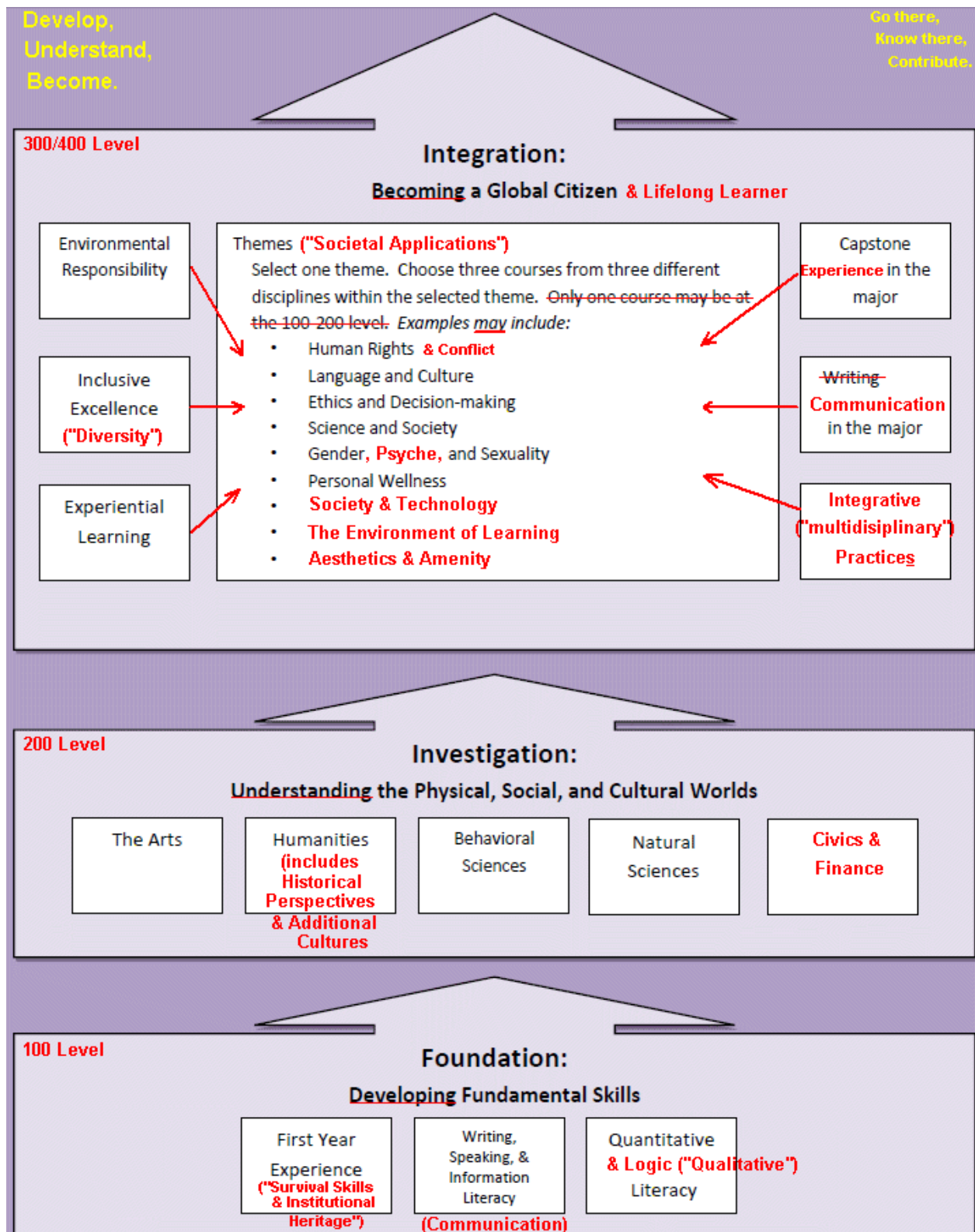
- Identify an issue or question related to the theme, and describe what each discipline contributes to an understanding of that issue. Assess the benefits of being able to combine these contributions.

FWIW,

*Mary*

Mary Bowman  
English Dept.  
x4338

The chart below is from Neil Heywood.



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**From:** Kuzmanovic, Dejan  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2009 3:43 PM  
**To:** Schneider, Julie  
**Cc:** Kuzmanovic, Dejan  
**Subject:** diversity requirement

Hi Julie –

I don't have any comments about the specific language of the most recent draft of the GEP "diversity requirement," but I would say, as you, Nisha, Pat and I discussed at our meeting a few weeks ago, the following:

"Discussing diversity across the curriculum," while being a very significant goal, is just that: a long-term goal. In other words, it is not something that can be quickly implemented in order to immediately replace the traditional diversity requirement(s). In my view, it will take years to gradually encourage faculty across the university to incorporate diversity into their syllabi, and indeed that encouragement should start with the new GEP proposal. However, including "pluralism" learning outcomes in a wide range of courses on the Investigation level should not replace the (still very much needed) specific and concentrated diversity requirement(s). If anything, it should be added to the traditional requirement(s). The shift from the traditional requirement(s) to achieving the goals of Inclusive Excellence cannot happen overnight, and if we imagine or pretend that it can, the result might be a weakening of diversity content in our GE curriculum and a false start to the Inclusive Excellence initiative at UWSP. Inclusive Excellence, as it is conceived by the AACU and endorsed by the UW System, is not meant to eliminate specific courses designed to meet the diversity requirement(s) but to add a diversity component to a wider range of courses. The two (specific diversity-focused courses and discussing diversity across the curriculum) are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they are mutually enhancing, and both are needed for a truly successful General Education Program.

Dejan Kuzmanovic  
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