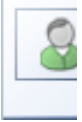



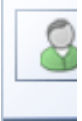
Listed below are comments on the Step 5b, GEP Course Criteria Proposal provided to the committee by email or through the committee's website. The committee also held an open forum on Nov. 11, 2010. To watch a video of the conversation, click on the following link:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/media/admin/ACAFF/GenEdReview2010/GenEdForum11112010.aspx>.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>I would like to voice my support for allowing non-instructional academic staff who hold a Master's Degree to teach FYS. As noted by some others, many non-instructional academic staff are experts in their areas, are passionate about student engagement and success, and have been well trained in areas that would benefit this program. I taught as part of a FYS at the last institution I worked at, as did many non-instructional staff, and the program was successful there.</p> |
|---|---|

Pope, Stephanie

Posted: 9/3/2010 11:15 AM View Properties  Reply

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Hi Don,</p> <p>We were talking in the math department about the new Gen Ed QL requirement. There were two important questions which I hope you might be able to clear up:</p> <p>1) (from page 12) "These skills might be taught in courses such as statistics, personal finance, business mathematics, probability theory, consumer economics, etc. Some of these courses are currently offered in various departments across campus. Many of these courses are designed for majors and have pre-requisites higher than beginning algebra. GEPRC is hopeful that new or modified courses will be offered specifically for the new GEP."</p> <p>Question: would old courses NEED to be modified so that they only have a pre-requisite of Math 90? Math 120 (Calc I), for example, could not reasonably be changed to lower the pre-requisites. The wording of this part of the document implies that Math 120 might therefore be INELIGIBLE to fulfill the QL requirement, simply because it has higher pre-requisites.</p> <p>Clearly, some courses should be developed with only a Math 90 pre-requisite. But many students come into the university with much more advanced math backgrounds. Why, for example, should a student who has placed into Calc III need to take a 100-level QL course, in addition to Calc III (if Calc III were able to otherwise qualify as a QL course)?</p> <p>2) (from page 13) "The remaining 89% of UWSP's incoming students in 2009 scored high enough on the mathematics placement exam to fulfill the proposed prerequisite to a General Education Quantitative Literacy course. Consequently, these students would simply need to complete one three-credit Quantitative Literacy course under the new GEP."</p> <p>Question: will four credit courses be unable to satisfy the QL requirement? The wording of this part suggests that every QL course might indeed have to be EXACTLY three credits. For</p> |
|---|--|

Guay, Don

example, Math 355 (Statistics) clearly satisfies the learning outcomes of QL. But it is four credits long. Changing our course from four to three credits is a tremendous amount of work, in terms of content, scheduling, paperwork, and approval, and it really would not be in the best interest of the departments which expect the course.

Clearly, some three credit courses would be advisable (we have one -- Math 105) in mathematics and possibly elsewhere. But why should a course that runs four credits be ineligible to satisfy the QL requirements, merely because it teaches MORE than the minimum expected amount?

These are the two questions. Should I come to your next meeting, in order to bring up the questions, or can you address them yourself?

>>

Assuming a 4-credit course with higher pre-requisites *CAN* qualify, we are planning on rewriting our descriptions of Calc I, Calc II, and Calc III to hopefully qualify them for QL status (so a student who enters with advanced placement won't have to backtrack). Any suggestions on what might make the future Gen Ed committee happy? -- I realize this is just speculation at this point...

>>

One more thing -- I think it might be important to have someone from mathematics on the Gen Ed course approval committee, when it gets set up. When is that supposed to start, and how do I volunteer?

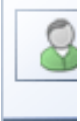
Thanks,

Jed Herman

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Posted: 9/3/2010 11:18 AM

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Guay, Don

Hi,

This may be jumping ahead but please consider our request. Deborah Tang and I are working with ePortfolio and program assessment. We have incorporated the new learning outcomes from the general degree courses and would like to build on any rubrics that may be used. Do you know if anyone in the committee may have rubrics that are being considered for the courses? We would like our students to have continuity throughout their learning including continued assessment. Before we reinvent the wheel, we hope to build on previous work.

Thanks,

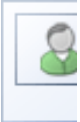
Jasia and Deborah

Dr. Jasia Steinmetz, RD, CD
Associate Professor
Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics
Coordinator of Graduate programs
202 CPS
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Posted: 9/3/2010 11:18 AM

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Guay, Don

Don

Regarding the Quantitative Literacy:

Can a student use the Math Placement Test to test out of this? If not, let's imagine one of the 15% of our students who has a math placement score that says they should take Calculus I. Imagine a second student who has just passed Math 90. Are we going to have a QL class that will keep both of these students interested and challenged?

Regarding the Interdisciplinary Studies:

In the case of a single course that would satisfy this

It is "restricted to the 300-level and above, so that they can build specifically on courses taken in the Investigation Level."

"The two disciplines being integrated in a particular course, major, minor, or certificate align roughly with two distinct areas of the Investigation Level, namely the Arts,

Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences.”

This means that a student who takes a course like this will need to have two sets of pre-requisite courses that would allow them to take this interdisciplinary course. OR we are going to develop a bunch of 300-level courses that don't have pre-reqs. OR we will develop 300-level courses with significant pre-reqs that will only help students in 2 majors. This sounds like our WE backlog.

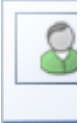
I find the “two distinct areas ...” fairly arbitrary. If a student applies Mathematics to Chemistry that does NOT count, but if a student applies Mathematics to Psychology, that does count?

Dr. Nathan Wetzel
nwetzel@uwsp.edu

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Posted: 9/4/2010 1:36 PM

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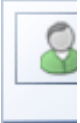
Caro, Patty

Under the experiential learning area, faculty or academic staff members must have a master's degree. Graduate degrees provide a basis for analysis of research, involvement in the profession, and a greater depth of knowledge.

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Posted: 9/4/2010 1:41 PM

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Caro, Patty

I am not sure where to reply or where to include information about the General Criteria area. I feel that the Curriculum Committee should approve the General Education program, because they are responsible for assessing the entire degree program. Why are two committees analyzing the same information?

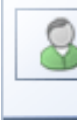
Under written communication, it would appear that English 102 would no longer be required. Is that correct?

For Math 90 under quantitative literacy, one should add the phrase "unless tested out" or something like that to denote not everyone will need that introductory level course.

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Posted: 9/13/2010 9:19 AM

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Olsen, Gary

Hi Gary,
Thank you so much for hosting faculty for discussion and feedback last week. I thought we had a fruitful discussion. I have a procedural question.

What would happen if a student passed the class in which the communication assessments were offered, but did not actually pass the assessments? Would there be another opportunity for that student to attempt the assessment in another semester? Or are you assuming that if a student passes the designated class that they have passed the communication assessments? It could very well happen that a student could earn a passing grade in the class but perform very poorly in the communication assessment. I think it's really important to recognize that this is a possibility.

A student in this situation should not have to retake the entire class, but should have an opportunity to get some coaching to prepare for a more successful attempt. If we want to really know that a student CAN do what we say they can do, I think we'll want to offer opportunities to retake an assessment (with no embarrassment) and coaching support for the assessments.

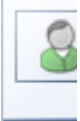
This leads me to believe that if we are serious about this outcome, we probably need to record the assessment completion in addition to the class grade.

When you are ready to have some training and coaching set up, I would be interested in helping out. Thanks again for a very useful feedback session!

Karlene Ferrante

Posted: 9/13/2010 10:23 AM

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Olsen, Gary

While I find the main points of step 5b of the new general education program to be thoughtful and valuable, I have two serious concerns. First, I believe departments, not a university committee, should retain the power to decide who should teach classes and who should not. Second, I believe that first year seminars, like other classes, should be taught by teaching faculty and staff.

Thanks--

Barbara Dixson
Professor of English

Posted: 9/13/2010 12:11 PM

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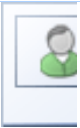
Olsen, Gary

Hi, Don and Gary. I am writing to give you my feedback on Step 5b of the reform process of the General Education program. I agree with many of the points and suggestions put forth in the proposal for this stage of the reform process. I am particularly glad to see how elaborated the Experiential Learning component proposal is at this point, in comparison with the earlier points of the process. My main concern currently with the Experiential Learning aspect of the proposal is that in many of the other areas the instructors are being expected to be trained and prepared via workshops conducted by CASE. Why would those who serve as ELA Mentors not be asked to receive some training by CASE? I understand that it is likely that the ELA Mentors may represent one of the largest groups of individuals who will play a role in the general education of our UWSP students, and thus the sheer resources necessary to offer mandatory training would be vast, but to not require some training for them but for others strikes me as perplexing. Is the lack of CASE training because there are so many possible ELAs that would qualify under this system, which may hinder the ability to prepare potential ELA Mentors? Also, can instructors who offer internships and service-learning activities (ELAs) as part of their courses serve dual roles as instructors and ELA Mentors? So, if I offer service-learning in my large Psychology 260 course would I potentially serve as the ELA Mentor of most of the students in that course? I am concerned that the instructions for students at step 7 on the ELA form seems to indicate the student is expected to take the initiative to request that the ELA Mentor assess their progress. The instructions for ELA mentors at step 2 indicate in general terms to determine how the ELA is going and then in step 3 the instructions indicate the ELA Mentor is to determine if the ELA is now completed or not. I think some language needs to be inserted in the instructions to students and ELA Mentors to indicate that both they and the ELA Mentor are responsible for monitoring and assessing the progress of the ELA.

Thanks.
Debbie Palmer

Posted: 9/14/2010 1:30 PM

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Guay, Don

Comments on GEP 5b

The proposal looks good in many ways, representing constructive responses to faculty members' concerns. As someone who teaches E102 every semester, I look forward to replacing this requirement with the sophomore level E202.

The concerns I have here are mainly questions regarding logistical matters.

1. General Criteria

Concerning the note under bullet #3, I recommend the following change: "the GEC must seek advice from appropriate department(s) and may request a brief curriculum vitae" My reason for suggesting this centers on the fact that a lot of power is being shifted from departments to one central committee. This shift might be necessary in order to improve the

coherence of our Gen Ed program, but we still need some checks and balances to protect the integrity of individual departments and the disciplines they represent. If for instance I proposed an interdisciplinary course on “Literature and Biology,” I certainly hope the committee would consult someone in Biology who would warn them against letting me teach that course despite how convincing my own written rationale might be.

2. First Year Seminars.

a. I don’t doubt that many non-instructional staff with MAs would do a good job (perhaps even the Chancellor could teach one), but I’m concerned about a “two-tier” system developing in which FYSs become primarily the responsibility of staff other than tenure-track or even instructional faculty. This could weaken the effectiveness of FYSs and it could lower the % of courses at UWSP taught by tenure-track faculty—a statistic that we like to use in promoting the university.

b. The FYS requirement raises questions about staffing beyond the issue of non-instructional staff. In English we offer over 60 sections of E101, 102, or 150 every semester, and if all these students are also required to take a FYS the school will need to offer around 40 FYS courses each semester. Given how difficult it would be for tenure track faculty to staff all these courses and continue to teach the introductory and advanced courses in their departments, it seems that there would be a strong incentive to rely heavily on academic staff for most of the FYS courses. How far do we want to increase our reliance on academic staff to teach core courses? I would hope there would be a commitment on the part of the GEC to make it a priority to have tenure-track faculty teach FYS courses, even if this means hiring more tenure-track faculty.

c. Who will decide which FYS courses will be offered in any given semester? Assuming departments approve enough courses to meet demand, who will oversee issues of over-enrollment or under-enrollment. For example, if we offer 50 FYS sections in Fall 2017, and we know that we only have enough first-year students for 40, do we a) still offer 50 sections and let at least 10 of them be under-enrolled? b) cancel courses below a certain enrollment minimum? or c) decide ahead of time which 20 of the proposed courses we offer? Who makes these decisions and what criteria will they use? What checks and balances would be in place to assess the performance of the GEC or GE coordinator to ensure fairness in this process?

3. Interdisciplinary courses

a. Will an Individually Planned Major satisfy the “interdisciplinary” requirement? This would seem reasonable.

4. This is perhaps my biggest area of concern: how are we going to pay for all this? Has anyone looked at how the proposals will affect the budgets of departments, colleges, and the University in general? Several aspects of this GEP will apparently require new administrative positions or at least expanded duties of administrative offices:

- New administrative positions, such as Director of GE, Coord. of FYS, etc. Even if these are “volunteer” positions, it would make sense that at least some course reductions would be necessary.

- Expanded role for CAESE in taking over WE training, providing curriculum development for non-instructional academic staff and others for FYS. (Will CAESE consult with the English Dept and the TLC on how to handle “Communication in the Major” training?)
- The possible need for new faculty or teaching staff to teach FYS and other courses.

Who will be paying for the additional expenses? How can we resist the temptation to add more Vice Chancellors and Assistant Vice Chancellors? The overall shape of the GEP looks good, but I hope it won't become a kind of “unfunded mandate” that will fall on the shoulders of departments (and primarily L&S departments) to absorb the costs.


5. Article XI – the General Education Committee in which we are “vesting ownership” of the curriculum.

This will be a very powerful committee, more powerful than the current GDR committee, so we should think carefully about how it is made up. In a recent open forum, some people raised questions about how this committee might rule in ways that could have unintended consequences, and the consensus response from committee members seemed to be “you can trust us.” As much as I'd like to trust whoever will end up on this committee, human history and common sense suggest that we also need checks and balances in order to prevent abuses or avoidable oversights where so much power is concentrated in one place.



As a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, it seems to be designed to represent the interests of administrators more than those of faculty. The only member on the committee to be elected is the chair; all other members are either appointed by the chair or various Administrators. Now this may be how most of our committees already get filled, but I think it would be healthy for a committee that has this much responsibility to have more faculty seats filled by elections within the various colleges or at large. As much as I'd like to think that the chair can find the most able people to appoint, I'd feel more comfortable with a more democratic process.

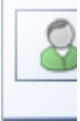
These questions are not intended so much to oppose the GEP proposal as submitted, but to raise questions about how it might best be implemented.

--Wade Mahon
English Dept.

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Posted: 9/15/2010 12:52 PM

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Olsen, Gary

Dear Gary, Don, and Committee Members:

Attached is the Department of Art & Design Curriculum Committee response to the GEPRC's latest proposal. I have a couple of specific points/questions to add to the narrative (listed below). Thank you for your continued work on this important issue.

- Interdisciplinary Studies – While the department feels strongly about the spirit of interdisciplinary studies in general, and has worked towards that over the years, a number of issues appear problematic in the proposal:
 - o The stated instructor qualifications will rule out a number of faculty in the department from participating.
 - o In terms of budget, how will these classes be staffed? Will resources be made available? Given 300+ students in the Department of Art & Design, a budget must be made available to provide staffing.The department and the college are very interested in creating opportunities to meet the Interdisciplinary Studies requirement through co-taught courses or initiation of multi-discipline certificate programs. Funding remains an issue to be solved.

- Capstone Experiences – The department currently offers a capstone experience for the BFA, as well as the BA with an emphasis in Art History. The BA with Studio emphasis does not have a capstone experience, and there are two issues which would make this problematic.
 - o The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) is the accrediting body which has granted accreditation to the Department of Art & Design for the past two decades. NASAD has specifically stated that major differences between BFA and BA degrees in the studio arts must be maintained. Creating a capstone experience for the BA in Studio emphasis could present major problems for the department under NASAD's procedures, and could endanger our accreditation.
 - o Additionally, the issue of resources is one that is a large concern. Given the number of BA studio majors, several sections of a capstone class would have to be created for them, with obviously problematic impact on staffing. Where does the budget for these extra classes come from? We can't simply turn an existing studio class, or classes, into BA capstone classes, because the same classes also function on non-capstone classes for the BFA majors. NASAD Accreditation is an important consideration and we do need to maintain specific and significant differentiation between the liberal arts (BA) and the professional degrees (BFA). I believe we could meet the GEPRC goal if we only had to add a Capstone EXPERIENCE to existing class(es) OR offer a separate EXPERIENCE for our BA students before graduation.

Best,
Diana

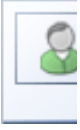
Diana Black
Chair, Department of Art & Design
Associate Professor, Graphic Design

Noel Fine Arts Center 163a
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College of Fine Arts & Communication | University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
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Posted: 9/15/2010 3:01 PM

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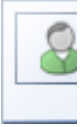
Caporale, Diane

I feel the requirements for a course in the major to count as a communication GDR is not broad enough. Saying a paper typically is at least 12 pages long (double or single-spaced?) or a need to have three 4-6 min long oral presentations within a course is too strict. Why not have an oral presentation that's 15-30 min long count? Or eight 3-page lab reports typically assigned in science lab courses count?

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Posted: 9/16/2010 2:23 PM

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Olsen, Gary

Feedback Regarding Step 5b – Dona Warren

Hello! Thank you for all of your work on 5b! My feedback is below.

General Criteria

I think that the general criteria for Gen Ed approval are quite reasonable. I have only one fairly minor question. In particular, when I read, on page 3, that a course must be approved via the submission of a course proposal that includes a course syllabus and assessment methods, I'm wondering how the General Education Committee will approach the issue of variation across sections of a particular course. Philosophy 100, for instance, may be taught by one professor in a way that differs significantly from the way that it's taught by another professor, and both courses could be very respectable introductions to philosophy. I doubt that we want to artificially impose uniformity across multiple sections of a course that can legitimately support (and profit from) heterogeneity, but I also doubt that we want to approve courses one section at a time. We should probably find a mechanism to deal with this issue. Perhaps, for such a course, the Gen Ed Committee could accept a template for the general type of syllabus that will be used in the course and approve a number of different assessment methods? This would give instructors a menu of choices without forcing each section to be approved individually.

First Year Seminar

Do we want to specify that students must complete the FYS before they reach X number of credits? I know that they are expected to take it the first year, but we might want to attach some consequence to failing to complete it within a reasonable amount of time.

I applaud the notion that an FYS should not be an introduction to a major. I would like the campus to remain open to FYSs that are introductions to disciplines, however. Introductions to a discipline – particularly if spun in an interesting way, could generate a host of appealing offerings. Introducing students to philosophy by looking at true crime, or to history by tracing the development of a musical form, would be appealing and effective FYSs, helping both students (by introducing them to new disciplines or to new ways of seeing a discipline) and departments (by providing them with a way to develop their introductory offerings).

Integration

I read that the disciplines involved must correspond – at least roughly – to the distinct categories at the Investigation Level. But Math isn't at the Investigation Level. Is Mathematics counting as a Natural Science for these purposes? Certainly a course in Arts and Mathematics would be interdisciplinary – and a great curricular offering!

Communication in the Major

This seems generally good to me, but it says both that the assignments should be based on the type of communication typical of the relevant discipline and that at least one presentation should include a visual or media component. What if the relevant discipline doesn't use visual or media components? Philosophy, for example, rarely uses visual or media components outside of pedagogical contexts. Could the requirement of using such components be dropped? I think that instructors will naturally require them in the appropriate disciplines anyway, as a consequence of asking students to engage in communication typical of the field.

Experiential Learning Activity

I'm wondering if the University mightn't provide some coordinated ELAs for students whose majors don't offer ELAs (although individually developed ELAs can certainly remain an option). These coordinated activities (such as working in an organic garden, volunteering for habitat for humanity, etc.) could be listed in the time-table and have an identified coordinator to serve as a mentor for the ELA. Serving as an ELA mentor for such a coordinated activity could be counted as part of load for faculty and teaching academic staff or be compensated in another way for non-instructional academic staff. (Coordinated ELA opportunities could possibly be offered through continuing education, as well, which would simplify the compensation issues. I know that continuing education already provides professional development and personal enrichment opportunities that might very well fit into the ELA model.) This coordinated arrangement would relieve students of the burden of finding someone willing to supervise an ELA. It would also prevent faculty and staff from the perceived necessity to supervise what might be essentially independent study projects without compensation.

Looking at ELA Plan Form, I'm wondering if we really need to include information for academic courses study abroad, etc. under III. Mightn't this form be restricted to students who aren't engaging in a preapproved ELA?

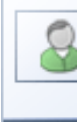
Other Thoughts

Looking ahead to the process of course approval, has any thought been given to temporarily "grandfathering" in certain courses in order to allow the approval process to run as smoothly as possible? Perhaps we could approve courses at the Foundation Level first, then courses at the Investigation Level, and then courses at the Integration Level. This would allow us to have all Gen Ed course approved within three years, without forcing us to delay implementing the Gen Ed program as a whole.

Thanks again for your continued work on this!

Posted: 9/17/2010 10:29 AM

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Olsen, Gary

Hi Gary: After reading through this proposal, I am still very concerned about issues of instructor qualifications.

On p. 3, I believe the phrase should read "...questions about instructor qualifications shall be referred to the appropriate academic department."

On p. 3, "All First Year Seminars...instructors have both expertise and interest..." This statement implies, with the use of the word expertise, that the instructor will have the appropriate academic credentials, which is as it should be. Therefore the inclusion of non-instructional academic staff in the pool of potentially qualified instructors (p. 4) is a contradiction. The very title "non-instructional staff" indicates this. Any person without the appropriate academic degree should not teach at a 4-year university.

The same inconsistency appears on p. 9. Any "qualified, capable" instructor would have the appropriate academic degree, but not necessarily any particular department membership.

I reject the idea that any such concerns about the relaxing of academic credentials amount to nothing more than a turf battle. This is about maintaining high academic standards suitable to a 4-year university institution. Students and their families are paying a lot of money for their education, and I think they will want to know that their instructors not only have an interest in any given subject, but also the best possible academic preparation for it.

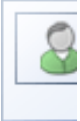
I also realize that the FYS is designed to introduce students to the university environment, but I believe that the most valuable thing is to focus on academics—that this work is different and more rigorous than high school. The seminars should prepare students for what they will be encountering in their classrooms. Because of this, non-instructional staff are not qualified as

they do not teach a variety of courses. They really don't know what to prepare the students for. If there is a perceived need for some sort of program to introduce students to other elements of campus life, then that should be set up through Student Services as a non-academic program.

Theresa Kaminski
Department of History

Posted: 9/17/2010 1:24 PM

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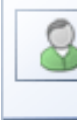


Reich, Tom

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Posted: 9/17/2010 2:17 PM

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Reich, Tom

Tom Reich, FAC Chair 2010-2011.

On Sept. 16, 2010 the Faculty Affairs Committee continued our discussion of General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC) draft proposal 5b. The following is a related excerpt from our draft minutes of the 09/16/10 Faculty Affairs Committee meeting.

4. Old Business

b. General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC) draft proposal 5b.

i. First Year Seminar Experience. UW Statutes Chapter 36, Article 4 gives faculty "primary responsibility for academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters." Faculty members exercise this responsibility through the organizational structures of both their respective departments and the institutions of faculty governance. This responsibility includes essential tasks for the design and maintenance of a viable curriculum, including approval of courses, approval of instructors, peer review and evaluation of instructors, and assessment of courses. These tasks are conducted by committees composed entirely of faculty who possess expertise in a given field. The Gen Ed proposal for the First Year Seminar Experience eliminates the role of departments in vetting course proposals and instructors. It provides no means for peer review and assessment of instructors. It assumes that no disciplinary expertise in a liberal arts field is necessary for teaching an introduction to the liberal arts. It places control of curriculum for the FYS in the hands of a committee composed of faculty, administrators and students. FAC also expressed concern that the stated learning outcomes for the First Year Seminar are exclusively study and life skill based, and that a 3 credit academic course needs to have theoretical and conceptual outcomes grounded in discipline(s) as well. In light of this discussion, Keefe moved the following resolution to be shared with the General Education Review committee:

“FAC recommends that academic departments be vested with the responsibility for vetting course proposals, approval of instructors, peer evaluation of instructors, and assessment of courses for all courses offered under the First Year Seminar Experience.”


FAC noted that this recommendation would not preclude non-instructional academic staff from teaching FYS courses; staff persons with appropriate degrees could teach FYS courses if they go through a vetting process conducted by the academic department that most closely correlates with his or her academic training (degrees) and proposed course subject.

Under this recommendation, the General Education committee would receive FYS course proposals vetted and approved by departments and would have responsibility for a) approving those courses for inclusion in the FYS program, and b) assessing these courses in relation to the approved course outcomes for the FYS. Thus, as is the case now, course proposals for Gen Ed classes would be vetted twice - first by approval of departments, then by the Gen Ed committee.

Techmeier seconded. Motion approved: 6-0-0.

ii. Single Interdisciplinary Studies Courses. After discussion, Reich moved that FAC resolves that academic departments be vested with the responsibility for vetting course proposals, approval of instructors, peer evaluation of instructors, and assessment of courses for all courses offered under the Single Interdisciplinary Studies requirement. Courses approved by departments would be forwarded to the General Education committee for approval in the Gen Ed curriculum. The General Education Committee would also be responsible for assessment of those courses in relation to the learning outcomes for this requirement. Julin seconded. Motion approved 6-0-0.


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
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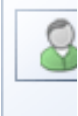


Bowman, Mary

It occurs to me that many of the questions that have been raised here can be settled by inserting the words "at least" in some key places--e.g. on pg. 4 of the current proposal, "All Quantitative Literacy courses will have at least a prerequisite of Math 90" (maybe also add "or equivalent placement"), and if it's not opening up too much of a can of worms, go back and revise the QL description in step 4: "Quantitative Literacy (at least 3 credits).

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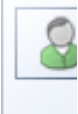
Bowman, Mary

Just a suggestion--I know nothing about the specifics of NASAD's requirements, of course. I notice that the BFA capstone is 4-8 credits. Might not a one- or two-credit capstone for the BAs be sufficiently different to preserve the "major differences" between the programs?

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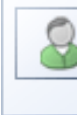
Bowman, Mary

I have the same concern as Dona about the general criteria. I would suggest adding the word "sample" in front of "syllabus" and "narrative", and adding something along these lines: "Proposals for courses that are taught by multiple faculty members should a statement identifying aspects of the course that will be common to all sections. (For example, 'All sections will devote at least x% of class time to discussion.' 'All sections will include at least one of the following assignments which can be used for assessment: a five-page paper, a 5-minute oral presentation, a group-written research report.')

I also second her concern about requiring visual/media components for oral presentations, which does exist in some tension with the goal of training students in the forms of communication used in the discipline.

Edited: 9/17/2010 2:38 PM

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Bowman, Mary

I respectfully disagree with my colleague on the first point. While departments should have the power to decide who will teach a course, the Gen Ed committee as proposed will have, and I believe should have, the power to determine whether a course will satisfy a requirement of the Gen Ed Program. For some kinds of courses, it would be a wasted effort to look at each instructor's c.v. (I am willing to trust Biology, for example, not to assign Bio 100 to someone who doesn't have appropriate credentials.) But for courses in the "sidebar," a given department will have some members who have appropriate qualifications and some who do not. In those cases, I think it's important for the committee to look at the instructor's qualifications, and approve a course only if the instructor's background is adequate and the course is going to be taught only by that person in the foreseeable future.

Posted: 9/18/2010 8:38 AM

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Again, we'd like to thank the GEPRC members for the hard work they have put into this process, and for the chance to respond to Step 5b. The following document reflects a variety of concerns shared by members of the Department of English. For clarity, they are arranged in the

Guay, Don

order prompted by the proposal itself.

Proposal: General Criteria (p. 3)

First dark bullet (p. 3): We are confident that the proposed General Education Committee (GEC) will construct a realistic timetable to determine when, during an academic year, a course proposal must be submitted in order to be considered and approved to be taught in the following academic year.

Second hollow bullet (p. 3): One faculty member suggested that the statement that course proposals should include “a course syllabus” might be misconstrued as requiring a common syllabus for Gen Ed courses, and requested that the phrasing be clarified in the revision.

Third dark bullet (p. 3): The proposed role of the GEC in vetting instructor qualifications prompted a variety of responses, from dismissal—“departments should have the power to decide who teaches classes, not a standing committee”—to acceptance with reservations. Some faculty members commented that in many cases it would be presumptuous of the committee to claim the right to vet the qualifications of, for example, a historian teaching a course in Historical Perspectives, or of a literary scholar teaching a Humanities course. However, most recognize that closer supervision might be desirable in other cases—most obviously involving courses offered under the Cultural & Environmental Awareness Categories, but also in other circumstances. One suggestion involved a rephrasing of the bullet and its Note:

Typically, instructors should possess at least a Master’s degree in their respective fields appropriate to the area or category of the proposed course.

Note: If there is a question about instructor qualifications, the General Education Committee may request a brief curriculum vitae describing the instructor’s qualifications and may must seek advice from appropriate department(s) and may request a brief curriculum vitae describing the instructor’s qualifications.

Proposal: FOUNDATION: First Year Seminar (p. 3)

Second dark bullet (p. 3): One faculty member pointed out that the phrasing of “All First Year Seminars should focus on topics in which instructors have both expertise and interest, but which are engaging to a general audience” is open to misinterpretation—that is, the “but” could be misconstrued to mean that “being engaging to a general audience somehow trumps the teacher’s expertise and interest.”

FOUNDATION: First Year Seminar (pp. 8, 10-11)

Most comments addressed the issue of instructor qualifications. Despite the GEPRC attempt to meet likely objections in the Explanation of Proposal: Instructor Qualifications, English Department faculty expressed a range of concerns. One respondent dismissed the question as “not a big deal [since] there are minimal qualifications in place already.” All other responses were either directly critical of the proposal or expressed anxieties about its unintended consequences.

Some were quite blunt: “classes should be taught by teaching staff and faculty (though I could happily include the librarians in that category).” Others elaborated more fully. For example: One could argue that the idea of non-instructional staff teaching our freshpeople flies in the face of our initiative to retain freshmen into their sophomore years. Indeed, we are known primarily as a teaching, student-centered school; those with little to no teaching experience should therefore NOT be teaching freshmen.

Another registered a related concern about the possible development of a “two-tier”

instructional system in which FYSs inevitably become solely the responsibility of non-tenure-track, or even non-instructional faculty, thus reducing the percentage of courses taught by tenure-track faculty—a statistic frequently offered to potential students and their parents. A related observation is that the proposal will, inevitably, place pressure on staffing that, without an increase in tenure-track positions, will lead to an increased reliance on academic staff—with all the knock-on effects that follow.

Several faculty members expressed strong general reservations about the proposed role of CAESE, and specific reservations about the role of CAESE in instructor training:

My fear is that CAESE will be granted authority to simply give non-instructional staff “teaching experience” through training sessions, something I can foresee happening if a non-instructional staff person wants to teach a First Year Seminar, has a good idea for a topic, but has never taught. Yet teaching experience is about having been in a classroom and seen what works—not “training” in-house. Just as I fear the proposed GEC’s gaining entirely too much power over curriculum and faculty at the university, I fear CAESE’s becoming far too powerful in granting people credentials in teaching or even in a specific discipline.

Bluntly, the training workshop sponsored by CAESE must not be used as a substitute for “teaching experience” in the assessment of instructor credentials.

If non-instructional staff members are approved to teach FYSs, other concerns are raised by the fact that they will apparently be expected to do so as an overload. If this is the case, we question whether staff members will have sufficient time and energy to commit to this instruction. Consequently, we suggest that this concern be addressed by the provision of release time for FYS instruction.

Several respondents identified two further elephants in the room:

1) An intake of 1650 freshmen a year will require 83 sections of the FYS spread over two semesters. Quite apart from the potential staffing issue—itsself a bone of contention—the practical difficulties must be acknowledged early in the process so that strategies may be devised to address them. For example, a timetable must take into account the circumstances whereby schedules are drafted roughly a year in advance, and significant changes made after, say, February (for following fall) or September (for following spring) are likely to create significant scheduling difficulties. This raises the general issue of coordination between GEC and the departments. Even if GEC is accepted as the appropriate body to approve a FYS, which body decides which FYS courses will be offered in any given semester? By what mechanism will the GEC be able to ensure that sufficient sections are available for students? Does the authority to determine what course a faculty member teaches remain in the department, or will the GEC be able to override a department’s scheduling need?

2) The provision of 85 sections a year, apart from being a knotty logistical problem, also raises the obvious question, where does the funding come from? Cost will be an issue. One representative comment:

As for costs, although Old Main may cover the start up costs, the administration should be pushed to make a specific statement as to where the money will come from to sustain the freshman seminar. In other words, to gain our support, they should have to specifically state how it will be funded even if they have to admit that this will fall upon the departments or the colleges.

That is, we need a realistic assessment—even if only a ball-park figure—of how these sections

will be funded, and, if departments / colleges will be expected to absorb those costs, whether any mechanism will be in place to compel individual departments / colleges to provide FYs, or will departments be able to evade what will presumably, by that point, be a responsibility?

FOUNDATION: Written Communication (pp. 4, 12)

Comment #1 (p. 12): We appreciate the fact that UWSP relies on the English Department to teach Written Communication / Composition; however, the reason is not merely historical precedent. All faculty in the English Department have received formal training in the Teaching of Composition, and most have extensive teaching experience in Composition, a recognized academic discipline[1]. We request a revision acknowledging this fact—in part, because it grounds some of our observations on the Communication in the Major requirement.

First dark bullet (p. 4): “The Written Communication outcomes will be satisfied by English 101: Freshman English and English 202: Sophomore English.” For information: The English Department Curriculum Committee is in the process of recommending two changes to the faculty (to be considered at the next department meeting): 1) changing 101: Freshman English to First Year Composition; 2) replacing English 102: Freshman English with English 202: Second Year Composition.

If the English Department faculty approve these changes, the primary difficulty would appear to be the mechanism whereby the changeover would be effected. We have devised a three-year schedule that we believe would involve minimal disruption to our course offerings or staffing.

Fifth dark bullet (p. 4): “English 101, 102, and 150 will have an enrollment cap of 23 students.” Many faculty have been disgruntled over the years by the perceived unfairness of a system that places a (relatively sensible) cap of 21 on Writing Emphasis courses, while capping composition classes offered by the English Department at 23. I have yet to find a faculty member who will argue with the claim that teaching composition is probably the most labor-intensive teaching assignment in the university. All department members are affected, as faculty regularly teach two sections of composition each semester, sometimes in combination with a writing emphasis course; academic staff members are affected most acutely, since their teaching assignment consists only of composition. This long-standing disgruntlement has been aggravated by the decision to cap the FYs at 20. We certainly do not argue for raising that cap; rather, we ask that the committee recommend parity between the FYs and Composition classes and set the caps of both at 20. This would better reflect the amount of work and time that goes into teaching an intensive writing course, and it at least moves in the direction of the CCCC’s recommendation that composition classes be capped at 17.

Proposal: INVESTIGATION (pp. 4, 13)

Despite the fact that the one credit requirement has already passed through Faculty Senate, several faculty noted how this reduction in credits does not jibe with our claim to be a “wellness school.”

Proposal: INVESTIGATION (pp. 4, 13)

1 The requirement that all courses be “sufficiently broad to serve an audience of general education students” (p. 4; variously rephrased as “breadth of topic” and “broad enough” p. 13) is itself sufficiently broad to invite uncertainty. Is the “breadth” a characteristic of subject matter? Or of delivery? Or both? One faculty member observed: “the next draft should articulate the concern more clearly so that departments can be alert to the implications for

courses.”

2 One faculty member asked for clarification of what, in fact, would constitute “strong justification” for courses with pre-requisites at this level.

Proposal: INTEGRATION: Interdisciplinary Studies (pp. 5, 13)

Since Interdisciplinary courses are “restricted to the 300-level and above,” many in the department question whether a Master’s degree is an adequate qualification for the instructor.

Proposal: INTEGRATION: Experiential Learning (pp. 6, 14)

One faculty member’s comments reflect a widely-felt set of reservations:

I fear that the Experiential Learning Requirement has been watered down to the point that it has no reason to exist and is tantamount to a mere box that needs checking without any oversight over what kind of experience the student has. A CLEAR definition of what constitutes Experiential Learning is critical; otherwise, in students’ race to meet this requirement, anything like a day-long car wash with one’s dorm-mates would constitute the experience.

Other issues with this proposed requirement:

1. The fact that theater arts students automatically meet the requirement (p. 14) because they are already required to do hands-on work on plays—acting, constructing sets, making costumes, serving as stage managers, or ushers--doesn’t make any sense: isn’t one of the key aspects of experiential learning the idea that students get out of their comfort zones and do something beyond their academic curricula?
2. Spell out what those “Other Experiences” are that might meet the Ex. Learning requirement, and do not allow a one-day volunteer effort to meet it (p.21).
3. Sounds as if anyone could be an Experiential Learning Mentor, which means that students may well put this requirement off until near graduation and then rush to find just anyone to sign off on an activity that isn’t very rigorous.

Proposal: INTEGRATION: Communication in the Major (pp. 6-7, 15-16)

Several people expressed surprise that CAESE would teach the training workshops for instructors who wish to teach courses to fulfill this requirement, wondering what expertise, if any, CAESE could claim in writing instruction, or what would distinguish such a requirement from the present WE (apart from changing the students enrolled and handing training from a qualified Composition instructor to, well, whom?).

One faculty member noted that the way the proposal is framed implicitly disqualified on-line courses from consideration, which might have an unintended effect on non-traditional students or students in the CDP. Another expressed these more wide-ranging reservations:

I don't particularly like the name [Communication in the Major]--I'd like to see writing foregrounded; additionally, I don't know that I feel qualified teaching the oral communication components of the course. I also don't know that I feel comfortable allowing those not trained in writing and rhetoric (and speech communication) teaching those skills to their own undergraduates. It seems to me, as someone who has served on the GDR subcommittee, that this part of the proposal doesn't actually address the problems with current WE offerings. Currently, it is difficult to get into WE courses because few are offered and many are unable to find courses within their own majors. As far as I can tell, this is because of a lack of faculty training in teaching writing (outside, perhaps, of English) and a reluctance to teach courses with smaller enrollments. Shifting the responsibility to individual departments to determine what constitutes "Communication in the Major" for their particular major could

potentially lead to widely disparate outcomes for those classes, depending on the discipline and only superficially address the real reasons for even having this requirement in the first place.

Yet another pointed out that the proposal's statement that departments "will not be able to send their students to other departments to find CM courses," overlooks the obvious fact that several English Department professional writing courses are actually targeted at students in other disciplines: for instance, Business Writing, Technical Writing, Environmental and Science Writing, Biomedical Writing, or Grants and Proposal Writing. Surely it would be short-sighted to disqualify those courses from being considered as an option under this category if appropriate for a student's Major field.

General Education Committee

Several English Department faculty members commented that the make-up of the committee "seems to be designed to represent the interests of administrators [rather] than those of faculty. The only member on the committee to be elected is the chair; all other members are either appointed by the chair or various administrators." According to one English Department respondent:

The General Education Committee, in which we are "vest[ing] 'ownership'" of the curriculum, will be a very powerful committee, more powerful than the current GDR committee, so we should think carefully about how it is made up. In a recent open forum, some people raised questions about how this committee might rule in ways that could have unintended consequences, and the consensus response from [GEPRC] members seemed to be "you can trust us." As much as I'd like to trust whoever will end up on this committee, human history and common sense suggest that we also need checks and balances in order to prevent abuses or avoidable oversights where so much power is concentrated in one place.

Suggestions to address these and other concerns included:

- that faculty members of the committee should be elected rather than appointed
- that the number of faculty members be significantly increased in such a way as to reflect the disproportionately large burden borne by the College of Letters & Science—either simply, by increasing the number of representatives from L&S to four, or, rather less simply, by establishing a system whereby representation is determined primarily by Areas listed under Investigation: Understanding the Physical, Social, and Cultural Worlds
- reducing the number of appointments made by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from 2 to 1, since the present description gives him as much input to the make-up of the committee as any one college [this might be made less of an issue if the number of faculty members is increased from 8 to 10 as suggested in the previous bullet]
- to make the representative appointed by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning a non-voting member

Additional General Concerns

1 One concern that has been registered—not within the control of GEPRC—Is indicated by the question whether anyone has asked the Registrar’s Office how these proposed changes, particularly the five-year phase-in for the FYS, are going to affect the DPRs?

2 The more significant question of how this change in the structure of General Education will be funded arises repeatedly. Several department members expressed concern that “several aspects of this GEP will apparently require new administrative positions or at least expanded duties of administrative offices.” It seems clear that, in addition to the likely costs of funding the FYS sections, the costs of new administrative positions are likely to be significant (Director of GE, Coordinator of FYS, etc.). Also the expanded role of CAESE is likely to incur significant cost. In the rather plaintive words of one colleague: “Who will be paying the additional expenses? How can we resist the temptation to add more Vice Chancellors and Assistant Vice Chancellors?”

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond. Our observations are not to be construed as opposition to your proposal, but as an attempt to give constructive input to contribute to its success.

[1] The position statement of the CCCC [Conference on College Composition and Communication] on this issue: “To provide the highest quality of instruction, departments offering composition and writing courses should rely on full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members who are both prepared for and committed to the teaching of writing. The teaching of writing courses need not be limited, however, to those faculty members whose primary area of scholarship is rhetoric and composition. Because of the significant intellectual and practical connections between writing and reading, composition and literature, it is desirable that faculty from both areas of specialization teach in the composition program. Ideally, faculty from each area should have the training and experience necessary to teach in both the literature and composition programs.”

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Guay, Don

Below are a few comments related to the Step 5b. The page number identifies the bullet in question followed by my comments in blue.

Page 3:

- No course in the Foundation or Investigation Levels may satisfy more than one general education requirement, unless it is paired with one of the following categories: Global

Awareness, U.S. Diversity, Environmental Responsibility, or Experiential Learning.

Experiential Learning is a recent addition to the double dipping discussion. If you are now going to allow Experiential Learning to be included with the double dipping of Cultural & Environmental Awareness courses, then you will need add one more course number to the First Year Seminar (FYS) list. When a course satisfies a GEP, then all of the sections under that course number will meet that GEP (or multiple GEPS if indicated). Since the committee is allowing different "sections" of the FYS to meet different GEPs, then you will need to use a course number for each double dipped area.

- o FYS 101: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS)
- o FYS 102: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Global Awareness)
- o FYS 103: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and U.S. Diversity)
- o FYS 104: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Environmental Responsibility)
- o FYS 105: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Experiential Learning) new

Page 3:

FOUNDATION

- All requirements in the Foundation Level must be completed before students reach 60 credits. If not, students will be restricted to enrolling for a maximum of 12 credits each semester until the Foundation Level is complete.

The FYS is going to be phased in over at least five years. Since most freshmen and transfers will not have the opportunity to take an FYS course, I don't see we should include it in the "all requirements in the Foundation Level..." statement. I recommend that you remove the FYS from this list and specifically state that Written/Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Wellness must be completed before a student reaches 60 credits.

Page 4:

- The Oral Communication outcomes will be satisfied by Communication 101: Fundamentals of Oral Communication.

COMM 101 is offered as both a 2 or 3 credits. The language in the GEP chart indicates that students must satisfy 9 credits of Written/Oral Communication. However, a student could take a 2 credit COMM 101 course and 3 credits of English 150 and this requirement would be satisfied. I recommend that the chart include the minimum credit range for this category as 5-9 credits. I also feel that the GEP chart should only focus on requirements that are related to the GEP. Requirements that are for the majors can be adopted but they do not need to appear on the GEP chart.

Catalog -- COMM 101. Fundamentals of Oral Communication. 2 or 3 cr. Introduction to and application of those principles which lead to an understanding of and facility with practical discourse. GDR:COMM

Page 5:

Interdisciplinary Studies

Students will complete either: a single Interdisciplinary Studies course or an approved Interdisciplinary Major, Minor, or Certificate.

o “Interdisciplinary” shall be defined as “integrating content, data, methods, tools, concepts, and theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge in order to advance fundamental understanding, answer questions, address complex issues and broad themes, and solve problems” (from Julie Thompson Klein, *Creating Interdisciplinary Campus Cultures: A Model for Strength and Sustainability*, 2010).

o The disciplines involved must be closely related to two distinct categories in the Investigation Level, namely Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences.

You have established very specific requirements as to what will and will not be acceptable as a interdisciplinary major, minor or certificate to accompany a student’s 1st major. Because of this, I feel that you may see more students opt to take an interdisciplinary course to satisfy this requirement while still selecting a second major or minor that meets their own career goals. If students select the interdisciplinary course option, my concern is that there may not be enough interdisciplinary courses available – thus creating a bottleneck for graduation (similar to what we face with Writing Emphasis). Since two instructors, or one instructor with multiple disciplinary fields of experience, is required to teach the course are we going to find an adequate number of departments that want to collaborate on this two instructor approach or is there enough faculty that will meet the one instructor model. At the time of approval of these courses, are instructor credentials and research experience in a second discipline going to be documented by anyone? Overall, who is going to manage that we have an adequate number of interdisciplinary courses on the books to graduate 1,600-1,700 students every year?

Page 6:

Students must identify an ELA before completing 90 credits. If not, they will be restricted to enrolling for a maximum of 12 credits each semester until the ELA is identified.

- Students must meet with their ELA mentor and complete an ELA Plan form before beginning the activity.
- The ELA Plan must be approved by the mentor before the student begins the activity.

- The mentor will assess the ELA using an ELA assessment rubric.
- The mentor will inform the Records & Registration office when the ELA has been identified and again when it has been completed.

I recommend that you remove the 90 credit restriction. Your building in so many restrictions that it just appears that the new GEP is a constant road block to graduation. When it comes time to complete an ELA, a student will probably want to select an ELA that is related to their major. Many students are not admitted to their major until late into their sophomore or early into their junior year. You are forcing many students to pick an ELA experience before they may have a real clue on what they should do or have the appropriate major advising to assist them with a decision. In addition, you indicate that an internship or practicum (and I assume student teaching) will meet this experience but many students will not complete these requirements well into their senior year. By building this restriction at 90 credits, you are now forcing hundreds of students to gain authorization to register. Require students to complete an ELA but have the advisors advise students to complete it during the advising process.

Another issue I see is that you're asking students to complete this requirement before their senior year of 90 credits. We have nearly 4,000 sophomores and juniors on campus that have to find a mentor. This will be challenging as their will not be an equal balance between faculty members who get asked to be mentors.

Finally, I do not see why Registration and Records has to be notified when an ELA has been identified. There is no reason for Registration and Records to maintain copies of ELA information until the requirement is completed.

Page 6:

• Departments or units will designate a minimum of six credits at the 300-level or above within each major to meet the Communication in the Major requirement.

All departments will have to clearly identify which courses are communication in the Major courses in the catalog and any advising sheets.

This requirement will be managed by the Curriculum Committee when the major is reviewed.

Page 6:

Capstone Experience in the Major

- Departments will designate a Capstone course(s) or experience for each of its majors.
- Capstone courses/experiences should have sufficiently small enrollment caps to allow for active participation by each student and feedback by the instructor.

We have not allowed the double dipping of courses within the major but it appears that the Capstone course and Communication in the Major could be one in the same.

Possible scenario – could student teaching meet all of the following requirements: Experiential Learning AND Capstone Experience AND Communication in the Major. Will you allow this to occur?

I understand the reasoning behind the small enrollment caps for capstone courses but will majors that graduate a large number of majors each year be able to offer enough Capstone courses, with small enrollment caps, without delaying anyone's graduation timeline?

Page 14:

Not every course or program precisely fits these disciplinary areas, of course. As a result, we sought to provide enough flexibility in the proposed criteria to include exceptions where they are warranted. For example, the College of Natural Resources currently joins with the History Department to teach Forestry/History 392: Native American Forestry. Although Forestry is not likely to offer courses that count specifically for Natural Sciences credit in the new General Education program, the Forestry/History 392 course nonetheless integrates two disciplines that clearly represent the Natural Sciences and Historical Perspectives areas of the Investigation Level.

NOTE: when identifying a GEP category for a course, all of the sections in that course will meet the same GEP category. You cannot have section 1 equal to Historical Perspectives and section 2 equal to Natural Sciences.

Question Regarding Degrees:

In April of 2009 the Faculty Senate Approved the following document. [https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/Documents/Previous%20Proposals%20and%20Comments/Step%203/Step%203,%20GEP%20Model%20Proposal%20\(Final\).pdf](https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/Documents/Previous%20Proposals%20and%20Comments/Step%203/Step%203,%20GEP%20Model%20Proposal%20(Final).pdf)

In this document, it was approved that the GEP + BA,BS,BM,BFA Requirements (established by the university) + Major would = a Baccalaureate Degree

At what point did Faculty Senate vote to change the concept that is outlined on page 3 of the above document?



Are we no longer going to have the a separate middle category of BA, BS, BM, and BFA

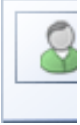
requirements? If the requirements that are going to differentiate one degree from another all going to be lower level (100-200) level course, I recommend that the requirements for a BA be the same for all majors, and the requirements for a BS be the same, etc. This will assist with the 60-70 percent of students that do change their major from what was initially identified on their freshmen application.

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Guay, Don

Comments from Sol Seppenwol, Biology, these comments are best read with the attachment in this reply.

Page: 3

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 5:10:22 PM

GENERAL COMMENT: I GET THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT THIS IS A REACTIVE DOCUMENT: WE HAVE TO DO THIS BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE (ACCREDITATION) TOLD US WE HAD TO. THE TEDIOUS TERMINOLOGY (INTERDISCIPLINALITY?? KNOWLEDGES??) TELLS ME THAT THESE ARE DERIVATIVE CONCEPTS, NOT NATURAL OUTGROWTHS OF THE TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES OF UWSP STAFF THAT HAVE MADE UWSP AN OUTSTANDING TEACHING INSTITUTION. THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS THAT WE HAD TOO MANY GDR'S AND ALMOST NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THEM. (E.G.: WHEN BIO 305/306, ECOLOGY, 4 CR., DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY, ONE HAS TO WONDER.) WE HAVE A GOOD TEMPLATE IN EAU CLAIRE'S BS/BA GDR'S. NOT SURE WHY WE HAVE STRAYED SO FAR.

Page: 4

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:39:09 PM

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:57:26 PM

THIS REQUIREMENT IS TOO LOW FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL MATH LITERACY! MATH 100 SHOULD BE REQUIRED AT MINIMUM. IT BEGINS TO SOUND LIKE WE WANT TO LOWER OUR STANDARDS TO BRING IN MORE STUDENTS -- SHORTSIGHTED.

Number: 3 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:42:37 PM

IN ANY SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION, THERE SHOULD BE MINIMUM H.S. REQUIREMENTS FOR AT LEAST MATH.

Number: 4 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:41:14 PM

Page: 5

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:45:49 PM
MASTERS DEGREE NOT ACCEPTABLE IN MOST AREAS AT THE 300-LEVEL. SPELL IT OUT. IF THE
TERMINAL DEGREE IS ACCEPTED AT THE MA/MS (ART, E.G.),
THEN FINE.

FOR THE SECOND DISCIPLINE: SOMETHING LIKE "DEMONSTRABLE EXPERTISE [PUBLICATION,
PERFORMANCE, ETC] IN THAT AREA MUST BE DOCUMENTED."

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:43:00 PM

Page: 6

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:47:28 PM

ENROLLMENT CAPS PER SECTION ARE SPELLED OUT IN PREVIOUS SECTIONS AND SHOULD BE
SPELLED OUT HERE, SINCE THAT IS THE ONE AMELIORATING

FACTOR IN TEACHING WRITING/SPEAKING-INTENSIVE COURSES.

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:46:03 PM

Page: 7

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:51:29 PM

WHERE DID THESE CRITERIA COME FROM? IF IT IS TO HAVE THE EQUIVALENT OF "WE" STATUS,
MUCH MORE WRITING IS REQUIRED. ALSO, THE SPEAKING

TIMES AND NUMBER OF TALKS SHOULD NOT BE SPELLED OUT, SINCE TIME AND NUMBER ARE
VERY MUCH DEPENDENT ON AREA OF STUDY.

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:48:05 PM

Number: 3 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:56:20 PM

WHY NO MINIMUM CREDIT DESIGNATION? ALSO, LEAVING THE ENROLLMENT CAPS
UNSPECIFIED WITHOUT ADEQUATE GUIDANCE WILL LEAD TO A SLIP-SHOD
PRODUCT. PUT MORE TIME INTO THINKING ABOUT THIS. JUST WHAT LEVEL OF COMPETENCE
ARE WE EXPECTING FROM OUR GRADUATES?

Number: 4 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:51:31 PM

Page: 8

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 4:58:24 PM

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 4:59:44 PM

THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE: YOU CAN'T DESIGN A NEW COURSE KNOWING THE OUTCOMES
BEFORE IT IS TAUGHT! BEGIN WITH QUALIFIED INSTRUCTOR

WITH A RIGOROUS, DETAILED PLAN FOR THE COURSE.

Page: 9

Number: 1 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Sticky Note Date: 09/15/10 5:03:29 PM

THIS IS NONSENSE: PSYCH AND MATH BOTH TEACH STATISTICS COURSES (BIOLOGY USED TO
AND WILL AGAIN). THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH CALLING

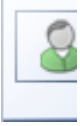
A COURSE WHAT IT IS -- HOW IS THE GENERAL STUDENT TO FIND THEM? SOLUTION: CROSS-
LIST COURSES WITH THE LOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

Number: 2 Author: SSEPSENW Subject: Highlight Date: 09/15/10 5:01:00 PM

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Posted: 9/18/2010 9:17 AM

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Guay, Don

My main concern, which may or may not be part of GEPRC's charge, is implementation-- especially for the senior capstone experience and the experiential learning requirement. In principle, I think they are fine, but in practice I don't know how our department (biology) will structure this to effectively meet student demand and stay true to the learning outcomes. Perhaps the ELA and capstone experience could work together for students doing an independent research project, but not if the ELA has to be completed by 90 credits (and even if they could go together, that option wouldn't work for the majority of our majors). That, and I am scared of the number of "mentees" I may be forced to take on. I am already over the limit of what I can handle with course load, advising, and research students. For our department, at least, this could be a logistical nightmare.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Karin Bodensteiner



Guay, Don

Here is a big concern of mine:

If departments are understanding the steps correctly, there will be some very generic rules for the BS vs. BA. Etc. Then, departments will determine what that means for their majors. The concern is that I might be a Biology major this week, and that major has one list of Gen Eds for a BS, but then next week I am an Elementary major and that department has a different set of Gen Eds. Changing majors would mean that my Gen Ed requirements also change, even though I am not changing by degree. I think this will add time-to-degree for many students and make it difficult for students to change majors or for Undeclared majors to choose appropriate Gen Eds.

Thanks,
Maggie

Maggie Beeber
Undergraduate Advising Coordinator
& Teacher Certification Officer
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Stevens Point, WI 54481
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E-MAIL: mbeeber@uwsp.edu

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Posted: 9/20/2010 11:25 AM

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Olsen, Gary

John,

I was unable to locate the GEP website for posting comments after our staff meeting on 9/17/10 – the GEP comment deadline. Might you kindly pass these on to the committee on behalf of the Forestry discipline?

* Who is qualified to teach interdisciplinary courses raised some concern. Is reliance on having degrees in different academic fields as the qualification appropriate? Would not experience in arenas in which an academic degree is not held be a valid consideration? Does it encourage silos and academic territories as a result?

* Writing in the major appears to span several courses, forestry supports that component.

*More definition of a capstone is needed to fully consider it

*Forestry supports the use of experiential learning and the specific mention of the Summer Camp experience as an example

*If current GDR components are dropped and shifted to within major requirements, will there be resources to cover these needs and FYS needs?

*The spanning of GEP components over one's entire academic career is better suited for a traditional student who spends four consecutive years at this institution. There is some concern as to the impact on transfer students and non-traditional students – growing segments of our student body.

Paul

--

Paul Doruska
Associate Professor of Forestry
College of Natural Resources
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Posted: 9/30/2010 12:58 PM

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Hefferan, Kevin

I had strong reservations about step 4 and continue to have strong reservations regarding step 5. Although input from faculty has been requested, such input has been ignored to date and I anticipate this will continue. Despite your hard work, the GEP has been a disappointment and its implementation will initiate a painful process that will result in another major revision-- sooner rather than later. One major problem is that while the GDRs focused upon general degree requirements, the GEP encompasses all courses and all majors. This is inappropriate as individual Departments and units should decide the necessary requirements for each major.

Specific comments on the Proposal are as follows:

General Criteria (page 3): the first 3 bulleted items start with "All courses...". I believe this should not include all courses taught at UWSP but only those courses that are included in the GEP such as introductory courses, courses in communication, writing, etc. Upper level courses in the major should not be included.

Integration, Interdisciplinary Studies (page 5): Remove the bulleted item "If the course is proposed by a single instructor, ideally that instructor will have at minimum a Master's Degree in two distinct disciplinary fields that will be used in the course". Replace with "the course should be taught by an instructor with a Master's degree or Ph.D. in two or more fields or a Ph.D in one field and demonstrated teaching or experience in a second field".

Experiential Learning (page 6): I oppose the first two bulleted items and the requirement of Experiential learning as part of the GEP. Requiring experiential learning as a zero-credit, non-graded activity is ludicrous, as is the suggestion that anyone with a bachelor's degree is capable of mentoring such an experience. Experiential learning is best left to each Department or unit as they best deem it fit for their majors.

Communication in the Major (page 6). It is beyond the charge of the GEP committee to make requirements in the major. Therefore, requiring a minimum of six credits at the 300-level or above within each major to meet communications in the major is inappropriate and ill conceived. Given a request for improved 4 year graduation rates by our new Chancellor (and the WI legislature), we will quickly find that these new GEP requirements will produce a bumper crop of superseniors.

Likewise, requiring a minimum of 12 pages of writing and 3-6 minute oral presentations is beyond the charge of the GEP and is best left to the individual departments. Many departments already require these but these should not be dictated by the GEP committee.

Capstone Experience in the Major (page 7): I oppose the requirement that all majors must have a capstone experience in the senior year. Again, this is beyond the charge of the GEP committee.

Step 5, as did Step 4, requires major revision before it is passed. If passed, I urge the Chancellor to veto the GEP proposal as it will have an adverse affect on 4 year graduation rates and will prove to be unsustainable with respect to demands on faculty and improving 4 year graduation rates. The net effect will be loss of tenured faculty, an increase in the number of adjunct faculty without Ph.D.'s teaching at UWSP. All this will result in a significant drop in our standing as a university regionally and nationally. Our greatest strengths at UWSP are tenure track faculty that teach lectures and labs and involve our students in research. Each major is unique in that the set of skills our majors develop is aligned with careers in that field. A GEP that extends beyond general degree requirements will prove unwieldy and will adversely impact our university.

I opposed Step 4 in the faculty senate and will likely oppose step 5 as well. Sadly, the sentiment among senators is that that august body simply serves as a final (rubber) stamp of approval as opposed to critically reviewing a document such as this.

Kevin Hefferan



Guay, Don

Department of History
Gen Ed 5b Comments

The History Department has the following comments on the individual parts of the General Education 5b.

Process:

- The History Department believes it is premature to be talking about specifics of course criteria and instructional components of courses, until Faculty Governance readdresses the question of Degree Requirement definitions. Until the Academic Affairs Committee and Faculty Senate acts on the issue of Degree types (it was tabled at the AA Committee meeting on 27 September), the current discussion and continued process of evaluating courses and teaching criteria should stop. That was part of the process as defined by the GERPC committee and faculty governance and must be resolved in order to effectively discuss General Education.

General Criteria:

- Under criteria, there should be more specific language about qualifications to teach courses in General Education. There are vast differences between terminal degrees in academic areas and professional experiences. It is essential there is clarity in determining who should be teaching the core of liberal education on the UWSP campus.

Foundations:

- FYS: Is this an academic experience or is this really a student affairs/ retention strategy? The current explanations and criteria do not satisfactorily answer

this. Qualification for FYS instructors is dependent on how this question is answered.

- It is unclear how the FYS program will be coordinated, scheduled and administered and that affects every department's ability to schedule and deliver courses elsewhere in the Gen Ed program and for their own majors. This needs to be resolved.

Investigations:

- The Step 5 document needs to include specific instructor qualification criteria for ALL GEP components. The current version explicitly defines instructor qualifications at the Similarly to how Foundation and Integration are defined with explicit language for each of their subcategories (i.e. Foundations has First Year Seminar, Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, etc. and Integration has Interdisciplinary Studies, Experiential Learning, etc.), Investigation MUST have those subcategories defined in these areas. In the current version of 5b, Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, are absent from the document. The areas must have specific criteria to determine teaching qualification in each of these categories as they are listed elsewhere in the document. This part of the proposal is incomplete. Since the majority of the General Education Committee will be non-specialists for any given area, it is necessary to establish clear guidelines for qualifications to guide their evaluation of prospective instructors.

Integrations:

- Interdisciplinary courses: That only 300 level courses can meet this General Education requirement eliminates true interdisciplinary courses such as PAX 200 or introductions to other disciplines like Women's Studies as a General Education offering. Allowing lower-division courses to satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement will encourage students to take interdisciplinary courses earlier in their careers, which may in turn help draw students to the interdisciplinary majors and minors. At the very least, it may get more students satisfying the requirement with courses outside of their major. There should be a clearer justification for this seemingly arbitrary requirement or it should be eliminated.

Experiential learning:

- What about having a job? There many student jobs that, with reflection, could yield "further understanding of their university education, and an enhanced sense of one's personal responsibility as a member of a larger community." Encouraging students to do that reflection could be quite valuable. Or does that make the field of possible ELAs so broad as to make the requirement meaningless?

- If we are really going to adopt this requirement, and assess its value, we need much clearer guidelines regarding what it is supposed to accomplish.

Communication in the major:

- Why the required workshop? Why not evaluate communication courses based on syllabus and assignments? Communication in a field of study is part of the expertise of faculty in the discipline and a workshop on how to teach this should not be necessary. It presumes that others outside the field 'know better' than the experts.


Cultural and Environmental Awareness:

- There needs to be clearer criteria than "Any combination of education and

experience that allow the learning outcomes to be met is considered qualifying?" If a faculty whose only global experience is leading students on a trip abroad, and hiring a local tour guide, is that "sufficient" for qualification to teach in this area? The criteria, as it now stands, undermines the expertise and professional training for those who are trained in these fields and have lived and worked abroad as an essential part of their work.

Instructor qualifications:

- The language regarding evaluation of instructor qualifications gives the proposed GEC too much leeway. Ideally, qualifications to teach the various GDRs should be assessed by independent committees of individuals with expertise in the relevant field, not by a committee of non-specialists

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Guay, Don

Hi Don,

I have a comment on step 5b of the GE proposal, and the website did not let me give a comment. (I signed in, but when I submitted the comment, it said I didn't have permission to do so.) Can you get this to the committee?

My comment pertains to the way the GE Committee is created. I think the two representatives from each college should be elected within the colleges, rather than appointed by the Chair of the GE Committee.

Thanks,
Andy Felt

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Guay, Don

Dear Greg,

We serve on the Curriculum Committee in the Biology Department. After discussing the First Year Seminar (FYS), we have a few concerns and requests for information regarding this proposed curriculum change, as well as questions about the proposed

program.

- We argue that all courses (introductory and otherwise) in college should be in accordance with some, if not all, of the learning goals stated in the FYS courses. As we understand it, one of the main goals of the proposed FYS program is increased student retention. We wondered if perhaps the same goals could be achieved by training faculty in additional skills to better connect with students in courses they currently teach. This might help infuse all courses (especially introductory courses) with the basic goals currently proposed as part of the FYS courses.

Does UWSP plan to help train all faculty members to incorporate techniques to connect with students and help retention into all of their existing courses?

- We wondered whether data are available to show, across many comparable universities, that such programs are successful, or perhaps more successful at retaining and engaging students than universities without such programs. To determine success, we feel it is necessary to know retention rates in the years prior to implementation of an FYS program, as well as in the years after. In addition, we wondered what plans are in place to collect similar data here, as this First Year Seminar program moves forward.

What evidence shows this kind of program is more successful than a program without it?

- Freshman Interest Group (FIG) is another program helping students acclimate to college life. This program's success is in part due to the intensive contact between students outside of classes.

Have other similar FYS programs included additional components designed to foster social interactions between students outside of classes?

Does UWSP plan to implement such outlets for social interactions into their FYS program? If not, how would it achieve these ends, which may strongly influence whether new students are retained?

- We are concerned about the potential added burden of the currently proposed FYS program, placed upon the faculty, due to the large numbers of smaller sections required to teach this course to all students during their first semester in college. If large numbers of sections are required, this might mean that some faculty who may not choose to teach the course would still be expected to do so, thereby potentially limiting their enthusiasm, and effectiveness at retaining students.

How does UWSP plan to address the inevitable problems described above?

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing your


response.

Sincerely,



Members of the Biology Curriculum Committee:

Tracy S. Feldman (chair), Karin Bodensteiner, Joseph Covi, Emmet Judziewicz, Robert Rosenfield, Meredith Seiler, Eric Singaas, and Pat Zellmer

cc. Dean Cirmo, James Sage, Robert Sirabian, Chris Yahnke, Terese Barta, and members of the Biology Curriculum Committee

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Guay, Don

Please see the attached file for the full letter from the Psychology Department.

I am writing in response to the recent General Education (GE) proposal (Step 5b). This memo is a summary of the comments recently sent to me by members of the Department of Psychology. As such, this summary certainly does not represent a consensus of opinions in my department; indeed, no one person in the department likely agrees with all of the comments herein. Also, some of the comments almost certainly address concerns that are more relevant to past (now approved) GE proposals, but I include them here for the sake of completeness.

Probably the greatest number of comments – and the greatest amount of underlying trepidation – addressed the Experiential Learning component. Though a couple of faculty addressed the philosophical/pedagogical grounding for this requirement, several faculty were very concerned about the pragmatic implementation of the requirement. Will departments and their faculty be responsible for insuring that all students and advisees find an Experiential Learning Advisor (ELA)? How will the workload be distributed among faculty, especially if students will be pursuing opportunities on their own? In general, it would be unacceptable if faculty will, in any formal or implied way, be asked to serve as an ELA for a significant number of students outside of normal teaching load. Similarly, the criteria for and examples of Experiential Learning may require some elaboration. For example, do research experiences – such as Independent Study – qualify as Experiential Learning? In the minds of most of us, they should. Though these and related aspects may be partially under departmental control, institution clarification of the process will be essential. Other faculty lauded the idea of Interdisciplinary courses, the absence of which has long the weakness of our current offerings. But here too there were concerns about implementation, especially if the university wishes to use team-taught courses as a vehicle for solid interdisciplinary teaching. How will faculty teaching loads and

compensation be determined for team-taught courses?

Faculty continued to support the idea of a Wellness requirement on campus. Some indicated that the credit requirement was perhaps too low, especially if wellness includes – as it probably ought to – mental health in addition to physical wellness. Thus, members of the department hope that the new GE committee will permit mental health courses to meet the Wellness requirement.

There was generally positive (though limited) commentary about the First Year Seminars. These seminars have the capacity to be truly transformational for our University. However, some faculty worry about these seminars devolving into purely preparatory, welcoming, or initiation programs into the university, devoid of college-level content. This is not to say that these courses should avoid early advising functions, but these seminars should also have a strong (interdisciplinary) curricular basis.

Underlying some of the comments about Interdisciplinary Courses and First Year Seminars is a concern that UWSP is trying to "reinvent the wheel" by not explicitly drawing on other successful programs around the nation. Perhaps these programs have been examined by the GE committee, but that is not clear in the proposal. Some faculty suggested that if the goal is to create a GE curriculum with strong logical, pedagogical, 2

and empirical foundations, then other university's programmatic successes and failures must be explicitly acknowledged.

Questions about Interdisciplinary Courses and First Year Seminars – along with more campus-wide concerns about qualified faculty for teaching Historical Perspectives courses – highlight the clear need to address "credentializing" (determining the qualified faculty for specific courses) and "credentialism" (the unmitigated dismissal of a person's teaching capabilities because of their home department or discipline). Though the proposal discusses the issues involved, it is not possible to overstate the importance of clear criteria for determining which faculty and courses are appropriate for each GE goal. There must be a clear balance between appropriate vetting of requirements, courses, and faculty, and the inappropriate rejection of a potentially invaluable educational experience simply because it falls outside a department's "turf." [Perhaps striking this balance is endemic in higher education. It seems that this problem is present not just in determining courses and instructors for GE, but in evaluating adjunct and prospective faculty, determining course transfers from outside institutions, etc.]

Finally, if there is one concern that occurred more than any other, it would be one of institutional support of both the structural and financial kind. Faculty at UWSP already work very hard with limited (and diminishing?) reward structures. Adding extra ELA obligations and interdisciplinary expectations, along with increased pressure to increase capstone and communication offerings within our department, enhances faculty's anxiety about workloads. In the end, it will be virtually impossible to gain faculty support for any proposal without an administration that commits to rewarding faculty for the excellent disciplinary and interdisciplinary classroom and extracurricular teaching that they do.

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Guay, Don

Compiled comments on 5b Proposal from the Department of Biology

Comment on 5b regarding the Experiential Learning component

Could the experiential learning requirement be satisfied by activities done through student clubs? The Pre-Vet society does 1 to 2 trips per month off campus to volunteer at places like horse rescue, raptor rehabilitation, etc. Volunteer work is a needed component for vet school applications, but it easily fits what we are asking of students in the new GEP. I'm sure this might be true for other clubs as well. Under the proposed new experiential learning activities, would those students then have to do something in addition to what they are already doing? If not, how would they be able to get credit for what they do as a club? I am concerned about the record keeping this would entail (and who would do the sign off?).

Thanks,
Terese Barta
Biology (pre-vet club advisor)

Comments on 5b from Joseph Covi, Assistant Professor of Biology October 1, 2010

New Topic Not in 5b:

I think, as a faculty, we agree that the university must deal with the inadequacies of K-12 education. We cannot simply graduate students who are nearly illiterate, and the Biology faculty certainly can't grade hundreds of additional papers and presentations on top of a jam packed science curriculum. I suggest that the University create a course—taught by adjuncts trained as teachers—that will provide students the skills they need to learn in college. I have composed a list of critical skills the vast majority of my juniors and senior lack. Most of these relate to the concept of metacognition. Rather than teach metacognition, our learning center is misleading students into believing that they do poorly in classes because their “learning style” doesn't match that of the professors “teaching style”. This is an antiquated view of learning that has been rebutted in the literature. It is concerning that we are providing our students such outdated and incorrect information about the process of learning. The problem is not a mismatch in styles. The problem is that our students lack the following skills, and our professors lack the training needed to create an environment that addresses these deficiencies.

Biology and CNR juniors and seniors generally lack the skills to...

1. study actively (think and take notes)
2. read actively (think and take notes)
3. take notes from PowerPoint presentations
4. take notes from oral presentations
5. take notes from discussion sessions in class
6. synthesize and apply course content
7. convert learning for exams into long term memories
8. apply prerequisite math and chemistry skills in biology
9. work in groups
10. use library resources—especially literature databases

Summary: Experts in teaching/learning should be hired to teach a specialized course that teaches these skills, and this course should be a part of the GE requirements. The answer to this problem does not lie in asking biology professors to teach writing and oral communication skills a year before a student graduates.

Under “Foundation”:

Step 5b: “All requirements in the foundation level must be completed before...”

concern: It is difficult for students to register for certain courses for reasons that fluctuate unpredictably (eg. Students retaking courses multiple times can unpredictably take up slots that would otherwise go to new students.) The word “must” could make it more difficult to register students were unable to register on time because of seat limitations. How is the university going to handle problems with limited seat numbers when students “must” take a course that they can’t fit into? I understand the spirit of the rule, but this could be bad for our students and PR. I would be angry as a parent of a student who couldn’t register for a “must” have course.

Comments on 5b from Joseph Covi, Assistant Professor of Biology October 1, 2010

Under “Investigation”:

Step 5b: “Departments must provide a rationale when proposing General Education courses with prerequisites.”

concern: As long as the prerequisites are general education courses, we should be able to list them for a GE course. Why can’t I ask students to use Math 90 skills in a GE course without getting approval first? They are required to take it for a reason. Let’s ask them to use GE skills!

Under “Integration”:

Step 5b: "Students will complete either: a single Interdisciplinary Studies course or an approved Interdisciplinary Major, Minor, or Certificate."

concern: How are we going to staff these courses. I don't believe enough "interdisciplinary" courses exist to seat all of our students. Professors would need a release from current teaching duties build and teach these courses.

Under "Communication in the Major":

Step 5b: As I read it, we are supposed to have each biology major take 2 courses where they have to write a 12 page paper and give 3 lectures that are too short to even introduce a biological topic.

concern: Even if we assume a scenario of students working in groups of 4 on all papers and presentations, the time drain for grading, planning, and employing these activities would adversely impact many of the upper division biology courses. Such activities are also inappropriate for courses that are based on taxonomy. The university is basically asking Biology to take on a teaching load that would require a significant increase in staffing and a complete revision of existing upper division courses.

additional comment: I agree emphatically that students should practice writing and speaking within their specific discipline. However, the mandatory structure outlined in 5b is unreasonably restrictive. A writing/presenting in the major requirement should be met by having students focus on these skills in a specialized course that could be taught by adjuncts with experience in these areas. It should never be forced into courses designed to teach other specific skills and content. (Note: I already require my students to write reports and/or essays weekly, and have all of them give two oral presentations each semester.)

Under "Capstone Experience in the Major":

comment: Great idea, but not if we need to redesign our curriculum to attain it. I suggest that the college provide adjuncts to teach a capstone course that satisfies the communication req.

This is the scenario I see UWSP facing:

1. We take in students who lack critical K-12 skills (ie. low standards)
2. We don't take into account the mind set of such students as it relates to learning.
3. We do nothing to ensure that they gain the skills they need to learn in college.
4. We graduate students who have gained little else besides life experience.

Current 5b answer:

1. Make students feel welcome and give them some skills related to learning in FYS.
2. Use adjuncts to relieve teaching load so professors can teach FYS.
3. Have professors and adjuncts (without training as teachers) continue to teach learning skills in all of their classes.

My suggestion for 5c:

1. Use FYS as a retention tool and introduction to learning in college.
2. Use adjuncts trained as teachers to teach a second FYS course that will rigorously cover learning skills in for success in the major.
3. Leave professors alone to teach our courses as we have. (ie. Remove all specific requirements for professors to incorporate communication, quantitative skills, etc. in their courses. Many of us already do this. It isn't enough!)

I agree with Emmet. I would like the university to hire teaching experts in permanent positions. Unfortunately, there are no funds to do this, but there are funds for adjuncts. Another reality is that the FYS can't have the rigor that would be required to teach these skills. It would scare the students off. If staffing is impossible for both FYS and a learning skills course, the FYS should be reworked into a course that teaches students how to learn.

Joseph Covi

UWSP-Biology

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on Section 5b.

I'll make my comments succinct:

5b boils down to the proposition that the panacea for 15 years of poor education (12 years of high school, 3 undergrad) is to throw the responsibility of teaching remedial basic writing and math skills onto the shoulders of over-worked professors teaching advanced courses in students' 16th and final year.

This proposal, if implemented, would be disastrous to biology and the natural sciences. It asks professors teaching junior and senior level biology courses to significantly gut the content of their courses and add perhaps 20% to their already heavy workload in the face of pay cuts and impending benefit cuts.

I teach 120 students in a 300 level course (Biology 342) each year. This represents 80% of my student credit hour work load and I spend 60 hours per week on just this one course. I set up and take down labs (which are disingenuously counted as only 2/3 the value of lecture contact hours) which feature content-rich learning sessions.

Under 5b I would be required to correct 12 pages x 120 students = 1,440 pages of English grammar.

Writing skills, mind you, that should have been taught more rigorously at ALL scholastic levels prior to students' arrival in my class.

And, if I require "three 4-6 minute presentations" (as also proposed by 5b) of each student, that works out to a total of 6 hours per lab section per semester – forcing me to reduce content by 3 whole lab sessions out of a total of 26 lab sessions, or a

reduction in course content of over 10%.

One need only look at recent history in my department, Biology, to see the futility of asking us to be BOTH Biology AND remedial English professors:

Kama Almasi and Isabelle Girard, two talented professors, left our department recently, due, in part at least, to burn-out as they attempted to “right every cosmic wrong” by mentoring students in writing and math skills in their upper level classes, in the manner suggested by 5b.

You can project for yourselves the quality of faculty that UWSP will be able to attract and retain if 5b is implemented.

I reiterate that this proposal mandates a significant dumbing-down of my class content, a greatly increased workload at a time of pay cuts and impending benefit cuts, will lead quickly to reduced faculty retention and difficulty in recruiting quality faculty, and is a tacit admission of the failure of UWSP freshman and sophomore class instruction in these basic skills.

Sincerely,

Emmet J. Judziewicz

Associate Professor of Biology and Forestry

Curator of Vascular Plants

Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium

Department of Biology and Museum of Natural History

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Fellow Biology Instructional Staffers,

How about using Emmet's comments as the starting point for yours? We have until MONDAY, 4 Oct, to get our comments in. I cut out the relevant 5 pages of the Gen Ed 5b proposal that will be voted on eventually by Faculty Senate.

I can't emphasize how much your life is going to change at the UWSP if 5b is passed in its present form. And passed it will be when it gets to Senate.

The issues raised so far by Emmet and others:

- Prop 5b is heavily remedial in its requirements for writing and speaking and basic quantitative skills
- It mandates the nature and number of upper-level courses Biology offers (e.g. mandated new upper-level interdisciplinary courses for all majors)

- It requires additional time be spent on gen-ed issues of writing, speaking in the 3rd and 4th years of departmental offerings, in addition to majors' courses
- It requires additional courses and low-enrollment sections without addition of staff
- It does not spell out the competence required for instruction.

If you have examples of how this would affect the courses you teach, that would be great.

(I submitted my comments earlier, with many of the same points as Emmet's, but in PDF sticky-note form.) Hope to see yours soon.

Comments go to (cut & paste): Cirimo, Christopher; Sage, James; Sirabian, Robert; Yahnke, Chris

CC to: Biology Staff List

We need a strong voice in this discussion. Add yours!

Thanks!

SS

Sol Seipsenwol, Ph.D.
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Thanks Sol for kick-starting this. I can collect comments into a single document to forward to the Dean, James, and Robert. If you do email comments directly to these people, I'll still collect the comments to submit as a group.

I concur with Emmet that the primary concern I have is meeting the communication in the major requirement (CM). Even if we had a relatively low number of 600 majors, this would be logistically difficult to accomplish without designating all of our 300 and 400 level courses as CM courses. Using the "typical" standards given in 5b, figuring out where to incorporate student presentations and finding the additional time to provide feedback and assess writing assignments would at the very least significantly disrupt the way we currently teach our upper level courses. For example, if we use a more realistic 12-15 minute research presentation to satisfy our CM requirement, I would need 4-5 lab periods per section just for this objective (current enrollment of 25 students per section). In mammalogy those 14 2 hour labs are already packed with content and active learning. I could conceivably redesign labs to incorporate this, but I'm not convinced this would improve the course. More worrisome would be the 75 12 page papers I would have to assess (not counting

feedback on drafts). I have more flexibility in Comparative anatomy with only 1 section of 24 students. In this 4 credit course I have the lab time to accommodate presentations and few enough students to incorporate a writing assignment. Problem is that we don't have enough of these single section 300 level courses to accommodate nearly 800 majors. Students in 490 do oral presentations, but this is only 1 credit. If you read down further in 5b you find this statement:

The CM requirement can be satisfied with a minimum of six credits; however, departments or units can require additional credits as a way of satisfying the requirement. In this scenario, for example, a department or unit might designate nine credits that students will take to satisfy the CM requirement.

With a minimum of six credits, students would need at least 2 300 level courses of CM. Currently our majors take at least 12 credits of 300 level courses (most take more). Let's look at what I see as the potential for CM in some of these.

| Course | Credits | CM | |
|--|---------|---------------|-----------|
| Biology 305 | 3 | low | Large |
| lecture of 100+ students | | | |
| Biology 306 | 1 | moderate | Potential |
| for lab reports, presentations, only 1 credit | | | |
| 3xx electives w/multiple sections | 2-4 | low-moderate | Potential |
| for lab reports, presentations, but large number of students limits instructor's ability to assess writing and incorporate presentations (e.g. 314, 333, 342, 377, 378, 387) | | | |
| 3xx electives w/single section | 2-4 | moderate-high | Potential |
| for reports, presentations, but not enough of these sections to accommodate 2 of these for all of our majors. Sacrifice content. | | | |
| (e.g. 317, 331, 370, 375) | | | |
| Biology 490 | 1 | high | Most |
| already incorporate presentations, only 1 credit. More likely to be modified for capstone requirement. | | | |
| Christopher J. Yahnke Chairman, Department of Biology | | | |

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Guay, Don

Comments from Sol Sepsenwol. There are two attachments that accompany this comment.

Please add to that:

1. Interdisciplinary courses should be optional, not mandated. They will happen on their own, thanks. Comparing Step 5b proposal to our closest academic rivals' policies, UWEC & UWLaX, interdisciplinary courses are either absent (UW Eau Claire) or optional (UW-LaCrosse) in satisfying GenEd requirements.

2. Similarly, departmental writing/speaking-enhanced courses should be limited to one 3-credit course (see UW-LaX; UWEC has no U-wide requirement), and that lab reports should be considered part of the writing component.

Thanks!

Sol.

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Guay, Don

Hi Don,

The website froze my computer (or perhaps it was a spurious correlation), but I am adding my comments here:

1. Wellness. It remains amazing that a university seeking to lead the way in innovative thinking and life styles of sustainability, has such a challenge with Wellness. We even host the national wellness conference here, we ARE the birthplace of that concept across the nation, and yet we can only nod to it with 1

credit? It's almost embarrassing. It is also indicative that the more things change the more they stay the same. It is unfortunate that there were only 3 responses indicating interest in teaching the Wellness courses. However, I am also keenly aware of some of the internal proceedings and discussions that took place around that topic. Apparently, turf battles are alive and well, as is the misunderstanding of what wellness is. After trying to educate the committee on what wellness is, which is certainly more than introducing students to healthy vending machines on campus, but being met with such staunch old school resistance, it is not surprising to me that A. there were only 3 responses due to our feeling that "what more can we say, it's not like they are listening?" and B. the fact that the committee seems determined to keep hold of its' own perceptions of wellness. One credit is a mere nod to what could have been a bold statement. It also creates logistical chaos trying to fit that into our schedules. I am sure that I will offer a wellness course, and it will be 3 credits. Such that in the end, students will still end up taking the 3 credit courses, but at least UWSP could have validated the concept, instead of just sniffing at it with 1 credit. I see that English and Communication remain top priorities, and I do not deny that they are important skills, but has anyone heard of the obesity epidemic out there? The financial mess that families are in? and all the other "real life" issues that our students will face that would have fallen under Wellness, and we deem 1 credit appropriate to prepare them for? Unfortunately, this seems just like the first time we were asked for input at a special seminar we had to discuss this new General Ed process in the DUC, our feedback was solicited, and then... the committee moved forward, without ever having the time to look at our input. I know this sounds whiney, perhaps I am whining, but either way, I'm just stating the perception of what I see occurring, and how that weighs on my, our, desire to be involved, to feel that our input will matter or make a difference.

2. Experiential Learning Activities. I'm not sure why these are "zero credit" options. This is going to create more work for faculty, with none of it going towards their credit load. It may also be a nightmare for students to find faculty, or others, interested in mentoring them, given it is an additional burden with no compensation or recognition in work load. Also, students seem to appreciate getting credit for what they do. We give credit for Practicum's, why not this?

I think that's it. So, having complained, I do recognize you all are putting in a LOT of time, I do NOT envy you, and do NOT want to trade places. However, in the matter of wellness, it just seems like that voice was shot before it even got out of the chute.

Sterling K. Wall
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Sage, James

Department of Philosophy
Compiled Responses to Step 5b
October 4, 2010

Here are my thoughts after having read the compiled campus feedback on Step 5b:

University-Wide GDRs

I wholeheartedly agree with those who've expressed the desire to have a middle-level of University-wide degree requirements in such a way that a baccalaureate degree will be composed of 1) the GEP common to all students, 2) degree requirements for the BA, BS, BM, and BFA that are set by the University and common across majors, and 3) major requirements. Not only does this seem consistent with a gradual narrowing of focus from the Gen Ed to the major, but it would make it easier for students to switch majors and relieve departments of the burden of crafting degree requirements.

I have heard the argument that the departments are in the best position to determine what their students need, but if that argument justifies allowing / compelling departments to set their own degree requirements, why shouldn't it similarly justify the practice of allowing / compelling departments to set their own Gen Ed requirements? I take it we've decided that all students should be subject to the same Gen Ed program because there's a level of education for which the University as whole is properly responsible. I think that similar reasoning supports university-wide degree requirements. All students should get the Gen Ed program because all of our students are seeking a bachelor's degree. Not all students are pursuing the same kind of bachelor's degree, of course. Degree requirements set by the University allow students to specialize beyond the Gen Ed. And, finally, the major requirements, set by the departments, all students to specialize beyond their degree type. That makes sense to me.

The GEC

I'm wondering if we mightn't constitute the GEC as a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, much like the current General Degree Requirement Subcommittee. This could streamline the course approval process and the arrangement would have strong internal logic, insofar as Gen Ed is a curricular matter.

If the University decides to have consistent Degree Requirements across majors, matters related to these requirements could be handled by the Curriculum

Committee as well, either via another subcommittee or – more likely - through a some other mechanism. (I doubt that another subcommittee will be needed because I doubt that degree requirements will raise any significant additional issues. This is particularly the case if the University decides to structure the degree requirements on the basis of existing Gen Ed categories, stipulating, for example that a BA will require (among other things) six additional credits from humanities.)

Staffing the FYS

1) Instructional vs. Non Instructional Staff

I share Wade Mahon's concerns about non-instructional staff teaching FYSs because I do fear that this practice could shift significant responsibility for crucial courses to non-tenure-track instructors and potentially out of the instructional ranks entirely. I think we want to avoid this, not only because we pride ourselves on the percentage of our courses taught by tenure track faculty, but also because it's important for as many faculty as possible to be aware of the nature of the FYS and familiar with skills taught in it. One of the best ways to ensure this familiarity, and to ensure that the FYS is a bridge to further academic study, is to have as many of these sections taught by regular faculty members as possible.

All of this is consistent with the recognition that non-instructional staff have a lot to offer. Perhaps we could encourage team teaching between instructional and non-instructional staff. Perhaps we could give faculty "first shot" at teaching the FYS and employ adjuncts and non-instructional staff if additional sections need to be offered to meet student need, much as we currently do for GDR courses?

2) Departmental Control and the GEC

Mary Bowman's point that "[w]hile departments should have the power to decide who will teach a course, the Gen Ed committee as proposed will have...the power to determine whether a course will satisfy a requirement of the Gen Ed Program" is very well taken.

Perhaps many of the concerns about the FYS can be resolved by locating FYS courses within academic departments and making corresponding changes to the way in which FYS courses are identified. For example, there could be "PHIL FYS 103" for an FYS in the Philosophy Department that meets the U.S. Diversity requirement, "BIO FYS 104" for an FYS in the Biology Department that meets the U.S. Diversity requirement, and so on. Under this arrangement, the GEC would need to approve the courses, but the departments would be responsible for staffing them. Non-academic staff would be eligible to teach an FYS if they are admitted into a department's adjunct pool. (The Library would count as an academic department and could offer FYSs. It already offers courses in Library Resources.)

I anticipate a possible objection to locating FYSs within academic departments in this way: the FYS isn't supposed to be an introduction to the major. I believe that this objection is mistaken, however. Not all introductory courses in a discipline are

introductions to the major, and not every course offered within an academic department needs to be an introduction to the discipline. It's true, of course, that an FYS offered within Physics and Astronomy might be expected to have a "Physics and Astronomy Spin," and an FYS offered within Communication might be expected to have a corresponding "Communication Spin," but given the fact that the FYS is supposed to have academic content, I think this is a fact to be celebrated.

1. Has anyone looked into whether something like a required Freshman seminar and required Communications course capped at 24 students is feasible with the budget? I like the idea of them, but don't know how we will pay for it.
2. I am very opposed to "Interdisciplinary Studies." I am currently doing research that is interdisciplinary and I find it incredibly challenging and far beyond what an undergraduate could do, unless there is a firm commitment that most of these courses have two instructors from different disciplines. Otherwise, students may get very inaccurate information about the 2nd discipline. I realize that persons teaching these courses have to establish qualifications, but I fear that because of the need for interdisciplinary instructors, there may not be strict standards about qualifications and it will mean that the content of the course will not be correct. Also, as above, how will this be paid for?
3. Experiential learning could be an added unpaid burden placed upon faculty and staff.

1. As I read the proposal, First Year Seminars will not be designated according to discipline and department, but be designated as FYS 101, 102, 103, and 104. What will this mean in terms of departmental FTE? Will these courses be cross listed with the home department of the instructor. If not, what incentive will be in place for departments to offer FYS courses? Who will be assessing instructors' performance in these courses?

2. On page 8, the document says that "this manner of attaching ownership of GDRs to individual departments is out of step with current practice in general education, in part because it makes the assessment and continuous improvement of the curriculum extremely difficult." This claim needs stronger support. Why/how would the Gen Ed committee be hampered in its assessment and improvement if departments own GDRs? And why/how will assessment and improvement NOT be hampered if some GDRs are owned by specific departments (e.g., the oral communication requirement)?

3. The shift from a requirement in "history" to one in "historical perspectives" threatens to seriously dilute the teaching of history at UWSP. The discipline of history entails far more than discussion of "what happened in the past." The discipline involves the interrogation of how we construct our histories (methodological issues) that are essential for students to understand the complexities relating to any reconstruction of "the past". To suggest that people not trained in history should teach "historical perspectives" is a pretty big insult to

the history faculty and shows a lack of understanding about the discipline and its aims.

4. The interdisciplinary requirement threatens to become a serious bottleneck in movement towards graduation. Unless the university seriously wants to enhance interdisciplinary study at UWSP through the addition of several new tenure track faculty lines, the committee needs to look at whether we really have the resources to make this a requirement. As we've seen with the WE requirement, it is difficult to get enough departments to support Gen Ed requirements if there are not clear incentives in place to do so.

5. Concerns were raised early in this review process (by Dona Warren, myself and others) about the proposal to mandate Communication in the Major and capstone courses within the major. The question we asked, but to which I've not heard any answer, concerns the authority of the General Education program to dictate the content of department curricula. It seems to me that the committee is overreaching its authority in seeking to dictate changes in the major programs of departments

6. The proposal we have received, as a whole, is very ambitious and contains several ideas which are very innovative and untested. The cost of implementing and maintaining this program will be immense; as the recent proposal document for CAESE suggested, several new administrative positions will be required to make this work. Given the precarious fiscal situation of the UW system at present, this seems unwise. I'll be sad when philosophy loses another tenure line so that we can have another administrator over in Old Main.

1. I think that the proposed "General Education Committee" (or whatever it's called) is a valuable aspect of the new General Education Proposal. While the details need to be worked out in consultation with Faculty Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Faculty Senate, I believe that it is essential to any general education curriculum to locate its coordination and assessment in a corporate body (preferably elected faculty members as part of faculty governance). Like any "shared curriculum" the general education program will require a dedicated/responsible group to ensure that our students are served the best that we can. Currently, I do not think the GDR system is "actively managed" as a "shared curriculum"... in other words, there is no "department of general education" (the way that there is a department of philosophy)... and so I think that the general education curriculum, like our philosophy curriculum, should be actively managed (and updated and improved) by SOMEONE. This new committee can fill that role.

2. I echo Mary Bowman's comments on the GEPRC comment page: I think the new general education committee should be responsible for DESIGNATING courses as satisfying gen ed requirements. Of course, this committee doesn't stop departments from offering courses (that's still their business). In this way, the proposed system is no different than the current GDR system. I think there should be standards that are actively enforced for the new general education system.

3. This is not directly a response to Step 5b, but to a previous step: I tend to think

that there should be more Natural Science required at the level of general education. I was disappointed that no science LAB class was required. Ideally, I'd like to see at least ONE lab class required, along with an additional natural science class in a different discipline (with or without a lab).

4. I think that the FYS that was proposed is an exciting new opportunity for campus. Of course, there will be a number of concerns regarding logistics and resources. Yes, we need to pay attention to these important matters. But we must not lose sight of the opportunity to serve students in meaningful ways... and the FYS does just that. So far, just about everyone I've talked to is excited about offering an FYS. I've even heard Deans and the Provost say that THEY TOO want to be able to offer an FYS. That's impressive. We should definitely not waste this chance to tap into our (collective) passion for learning.

5. I don't think that the Communication in the Major or the Capstone Experience in the Major belong in the general education curriculum. These ideas should be flexible, and should be part of what a student needs to complete for their degree (not for gen ed).

6. I think the Interdisciplinary Studies requirement is exciting. However, its flexibility will render considerable variability (from a single course to a major/minor). I guess it's better than nothing, but I'd like to see more parity, more rigor. Also, the learning outcomes for the interdisciplinary requirement are rather meager.

7. Many concerns regarding staffing and SCH and resources are quite legitimate and have been expressed repeatedly. However, as a faculty member, I realize that it is my role to serve my students and my colleagues as best as I can, and to help out on campus when I can. I rarely understand the details regarding decisions about staffing and tenure-lines and SCH and other complex, institutional matters – I do not pretend to be ABLE to understand such issues, nor (to be honest) do I WANT to concern myself with those issues. Of course, I don't want to see anyone I work with be "released" or have their tenure-line "reassigned" to another department. But, at the same time, I would like the support from campus, to know that SOMEONE is "driving the bus" so to speak. We need someone who is looking out for the good of the whole academic mission, not just the interests of each department– so, I'm just not sure how to balance this equation: protect faculty tenure-lines and also provide the administrative support necessary for me to serve my students. Quite frankly, I'm going to need some help converting my existing courses into the new general education system. I hope somebody, somewhere, will be planning how to help me and my colleagues—in terms of workshops, stipends, summer institutes, etc. We don't have time to do this on our own. To move forward as a campus, we need to know that we're going to be supported. Whatever assurance I can get will greatly ease my worries.

Posted: 10/5/2010 1:14 PM

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Guay, Don

Rob Harper, Department of History

Gen Ed 5b notes

FYS:

Wrong conjunction: "All First Year Seminars should focus on topics in which instructors have both expertise and interest, but which are engaging to a general audience of first-year students." Making our expertise engaging to first-year students is what we do for a living. Replace "but" with "and."

Who will determine/evaluate qualifications for FYS instructors? What background is required to teach an FYS? I am open to using non-instructional staff as instructors, but such individuals must be well qualified to teach an academically rigorous college-level course. Presumably, familiarity with college-level teaching is necessary to introduce students to college-level learning. The people best able to evaluate such qualifications are faculty.

The larger question here is whether the FYS will in fact be an academically rigorous college-level course. The approved FYS description states that it will, but the approved FYS outcomes show little sign of academic rigor. So faculty quite reasonably argue that academic qualifications are essential to ensure rigor, while non-instructional staff just as reasonably argue that they can teach to the less-than-rigorous learning outcomes as well as faculty can. As things currently stand, it appears that the "rigor" of the FYS will depend entirely on the whim of the individual instructor, which makes control over instructor selection all the more important. For my part, I think first-year students need focused, small-class instruction in basic college-level academics: reading comprehension, notetaking, documentation, work on writing that supplements freshman English, etc. FYS instructors should be selected based on their ability to provide this training. FYS instructors certainly should draw on the expertise of student affairs professionals, etc., so that the FYS complements non-instructional retention efforts: I think faculty have a lot to learn from student affairs about how best to serve our students, and I hope the FYS program will help improve communication about such matters. That said, the focus of the FYS needs to remain on preparing students for academic success. If a student sticks around for their second year but still has not learned how to read a textbook or write a coherent paragraph, then we are doing that student a disservice, no matter how good our retention numbers look. We can convince students to stay by making everything easy and fun, or we can convince students to stay by teaching them to read and think and write at a college level (while having some fun along the way). Let's aim for the latter, and let's choose FYS instructors based on who can best achieve that goal.

Interdisciplinary:

Why limit "interdisciplinary courses" to 300-level? Why not PAX 200, or core courses for other interdisciplinary majors/minors? Likely outcome of the proposal as written: most departments will figure out a way to offer an upper-level class that meets the "interdisciplinary" criteria, and most of their majors will take that class. That seems to defeat the purpose of the requirement. Allowing lower-division courses to satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement will encourage students to take interdisciplinary

courses earlier in their careers, which may in turn help draw students to the interdisciplinary majors and minors. At the very least, it may get more students satisfying the requirement with courses outside of their major.

In their current form, I suspect that the qualifications for “interdisciplinary” instructors are too strict. Will PAX 200 be interdisciplinary one year and not the next, based on the CV of the instructor? Will the GEC need to re-assess its “interdisciplinarity” each time a new instructor teaches it? The language here needs to be flexible enough to allow faculty to “qualify” for this requirement in various ways, including post-grad school teaching and research experience. Alternatively, we could evaluate courses for Interdisciplinary Studies based strictly on course content rather than instructor qualifications, but that would require establishing more concrete learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies.

Experiential learning:

What about having a job? If a student waits tables to pay the bills and writes an essay reflecting on what they’ve learned, can that be an ELA? There are a whole lot of student jobs that, with a modicum of reflection, could yield “further understanding of their university education, and an enhanced sense of one’s personal responsibility as a member of a larger community.” Encouraging students to do that reflection could be quite valuable. Or does that make the field of possible ELAs so broad as to make the requirement meaningless?

If we are really going to adopt this requirement, we need much clearer guidelines regarding what it is supposed to accomplish. I personally think that waiting tables can be just as valuable, educationally, as stocking shelves at a food bank – or just as pointless, depending on the attitude of the student. If the requirement is to remain as nebulous as it currently stands, I hope that it encompasses paid work as well as volunteering. Most of our students get plenty of “experiential learning” by working long hours to pay tuition: let’s not pile on additional extracurricular obligations in the form of a graduation requirement.

On a related note, what will the “ELA assessment rubric” consist of? In terms of clarity of learning outcomes, this is by far the most oblique part of the new GEP: just which of the assessment-friendly verbs will the ELAs enable students to perform? The approved learning outcomes for EL appear to be limited to “reflecting.”

Communication in the major:

Why the required workshop? Why not evaluate communication courses based on syllabus and assignments, and thereby resolve the problem of students doing WE-level work without receiving WE credit? If the workshop must be continued, why move it from English to CAESE?

3 4-6 minute presentations? Depending on class size, that could be 6+ weeks of the semester, and with the WE cap lifted, class size will go up.

Funding for CitM: will departments with large numbers of majors (like history) need to offset small CitM class sizes by raising limits on non-CitM courses? Might that create a perverse incentive for departments to push the boundaries of “sufficiently small”? Or will the university back up its mandate by subsidizing small class sizes?

The current proposal amounts to a Gen Ed requirement dressed up as a major requirement. If we want it to be standardized across the curriculum, then it should

be a Gen Ed requirement (as it is now). If we really want to boot CitM out of the GEP and into the majors, we should let the departments decide how to implement it (while holding departments accountable through assessment). Mandate that all majors include discipline-appropriate writing and presenting skills in their intended program outcomes, and leave it up to the departments to decide how to teach and assess these skills (many departments probably include such skills in their program outcomes already). Per the logic of assessment, the important thing is that departments demonstrate that on graduating, their majors can write and present at an appropriate level. If graduates can write, then presumably the program is doing a good job, whether or not it meets some arbitrary university-mandated minimums. If graduates can't write or present, then presumably the program needs to change something.

The underlying problem here is that the university wants to offer small classes to teach writing, etc. more effectively, but it doesn't want to pay for them. The old system didn't work in part because departments had incentives NOT to offer WE courses (because they would have to make up the reduced class sizes by making other classes bigger). But rather than providing funding to alleviate the disincentives, the current proposal would force departments to offer WE courses (doubling as oral communication courses).

Instructor qualifications:

The language regarding evaluation of instructor qualifications gives the proposed GEC too much leeway. Ideally, qualifications to teach the various GDRs should be assessed by independent committees of individuals with expertise in the relevant field, not by a committee of non-specialists. To address concerns about "turf," the rules establishing such committees could mandate that they include representation from multiple departments. In the case of Historical Perspectives, it could include members of other departments with some background in historical methods (historical geographers, historical sociologists and anthropologists, and art historians all might qualify).

The history department must accept that some courses taught by non-historians will carry Historical Perspectives credit – that will happen whether we like it or not – but we should push for a compromise that entrusts the vetting to people who actually know about historical perspectives (and entrusts the vetting of natural science instructors to people who know about natural sciences, etc.) That will help ensure that students completing the historical perspectives requirement will gain some critical awareness about the past, rather than simply memorizing when things happened (only to forget it all after the exam).

A better solution would be to strengthen the intended learning outcomes, so that the outcomes themselves provide a meaningful standard for judging the appropriateness of a given course/instructor. In my opinion, the existing outcomes are too vague and insubstantial to serve that purpose. They leave the GEC lots of room for interpretation as to what kind of course will satisfy them, and they are easy enough to meet that someone could teach a high school-level rote memorization course and still boast quite legitimately that their students meet the outcomes just as well as students in more critically engaging courses. Anyone cribbing from a textbook can

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>teach students to “describe events from past cultures” and recite standard definitions of “causality” and “agency.” I think our existing history courses are better than that, and UWSP students certainly deserve better than that. We need to push for standards of assessment that allow us to demonstrate what we do, push us to do even better, and require other HP course instructors to deliver similar quality.</p> |
|--|---|