On November 19, 2008 the Faculty Senate approved the following step-by-step procedure for considering and approving a new General Education Program.

1) *Articulate the mission of the General Education Program (GEP) at UWSP.*

   ✓ *Approved May 2008*

2) *Develop the explicit goals and program outcomes of the GEP.*

   ✓ *Approved February 2009*

3) *Identify the GEP model (core, distribution, decentralized, etc.) including its relationship to degree types (BA, BS, BFA, BM).*

   ✓ *Approved April 2009*

4) *Identify the structural components of the GEP and specify measurable learning outcomes for each.*

5) *Develop course criteria for the GEP.*

6) *Make recommendations regarding the administration of the GEP.*

_____

GEPRC Proposal, Step 4b: Identify the structural components of the GEP and specify measurable learning outcomes for each.

In April 2009, shortly before the spring semester concluded, the committee circulated a draft proposal for Step 4, which we labeled Step 4a. During the summer, members of the committee gathered feedback through our Web site, by email, and especially by meeting with as many faculty and staff who remained on campus as we could. We are grateful for the many thoughtful comments we received. (These comments are contained in a separate attachment.)

Based on this feedback, the committee is now circulating the following revised proposal, labeled Step 4b. The proposal remains an admittedly incomplete draft intended primarily to further the conversation. In particular, we are eager for input on both the structural components of the curriculum outlined below and the draft learning outcomes included with each suggested requirement. The proposal is comprised of three sections: 1) a graphic representation of our proposed GEP illustrating the structural components which might comprise the curriculum; 2) an explanation of the structure we propose; and 3) a curriculum map suggesting how each component might be linked to the approved Program Outcomes.

Our intent is to collect feedback on this version of the Step 4 proposal in order to make further revisions which we can resubmit to the campus. Our hope is that we can submit a final proposal for Step 4 to the Faculty Senate for approval by the end of the fall semester.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
General Education Program

Integration:
Becoming a Global Citizen

Themes

Select one theme. Choose three courses from three different disciplines within the selected theme. Only one course may be from the "Investigation" level.
Examples may include:
- Human Rights
- Language and Culture
- Ethics and Decision-making
- Science and Society
- Gender and Sexuality
- Personal Wellness
-
-
-

The United States & the World

Environmental Responsibility

Writing in the major

Experiential Learning

Capstone Experience in the major

Investigation:
Understanding the Physical, Social, and Cultural Worlds

| Arts | Humanities | Social and Behavioral Sciences | Historical Perspectives | Natural Sciences |

Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Pluralism

Foundation:
Developing Fundamental Skills

| First Year Seminar | Writing, Speaking, & Information Literacy | Quantitative Literacy |

Explanation of Proposal

In February 2009, Faculty Senate approved the following Program Goals and Outcomes for the new GEP:

UWSP General Education Program

Mission Statement: The General Education Program provides the framework of a liberal education, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate intellectual and personal growth, pursue their advanced studies, and improve the world in which they live.

At UWSP, we believe that a liberal education is essential to living in today's global society. We also believe that global citizenship must begin at home with individuals learning to see the world from perspectives other than their own. Some of these perspectives are cultural and develop from the study of other languages, ethnicities, and beliefs. Some perspectives come from honing new intellectual skills, by learning math and science, for example, or cultivating an understanding of the past and an appreciation of the arts and literature. And some perspectives are the products of unique experiences such as getting involved in a community or studying abroad.

Ultimately, the more students are encouraged to step outside their familiar habits and beliefs, the more they gain the wisdom to see connections between themselves and the world around them, the generosity to empathize with the differences they encounter, and the willingness to place their newfound abilities in the service of a larger community. In this way, a liberal education at UWSP prepares students to be responsible global citizens.

Program Outcomes

The General Education Program seeks to develop these qualities of global citizenship in four distinct ways. After completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.
- Acquire broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.
- Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
- Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

In April 2009, the Faculty Senate agreed to use a distribution model to create a new GEP curriculum, and to develop a distinct set of degree requirements as outlined below:
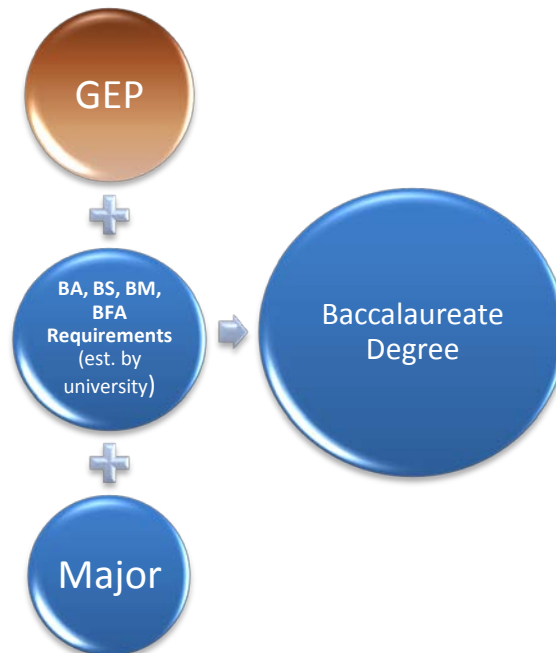
The current proposal is an effort to create a structure that satisfies the goals and outcomes for the GEP (highlighted above). In proposing this structure, we sought first to avoid creating a GEP that was comprised by a simple menu of categories and courses that are disconnected from one another. Among the clearest trends in general education is to create programs that function as cohesive curricula. In other words, a general education curriculum should be defined by clear learning outcomes that encapsulate what students will know, do, value, and appreciate when they complete the program; it should require students to move logically from the introduction and development of these outcomes toward their potential mastery; and finally, it should be connected as seamlessly as possible to the degrees and majors that students pursue.

Our proposed curricular structure is intended to accomplish each of these aims. Students begin with a First Year Seminar that introduces them to academic study at a university and the skills they will need to pursue their education. Students then proceed through a series of courses that develop these skills and introduce the core methodologies necessary to understand the physical, social, and cultural worlds. Having acquired this knowledge and basic skills, students would then proceed into more specialized coursework aimed at developing the personal, social, and environmental responsibility by which we have defined global citizenship at UWSP. These courses include several organized by themes that carry general education into upper-level

coursework and offer students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the context of a topic of their choosing. Finally, a capstone experience in the major serves to help integrate their advanced studies with the four Program Outcomes already approved for general education.

Combined, the various components of this structure would make possible a well-defined curriculum that moves far beyond the simple menu of courses that comprise our current General Degree Requirements. Instead, students would fulfill the GEP Outcomes in a purposeful, step-by-step manner in which courses could build logically on one another, moving from introduction through development and toward mastery of the intended learning outcomes. This structure would also provide numerous opportunities for departments and programs to build on the knowledge and skills that students would acquire through the GEP.

It has been difficult for all of us at UWSP, members GEPRC included, to avoid thinking of the new GEP in terms of our current General Degree Requirements—and especially how our own courses might be affected by the reforms underway. **Yet if we are to succeed in this endeavor and create a program that will serve our students well for several decades, it is vital that we set aside the constraints of the status quo in order to imagine what is possible. It bears repeating that this "proposal" remains an incomplete draft. There are no credits attached to the categories we suggest, nor particular courses specified. Rather, we intend our proposal to outline in the broadest possible terms one potential way of organizing the GEP curriculum. The committee is eager to hear comments and suggestions from the campus community.**

What follows below are rationales for each of the structural components that we suggest. In addition, for each component we include draft learning outcomes for which we are especially eager to receive comments and suggested revisions.

Foundation: Developing Fundamental Skills

Courses listed under this category are intended to provide students with the basic skills necessary to succeed in their studies at UWSP. These include, in particular, the "critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills" referred to in the first Program Outcome.

First Year Seminar

A First Year Seminar is an academically rigorous foundational course for incoming first year students. The course is designed to introduce critical thinking skills, orientate students to the academic community and campus life, and equip incoming freshman with other skills necessary to be a successful student. The course will foster intellectual inquiry and self-assessment and help students begin the process of taking responsibility

for their education, career choices, and personal development. (For a more detailed discussion of the First Year Seminar and the role it might play at UWSP, see Appendix II.)

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify and apply appropriate note-taking, test-taking, and time-management strategies to their academic studies.
- Identify and utilize UWSP programs, resources, and services that will support their academic studies.
- Describe the importance of a liberal education and the ways in which academic study is structured at UWSP.
- Recognize the concepts of critical thinking and information literacy and their relevance to academic study.
- Display a commitment to and responsibility for their own education and how this relates to their interests, abilities, career choices, and personal development.

Writing, Speaking, and Information Literacy

The committee envisions two distinct requirements under this heading, one focused on written communication and the other on oral communication with both seeking to develop students' skills in information literacy. In particular, we suggest that basic writing skills be developed through a two-course sequence, with one course taken in the freshman year and the second during the sophomore year. Although this would delay students' completion of the sequence, the delay could potentially improve student performance by allowing them more time to develop their writing ability during their freshman year.

Introductory writing classes provide a foundation of communication skills on which students can build throughout the rest of their university careers and beyond. They develop students' skills in analyzing audience, structuring written documents, and understanding and applying the conventions of effective writing. Subsequent writing courses build upon these skills by helping students learn to locate sources, critically analyze information, and synthesize their ideas with those of others to write well-supported academic arguments. They also provide an essential starting point for the more specialized writing students will be expected to do in the future within their fields of study.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify basic components and elements that shape successful writing such as topic, purpose, genre, and audience.

- Compose an articulate, grammatically correct and organized piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Oral communication is an essential part of a liberal education. However, effective communication in today's society requires more than the acquisition of oral presentation skills. UWSP also expects students to develop skills in using visual communications technologies and other media tools in order to enhance presentations and connect more meaningfully with audiences.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify basic components and elements that shape successful oral presentation such as topic, purpose, genre, composure, and audience.
- Compose an articulate, grammatically correct and organized oral presentation with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' speaking to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Quantitative Literacy

Quantitative literacy is knowledge of and confidence with basic mathematical/analytical concepts and operations required for problem-solving, decision-making, economic productivity and real-world applications. Such skills are essential for citizens living in today's global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Select, analyze, and interpret appropriate numerical data used in everyday life in numerical and graphical format.
- Identify and apply appropriate strategies of quantitative problem solving in theoretical and practical applications.
- Construct a conclusion using quantitative justification.

Investigation: Understanding the Physical, Social, and Cultural Worlds

In addition to developing critical thinking and information literacy skills in the context of various disciplines, this category in the GEP maps directly to the second Program Outcome: namely,

that students will "acquire broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced." The specific components that comprise this category come almost directly from the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. (See the document on our Web site: https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/default.aspx.)

Development of Critical Thinking and Information Literacy

Although the committee gave strong consideration to the idea of proposing separate categories of required classes devoted solely to the teaching of critical thinking and information literacy, in the end we believe that these skills are best taught within the context of other topics and disciplines. As noted above, we suggest learning outcomes that introduce these topics in the "Foundation" level. In the "Investigation" level described below, we have included learning outcomes meant to develop these skills further.

Certainly, we recognize that this approach may seem to "water down" the presence of critical thinking and information literacy in the general education curriculum. But in fact, our intention is just the opposite: we hope that the outcomes suggested below will ensure that students are taught these skills, both purposefully and repeatedly, in ways that are appropriate to the various courses and disciplines involved.

Upon completing any course at the Investigation level, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills within the context of the discipline.
- Locate, evaluate, and utilize information effectively.

Pluralism in the United States and Abroad

In the effort to obtain and analyze knowledge of physical, social, and cultural worlds around them, students must acquire an understanding of the broad range of diversity in contemporary society. By "diversity," we refer not only to the racial, ethnic, and cultural groups upon which the current Minority Studies and Non-Western requirements are defined, but to a much broader definition as expressed in the UW System Inclusive Excellence initiative: http://www.uwsp.edu/equity/Inclusive%20Excellence/Inclusive%20Excellence%20FAQ-Short%20Version.pdf. This broader definition of diversity includes "individual differences (e.g. personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and other group/social differences (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations)."

Students must learn about and develop an appreciation for diversity both within and outside the United States. This fundamental understanding of different cultures, value

systems, and beliefs will help students to build a foundation upon which a comparison between the U.S. and the World will be made in later courses.

Consequently, all courses at the Investigation level should meet <u>one</u> of the two sets of outcomes below.

Upon completing any course at the Investigation level, students will be able to:

United States Pluralism

- Describe the variety of social and cultural differences within the United States.
- Articulate the relevance of concepts such as prejudice, cultural bias, and discrimination to understanding American society.

Or, International Pluralism

- Demonstrate knowledge of cultures that are significantly different from the United States.
- Articulate the relevance of learning about societies and cultures outside the United States.

Certainly, the committee recognizes that this proposal marks a significantly new approach to the teaching of diversity-related content at UWSP. Yet there are good reasons to consider broadening our efforts. Rather than students addressing diversity issues as an isolated topic in a single course, we encourage faculty to find natural points of entry for discussing diversity across the curriculum, acknowledging that fully investigating the physical, social, and cultural worlds of human society demands that students seek information and perspectives from people of all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Embracing this broader approach will almost certainly involve rethinking how we teach courses in each of the categories below, and it may be that courses which have traditionally carried GDR designations in these areas will not fit in the new GEP without significant modification. Yet if we are to take seriously the notion that understanding diversity is essential to the education we provide our students, then rethinking our courses in this way seems a worthwhile exercise. In the area of natural science, to take just one example, our GDR objectives have long called for courses to enable students "to describe the relevance of some aspect of natural science to their lives and/or society." Surely, there are ample opportunities within this framework to acknowledge the diversity inherent in society, and to explore the implications of this diversity on the role of science in modern life. For some current Natural Science GDR courses—

especially those intended mainly for science majors—inserting the investigation of such questions may be inappropriate. But if courses in the new GEP are to be aimed solely at a *general* audience of students, as approved by Faculty Senate, then it seems an ideal time to reconsider their purpose and content.

For examples of the kinds of innovative curriculum changes that might result from greater attention to diversity,
see: http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/curriculum_change/index.cfm.
Note especially the link for "General Education Requirements."

For more information on Inclusive Excellence and its potential relevance to general education see: http://www.uwsp.edu/equity/Inclusive%20Excellence.aspx
or http://www.aacu.org/inclusive_excellence/index.cfm.

Arts

The arts celebrate the human capacity to imagine, to create and to transform ideas into expressive forms. The arts provide us with a rich record of human cultures and values throughout time. They enable us to understand and enjoy the experience of our senses and to sharpen our aesthetic sense. Courses in the arts examine the process of creativity, the analysis of the artistic imagination or the relationship between artists, their works and the societies in which their works are produced. The arts challenge you to understand creativity and the distinctive intellectual process of the human imagination.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Recognize and develop an understanding of aesthetic, cultural, and historical dimensions of artistic traditions and techniques.
- Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by critiquing, creating, or collaborating on a specific work of art.
- Express their own understanding, interpretation and responses to works of art with care, imagination, and self-examination.

Humanities

The humanities explore the fundamental ideas and values shaping cultures and civilization, in life and as represented in the written word, using scholarly approaches that are primarily analytical, critical, or interpretive. By introducing students to thoughts, beliefs, and ethical concepts within and outside their own perspectives,

courses in the humanities help students to understand and critically engage a variety of worldviews and the ideas that give them meaning.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the human experience through the interpretation of human culture and artifacts.
- Identify the role of individual and social values in shaping specific cultures.
- Formulate ethical judgments about human conduct as it is represented in art or life.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

The social and behavioral sciences provide students with an understanding of humans and their behavior as individuals and within communities, institutions, and social structures. Courses in this category equip students to contribute to public discourse and function as responsible citizens of their professions and communities.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Define the major concepts and methods used by social or behavioral scientists to investigate, to analyze, or to predict human or group behavior.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the major principles, models, and issues under investigation by the social and behavioral sciences.
- Examine how the individual or groups of individuals are influenced by social, cultural, or political institutions both in their own culture and in other cultures.

Historical Perspectives

An understanding of the past and the methods by which people seek to explain it are essential to finding meaning in the present. By exploring the evolution of human societies—their institutions, ideas, and values—students gain a framework for understanding themselves and the world; and they learn to make connections between the natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Recall events from a past culture, society, or civilization.
- Recognize that historians use a variety of evidence to offer perspectives on the meaning of the past.
- Identify the roles of these events in shaping historical changes.

- Demonstrate an understanding of historical causality.

Natural Sciences

As the progress of our society becomes more dependent on science and technology, our future becomes increasingly dependent upon a scientifically literate population. Individuals today must be sufficiently knowledgeable about scientific facts, science applications, and the process of scientific inquiry in order to make reasoned decisions concerning their use in addressing society's problems. Courses in this area should contain a laboratory component to develop an understanding of scientific inquiry.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify the basic taxonomy and principles of scientific method as it pertains to the natural, physical world.
- Infer relationships, make predictions and solve problems based on an analysis of evidence or scientific information.
- Apply scientific concepts, quantitative techniques and methods to solving problems and decision making.
- Describe the relevance of some aspect of the natural science to their lives and society.

Integration: Becoming a Global Citizen

Courses in this category are meant to foster the development of global citizens as defined in the approved Program Goals and Outcomes: they help students "to see the world from perspectives other than their own," and to "recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability." These courses are also meant to build on the earlier components of the GEP, giving students the opportunity to develop, integrate, and apply the knowledge and skills they learned.

Themes

Courses in this area give students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the context of a topic of their choosing, and to do so in ways that facilitate making connections across disciplines. Preparing students for responsible citizenship by encouraging them to see the world from new perspectives is among the chief goals of the General Education Program. Toward that end, themes help students to recognize that issues can be viewed in multiple ways, and that solving problems requires integrating and harmonizing these perspectives.

Please note: the list of themes provided in the graphic is meant to be suggestive, not comprehensive. In fact, among the comments we would most like to receive from faculty are further suggestions for themes that might be appropriate to this category of the GEP. We hope especially that faculty might see this proposed component of the GEP as an opportunity to work together with colleagues in other disciplines to create challenging, engaging themes from which students could select.

The themes are meant to be especially relevant to developing the qualities of global citizenship outlined in the approved Program Goals and Outcomes. Courses within each theme should seek explicitly to develop the knowledge and skills that students acquire in earlier components of the GEP. In fact, we suggest that one course in each theme come from those courses that students take in the "Investigation" level, a connection that would help create a more cohesive learning experience for students as they move through the general education curriculum. In addition, after completing a theme, students could be required to write a reflective paper that integrates the various perspectives they explore in the three courses.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

The United States & the World

At the Integration Level, students need to expand their horizons and develop a global perspective that encompasses both the U.S and the rest of the world together. Having developed a fundamental knowledge base of social and cultural pluralism both within and outside the United States earlier in the GEP, students will now build on it and critically compare the similarities and differences among these cultures. Their increased knowledge and understanding of the world will help them to become more responsible global citizens.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe relationships (political, economic, historical, cultural, etc.) between local, national, and global societies.
- Demonstrate knowledge of a specific topic affecting the place of the United States in a global society.

Environmental Responsibility

Maintaining a sustainable natural environment is necessary to the long-term survival of all organisms, including humans. An understanding of the individual, social, cultural, and natural factors that influence and contribute to environmental sustainability and ecosystem function is, therefore, essential to responsible global citizenship.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Recognize areas of interaction between human society and the natural environment.
- Identify their individual impacts on the environment
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, and ecological factors that promote environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate the competing scientific claims that frequently inform environmental debates.
- Formulate and adequately support their own understanding of what it is to be "environmental responsibility."

Writing in the Major

Writing in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop writing skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to write effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles. The courses that comprise these programs need not be held to exactly the same standards as the current Writing Emphasis criteria demand. Yet they should fulfill the same basic purpose.

Among the clearest messages the committee received when we first sought input on how to reform our General Degree Requirements was that: 1) students, faculty, and staff all hoped to see strengthened requirements for effective writing; and 2) nearly everyone believed that the current Writing Emphasis requirement had become dysfunctional. The committee believes that a writing-in-the-major program could address both these concerns.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of writing to compose an articulate, grammatically correct and organized piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.

- Critique their own and others' writing to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Experiential Learning

Students benefit from opportunities to learn by reflecting on experiences outside the classroom, and by applying the knowledge and skills they gain from more traditional courses. An experiential learning requirement at UWSP could potentially be satisfied in a number of ways. (See the learning outcomes below.) By allowing students to choose from a menu of options, we could include experiential learning as part of the new GEP while minimizing its potential burden on administration and resources.

To complete this requirement, students will:

- Engage in an approved experiential learning project outside their normal classroom activities. (These could include such things as internships, service learning opportunities, study abroad trips or international experiences, community-based projects, discipline-specific research projects, creative projects, or various student-involvement activities including participation in student organizations, Residence Hall activities, or Student Government.)
- Reflect on the experiential learning project in order to gain further understanding of a discipline, and an enhanced sense of one's personal responsibility as a citizen of a global society.

Capstone Experience in the Major

As with writing-in-the-major, the committee suggests that all departments and programs be required to create a capstone experience as part of the new GEP. A capstone experience is either a single seminar or some broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of a student's program of study. It is meant to tie together the key learning objectives that faculty expect the student to have learned during the major and to link these explicitly with the Program Outcomes of the GEP. Capstone seminars provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate how they can integrate the knowledge, abilities, and values that faculty have been teaching or demonstrating.

To complete this requirement, students will:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.

- Demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

Request for Comment

As the members of the campus community consider this proposal, it bears repeating that the ideas outlined above comprise a draft intended to advance the conversation begun last year. The committee requests that comments be focused along two specific lines.

- First, what revisions would you suggest to the structural components themselves?
- Second, to the extent that you favor a given structural component, what revisions would you recommend to the suggested learning outcomes?

The committee will collect feedback from now through September 25. Comments can be posted on our Web site (https://committees.uwsp.edu/gedpolrev/Step4/default.aspx) or emailed directly to the committee chair, Don Guay (dguay@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 Tuesday, September 1 from 10am-noon in CPS 116.

In addition, members of the committee would welcome invitations to attend department or unit meetings prior to September 25 to hear your comments and suggestions.

Appendix I
UWSP General Education Program
Curriculum Map

Mission Statement: *The General Education Program provides the framework of a liberal education, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate intellectual and personal growth, pursue their advanced studies, and improve the world in which they live.*	Foundation: Developing Fundamental Skills			Investigation: Understanding the Physical, Social, and Cultural Worlds						Integration: Becoming a Global Citizen					
Program Outcomes	*First Year Seminar*	*Writing, Speaking, & Information Literacy*	*Quantitative Literacy*	*U.S./ International Pluralism*	*Arts*	*Humanities*	*Social & Behavioral Sciences*	*Historical Perspectives*	*Natural Sciences*	*Themes*	*The U.S. and the World*	*Environmental Responsibility*	*Experiential Learning*	*Writing in the Major*	*Capstone Experience in the Major*
Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.	I	D	D		D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	M	M
Acquire broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.	I			D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D		M
Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.	I									D	D	D	D		M
Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.					I	I	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	D	M
I → Introduce D → Develop M → Master															

Appendix II

Explanation of First Year Seminar (FYS) Course Proposal

Why Does UWSP Need an FYS?

UWSP has numerous efforts that might fall under the general heading of First Year Experience activities. While these efforts have been moderately successful, combined they are still serving only 30-40% of our first-year students. The programs are also housed in different Student Affairs Divisions and there is a lack of a unified institutional message or coordinated programming.

According to UWSP's Office of Policy Analysis and Planning, "UWSP's largest drop in retention is from the first to second year. However, UWSP does the best job of our UW peers in getting students from sophomore year to graduation. Hence, increasing first year retention would positively impact overall success rates of UWSP students." Since the General Education curriculum is currently under review and revision, we recommend that an FYS be designed and implemented as part of the general education requirements.

Why an FYS at UWSP Will Be Effective:

The existing programs are effective, but still are only reaching a fraction of our incoming students. It can also be argued that these programs, since voluntary, self-select students that are higher achieving or more committed to their educational success; or students that are more familiar with the demands of college and also have parents who may have completed college themselves.   UWSP has a relatively high percentage of students who are first-generation, first-year students, and a program that is designed for all first-year students could ensure that we are extending the opportunity to everyone who enters the doors of our institution. In addition, with an intentional FYS in place, entering freshman would get a consistent message regarding what it means to be a student at UWSP and the importance of a liberal education. We know that many of our students self-report that they have little experience or skills necessary to be successful at college. For example, in a 2008 survey of incoming UWSP freshmen, students reported having little experience writing lab reports, utilizing online environments for academic work, writing research papers with citations, or taking notes during a lecture. The survey also found that 13% of new students reported not studying outside of school hours during their senior year of high school. This is the highest reported percentage recorded in data going back to 1986. (UWSP CSCI, http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/chancellor/policyplanning/surveys/CSCI%20Results%20-

[%20Academic%20Preparation%20and%20Expectations.pdf](#)) An FYS can aid in the development of critical study skills and habits allowing students to maximize their learning experiences in their crucial first semesters on campus and preparing them for success throughout their academic careers. This is the basic concept of most First Year experiences and is founded on one of the seven tenements of Arthur Chickering's student development theory and the role that institutions have on student learning. (Evans, Forney and Guido-DiBrito, 1998)

There is also what might be categorized as a disconnection between the study habits that entering students currently possess and the habits they expect to develop when they enter college. Although 94% of new students spent less than 10 hours per week studying in high school, only 7% say they will spend less than 10 hours per week studying in college. While students expect to study more when they get to college, they may not have the time-management skills actually to follow through with their intentions. It is also important to note that 91% of these same students expect to maintain an A or B average in college. (UWSP 2008, CSCI) An FYS could help students to assess and improve their study habits and skills.

More generally speaking, the consensus in the FYS literature is that this type of experience, if done intentionally and with academic rigor, can increase student retention, shorten time to graduation, and increase overall campus student involvement. The good news for UWSP is that these First Year endeavors have been around in higher education for over 20 years, and there is an enormous amount of information about these experiences and what makes them successful. Much of this information is conveniently housed at The National Resource Center for the First Year Experiences and Students in Transition (http://sc.edu/fye/). In this way, UWSP can capitalize on the experiences gained from these earlier programs.

What Will the UWSP FYS Look Like?

Nationwide, First Year courses have taken on a variety of forms over the past 30 years. The two most popular formats are the extended orientation seminar (57.9%) and the academic seminar (28.1%). These courses tend to be small in size and range between 10-25 students. Of these courses, 92.2% are graded courses that carry credit towards graduation. The most common course objectives for these seminars are to develop academic skills and to orient students to campus resources. The most important course topics in these seminars tend to be study skills and critical thinking.

The UWSP General Education Policy Review Committee recommends the development and implementation of a condensed 8-week, one-credit First Year Seminar course. In particular, the committee thinks that UWSP would best be served by the academic seminar model rather than the extended orientation format since we already have a successful two-day orientation in place. Although the topical focus of each seminar could vary depending on the expertise of the

faculty teaching the course, we suggest that the majority of the curriculum address basic college skills such as orienting students to the academic environment at UWSP, developing skills in critical thinking, information literacy, and writing, and introducing them to the basic tenets of a liberal education and the General Education Program at UWSP.

While students may never truly appreciate the curricular plan that shapes their education, it is important that they understand that their coursework and other academic activities are not a random collection of unconnected requirements. One exercise that may help students make sense of their coursework is the completing of degree maps, where the students plot out their courses by semester to graduation. This provides the students with a map of where they are going, and it can also foster a deeper sense of ownership of their education. It may even have the added benefit of encouraging students to take a more intentional track of courses that could aid their progress toward their degree.

To ensure that the experience is as valuable for our teaching faculty as it is for students, we suggest the class size be limited to 21 to encourage stronger connections among the instructor and students and to foster discussion. In addition, all faculty and staff teaching a FYS should receive one- or two-day training workshops to help them plan the curriculum in ways that meet the intended learning outcomes.

We also recommend that each section of the FYS course be assigned a student mentor. This concept is not novel, as Alexander Astin's work with student involvement theory in the mid-1980s demonstrated that the peer group is the most influential group for college students. (Evans, Forney and Guido-DiBrito, 1998.) In another more recent study of peer mentor involvement in courses linked to learning communities, it was found that students participating in these learning environments reported "higher levels of engagement, more positive perceptions of the campus environment, and greater gains in learning outcomes compared to students who did not participate in learning communities."
See http://www.lc.iastate.edu/LC%20Institute%202005%20Plenary.pdf for highlights of the study.

The addition of a peer mentor would add costs and coordination, but the literature on FYS courses suggests that having an upper-division mentor can greatly increase classroom participation. In turn, it can also enhance the upper-class mentors' UWSP experience and professional resume. The Tutoring and Learning Center, Pathways to Point, Freshman Interest Groups and the ARC to Success program at UWSP have used the peer mentor model to foster a more academic culture in the Residence Halls. Thus, UWSP has a well-established cadre of qualified students ready to serve as mentors to their incoming classmates.

Are These Programs Really Successful?

Yes! In a 2006 survey of 2646 accredited colleges and universities with undergraduate students, just over 60% of the responding institutions indicated that they have a formal FYS program. Of these institutions, over 40% reported an increase of persistence from first year to second, gains that could be attributed to the first year seminar. In addition, close to 30% of these institutions reported an increase in:

- student satisfaction with the institution,

- use of campus services,

- out-of-class interactions between student and faculty,

- student participation in campus activities, and

- student satisfaction with faculty.

Twenty-nine percent reported an increase in academic abilities and nearly 18% reported an increase in persistence to graduation and improved grade point averages. The majority of the seminars have been offered for over ten years at the institutions who responded.   Just over 42% having been offered for three-to-ten years and less than ten percent offered for two years or less. The full results of this survey and many other resources can be found at The National Resource Center for First Year Experiences and Students in Transition at http://sc.edu/fye/.

References:

UWSP College Student Characteristics Inventory (Freshman Survey), 2008 http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/chancellor/policyplanning/surveys/CSCI%20Results%20-%20Academic%20Preparation%20and%20Expectations.pdf

Evans, Forney and Guido-DiBrito, Student Development in College (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 37, 26.