

Listed below are comments received by GEPRC on the revised Step 3, GEP Model Proposal. They include: 1) comments sent by email; 2) comments posted on the Web site; and 3) comments made during the open forums.

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Greg

My concern about the silver bullet classes deals only with the WE. While I agree with the arguments outlined in the GEP proposal, like others that have already commented, I too worry about the writing of our students not being required and evaluated... unless the new distribution requirements exclude the WE designation, but require a writing assignment in ALL 300-level classes at UWSP.

Thanks.

Mark Tolstedt

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Don and Greg,

The Department of Physics and Astronomy met on March 6th to discuss the recommendations for Step 3 of the GEP proposal. Randy Olson was there to help answer questions that the department members had about the proposal. Overall, the departmental feedback was positive. The members agreed that the distribution model was the preferred model for the GDR requirements. They also favored the recommendation that the departments be allowed to choose the type of degree (BA vs. BS in our case) and to NOT have additional requirements imposed at the university or college level. During our discussion it was recognized that the degree type does not really matter in our discipline, so we would likely list Physics as a BS. There was no opposition to eliminating silver bullets, although there was some concern as to how courses would be chosen to fulfill requirements for the various learning outcomes.

Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks for all of your work on this project.

Katie Jore

Dr. Katherine Jore
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Dear Don,

I really appreciate the huge amount of work you all are putting into this. I really like the proposal so far, and I agree with both the distribution model and the three proposed characteristics of the model (GEP

applies to all, GEP + major = Bac, no silver bullets). I also like the learning goals as posed, and the fact that you all are working to “backward design” the program.

I am still not sure what the “content” part of the program will look like. Is there any *content per se* that should be part of the education of all students at UWSP? Should all students have some experience with a foreign language, or in another country? Should all students take a history course of some sort? A literature course? A science course? I am not sure if the answer should be “yes”, although part of me sees value in this. I really like the learning goals as posed, so if those goals are achieved by the GEP, perhaps that’s enough.

My main concern about the GEP is the worry that students could end up with an education composed of GEP requirements fulfilled within their major and courses required for their majors. I’m not sure if that is possible under the proposed plan, or how many of the 45 GEP credits could come from within any one major. Perhaps it is too soon to worry about this?

Thank you for taking my comments.

Take care,

Tracy S. Feldman

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Dear Greg, here are my thoughts in response to step 3. Please post as appropriate.

1. The proposal to have departments designate the degree type would effect a very significant change in UWSP’s current degree structure, but the committee does not present a strong argument concerning the faults or weaknesses of our existing structure. What is wrong with the current degree structure that warrants a significant change? Its current complexity will certainly be alleviated by a simpler GDR structure, and beyond that the existing and prevailing understanding about the meaning of these degrees would still be relevant: for the BA you do a foreign language, for the BS, you do more lab science. Why is this problematic and in need of change? Further, it would really help in evaluating the GERC proposal if we had some comparisons with other UW schools. Which of them require a foreign language for the BA, which do not, etc....
2. If the committee is going to recommend a 45 credit limit for the GDR program, it needs to present an argument why, and presumably this argument would include comparative data from our sister UW institutions (our main competitors). It isn’t enough to say that 45 credits is the maximum which Mark Nook will accept, because the faculty and the provost share responsibility for educational decisions. Indeed, the faculty is vested with “primary responsibility” for academic and educational activities; thus the number of credits in our GDR program is a decision which we need to make, not the Provost, although we can certainly give serious consideration to his recommendation and his rationale.

Sincerely, Alice Keefe

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Hi Greg,

Here is my take on the current round of the gen ed discussion:

I like the proposed distributive model and the elimination of silver bullet courses. It might be a good idea to revise the silver bullet language slightly to make clear that individual courses could still meet multiple requirements (for example, the Native American Forestry course could carry both environmental literacy and ethnic studies designations), but that a given student could use such a course to meet either one or the other, not both. (There will be language to this effect in the COLS Advisory Committee statement on the model proposal). The proposal's current wording could be interpreted to mean that no course could carry multiple designations, and I suspect that ambiguity may be feeding some of the confusion on the issue (such as the perception that eliminating silver bullets will discourage interdisciplinary course offerings).

Regarding the BA/BS issue, I think it may be a bad idea to commit to a particular BA/BS solution at this stage in the process. I think this point might better be resolved during stage 4, once we get a clearer sense of what the actual requirements will look like. In particular, stage 4 will presumably include some discussion of whether the new GEP should include a math requirement, a language requirement, or both, or neither. It may make more sense to continue giving students a choice between one or the other, rather than mandating one or the other for everyone, or leaving both out completely. If so, the university-wide BA/BS distinction might still be useful.

Please understand that I'm not advocating this particular solution per se. My own preference would be to have a single set of requirements that includes both math and language. But given the 45-credit limit and various competing priorities, that probably won't happen. I'm also concerned that doing away with the BA/BS distinction will make the stage 4 discussions all the more difficult, since it would make the battle for particular requirements (particularly math vs. language vs. neither) into an all-or-nothing game.

One more thing: I find it hard to buy the committee's argument that individual departments would add particular requirements to their majors, as appropriate. Yes, our department might agree that foreign language is an essential part of a liberal arts education, and of a history major in particular. But in adding a foreign language requirement to our major requirements, we would put ourselves at a considerable disadvantage in attracting majors. By the same token, any department looking to add majors (and as best I can tell, that is most of them) would have a strong incentive to shed such additional requirements. It's clear that the pressure driving the GEP reform is coming in part out of competition among the various UW campuses, all of whom are trying to add students: the byzantine GEP we have now puts us at a competitive disadvantage. Passing the decision about foreign language requirements (etc.) down to the departmental level will simply replicate that same competitive pressure (and the incentive to reduce requirements) within the university. If there is going to be some sort of foreign language requirement, it will need to be university-wide, either as part of a unified GEP or as part of the BA component of a divided GEP.

I hope that is helpful,

Rob Harper

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John,

The following is my feedback/input to the CNR Gen. Ed. Response. This is mine alone, as there is not time to discuss this with the Forestry Faculty. Under normal circumstances I would prefer to be providing a consensus from the Forestry Faculty. Perhaps you can use this along with other feedback to develop a draft for review and consensus of the College. I am using “we” even though these are mine alone in hopes that it will facilitate using some of these comments in the final CNR response. For those on the copy list, if you agree or disagree with my points, please provide that input to John rather than me – while I value all your thoughts, I am too far behind in my e-mail.

Regarding the first two steps in the review procedure, the mission and goals, we are in support of these outcomes. However, we think it is appropriate to note that by their nature (necessary to get consensus) there are a number of places where somewhat general language is included. Obviously each person that reads this language can have some different interpretations. We believe that the language is appropriate to help narrow down alternatives, but cannot say with certainty that the final product will be based on the same interpretation that we are making.

Regarding Step 3, and the distributive model recommendation, we are in support of the distributive approach. Critical to this support is the expectation that there will be a relatively large pool of courses available, much as there is today. [I think a student should have some say in how the GDR education is acquired. I suppose this is similar to Tim’s sentiment that students should be able to delve deeper into a topic if they are interested in the topic.](#)

Regarding the committee’s recommendation that the General Education Program should apply to all students regardless of degree type, we concur with this recommendation from a philosophical perspective. From a theoretical stand point, if the General Education Program (GEP) is based on essential knowledge rather than degree type it would seem that this would imply that the GEP should be composed of the minimum knowledge base that is common to all degrees. Thus, if one degree would imply some need for additional knowledge beyond the minimum common to all degrees, that additional knowledge should be included in the majors associated with that degree type rather than in the GEP. [I agree](#)

Regarding the committee’s recommendation that “No single course should be allowed to satisfy more than one GEP requirement”, we do not categorically agree with this recommendation, though we can envision a situation where it might materialize. If the governance organization that assigns general education credits to courses, determines that a course offers a knowledge base that meets two or more objectives, and if the principle that we are operating under is that a certain knowledge base is required of all students, then there can be no justification to preclude silver bullets and in fact they would be an efficient method for students to obtain the desired knowledge. To preclude silver bullets either suggests that the GEP should be based on numbers of credits rather than a knowledge base, or that there is something wrong with the way that the knowledge base is evaluated by the governance organization. Thus, if the governing organization found that no course met more than

one knowledge requirement, then there would be no silver bullets, but it would be based on the knowledge offered rather than some arbitrary like or dislike of silver bullets or some perceived idea that some arbitrary number of credits is required to meet the general education requirement. I agree with Jan in this point. I think having SOME courses meet 2 GDR requirements is fine. Having served on the GDR subcommittee, I know that it is not that difficult to have a class passed as a particular GDR. I think a re-evaluation of the requirements for each GDR designation is warranted at this time and, as Jan states above, if the committee deems a course worthy of 2 designations, so be it.

We have an additional suggestion for the committee which is not related to a committee recommendation, but is suggested by Appendix II of the material provided with the committee's recommendations. In the appendix it can be noted that the average CNR major currently completes 57.7 GDR credits (even with the availability of silver bullets, we might add). However, presumably because the CNR Faculty feel that a general degree education is important to our majors and that certain GDR courses are critical to our majors, a great number of general education courses are imbedded (required) in our majors. In fact, while the average major completes 57.7 GDR credits, only 23.7 credits are taken outside of the major requirements. If the new GEP requirement is incompatible with our current approach, it could require a significant overhaul of CNR major requirements. In other words, if the GEP is not carefully crafted, it could end up driving our major requirements. This is something that would be extremely objectionable to the CNR faculty. Thus, the CNR recommends that the committee be cognizant of this potential impact and that as the process moves forward they ensure that the GEP program has sufficient flexibility to accommodate our current approach. I am in agreement here. We in wildlife will need to evaluate our majors in this regard.

Jan C. Harms
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Hi everyone,

I am in agreement with John about the need for a broad-based liberal education and it seems to me that retaining silver bullets along with a reduced number of credits defeats that purpose. I am largely in favor of the proposal as presented. Keep a common set of GDR's for everyone and let departments choose which degree(s) to offer and what constitutes the difference between a BA and a BS. At my alma mater (Humboldt State) I received a B.A. in Biology. I had the choice between that and a B.S. The only difference in the two was 6 credits of biology electives (or thereabouts). Having a B.A. has never held me back and I don't think we need to have much heartburn over the difference between the two. If we don't explicitly offer a B.A. in the catalog I doubt if any student would force the issue.

I would, however, like to float a proposal. Allow silver bullets to help satisfy the requirement of taking courses in whatever different categories are created in this process. Secondly, require a minimum number of credits in GDR classes (40?). The model would be somewhat analogous to how we currently handle humanities and social sciences (6 credits humanities, 6 in SS, and 6 more in either at the discretion of the student). This model would possibly allow a student to complete the categorical

requirements in fewer credits but subsequently allow them to take more courses in a personal area of interest, be it fine arts, music, minority studies or whatever. Given that there is no proposal to limit overlap between GDR's and major requirements I don't see a huge (or any) negative impact. There is a potential opportunity here in that reducing the number of GDR's that a student needs to take might allow us to beef up the content of our majors, or alternatively allow a student to actually graduate in four years.

Have a nice break...you deserve it,

Tim Ginnett

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I agree with Tim's comments. (above)

Anna

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Personal comments regarding GDRs,

It is reasonable to have a minimum credit requirement (40-45), but not silver bullets within those credits. Follow the KISS principle for GDRs and the system will not be manipulated or abused as it has in the past. It would still be desirable for courses to qualify for more than one designation SS, EL etc. (increases demand for an individual course). Although, I could envision a hypothetical course that could meet all of the designations (say four different areas and 12 or more credits) it is unreasonable to expect that a single course would provide the level of exposure that four different 3 credit courses would provide. Size matters. Silver bullets should still be allowed within majors. Many majors have some sort of certification requirement that specify a particular SS, or HU course that may well coincide with a GEP requirement.

Ronald Crunkilton

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John,

I agree with Jan's points. With regard to the silver bullets, I can think of an example where a course would satisfy two general education requirements (or two portions of the current objective framework) – a course in international economics would do such a thing as it is a social science (economics) as well as satisfies the goal to create "global" citizens. I also believe that in order to be assessable we should try

to minimize the difference between degrees. If we are to say that all of our students have met the overall objectives of our program here, then we optimize the result by creating the least amount of variation between what constitutes a BS, BA, or any other undergraduate degrees that are out there running about (this is done in terms of minimizing the cost of compliance). If the concern is that there might be a foreign language requirement under such a framework, the resulting question would be “what is gained by the students in terms of reaching the objective outcome”. If such outcome desired by the insert of such a requirement is the creation of global citizens then there ought to be multiple ways to achieve that outcome (rather than the dictation of satisfying a foreign language requirement – for instance study abroad in a non-English (as first language) speaking country). The question should never be “what is gained by department x by having this degree requirement” as then we are only acting for ourselves (internally) as opposed to externally in terms of the outputs (liberally educated students) we are creating and, as an economist, the self-absorbed actions tend to produce inefficient allocations as opposed to the acting in the interest of the society (students, employers, the world which will be impacted by these individuals) which is good for all.

Best,
Melinda

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Paper Science and Engineering Response to GEPRC Proposal, Step 3

- The GEPRC proposal to keep a “distributional” GEP model in order to have a flexible GEP curriculum is acceptable to the Paper Science and Engineering department.
- The proposal to eliminate “silver bullet” courses is also acceptable to PSE as long as the GEP course credits are restricted to a total of 45 or less.
- The PSE department agrees that the GEP program should apply to all degree types.

I agree almost totally with Jan’s comments. They were well thought out and represent my concerns on the issue.

Regarding silver bullet course, Tim’s comment (“ Allow silver bullets to help satisfy the requirement of taking courses in whatever different categories are created in this process. Secondly, require a minimum number of credits in GDR classes (40?)”) is very much in accordance with mine.

Jan mentioned that on average 23.7 credits of current GDR do not count towards our major, even though Jan made an obvious effort to say “yes, we like GDR’s so much that we require them for the major...” I think this needs to be reworded to present the best picture.

Also, I DO NOT believe that there is only one way to fill these needs (as stated by Jan), the specific comments below worry me.

A baccalaureate degree at UWSP should be defined by the GEP requirements plus those of a major. (In other words, neither the university nor the colleges should establish separate and rigid sets of degree requirements.)

AND

(Please note: this recommendation does not affect the potential overlap between the new GEP and the majors. In other words, it is the opinion of the committee that courses required in a major should still be allowed to fulfill applicable general education requirements as they do now.)

The fact that they even mention the “Please note:” statement, worries me. The second thing is that this is being presented like these GEP’s are part and the course for the major are part...i.e. disjointed parts. I think far more integrative than this. Everything a person ever learns affects everything else they learn. If this is chunked up into parts that are not set up to improve the person involved, it is a waste. In an ideal world ALL GEP classes would be part of the major. Right now, with GDR’s it is like a giant cosmic Venn diagram where a student tries to put the most credits into the center of the Venn (where they count multiply). If we put this Venn diagram together so there is a big chunk in one bubble, a big chunk in the other bubble and no crossover, this is a bad thing for both the major and for the liberal arts approach.

If the representation of this could be an actual Venn diagram (something like what is attached) instead of two disjointed bubbles, that would definitely make it more palatable to me.

Have a good day
Michael Demchik

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John:

In my opinion, the current state of the GDR proposal prevents my evaluation on grounds of merit, so the process for seeking faculty input is fatally flawed. To judge parts of the GDR proposal, we must see the entire framework, because the parts are entangled in ways that prevent their independent evaluation. Nonetheless, we are pressed to comment at this time despite the fact that such comment must be conditioned on elements of the GDR program that have not yet been revealed.

First, a reduction in total credits for GDR courses seems good for our students, but the framework of the GDR requirements could actually force our students to take more, not less, GDR courses despite a reduction in total credits. Therefore, the proposed reduction in total GDR credits (from ~60 credits to ~45 credits) is superficially acceptable, but would be unacceptable if the framework of the revised



number of GDR credits leads to more “real” credits than students are required to complete under the present catalog. The first two elements of the revised GDR proposal nicely illustrate why our input at this stage of development is premature.

Second, elimination of “silver bullet” courses is acceptable if some categories of GDR courses (e.g. Non-Western; Minority Studies; Environmental Literacy) are eliminated, but unacceptable if all categories of GDR courses are retained. Under the present catalog description, for example, fisheries students only need to complete ~23 GDR courses beyond those required for their major degree requirements. Part of the efficiency of completing GDR courses under the present catalog is that students need not complete “extra” courses under GDR course categories for Non-Western Studies, Minority Studies, or Environmental Literacy. I do not see how we can consider the merits of this part of the GDR package without seeing the full listing of GDR course categories.

Third, consolidation of all General Degree Requirements across degrees (BS, BA, BM, BFA) is acceptable if unique requirements of one degree (e.g. a language requirement) are not carried across from one degree (e.g. BA) to another degree (e.g. BS), but unacceptable if all degrees must fulfill all requirements from all degrees. I do not see how we can consider the merits of this part of the GDR package without seeing the entire consolidated GDR program.

Mike

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 My department (Psychology) has already commented on the recent proposal in general (see below). However, I wanted to express my individual opinion in order to clarify what I see as a reasonable alternative to the models described by the GEP committee. I am obviously emailing this directly to you; if you wish me to submit in a different manner, please let me know.

As a general principle, I believe that there should be a common core to all Bachelors-level degrees (perhaps about 20 credits worth?). In my mind, this is crucial so that all BA and BS recipients have the same underlying core abilities and skills as defined by the university.

However, I also think that there should be some university-prescribed distinctions between a BA and a BS. In other words, all BA recipients should have the same core and all BS recipients should have the same core. This would produce a two-tier GDR system, similar to that recognized by the committee. (Perhaps this would amount to another set of 10-15 credits above and beyond the common core described above.) Any additional decentralization would clearly complicate the GDR, especially from the perspective of a student who may navigate between multiple majors in their time at UWSP.

Unlike what is implied in the committee proposal, I do not see this two-tiered system as less assessable. It simply means that there are different assessments for the different components. In fact, most assessment programs automatically require us to focus our attention on different skill sets anyway. To parallel a thought above, any further decentralization of GDR requirements would, in fact, complicate the assessment process, effectively shifting GDR assessments away from the university and on to the individual departments.

However, this two-tier system should not trump the needs and requirements of individual departments. In other words, departments should have the authority to specify which type of degree (BA or BS) that their majors must get. In some departments, a BS may be the only logical choice; in others, a BA is appropriate. And in still others (perhaps like Psychology), students might be offered a choice (BA or BS) consistent with their own goals and future plans.

In the end, the onus is clearly on the next stage of committee's task: identifying the specific learning objectives, academic disciplines, and classes that fulfill the approved goals.

Thanks for reading this and good luck with your future work on this difficult process!

Craig Wendorf

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Dear Charles—

Here are some reactions to the GEP proposal from some of the CNMT faculty:

1) Miller, Trudi

It strikes me as very odd that CNR students only have to do an average of 23.7 credits outside of their major to obtain their completed GDRs while English, Chemistry, Sociology, and Dance are all over 45 credits each. Can one actually argue that an English or Sociology major is going to be less "well-rounded" than a Forestry major?

"Silver bullet" courses make sense, especially when departments want to offer specialized courses. A course about Native American history could very easily be both a social science and a minority studies requirement. To label it as one and force a student to take another course actually limits the level of specialization that we can offer to our students, thereby depriving them of some focused courses at the General Education level, since the large number of GDR requirements substantially reduces the number of true electives that a student can take.

Our GDRs should not exist in a vacuum. As a transfer destination for several 2 year UW schools as well as the Technical Colleges, it would make sense to ensure that there is some level of consistency between what we require and what can be taken at the 100 and 200 level from our main transfer schools. We should not allow them to dictate our GDRs, but we should take into account that students who transfer here after completing an associate's degree with an appropriate concentration should not be expected to complete dozens of additional GDR credits in addition to the 300 and 400 level courses for their major.

2) Seeling, Patrick

(Please note: this recommendation does not affect the potential overlap between the new GEP and the majors. In other words, it is the opinion of the committee that courses required in a major should still be allowed to fulfill applicable general education requirements as they do now.)

I do not believe that this should be carried forward in a new GenEd design. Overall, I believe that if you want GENERAL courses, these should lie outside the majors of the individual students.

Sincerely,  
Robert Dollinger

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As of now, with the current system of GDRs in place, the silver/golden bullet classes are a necessary part of completing the degree process in a reasonable amount of time. I think that the new system will allow for the elimination of some of these classes. Having the bullet classes count for only one GDR will also free up a lot of seats in classes because students won't be as apt to take these classes just to fill GDRs.

Jacob Mathias

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It would actually make it a lot easier on students not to have to find and then fit those golden bullet classes into their schedule. Lowering the credit requirement and eliminating golden bullet classes would make the whole process less complicated (and long) for everyone.

Kim

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I am responding in hopes that this does not end up in the newspaper and is just general feedback. I would say that having less GDR's regardless of silver/golden bullets is better. So as long as they shorten that I think it would serve students best. However, I do think that sometimes it's ridiculous when I do more writing in a class that is not writing emphasis than in one that is, so I could see that maybe being one exception to the rule. For whatever reason it always seems like WE classes are difficult to find, but yet I do so much writing in a lot of my non WE classes. I would appreciate if the WE could be looked at and improved. I hope that my feedback is helpful.

Nick

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Silver Bullets were nice, but if the requirements were lowered (which is what the silver bullets are used for anyway) it would actually not be such a bad deal to eliminate them. It would also require students to take a broader range of classes at the university and help them become more diverse. I also think that if students were unaware of "how it used to be" then it would not be a big deal. Because it wouldn't affect students already in their programs, I don't think it would be a bad idea to implement something like this.

It could have some potential problems with students trying to get into classes in the different departments with the increased need for classes, but if the departments offered more classes then it wouldn't be so bad.


I loved the silver bullets, it helped me get through my generals fairly quickly and also helped me get done with my major and minor. I guess if I would have never known about them I wouldn't be all that concerned especially if I was finished with school before or about the same time the bullets would be removed.

Alisha


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	<p>I have a simple question. What's going to happen to my WE, EL environmental journalism course under this plan? Will I have to decide whether I offer it only as WE, or only as EL? Will students have to decide, or be able to decide, which requirement they meet? Has the committee dealt with the implications of existing silver bullets and their continued presence in a new system?</p>
<p>Hill, Steve</p>	

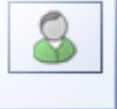
Posted: 3/13/2009 8:05 PM [View Properties](#)  [Reply](#)

	<p>Steve,</p> <p>Your question is actually a bit complicated. Given that we are building the new GEP from the top down--from mission and program outcomes toward specific courses, we don't yet know what the new GEP requirements will be, let alone whether some of these requirements will resemble either WE or EL. Such things will be a part of our Step 4 proposal. As a result, your question is impossible to answer at the moment.</p> <p>Our silver bullet proposal at present is more philosophical than particular. It does not refer to specific courses.</p> <p>Greg</p> <hr/>
<p>Summers, Greg</p>	

Posted: 3/15/2009 3:56 PM [View Properties](#)  [Reply](#)

	<p>Thanks, Greg.</p>
<p>Hill, Steve</p>	


Posted: 3/17/2009 11:03 AM [View Properties](#)  [Reply](#)

	<p>I noticed that the "silver bullet" portion of the recommendation remains. I strongly disagree with this. Unless the new requirements are VERY narrowly defined.</p> <p>In principle I disagree with the concept altogether because I think it reinforces the "silo" and "department" mentality rather than encouraging cross-disciplinary work. Our future leaders are going to need to be able to work</p>
<p>Carlton, Ginny</p>	

	<p>across discipline and skill sets---not just work on one skill set or within one realm at a time. The World is becoming more complex, and the problems of the future are going to need integrated solutions. Suggesting a particular course only enhances a students knowledge and skill set in a particular area is demeaning. For examle students can, and do, acquire a lot of content knowledge about a wide range of topics as they participate in WE courses.</p> <p>The stated purpose of the GEP requirements is to have students be well-rounded. It therefore seems to me to make sense to attempt to have these GEP requirements tied to particular disciplines. That seems to be the purpose of having multiple courses that "count" for a particular GEP--the distribution model you propose. If more than one course can meet the requirements of a particular GEP why shouldn't it be allowable to create a course that integrates various GEP requirements into one offering? If I am allowed to combine history and writing (e.g., a discipline created WE GEP course) why can't I combine foreign language and writing (two possible GEP requirements)?</p> <p>Show Quoted Messages</p>
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Posted: 3/20/2009 6:53 PM

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 <p>Williams, Michael</p>	<p>My own opinion is that the committee's proposal, while seeming to offer simplicity in place of the former (alleged) complexity, now threatens to open the possibility that each department / functioning unit will define what a BA or a BS means independently and add to the pre-requirements of their major. This will defeat one of the declared purposes of the GDR revision (clarity, simplicity, etc. Try explaining to a transfer student, well, yes, a BA means this if you are a Philosophy major, but this if you are in Sociology, and that if you are in History). I admit this is not necessarily the case, but it is one possible scenario. It seems to me to be far more sensible to follow the model of, say, Eau Claire, and have: 1) The university-wide Gen Ed requirements, simple and assessable--the cat's whiskers required by the HLC. 3) Requirements in the Major. Where's 2)? that's a middle ground between university-wide General Education and the requirements of a Major field. So 2) is where you decide what courses are added to the Gen Ed requirements in order to distinguish between a BA and a BS. These credits are not considered Gen Ed requirements, but degree requirements. These distinguishing credits should be decided at the university level, as are the Gen Ed requirements.</p> <p>Show Quoted Messages</p>
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Posted: 3/22/2009 10:53 AM

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 <p>Nandrea, Lorri</p>	<p>I would like to point out that many universities add additional layers of General Education Requirements at the level of the college or school (see, for example, Madison and Eau Claire). If one compares the total number of credits in our old GDR program to the *university-wide* GDR requirements at other universities, our GDR program does appear larger than average. However, if one considers the total number of Gen Ed credits actually required of students at those universities for graduation, including the extra layers of college and/or degree requirements, it is clear that our existing GDR program is *not* unusually large. Indeed, if we reduce our existing GDR requirements without adding such an extra layer, some of our degree programs (especially our low to mid credit majors) will become _significantly less_ structured and directed than those at other well respected universities. In some cases, the reduction will leave</p>
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students with a very large number of elective credits. If the GDR is reduced to 45 credits, an English major, for example, would go from having a minimum of 16 electives to having a minimum of 37 electives (the actual numbers will be larger in both cases). It seems quite difficult to foresee the results of leaving such a large percentage of the Bachelor's degree program entirely in the hands of the individual students. I would urge the committee to consider the possible advantages of allowing each _college_ to decide whether or not to add a layer of requirements that exceed those of the university as a whole (as at Madison and Eau Claire). While such extra requirements might occasionally inconvenience students switching from one college to another, they would not impede a change of majors within a college. Without replacing or undermining the goals and structure of the university-wide Gen Ed requirements, this plan would allow each college to have some flexibility in determining the most suitable learning objectives and credit load for General Education programs in their particular fields. This approach would seem to carry much less potential for chaos and confusion than leaving all of these decisions to individual departments. Thanks again for all your work, Lorri Nandrea

Posted: 3/23/2021 7:28 PM

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Doruska, Paul

With respect to the GEP proposal, I offer the following thoughts.

I am generally fine with the proposed path, but do have some concern about the potential for placing a fair number of credits that are currently in the GDR requirements into the major requirements as a result of university-wide GEP requirements. If those GEP requirements include subjects beyond those presently in the GDRs the potential is there to increase the number of credits toward a given major if those “transferred to the major” credits are to remain part of the major – and that is where my concern in that regard lies.

I also understand that in the new system, any given course can be used to fulfill just one GEP requirement. I am generally okay with that notion. However, I do believe that some courses should be able satisfy more than one GEP requirement area based on how the student wishes to apply it. In other words, course A can be used to satisfy wither GEP area 1 or GEP area 2, but not both.

The reasoning behind that suggestion is as follows. First, by making any given course fit just one GEP area, the campus would subliminally be telling students that each course is a silo in and of itself and that there is no such thing as cross disciplinary courses in the GEP. On a campus that strives for integration and demonstrating the interconnectedness of subject matter – I question whether that notion carries through to the proposed model.

Second, if courses can be used in more than one GEP area (again with the restriction that any one course can only be applied to one GEP area based on the students choice) a student might be able to identify some

subject area(s) he/she likes and then can string some GEP courses that meet the GEP requirements but still be “themed” to a subject area of interest to the student.

I am also philosophically opposed to the use of the phrase “silver bullet” as applying that phrase like it often is in the GDR program implies that a student is “getting away with something” or that it is a “shortcut”. I don’t think such terms should ever be applied to the GDR or the GEP – it sends a very bad message to students – that the GDR or the GEP is something just to get out of the way...

In summary then, I generally agree that a single course should be used toward a single GEP area, however, I do not believe that any given course should have its use, or GEP area label if you will, restricted to one and only one GEP area. Cross-disciplinary courses should and do exist – why would we want to give that up and more importantly, say to our students, particularly our lower division students, that such things do not exist?

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Posted: 3/25/2009 1:09 PM

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Olsen, Gary

In reviewing “Step 3” I fear that allowing the additional degree requirements after the GEP for BA, BS, etc. to be decided by major will truly only complicate things further. It would, with roughly 100 majors available on campus, create a very large and confusing network to navigate, especially for students who decide to change majors or those who transfer in. I can see the attractiveness of this approach and the way it allows departments to individually tailor their programs. I worry, however, that this same great variation complicates, both for students and the outside world, what a BA (at the very least a BA from UWSP) truly means. There’s value in being able to say that all students with a certain degree have had some uniformity in their education and that a specific degree type from UWSP means something to students and employers as students graduate. I only foresee students changing majors and questioning why a BA in English is different from a BA in any number of different majors, a response that will be no convoluted as I attempt to provide an answer than it presently is to explain the current GDR structure. It seems to me, therefore, that some level of uniformity is needed. If that uniformity doesn’t happen at the university level I’d suggest, as the committee has noted in the other available options, that there be a third level, preferably established by the university, but at the

	<p>college level at the very least.</p> <p>It's short, I know, but that's my two cents. Thanks for all of the work that you and the committee have done and will continue to do on our behalf. It's sincerely appreciated.</p> <p>Best, -David</p> <p>David Roloff Instructor of English</p>
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Edited: 3/28/2020 5:02 PM

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Bowman, Mary

It seems to me that in the revised proposal the committee is still making an argument against allowing silver bullets that is based on indirect effects this will have. I would rather see us deal with those issues directly, and I would really like us to have a discussion about the educational issues involved in the silver bullet policy.

The proposal mentions student complaints about "silver bullet" courses that don't really do what they are supposed to for all the GDR designations they carry. I agree that's a problem--but I submit that the solution is the clear and assessable learning outcomes that you are working so hard to create. If we are assessing the program (as we will be) we should be able to identify categories of courses, and even specific courses, that aren't doing what we want them to. We can then make changes to those courses, and possibly remove designations from courses that aren't accomplishing the Gen Ed objectives. This is true whether or not silver bullets are allowed, and will address the problem regardless of how many designations a course has. After all, if a course can get a second designation that it really shouldn't have, it can get a first designation it shouldn't have. Assessment can address that; the silver bullet policy does nothing about courses that don't adequately meet their one-designation goals.

The possibility was raised of a student using silver bullets to get most of their Gen Ed credits within their major. As I said before, the way to avoid that with certainty is to meet it head-on, by setting a minimum number of Gen Ed credits that must be earned outside the major. If a major can offer courses in (let's say for example) two-thirds of the Gen Ed categories using silver bullets, it can probably offer courses covering the same number of categories without silver bullets. It may be that a no-silver-bullet policy will reduce the number of students who can get all of those Gen Eds in because of the total number of seats in those courses, but there's nothing to stop individual students (who through determination or chance get into all the courses with Gen Ed designations) from still getting those 2/3 of the requirements in the major.

Other than these issues that can be dealt with in more direct ways, what are the arguments against silver bullet courses? I've seen some good points made against the proposed policy (from Steve Hill, the Sociology Dept., Paul Doruska and Ginny Carlton, for example--I'm still working on the new metaphor, Paul!) but I haven't seen any for the policy. I really think we need to have this substantive conversation as a campus before we settle on a

policy. What is that we will gain pedagogically from saying that Environmental Journalism, for example, is an appropriate course for students to take to meet the environmental goals of the Gen Ed program, but not one that develops their writing skills (or vice versa)? What harm comes from recognizing that it does both, provided that we have a threshold number of credits required? (These are genuine questions, by the way.)

I also think we need a better sense of what this will mean in practice. I respect the committee's point that we don't know what the structure is going to be yet, but could the committee share what you have in mind? Let's say hypothetically there is something like the current WE requirement, and something like the EL requirement in the new program. Will Steve, or the Comm Dept., be asked to decide which category they will list Environmental Journalism under? Will that decision be made by the administrator and/or committee that is overseeing the program? Or does GEPRC anticipate that we will have requirements defined in such a way that no course is really going to be able to meet two categories? (In which case the silver bullet policy is a moot point.) Without having at least a vague sense of how this is going work, it's hard to have a well-informed opinion on the policy.

Or could we, perhaps, leave this part out of the final proposal for step 3 and include it in step 4 when we'll have a better idea of what we're talking about? (The committee's charge for step 3 doesn't explicitly include this issue.)

From: Summers, Greg

Posted: Thursday, March 12, 2009 1:09 PM

Subject: Comment on Revised GEP Model Proposal

Please use this space to offer comments and suggestions regarding the Revised GEP Model Proposal. To begin, click the "Reply" button to the right. (If you don't see this button, click the "Sign In" icon in the upper right corner of the screen.) You may respond directly to this message or to any posted below.

Posted: 3/12/2009 12:17 PM

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Warren, Dona

The Committee is clearly tackling some very difficult issues here, and it is certainly to be commended for its hard and often thankless work! After reading everyone's comments, and reflecting on the matter, however, I remain uncomfortable with the proposals that no additional degree requirements be set at the college or university level and that no course be allowed to fulfill more than one general education category.

Michael Williams, Lorri Nandrea, and David Roloff have all leveled strong arguments in favor of setting degree requirements at the college or university level, and I find these arguments to be convincing. Allowing departments to determine degree types – especially if departments are required to articulate separate degree tracks if they offer both B.A. and B.S. degrees – can be expected to result in complex degree structures that are confusing to students, burdensome to

departments, and unfriendly to double majors. In contrast, setting degree requirements at the college or university level is simpler (see Williams and Roloff) and will not result in a bloated degree structure (see Nandrea). Furthermore, even with degree requirements set at the college or university level, departments can continue to require courses from other departments for their majors so important departmental autonomy will be preserved. I suggest, therefore, that degree requirements should be set at the college or university level.

I also agree with the strong arguments in favor of allowing courses to fulfill more than one general education category, and I would urge the committee to very carefully consider the thoughtful feedback on this issue that has been articulated by Mary Bowman and others. It seems to me that Mary Bowman's suggestion that only a certain percentage of general education credits be allowed to fall within a student's major, coupled with the requirement that all students take at least 45 credits of general education classes, satisfactorily addresses the concern that allowing "silver bullets" will result in a pernicious narrowing of a student's educational experience. Furthermore, disallowing silver bullets could very well cultivate exactly the sort of "silo thinking" that we want to avoid. I suggest, therefore, that courses be allowed to satisfy more than one general education category, with the proviso that students be allowed to take no more than a certain number of general education credits within their major and that all students be required to take a given number (say 45) of general education credits.

Thank you, once again, for soliciting and incorporating campus feedback!

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Edited: 3/26/2019 12:45 PM

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Davis, Matthew

Overall, it appears that the proposal does promise to make assessment of GEP easier; however, it seems to go so far in the direction of simplifying matters as to relinquish control of things that the university ought to strive to maintain: uniformity of what constitutes a degree and overall rigor. The proposal conflates a university-wide set of requirements--which need not be overly complicated, but could maintain rigor and uniformity across departments--with degree requirements set by individual colleges, then complains that we would necessarily end up with four-different sets of requirements, when one could be developed. I would advocate in favor of University-wide degree requirements beyond GEP so as to maintain consistency across departments, to enable better

	<p>assessment of GEP, and to ensure that the education provided by UWSP is broad, rigorous, and well-respected. Some concerns and observations: - The idea that the GEP would simplify matters for students seems unlikely when you have each individual department setting what constitutes a BA, BS, BM, BFA, etc., as it is likely that major requirements will vary more rather than less under the proposed revisions. I also think that shifting the definition of what degrees mean to departments might have the unintended consequence of devaluing all UWSP degrees because they are no universal standards. - If the goals of the GEP are to prepare students for the world as global citizens, etc., shouldn't some level of complexity be expected or even encouraged? I don't think that "complexity" in and of itself should be something we strive to work against. - The continued use of the current GDR requirements linked to the conclusion that we require too many credits is disingenuous. The chart on page 6 gives a range of 67-71 required credits as a maximum, and the rest of the report treats this number as true for all students, when a cursory glance at the appendix reveals that because of "magic bullets," testing-out, and AP credits, the "real" number of current GDR credits is significantly lower, and not far from the proposed revisions. This manipulation is clear on page six when the proposal states that "the majority of students are required to take as many as 66-71 credits to complete the general education curriculum" while page seven provides a very different conclusion: "students appear to reduce the GDR's to an average of 58 credits."</p>
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Posted: 3/25/2009 7:55 PM

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 <p>Barnett, Rachael</p>	<p>Like many before me, I appreciate the effort that has gone into this proposal. I do support the inclusion of requirements at the University level that define the various degrees. My comments below emphasize what I see as underlying theoretical implications of the proposal as currently structured. Concluding that because different institutions have different criteria for various degree types means that they "function simply as labels" suggests that they are without meaning and is a dangerous conclusion. And while I don't imagine the committee actually believes this, the implication is there. Instead, I would argue that creating the simplest possible definition of a baccalaureate degree would in reality make the degree less meaningful. A university degree should not be acquired simply. The proposal's, likely inadvertent, conclusion that "complicated" equals bad also seems misguided, especially since a university-wide set of degree requirements beyond the GEP would not need to be complicated (or certainly not as complicated as the imagined degree requirements by college). Finally, requiring students to take a wide range of classes that give breadth and depth to their education should be seen as a good thing; students will not be served (nor will they end up well-rounded or liberally educated) if our overall goal becomes merely minimizing requirements. This model seems, dangerously, to produce trained versus educated students. Thank you for the forum to offer these concerns.</p>
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Posted: 3/25/2009 9:23 PM

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 <p>Fish, Jesse A</p>	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I took a university course in which we read and studied the plays and literature of African, American, and African-American Black women dramatists. We read a lot, we took turns presenting the literature to the class. My group presented</p>
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Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. We learned about the African folk tradition of Ananse stories. We read *Fires in the Mirror* by Deavere-Smith, who tells the real accounts of Jewish and Black tensions in NYC during race riots. There was much more, but the point is that it was a great course, truly covering both literature and ethnic studies - 2 GDRs. To label it otherwise benefits only the administration and is an insult to the instructor. Not everything in life fits nicely into one category.

I read some reasons for 'no silver bullets' in the proposal:

“Perhaps most important, the practice of allowing courses to fulfill more than one GDR requirement contributes to a pervasive “check-the-box” culture of general education in which fulfilling requirements becomes more important than the content or pedagogical value of the courses themselves.”

There will still be requirements to meet, boxes to check, with or without 'silver bullets'.

“Some students we spoke with reported resenting the existence of “silver bullets”: although they take such courses out of necessity in order to minimize their time-to-degree,”

A student who has a virtuous motivation for minimizing their time-to-degree will not be helped by disallowing ‘silver bullets’. Time-to-degree will be longer. If a student has the academic standing to get an open seat, if the ‘silver bullet’ course truly meets what it is labeled to meet, and if the student would rather earn some of their 120 credits with another course, then I believe the responsible student should be allowed to make the choice.

“they sometimes find that the courses fail to deliver the multiple GDR perspectives they are intended to satisfy.”

Then the problem is not the course, but the designation. All courses should carry valid degree requirement labels, regardless of how many degree requirements they meet.

“allowing such courses creates an inappropriate incentive for faculty and departments to add additional GDRs to their courses in order to increase enrollment, not necessarily because it is pedagogically warranted.”

Again, adding GDRs to courses should not be an arbitrary process. GDR requirements of a course should be reviewed and validated. Quality courses which do meet multiple GDR requirements meet them whether or not they are labeled as such in the timetable. The problem in this case is faculty and staff who choose to abuse GDR course labeling without regard to scholarship.

“We hope to avoid this in the new GEP. Second, the current practice creates a similar inappropriate incentive among students to shop for “silver bullets” in order to minimize the number of courses they take, not necessarily because students need or wish to take the class.”

A student who takes a course because it meets a GDR is taking the course because they ‘need’ it. This practice will continue as long as there are GDRs, with or without ‘silver bullets’. This is not a bad thing. A narrow minded student does not ‘wish’ to learn about another culture. GDRs exist in order to give each student a broader perspective before they graduate.

I have cited many of the above arguments in order to give myself credibility. The truth is that I feel negative undertones when I read words like ‘undermining’, ‘inappropriate’, and ‘deterrent’ in the proposal. As a student I enjoy the luxury of not fearing retribution when speaking on matters of University policy. I understand that there are personalities, agendas, and financial concern in play, but I can speak from a point of purely academic concern. A course is what it is, based on content, regardless of GDR notation. If you find that UWSP students are too lazy or unmotivated to make good choices about their education, then look at the advising, recruitment and retention processes. The same goes for the faculty and

staff. The idea that a single course must have a single GDR notation is artificial. Deciding that it is necessary is probably evidence of a deeper problem. Mandating that a single course have a single GDR notation masks that problem and allows it to go on.

I do appreciate the people who take the time to work out the problems that we face as a university. My ideas may be off, but they are genuine, and maybe unique at your proceedings, so I thought that I should give them. My only hope is that whatever is decided on the GEP model is done so with the long term benefit of the university in mind.

Cheers,

Jesse Allen Fish UWSP '10

Posted: 3/30/2009 9:21 AM

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Hladky, Paul

Don, Greg , GEPRC committee members, and other interested readers,

I agree with the choice of the distribution model and offer the following comments/observations concerning the three specific proposals.

(a)

I am open to the idea of a common Gen. Ed. Program. A single GEP may make it easier to reduce the number of GE credits and develop an assessment program. After all, the Higher Learning Commission will return for a “(f)ocused visit on assessment with a particular emphasis on the assessment and subsequent revision of the General Education program and General Degree Requirements.”

(b)

There has been some discussion about where the distinction between the various bachelor degrees should be made; department, college, or university. According to the 2007-2009 catalog, each college decides which degrees it offers: CNR - BS only; L&S - BA and BS; COFAC - BA, BS, BFA, BM depending on the major; CPS - no specifications that I could find. It is worth noting that the distinction between BFA and BM degrees seems to be made at the department level and not in the GDRs.

Since the colleges already decide which degree or degrees they will offer and in some cases the distinction is being made at the department level, separating the “degree distinction” from the GEP makes sense to me.

(c)

I would like to know what “silver bullet” means. I’m well aware that it is a term in common use but I suspect that it has more than one meaning. Of course, the idea of “silver bullets” may be a moot point depending on the committee’s proposals for steps 4 and 5 but it seems to be generating some debate. Let me add some observations.

I recently searched the UWSP website and can only find “silver bullet” in the minutes from two GEPRC meetings (1/05/09 & 1/12/09) and a memo from Dan Kellogg. The term “golden bullet” may be more official and appears in two places; (i) a one-page pdf from Academic Advising that compares BA and BS GDRs, and (ii) in the FIG Handbook for next year (see web addresses below). Interestingly enough, I can’t seem to find the Academic Advising pdf by going through their website which may mean that the link has been removed even though the pdf itself still exists.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/advising/pdfs/DegreeTypeChart.pdf>

<http://www.uwsp.edu/resliving/pdfs/FIG%20booklet0910.pdf>

I am confused by the table on page 6 of your proposal which shows the WE, MNS, and NW GDR requirements as 12 separate credits. I looked back at the 1989-91 catalog where Minority Studies first appears and it seems that the original intent was that a MNS class would not be an additional credit requirement but just another distributional aspect of the Cultural Awareness category. The same seems to be true of the NW and WE requirements. In light of this, I wonder why UWSP now has NW and MNS courses that don’t also satisfy HU or SS GDRs. Perhaps the “single purpose” courses should be called “duds” rather than glorifying the “dual purpose” courses as “silver bullets” when the “dual purpose” courses simply accomplish the original intentions. As an aside, if one were interested in tweaking the current GDRs, one could designate all of the Cultural Awareness courses as W (for western), NW, or MNS, and then require that students take at least one of each. Nothing changes credit-wise, but the notion of “silver bullets” might fade away.

A true “silver bullet” (or gold or platinum or palladium/iridium alloy bullet) *might* be defined as a 3 credit course that satisfies 6 credits of GDRs. The only place in the BS GDR section of the 2007-9 catalog where I see this happening is with some of the Environmental Literacy

courses. Specifically, Chem 100, Geog 100, and Phys 100 satisfy NS and EL; Hist 366 satisfies HI and EL; Phil 380 satisfies HU3 and EL; Soc 360 satisfies SS1 and EL; and Nres 150 and Soc 355 satisfy SS2 and EL. There are a couple of EL courses, Nres 220 and Watr 220, that satisfy NW but they don't have HU or SS designations so they only contribute 3 cr to a student's GDR count. Interestingly enough, in the FIG Handbook, Soc 101NW and IA 150 NW are listed as "golden bullets" but they are no different than most of the other NW courses, Nres 150 is *not* listed as a "golden bullet" even though it satisfies SS2 and EL, and Nres 151 is listed as a "golden bullet" even though it doesn't satisfy any GDRs. I would certainly favor eliminating any 3-credits-count-for-6-credits courses in the new GEP.

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Subject: 3/20/2019 11:24 AM

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Hill, Steve

I'm not sure when this round of commentary is closing, but I want to let others know that the Division of Communication curriculum committee has drafted a statement of concern over the suggested approach to silver bullets for consideration of the larger faculty. Unfortunately, last week's meeting was cancelled and we were unable to consider it as a group, although the committee has asked that this be done at a future meeting. I hope there will be another round of this discussion, as it allows us to document concerns that I personally believe still have not been addressed adequately. I need to note that this is my own opinion and not that of our faculty, but we should have a faculty statement soon.

Furthermore, I find the discussion of proper metaphors interesting, as I have studied metaphors and am well aware of their ability to either highlight or mask attributes of concepts or objects that they represent.

I have resisted, to date, calling single-outcome courses "lead bullets," which would be my preferred nomenclature if we're going to continue using the "kill the requirements" imagery. (I trust that hunters and others are well aware of the environmental implications of such bullets.) I think Paul Hladky's term "duds" above is also appropriate if we're going to deal in the kind of language that Jesse Allen Fish aptly described above.

But my preference would be that we describe these courses as what they are: single-outcome courses or multiple-outcome courses (or, if we prefer to be complete, single/multiple-outcome GEP courses). I think that keeps the focus more properly on what we're talking about here: meeting learning outcomes. Using that terminology, of course, highlights the question: Are multiple-outcome courses good things or not?

	<p>I think Dona Warren's suggestion is more than reasonable. I think Mary Bowman's thoughts are well considered. I agree with Jesse Allen Fish's remarks about the implications of assuming the worst about both students and instructors. And I agree with numerous others who have concerns about this recommended prohibition.</p> <p>I believe the simple, if not elegant, solution is to require a certain number of hours outside of one's department and a minimum of 45 discrete classroom hours (or whatever number we decide on) of standalone GEP coursework. By "discrete" and "standalone," I mean that students would have to take 15 three-hour GEP courses, including X number outside their departments, regardless of whether those hours meet 45 hours of learning outcomes or 75. Thus, there is no discussion of three hours of classroom work for six hours of credit.</p> <p>Work is work and learning is learning. The former is more easily measured, at least in semester hours. We should focus on encouraging the latter to the best of our ability, as that would seem to be our purpose.</p>
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Posted: 3/10/2021 3:00 PM

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Williams, Michael

Members of the Department of English offer the following collective response to the **GEPRC Proposal, Step 3**. As a fairly large department, we inevitably differ among ourselves on most issues, but in this case our differences are only a matter of emphasis. We agree on the following:

1. Generally, we find your choice of a distribution model to be appropriate for the reasons you have stated. However, several members of the department did object to your having framed the options as mutually exclusive, and ask whether you considered a combination of core and distribution as offering most flexibility.
2. We agree with your proposal that a) **The General Education Program should apply to all students regardless of degree type.** We **do not** agree with your proposal that b) **A baccalaureate degree at UWSP should be defined by the GEP requirements plus those of a major. (In other words, neither the university nor the colleges should establish separate and rigid sets of degree requirements.)**

Sensible and powerful objections to this part of your proposal have already been offered by the departments of Sociology and Philosophy, the Academic Advising Center, and various interested

individuals. The main virtue of your response is that it shows a willingness to engage in discussion and work through the process; unfortunately, however, it doesn't significantly address those matters which cause us the greatest unease:

- You are correct to observe that a bachelor's degree varies in definition from campus to campus, as do the grounds for the distinction between a BA and a BS. This says no more than the obvious—that the definitions are determined by context, in this case by the institutional context.
- We object to your suggestion that the degree types function simply as "labels" that departments can apply at will to the diplomas of their graduates.
- In part, our objection is based on the fact that, although these "labels" might have "no essential meaning" in and of themselves, they do signify strongly, conveying essential information about a student's course of study. When you observe "In general the BS appears to be reserved for the more specialized, professionally oriented degrees," you are registering that fact. We would add the corollary that a BA degree indicates its holder has received a substantial grounding in the liberal arts.
- You might agree, but then assert that it will be the responsibility of each department to ensure the label they choose to apply is appropriate, and that if they believe a graduate with, for example, a BS degree in their field should have more Math, then it is up to the department to include that requirement in their major—in effect to follow the example of those departments that already stack up their correlative requirements. This is just a matter of moving requirements out of the GDRs and into the majors. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that we run the risk of offering as many BA-types as there are traditional Liberal Arts programs, and as many BS-types as there are traditional Science or professional programs. Such an approach is likely to add a level of complexity that defeats the committee's intent to "simplify" the General Degree Requirements, and will compound the problems faced by students transferring from other institutions or between majors.
- Our position is, bluntly, that **a distinction between the**

degree types must be made, and it must be made on the university level. The specific requirements listed as components of the simplified distribution model will be the (simplified and assessable) General Education Requirements. Those additional courses required to distinguish the degree types may be given another name. **We offer the following proposal:**

- **The distinction between BA and BS should be made on the basis of the number of credits required in the major.** This is not as arbitrary as it sounds, since the higher-credit majors tend to be those majors traditionally identified with the BS designation, and the lower-credit majors with the BA. The high-credit BFA or BM programs could fit into this proposal with minimal adjustment.
 - High credit majors (the 50cr mark seems an appropriate cut-off point) would be designated as BS degrees, denoting a more specialized course of study in a particular discipline. To earn these degrees, students would complete a) the university-wide General Education Requirements (45cr), and b) the requirements for the major (50cr+).
 - Lower credit majors could be designated as BA degrees. To earn these degrees, students would complete a) the university-wide General Education Requirements (45cr), b) the requirements for the major, c) a set of courses in the liberal arts (to be determined at the university or, at least, the college level) . The BA degree would thus denote knowledge of the major field plus more substantial grounding in the liberal arts.
 - It is conceivable that departments could offer their students a choice of tracks within their majors, one leading to the BS (more classes in the major), and the other to the BA (fewer classes in the major + the liberal arts requirement).
 - A set of rules or procedures would need to be devised for students double majoring in, or transferring from, fields with different degree designations, but this problem is not

	<p>insurmountable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We appreciate the difficulties faced by those departments with very high credit requirements—often set by external agencies—whose students must also negotiate the current GDRs, and we suggest that our proposal offers a way to ameliorate those difficulties while providing a logical and consistent way of giving meaning to while distinguishing between the degree types. <p>3. Finally, we would like to suggest that consideration of the so-called “silver bullet” issue is premature at present, and should be addressed at a later stage when the practical implications have become clearer.</p> <p>Thank you for soliciting our opinion. We look forward to your response to our suggestions.</p> <p>Show Quoted Messages</p>
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Posted: 3/10/2021 10:49 PM

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Kellogg, Angela

There has been some discussion regarding the distinction between a B.A. and a B.S., and questions as to whether employers prefer one degree type over the other. In the Career Services Office, we have found that employers generally do not indicate a preference for a BS versus a BA degree. Although employers in the arts may distinguish between the B.A., B.F.A., and B.M. degrees, generally, employers look at whether the student has a Bachelors degree, regardless of the designation. Employers also want to know whether the student has the skills and experience needed for the position, and whether the student can effectively articulate and apply these skills.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information and for your continued work on the GEP.

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Posted: 3/11/2021 9:02 AM

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Nemeth, Robert

Dear GEPRC Committee Members:

On behalf of the Department of Psychology, we are commenting on the Revised Step 3 of the GEP Proposal. As our previous comments indicated, we are in favor of the distributed model and generally support the rationale for not allowing “silver bullet” classes. However, our department has shown little agreement on the question of whether degree type (i.e., B.A. or B.S.) should be made at the university or department level. Roughly a third of our department supports the current recommendation of the GEP Committee to have the degree type determined by department. Another third feels strongly that the university should set those requirements, even if that means adding another level of requirements in addition to the GEP and major requirements. Finally, the remaining third of our department is on the fence on the issue. Thus, at this time, our department is unable to clearly support or reject the recommendations of the GEP Committee regarding determination of degree types. One of our colleagues suggested that we may be less indecisive if we knew what the committee will propose for steps 4 and 5 of the GEP.

Robert Nemeth and Debbie Palmer

Posted: 3/11/2009 11:45 AM

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Dixon, Barbara

The statement from the Department of English says very clearly just what I would like to say. I do feel strongly that the different degrees should have distinguishing requirements at the university level, and that the B.A. degree should indicate a thorough grounding in the liberal arts.
Barbara Dixon

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Posted: 3/11/2009 2:05 PM

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Sommers, William A

I must say that while reading the proposal I was slightly disappointed to see that one class can't work for more than one area. I studied at the University of St. Thomas and they had many of these types of classes. Namely ones that would fulfill more than one requirement. We called them double dips. Under this new model it is going to increase the amount of time and money students will have to spend because one class can't fulfill more than one requirement. Not a good idea. Got the us, the college students, out as soon as possible with as much education possible with the least amount of money. Under this new plan it is becoming less feasible to be a 4 year college and is working up to 5 and 6 years. How can we contribute in society if we can't get out of college? Help us get out sooner and make the difference we want to make. Side note- Just like one of the previous people posted, double dips help promote interdisciplinary communication which is so often lacking.

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Olsen, Gary

I appreciate that the English Department put together such a carefully considered response. We need more units on campus to do the same.

I am however concerned with two aspects of their suggestions. The idea of differentiating the type of degree by the number of credits could be seen to imply that those majors with less than 50 credits are inferior and in need of shoring up with a selection of humanities classes.

I do not feel that is the case with our programs. We have BA/BS tracks in both Drama and Dance in the Department of Theatre & Dance. The Drama track requires 44 credits. Those credits include a script analysis class and three theatre history classes all with significant writing and research components. There are also nine advisor approved elective credits in the Drama BA which are often taken outside of the Department of Theatre & Dance. I feel our Drama BA's are well rounded and liberally educated and will continue to be with a well structured Gen Ed curriculum.

My second concern is that the additional requirements that are being suggested will limit one of the advantages of a new and smaller Gen Ed requirement. That advantage is a greater potential to take a second major and/or minors. Our BA/BS students are those who tend not to fit the focus of our Acting, Musical Theatre and Design/Technology BFA's. They are often interested in directing, management, writing or criticism. Our BA/BS and to a lesser extent our BFA students would be better served by a Gen Ed program that opened greater possibilities of additional majors or minors in business, arts management, art history, foreign languages, psychology, sociology and numerous other disciplines across campus. Adding degree requirements beyond the Gen Ed seems to reduce that possibility.

Posted: 3/11/2009 2:31 PM

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Sirabian, Robert

**From the L & S Dean's Advisory Committee:
Response to the revised GEP Model**

First, we would like to thank the GEP Review Committee for all of their work and for their efforts to solicit feedback.

The Advisory Committee's Thoughts

Rather than simple labels, degree types do generally signify if students have earned more specialized degrees (BS) compared to degrees grounded in the liberal arts (BA). The committee acknowledges that both proposals for defining degree types are workable. The second option, which includes a "third layer" or middle ground, has the advantage of offering standardized requirements. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion for students and the assessment process, the university should establish these requirements. This would avoid complications that could arise if each department defined degree types or if each college defined degree types. And standardized requirements would also mirror the consistency and simplicity of the GEP. Given the new GEP, we feel strongly that the requirements for the degree types should be reviewed and revised in consultation with departments. These requirements do not have to be "rigidly defined" or complicated and would not be "additions" to the GEP. They would function as a bridge, ensuring students have coursework that enhances their knowledge and skills and prepares them for their major. And the major would not bear the burden of absorbing added coursework. The university requirements could take credits for majors into account when defining the BA and BS. Finally, the committee feels that without knowing the structural components of the GEP and the learning outcomes for each, it is difficult to understand the full impact of the degree-type issue.

The committee generally supports the proposal to allow no "silver bullet" courses in the new GEP, on the understanding that courses could continue to fulfill multiple GEP requirements, but that a given student could use each course to satisfy no more than one of those requirements. For example, a student could use a course on environmental sociology to satisfy either an environmental literacy requirement or a social science requirement, but not both. The committee feels the GEP should encourage interdisciplinary course offerings and that enabling courses to fulfill multiple GEP requirements facilitates that goal.



Schneider, Julie

In speaking with my colleagues in the Student Academic Advising Center regarding the revised GEP Model proposal, they appreciated the clarification the GEPRC provided describing a degree at UWSP=GEP + Major . Although some faculty are worried that students in low credit majors will have too much unstructured freedom in choosing courses to make up the 120 credit total required for graduation, the SAAC advisors see this as a positive opportunity. Reducing the # of GEP requirements would allow students to create a more intentional degree. As long as dept. do not add credits unnecessarily to their major, students in low credit majors now will have the option of double majoring or adding a minor or two. Perhaps dept. will now have an incentive to create 12-15 credit certificates, a provision passed by Faculty Senate some years ago.

This will require more comprehensive advising by all advisors across campus, since up until now, students took anywhere from 45-60 credits that were dictated by the GDR list. With a reduced GEP and good advising, students will not just take random courses, as some people fear, but rather craft a degree with majors, minors and certificates that complement each other and prepare students for their next endeavor, be it graduate school or the world of work.

Edited: 3/24/2019 11:50 PM

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Summers, Greg

The History Department met on March 30 to discuss the current proposal. Much like **Psychology**, opinion in the department was divided with some favoring the proposal as it stands and others objecting in particular to the proposal concerning degrees. The concern over degrees was much as stated in other posts: that allowing departments to determine the individual composition of their degrees would be too chaotic and would complicate the difficulties students face in switching majors. In addition, there was concern that the proposal would work to the disadvantage of departments with low-credit degrees because they would be reluctant to add courses to their majors.

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Open Forum

March 24, LRC 310, 9-10am

Attendees: Dona Warren and Eric Yonke

Both Warren and Yonke expressed concern with creating a new GEP that lacks university standards for degree types.

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General Education Policy Review Committee Open Forum

March 25, 2009 12-1pm LRC 107

GEPRC members present: Gary Olson, Randy Olson, Julie Schneider,

Attendees: Neil Heywood

Neil felt that many faculty feel they can't comment on the degree type issue until they see what the actual GEP requirements look like. He did an online search and came up with 85+ different degree type labels. He feels we're perhaps spending too much time on this detail and it could cause turf wars to develop when we should be trying to be united, not divisive, when developing a GEP that we all can embrace. We need to collaborate so that we don't create a fractured GEP.

He also referenced the "Are They Ready To Work" report and stated that we need to make sure we acknowledge the skills employers are telling us our graduates need. He remarked that he personally doesn't believe that employment should be the sole or primary public that a liberal university GenEd should serve; there are many other publics that we must accommodate, too.

He agrees with the elimination of the "silver bullet" courses.

He expressed a concern that, whatever form the new Writing Emphasis requirement takes, the assessment measures must be flexible enough to allow for different disciplines' writing needs.

Neil asked that I share the URL for the above report:

www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Schneider

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Open Forum  
March 30, 5pm, LRC 310

No one from the campus attended.