

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Step 5b

Course Criteria

General Education Policy Review Committee
August 18, 2010

A proposal for discussion and comment by the campus community.

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Proposal

GENERAL CRITERIA

- All courses must be approved by the General Education Committee through the submission of an electronic course proposal. The proposal will include:
 - Basic course information, including course number, title, credits, and catalog description.
 - A course syllabus, including learning outcomes aligned with those of the General Education program.
 - A narrative describing how student learning will be assessed.
- All courses must address the approved learning outcomes in the category in which they are taught.
- All courses should be taught by an instructor with teaching, research, or professional expertise in an appropriate area of study in order to satisfy the relevant learning outcomes in each category. Typically, instructors should possess at least a Master's degree in their respective fields.

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 seek advice from appropriate department(s).
- 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.

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.

First Year Seminar

- All First Year Seminars must be numbered according to the following scheme, with appropriate subtitle:
 - FYS 101: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS)
 - FYS 102: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Global Awareness)
 - FYS 103: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and U.S. Diversity)
 - FYS 104: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Environmental Responsibility)
- 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. The primary function of the First Year Seminar should NOT be to serve as an introduction to a major. Ordinarily, no First Year Seminar may be required for a major.

- Instructors of the First Year Seminar may be drawn from the faculty, teaching academic staff, or non-instructional academic staff.
- All First Year Seminar instructors must attend a training workshop sponsored by the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement.
- All First Year Seminars will have an enrollment cap of 20 students.

Written Communication

- The Written Communication outcomes will be satisfied by English 101: Freshman English and English 202: Sophomore English.
- English 150: Advanced Freshman English may be substituted for English 101/202, with the appropriate placement.
- English 101 should be taken during the student's freshman year.
- English 202 should be taken during the student's sophomore year and will have a prerequisite of English 101.
- English 101, 202, and 150 will have an enrollment cap of 23 students.

Oral Communication

- The Oral Communication outcomes will be satisfied by Communication 101: Fundamentals of Oral Communication.
- Communication 101 will have an enrollment cap of 24 students.

Quantitative Literacy

- All Quantitative Literacy courses will have a prerequisite of Math 90.

Wellness

- Wellness is a one-credit requirement that may be met by a one-, two-, or three-credit course.

INVESTIGATION

- All courses in the Investigation Level must be sufficiently broad to serve an audience of general education students.
- Ordinarily, courses in the Investigation Level will not have prerequisites. Departments must provide a rationale when proposing General Education courses with prerequisites.

INTEGRATION

Interdisciplinary Studies

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

- “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).
- 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.

For single Interdisciplinary Studies courses:

- All Interdisciplinary Studies courses must be numbered at the 300-level or above.
- If the course is co-taught by two instructors:
 - The instructors should represent two distinct disciplines, as defined above.
 - The instructors should provide a written explanation regarding the division of work.
- 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.
- If the course is proposed by a single instructor who has at minimum a Master’s Degree in one disciplinary field, then that instructor should also possess adequate teaching or research experience in a second discipline to allow students to satisfy the approved learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies.
 - The instructor should provide a written explanation of how their teaching experience, research, or other academic training has prepared them to teach an Interdisciplinary Studies course.

For Interdisciplinary Majors, Minors, and Certificates:

- Interdisciplinarity, as defined above, should be the organizing principle of the coursework involved. An interdisciplinary program, in other words, is not meant to focus largely on a single discipline or methodology with one or two extra courses added to the requirements.
- The program must include a plan from the department or coordinator for how student achievement of the approved interdisciplinary learning outcomes will be assessed.

Experiential Learning

- For the General Education Program, Experiential Learning is a zero-credit, non-graded activity. It may, however, be satisfied by a course that does carry credit.
- Any UWSP faculty or academic staff member with a minimum of a bachelor's degree may serve as a mentor for an Experiential Learning Activity (ELA).
- Students must complete the ELA while enrolled at UWSP. Credit for Prior Learning may not apply to the Experiential Learning requirement.
- An ELA may be completed through:
 - A course or experience designated by an academic department that has been approved by the General Education Committee as meeting the Experiential Learning outcomes
 - An academic course that includes a service-learning, internship, or practicum experience
 - A study-abroad experience
 - Other experiences as approved by an Experiential Learning mentor.
- An ELA must consist of a minimum of 24 hours.
- Students must reflect on their activity to gain further understanding of their education and an enhanced sense of their responsibility as a member of a larger community.
- 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.

Communication in the Major

- All instructors teaching Communication in the Major courses must complete a training workshop sponsored by the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement.
- 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.
- Communication in the Major courses should have sufficiently small enrollment caps so that students will receive adequate personal feedback, from both instructors and their peers, on their communication techniques.

- Assignments should be based on the kinds of communication typical of the relevant discipline or profession.
- Both writing and speaking instruction should be integrated into course discussions and activities and include grading criteria, revision experiences, and opportunities for student peer review.
- Typically, writing should total a minimum of 12 pages (defined appropriately for the discipline); typically, speaking should include a minimum of three, four-to-six-minute presentations (at least one of these should incorporate a visual and/or media component). Writing and speaking assignments can be individual and/or group assignments.

Capstone Experience in the Major

- Departments will designate a Capstone course(s) or experience for each of its majors.
- The Capstone course(s) or experience should focus on some facet of the student's area of concentration and should require the use of skills, methodology, and knowledge which demonstrate achievement within the General Education Program Outcomes.
- All capstone courses/experiences must be completed in the senior year of the respective major.
- Capstone courses/experiences should have sufficiently small enrollment caps to allow for active participation by each student and feedback by the instructor.

CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- The instructor and course criteria for the categories of Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, and Environmental Responsibility are driven almost exclusively by the approved learning outcomes. Any combination of education and experience that allow the learning outcomes to be met is considered qualifying.
- Ordinarily, courses offered in this area will fulfill one other requirement in the General Education curriculum at the same time, either at the Foundation, Investigation, or Integration Levels.

Explanation of Proposal

While completing Step 4 required the campus to decide *what students should learn* from the new General Education program, completing Step 5 necessitates deciding *how and by whom* the approved learning outcomes will be taught.

Instructor Qualifications

Without question, the most difficult aspect of this task is to define instructor qualifications for teaching within each area of the new general education curriculum. On this issue, the committee has been pulled in two seemingly opposite directions. On the one hand, the growing emphasis on assessment and learning outcomes in higher education suggests that outputs rather than inputs should be paramount in defining and evaluating a curriculum. By this logic, any instructor able to demonstrate an ability to teach the approved learning outcomes should be qualified in a given category. On the other hand, however, it is equally clear that inputs like instructor qualifications still have an important—and perhaps *the most important*—role in shaping the desired outcome of a given class.

Under the present General Degree Requirements (GDRs), UWSP has been governed by relatively inflexible rules regarding which instructors are permitted to teach in each GDR category. Many of the GDRs themselves are labeled using department names, including Freshman English, Mathematics, Communication, History, and Foreign Language. (The GDRs are described in Chapter 7, Section 6: <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/handbook/handbook09-10/CH7-8%2009-10.pdf>.) Beyond this implicit restriction, the only instance in which instructor qualifications are explicitly stated in the Handbook is in the Social Science area, which specifies that “Category 1 courses must be offered from the departments of Business/Economics (Economics only), Geography/Geology (Cultural Geography only), Philosophy/Anthropology (Anthropology only), Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.” Other faculty are permitted to teach Social Science classes, but only under the “Category 2” label.

This manner of attaching ownership of our GDRs to individual departments is out of step with current practices in general education, in part because it makes the assessment and continuous improvement of the curriculum extremely difficult. The issue was specifically cited as problematic by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) team that reviewed our GDRs in 2006, and it is among the concerns that prompted the upcoming focused visit by the Higher Learning Commission, our accrediting organization. As a result, GEPRC has sought to avoid using department names as titles for the components of the new general education curriculum. We proposed Quantitative Literacy rather than Mathematics, for

example, and Historical Perspectives rather than History. We did this deliberately in the hope of avoiding any conversation about “ownership” of the curriculum until after the campus had defined what learning outcomes specifically that curriculum would entail.

Now that Faculty Senate has approved these learning outcomes, however, the question of instructor qualifications must be addressed. For help in navigating this difficult issue, the committee turned to UWSP’s faculty and staff, conducting an online survey for two weeks during March 2010. Here, too, we heard apparently conflicting advice. The survey asked faculty to select which areas of the new curriculum they were most interested in teaching. The responses—which can be viewed at <https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/Step5/default.aspx>—illustrate just how difficult it may be to draw firm boundaries related to degrees or department memberships around many areas of the curriculum. In addition, the survey asked faculty what factors were most important in defining course criteria. Among those who elaborated on the question of instructor qualifications, some respondents advised the committee to keep “turf” and department memberships out of the criteria while others insisted that instructor qualifications were paramount and should be defined as precisely as possible.

Keep turf out of the formula.... Our past system allowed approval of courses by faculty who had no training or experience in the areas in which they were trying to offer a course. Other faculty courses were precluded because they were not in the right department or College. This must stop.

--response to Step 5 Survey

Yes, a person might be able on paper to "meet learning outcomes" as defined by the gen ed committee, but a person must also be able to demonstrate they have the qualifications to teach in the area they are proposing. Otherwise, a person in history who also speaks Spanish could propose a language course. Equally, a person in the sciences might propose a "history of science class," but are they qualified and experienced in how to conduct historical research and/or teach history?

--response to Step 5 Survey

Both points of view have merit. As a result, the committee has sought to find a middle ground between the potential extremes: in other words, to define criteria precisely enough to ensure qualified instructors but not so rigidly that capable instructors are excluded from teaching in a given area solely because they lack particular degrees or department memberships. As one respondent described the problem, “it would be appropriate to allow a mechanism to recognize expertise acquired and demonstrated through some means other than a degree program in unusual cases, but not to open [the] door wide.”

The solution proposed by the committee is to vest “ownership” of the curriculum in a new General Education Committee (GEC) as a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. This idea was initially proposed by the HLC

Assessment Academy Team and approved in principle by the Senate's Executive Committee. It has been referred to the Constitution and Handbook Review Subcommittee for development as a formal proposal for consideration by the Senate. (To review the subcommittee's current proposal, see Appendix I.) According to the criteria proposed by GEPRC, the new GEC would be charged with ensuring that instructors in each category of the curriculum possess "teaching, research, or professional expertise in an appropriate area of study in order to satisfy the relevant learning outcomes." If there is a question, this should be easily determined by reviewing the instructor's curriculum vitae. But if members of the GEC are uncertain for any reason, the proposed criteria allow them to seek advice from appropriate departments.

Instructors in the First Year Seminar

One area of the curriculum for which we have proposed additional criteria related to instructor qualifications is the First Year Seminar. Here, the committee suggests allowing non-instructional academic staff with at least a Master's degree to serve as qualified instructors. Although this is common practice in First Year Seminar programs across the country, the practice would be new to UWSP. Thus, it deserves some explanation and campus discussion.

We make this proposal for several reasons:

1. The First Year Seminar, although intended to be a rigorous learning experience, is not dependent on any discipline-specific content or methodology. In fact, such seminars work best to the extent that they are not structured as introductions to a major or even a discipline. Instead, they should focus most directly on introducing students to the liberal education available at UWSP.

For example, imagine a First Year Seminar entitled "Beyond Petroleum?" that explores the recent Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Rather than examining the topic from the perspective of a single discipline, the seminar might require students to explore the oil spill and its impact from a number of perspectives. Students could read a wildlife biologist discussing the harmful consequences to fish and waterfowl; an economist investigating the impact on consumer prices or the concept of peak oil; a political scientist describing the oil spill in its geopolitical context; a historian explaining the United States' longstanding dependence on fossil fuels; and scientists and engineers grappling with the technical difficulties of plugging the leak. The point in all these readings would not be to teach students discipline-specific content or methodologies. Rather, it would be to teach students that there are, in fact, such things as "disciplines," each of which plays an important role in a liberal education and each of which demands that students develop study skills and an ability to think critically and use information wisely. These goals are modest, perhaps, by comparison to the GDR courses that

freshmen students have traditionally taken at UWSP. But the very purpose of the First Year Seminar is to provide exactly this kind of basic introduction to higher education. The committee believes that such goals can realistically be met by non-instructional staff with the appropriate training.

2. Several of the learning outcomes for the First Year Seminar relate to areas in which non-instructional staff have significant expertise, especially those involving study skills, co-curricular involvement, and the academic support services available to students at UWSP. As one survey respondent noted, many non-instructional staff “have valuable insights into student engagement/success and can develop a course or experiences that meet the learning outcomes.” We agree.
3. The inclusion of qualified non-instructional staff is very much in keeping with the broad goals of the new General Education Program, especially the more effective integration of curricular and co-curricular learning. The First Year Seminar seems an ideal location in which to encourage this type of collaborative teaching and learning.

Certainly, there are obstacles to broadening the pool of instructors for the First Year Seminar. Training in the methods of teaching a FYS will be essential for both faculty and non-instructional staff; and in the case of the latter group, it is likely that instructors will need further assistance with curriculum development. In addition, while faculty participating in the program would teach these courses as part of their normal load, non-instructional staff would potentially need to participate as an “overload” to their regular responsibilities. This raises the possible need for additional compensation.

That said, given that the First Year Seminar depends for its success on placing UWSP’s most experienced, engaging, and enthusiastic instructors in the classroom, there are strong reasons to create a pool of instructors that is as broad and inclusive as possible.

Foundation

First Year Seminar

The course criteria for the First Year Seminar are meant to ensure that the class enrollment is small enough to conduct the class in a true seminar format, that instructors are appropriately trained, and that the topics of individual sections are general enough to be appealing to the broadest possible audience of first-year students. Given the unique challenges of teaching the First Year Seminar, the new General Education Committee may wish to establish a special

subcommittee to consider and approve proposals for new courses in this area. Ideally, this process could be led by a Director of General Education or a Coordinator of the First Year Experience who could develop the expertise to effectively judge what kinds of topics and course structures are most effective.

Written and Oral Communication

This is the only area in which the committee has proposed singling out particular classes to satisfy the learning outcomes. We did so for two reasons:

1. UWSP has a history of relying on faculty within the Department of English and the Division of Communication to teach these foundational courses.
2. Faculty in other departments wishing to teach these kinds of communication skills have an opportunity to do so through the Communication in the Major requirement.

The idea of moving the current English 101/102 sequence to a new English 101/202 format comes from the English Department itself and reflects research which suggests that a sophomore writing experience can be more beneficial to students than a two-course requirement entirely in the freshman year.

Finally, although the committee is content to recommend that Communication 101—revised to become a three-credit course—continue to serve as the sole course fulfilling the Oral Communication outcomes in the new General Education Program, we hope that strong consideration is given to offering a greater variety of class options under this course number. For example, some sections of Communication 101 could be geared specifically to students majoring in the sciences, or other similar emphases.

Quantitative Literacy

The committee seeks to maintain essentially the same standard of proficiency in mathematical skills as exists in the current General Degree Requirements. In the process, however, we hope to broaden the definition of quantitative literacy to include a greater variety of competencies, including applied mathematical skills. 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.

In 2009, 11% of UWSP's incoming students scored a 1 on the mathematics placement exam, which placed them into beginning algebra (currently offered as Math 90). Under the new program these students would need to take Math 90 prior to enrolling in a Quantitative

Literacy course. 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.

Wellness

In GEPRC's recent Step 5 survey, only three people indicated an interest in teaching courses in the Wellness category. However, Wellness is a one-credit requirement, there is nothing preventing a two- or three-credit course from also meeting the approved learning outcomes where appropriate.

Investigation

The only criteria beyond the approved learning outcomes required for courses in the Investigation Level involve breadth of topic. In general, we suggest these courses have topics broad enough to be of interest to general education students (as opposed to majors). As a result, these courses should not typically require pre-requisites without strong justification.

Integration

Interdisciplinary Studies

Interdisciplinarity can be defined in a great variety of ways. As a result, in establishing criteria for the Interdisciplinary Studies category in the new General Education Program, the committee sought to adopt standards that fulfilled the learning outcomes and at the same time remained internally consistent with the rest of the curriculum. In particular, given its location in the Integration Level, the interdisciplinary requirement is intended to build on the disciplinary knowledge and methodologies that students will learn earlier from courses in the Investigation Level. With this purpose in mind, the committee's proposed criteria seek to ensure that:

- Interdisciplinary courses (which fulfill the single-course option) are 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.

The committee recognizes that these criteria will exclude some courses and programs from fulfilling the Interdisciplinary Studies requirement. For example, a Biochemistry major may well be an interdisciplinary program in that it integrates distinct methodologies employed in Biology and Chemistry. Nevertheless, both Biology and Chemistry are Natural Sciences. Given the structure of the approved General Education Program and its intent to provide as broad an education as possible, it seems prudent to exclude such programs in favor of those that integrate the disciplinary areas defined at the Investigation Level.

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.

In the same way, the proposed criteria leave broad discretion to the General Education Committee to determine which majors, minors, and certificates should fulfill the Interdisciplinary Studies requirement. These programs, just like individual courses, must submit a plan for how student achievement of the approved learning outcomes will be assessed.

Experiential Learning

Many departments already offer or require that their majors participate in some type of “learn-by-doing” experience: for example, student teaching; a music, dance or theater performance; the CNR summer camp; the undergraduate research symposiums; internships; etc. As long as these departments can explain how such experiences meet the GEP learning outcomes for Experiential Learning, they may designate particular experiences or courses as fulfilling the Experiential Learning requirement.

Students whose majors do not offer such an experience or who choose to complete their Experiential Learning requirement with an experience outside their major must engage in some type of an activity as described in the proposed criteria. These Experiential Learning Activities will be vetted by individual faculty or staff members who agree to serve as an “ELA Mentor” for a student.

See Appendix II, “Experiential Learning Activity Guide” for more details and examples.

Communication in the Major

The Communication in the Major (CM) requirement (non-GEP credit) addresses the continued need for students to improve their writing and speaking knowledge and skills. Although undergraduates will take English 101 and 202 and Communication 101, these courses will be taken during their freshman and sophomore years and address communication fundamentals using various types of subjects and assignments. Taken during the junior and senior years, CM courses allow students the opportunity to build on their foundational communication skills and, specifically, give students experience with discipline-specific writing and speaking. Although CM courses focus on content as well as writing and speaking, writing and speaking are an integral component of these courses. Perhaps most importantly, CM courses allow all faculty to help students improve their communication awareness and skills, a need almost universally acknowledged by faculty across campus. This CM requirement is an example of how general education courses can be integrated with courses in the major, helping to discourage the notion that general education courses are simply obstacles to overcome or perfunctory checklists.

The CM requirement retains some of the characteristics of the former Writing Emphasis (WE) requirement while addressing some of the problems with WE identified by faculty. It should not be difficult to adapt WE courses to meet the learning outcomes for CM courses. 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. Class size might be a factor in devising this structure since larger classes will limit the amount of writing and speaking that can be assigned as well as the instructor's ability to provide timely and specific feedback. Of course, a department or unit can require their students to take additional CM courses if they wish to make the requirement more rigorous.

Since all departments or units will have to offer CM courses for their students and will not be able to send their students to other departments to find CM courses, class sizes have been left to the discretion of each department or unit. Class sizes should be as small as possible to ensure that CM courses meet the designated learning outcomes. Research clearly shows that small classes enable more effective writing and speaking practice. There will be more opportunities for students to work closely with faculty and their peers as well as for faculty to provide students with detailed oral and written feedback.

As discussed in the explanation section of Step 4 of the GEP, the general, university-wide guidelines offered for the CM requirement will help ensure that the requirement is addressed credibly and consistently across the university. These flexible guidelines also provide faculty

with help developing their CM courses. Some of the guidelines are those faculty currently use for WE courses. However, these guidelines give faculty the ability to design CM courses that meet their students' needs. Faculty can, of course, exceed these guidelines in addressing what communication skills will best serve their students.

Capstone Experience in the Major

The Capstone experience is designed to bring reflection and focus to the whole of the college experience. It should encourage students to integrate facets of their area of concentration with important concepts from the General Educational Program.

Examples of possible capstone experiences include (but are not limited to) the following:

- A senior seminar that requires a major project.
- An undergraduate thesis.
- A semester project that culminates in a paper, essay, presentation, or similar product.
- An internship to investigate a problem in the workplace and a paper/presentation that asks students to analyze and evaluate the experience.
- A performance, show, or recital appropriate to the discipline, together with relevant supporting assignments.

Cultural and Environmental Awareness

As with the Investigation Level, courses in this area require few criteria beyond the approved learning outcomes. The only criteria we have proposed involve the breadth of topics, which should be broad enough to be of interest to general education students and which should generally not require pre-requisites.

Providing Comments

The committee will collect feedback through Friday, September 17. Comments can be posted on our website (<https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/Step5/default.aspx>) or emailed directly to the committee co-chairs: Don Guay (dguay@uwsp.edu) and Gary Olsen (golsen@uwsp.edu).

Members of GEPRC will host a public forum open to anyone on campus to introduce and discuss this proposal. The forum will take place on Wednesday, September 1 from 9:30am-12:00pm in the DUC Alumni Room. The agenda for the forum is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 9:30-9:55 | Overview of Step 5 Proposal |
| 10:00-10:40 | Table Discussions (Organized by Four Topics) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Criteria/Cultural & Environmental Awareness• Foundation• Investigation• Integration |
| 10:45-11:25 | Table Discussions (Organized by Four Topics) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Criteria/Cultural & Environmental Awareness• Foundation• Investigation• Integration |
| 11:30-12:00 | Wrap-Up Discussion |

** Coffee, pastries, and other refreshments will be available to participants.*

In addition, members of the committee would welcome invitations to attend department or unit meetings to hear your comments and suggestions.

**Appendix I: General Education Committee Proposal
From the Constitution and Handbook Review Subcommittee**

ARTICLE XI: GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Section 1. The General Education Committee shall be a standing committee of the Senate.

Section 2. The chair of the committee shall hold at least a .50 FTE teaching appointment and shall be nominated and elected at large by the faculty, under the supervision of the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee, according to the rules prescribed by the constitution and such additional rules as may be established by the subcommittee. The other members shall be appointed by the chair in consultation with the appropriate Dean, Vice Chancellor, and the Executive Committee of the Senate except as specified in Section 3 below.

Section 3. There shall be 15 members distributed as follows:

- a. The chair;
- b. Two faculty members from each college appointed by the chair in consultation with the Dean and Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. Faculty members shall serve two-year terms, with one member from each college appointed annually;
- c. One member appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (with responsibility for the General Education curriculum);
- d. One member appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (due to involvement of Student Affairs in the new General Education curriculum);
- e. One member appointed by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning (to assist with institutional-level assessment);
- f. One member with responsibility for assessment of the General Education curriculum (appointed by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs);
- g. Two students appointed by the SGA.

Section 4. The committee shall have the authority to recommend to the Senate policies pertaining to the General Education curriculum and to determine such policies subject to review by the Senate, in such matters as the following:

- a. The committee shall be responsible for designating courses as meeting general education learning outcomes and establishing the procedures for assessing those outcomes.
- b. The committee shall oversee the General Education curriculum in accordance with the educational aims of the university and the criteria to meet these aims.
- c. The committee shall recommend policy pertaining to the General Education curriculum.

- d. The committee shall approve and coordinate test-out procedures.
- e. The committee shall be responsible for collaborating to gather assessment evidence regarding the General Education curriculum. This includes both course-based assessment data provided by instructors and institutional-level assessment data compiled by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning.
- f. The committee shall be responsible for evaluating all assessment data and making recommendations to improve the General Education curriculum to the appropriate governance and administrative units.
- g. No course may become part of the General Education curriculum without the approval of the General Education Committee.

Appendix II: UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning Activity Guide

Introduction

The fourth program outcome of the General Education Program (GEP) states that, after completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

Students benefit from opportunities to learn by reflecting on experiences beyond their typical classroom activities and by applying the knowledge and skills they gain from traditional courses in new settings. To this end, students are required to complete a noncredit Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) as part of the GEP. To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete an approved Experiential Learning Activity.
- Reflect on the Experiential Learning Activity in order to gain further understanding of their university education, and an enhanced sense of one's personal responsibility as a member of a larger community. "Community" in this context is defined as any of the various on- or off-campus departments, units, or organizations with whom students might work to complete their ELA.

Experiential learning is a broad concept, including many types of active, hands-on learning opportunities. It is an example of a "high-impact teaching practice" that has been shown to enhance a student's comprehension of course material, to enable students to see connections between theory and practice, to aid in student retention, and to develop a student's sense of responsibility for their education. Moreover, experiential learning provides students with an experience that aids in the development of leadership skills and responsible citizenship.

Experiential learning is the synthesis of a hands-on experience with some relevant aspect of a student's university education. This synthesis of experience with learning takes place in the context of a structured reflection activity. An appropriate reflection activity will vary depending on the experiential learning activity.

Many departments already offer or require that their majors participate in some type of "learn by doing" experience, e.g. student teaching, a music, dance or theater performance, CNR summer camp, undergraduate research symposiums, internships, etc. Departments may have received approval to designate these types of experiences or courses as fulfilling the Experiential Learning requirement from the General Education Committee.

Students whose majors do not offer such an experience or who choose to complete their Experiential Learning requirement with an experience outside their major, must engage in some type of an activity as described in the Guidelines below. These Experiential Learning Activities (ELA) will be vetted by individual faculty or staff members who agree to serve as an

“ELA Mentor” for a student. It is the student’s responsibility to decide on an ELA and find a UWSP faculty or staff member willing to be their ELA mentor.

Guidelines for an Experiential Learning Activity

In order to satisfy the Experiential Learning requirement, students will engage in an experiential learning activity in conjunction with an appropriate faculty or staff member (usually the student’s academic or student organization advisor, research supervisor, or immediate staff supervisor) and will complete a reflection activity that synthesizes the student’s experience with an enhanced understanding of responsible citizenship, leadership, and/or the scholarly aims of a discipline. Students can complete this experiential learning requirement by engaging in at least one of the following types of experiential learning activities.

Course-based Activities:

Some courses will be recognized and designated as experiential learning courses (including courses that are based on service-learning, internships, practicum experiences, study abroad trips, etc.). Within such a course, students will engage in an appropriate reflection activity linking their hands-on experience with the learning goals of the course.

Non-course-based Activities:

Students gain valuable educational experience by engaging in activities that take place outside of a for-credit course structure. There are numerous such opportunities for students; however, in order to count as experiential learning, students must complete an appropriate structured reflection activity that links their experience with their university education in a meaningful way. Examples include:

- Undergraduate Research, Creative/Performance, or Community Activity:

The Experiential Learning requirement can be satisfied by students who engage in appropriate discipline-specific research projects, the development of creative or performance works, or other community-based service projects usually with a faculty supervisor or academic advisor.

- <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/research/symposium/>
- <http://www.uwsp.edu/cls/subpages/ResearchSymposium/index.aspx>
- Participation in one of the many art, dance, music or theater opportunities offered in the College of Fine arts or off-campus community performance opportunities.
- A foreign language major tutors for a local literacy council.

- Student Leadership:

Students can satisfy the Experiential Learning requirement by participating as leaders in Student Government, student organizations, Student Involvement and Employment programs, or Residence Hall activities. Students must do more than just attend meetings as a member, however. They must hold an officer position or some other position that has significant responsibilities.

- <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuorg/sga/>
- <https://mypoint.uwsp.edu/SIEO/SIEO004/SIEO004.aspx>
- <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/sieo/index.asp>
- <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuorg/rha/>

- Professional Development:

Valuable experiential learning can take place in a professional activity, paid or unpaid, if a student is involved in a capacity that enhances the student's skills, abilities, and professional development.

- A student (in any major) who plans to work in human resources sets up a job shadow with a retail store manager where she/he has a part-time job.
- A student completes a non-course-based internship.

UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) Checklist

For Students:

1. Check to make sure that your major has not already designated an experience or activity required for your major that satisfies the Experiential Learning Requirement.
2. If not, decide **before completing 90 credits** on an ELA.
3. Ask a UWSP faculty or academic staff member who has a minimum of a bachelor's degree to serve as your ELA mentor.
4. Complete I- IV of the ELA Plan form.
5. Meet with your ELA mentor to discuss your ELA Plan form.
 - a. Determine whether the activity is appropriate to achieve the Experiential Learning learning outcome.
 - b. If not, work with your ELA mentor to modify activity or choose a different one.
 - c. Agree on an appropriate reflection type (section V).
 - d. Agree on scheduled meeting dates and times as well as the reflection due date (section VI).
 - e. Sign and date the ELA Plan form.
6. Meet with your ELA mentor as agreed upon in section VI of the ELA Plan form to discuss how the ELA is going. Use the questions in the ELA Reflection Guide to guide your discussion(s).
7. Request that your ELA mentor assess your progress.
 - a. If you successfully complete the ELA, your mentor will indicate completion of the ELA requirement to the Records & Registration office for entry in to your record.
 - b. If not, at your ELA mentor's discretion, you may reapply to use the same ELA with the same mentor with the suggested modifications, or your ELA mentor can request that you choose a new ELA activity and mentor.

For Faculty/Staff ELA Mentors:

1. Meet with student and discuss her/his ELA Plan form.
 - a. Determine whether the activity is appropriate to achieve the Experiential Learning learning outcome.
 - b. If not, work with student to modify activity or choose a different one.
 - c. Agree on an appropriate reflection type (section V).
 - d. Agree on scheduled meeting dates and times as well as the reflection due date (section VI).
 - e. Sign and date the ELA Plan form.
 - f. Indicate approval of the ELA Plan form to the Records & Registration office.
2. Meet with student as agreed upon in section VI of the ELA Plan form to discuss how the ELA is going. Use the questions in the ELA Reflection Guide to guide your discussion(s).
3. Using the ELA assessment rubric, determine whether student has completed the Experiential Learning requirement.
 - a. If yes, indicate completion of the ELA requirement to the Records & Registration office for entry in to the student's record.
 - b. If not, at your discretion, student may reapply to use the same ELA with suggested modifications, or you can request that the student choose a new ELA activity and mentor.

UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) Plan Form

Students: You must identify your Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) before completing 90 credits or you will be restricted to enrolling for 12 credits each semester until the ELA is identified.

Submit completed form to your ELA Mentor **BEFORE** you begin your ELA.

I. Student Information

Name _____ ID# _____

Total # of credits completed _____

Major(s)/Minor(s) _____

Cumulative GPA _____ Major GPA _____

II. Mentor Information

Name _____ Faculty/Academic Staff (circle one)

Department/Unit _____ Degree: Bachelors Masters Doctorate (circle one)

Attended EL workshop? Yes No (circle one)

III. Experiential Learning Activity Information (check one and fill out corresponding information)

Academic course: Course # _____ Title _____

Instructor _____

Type of activity: (circle one) service-learning internship practicum

other: _____

Study Abroad Experience: Program _____

Undergraduate Research: Supervisor, if not ELA mentor _____

Creative/Performance Activity: Supervisor, if not ELA mentor _____

Community-based Activity: Supervisor, if not ELA mentor _____

Student Leadership: Name of organization _____

Organization advisor, if not ELA mentor _____

Your position _____

-OR-

SIEO volunteer activity _____

Your responsibility _____

Professional Employment: Place of employment _____

Your position _____

Supervisor and contact information _____

IV. **ELA Planning** (on a separate piece of paper)

Describe your Experiential Learning Activity.

How many hours do you expect to spend on this activity (minimum 24 hours total)?

Describe the orientation and supervision you will receive for this activity.

What do you expect to learn from the proposed activity?

How does this activity either relate to the subject matter of a course, to your major or minor, or to the 4th program outcome of the GEP: "Students will apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems."?

How will this activity help you develop or enhance your sense of personal responsibility as a member of the larger community you are working with?

V. **Reflection Information** (check one)

- written reflection (1 page minimum)
- one-on-one interview (15 minutes minimum)
- small group discussion (30 minutes minimum)
- oral presentation (15 minutes minimum)
- media presentation (15 minutes minimum)
- journal (5 pages minimum)
- other ELA mentor-approved reflection (describe here)

VI. **Student/Mentor Meeting and Activity Completion Information**

Scheduled meeting date(s) and time(s): _____

Reflection due date: _____

VII. Approval Signatures:

The following signatures of agreement and approval must be secured **BEFORE** the student begins the Experiential Learning Activity.

I have reviewed this student's proposed Experiential Learning Activity and approve it as meeting the UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning requirement.

I agree to work in collaboration with the student, to monitor the student for the duration of the ELA, and to assess the chosen reflection activity from section V. I agree to provide notification of successful completion of the ELA to the UWSP Records and Registration office.

Faculty/Staff EL Mentor _____ **Date** _____

Print Name _____

I agree to complete this activity by the date agreed in section VI and to work in collaboration with my ELA mentor. If not, I may reapply for the ELA requirement at the discretion of the ELA mentor.

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

Print Name _____

UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) Reflection Guide

Experiential learning is the synthesis of a hands-on experience with some relevant aspect of your university education. This synthesis of experience with learning takes place in the context of a structured reflection activity. The learning outcome for the UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning requirement is to “reflect on the Experiential Learning Activity in order to gain further understanding of one’s university education, and an enhanced sense of one’s personal responsibility as a member of a larger community.”

“Community” in this context is defined as any of the various on- or off-campus departments, units, or organizations with whom students might work to complete their ELA.

Regardless of which type of reflection you choose: written reflection, one-on-one interview, small group discussion, oral presentation, media presentation, journal, or some other method of reflection decided upon by you and your ELA mentor, the questions below are to help guide you in your reflection.

- What did you learn about the people in the community you worked with and their similarities or differences to you?
- How were you able to contribute to the goals of the community you worked with?
- What do you feel was your main contribution to the community you worked with?
- What did you learn during your ELA that enhanced your learning gained in the classroom?
- As a result of your ELA, describe how you practiced and improved on one or more of the following:

<u>skills</u>	<u>characteristics</u>
oral and/or written communication	work ethic
listening	attention to detail
critical thinking	initiative
organizational/interpersonal	honesty/integrity
leadership	flexibility/adaptability
teamwork	problem-solving
computer literacy	
- What impact did your ELA have on your everyday life?
- What insights did you gain through your ELA that might assist you in your career or in selecting a career?
- What did your activity teach you about community involvement, citizenship and civic responsibility?
- What is the relationship of your ELA to the “real world”?
- What was the most difficult part of your experience?
- If you were to start at the beginning of this ELA again, what would you do differently the second time around?

UWSP General Education Program Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) Assessment Rubric

Student Name _____ **ID #** _____

ELA Requirements	Yes + comments	No + comments
The ELA was completed while student was enrolled at UWSP.		
The student submitted an approved ELA Plan form before beginning the activity.		
The ELA meets the 24 hour minimum.		
The reflection meets minimum requirements as stated in section V of the ELA Plan form.		
The student demonstrates in the reflection piece that she/he has an enhanced sense of her/his personal responsibility as a member of a larger community.		

The above student has successfully completed the Experiential Learning Requirement of the UWSP General Education Program.

Faculty/Staff ELA Mentor Signature _____ **Date** _____

Mentors must retain a copy of the ELA rubric for their own records and future assessment purposes and give a copy of the ELA Rubric to the student.

Mentors must electronically confirm the completion of the ELA requirement.