The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Step 6

Administrative Recommendations

General Education Policy Review Committee

November 23, 2011

A proposal for campus approval.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	**2**
STEP 6: GENERAL EXPLANATION / SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL	**3**
PROPOSALS FOR ACTION	
1. Placement, Test-Out, and Credit-by-Exam Policies	**4**
2. Transferring Credit to UWSP	**11**
3. Catalog Year Requirements and Advising Policy	**13**
4. General Education Program Assessment Plan	**15**
FOR INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATION	
5. Administrative Recommendations to the Academic Affairs Office	**43**
6. Recommendations for Transitioning to the New GEP	**44**
7. Advising Recommendations	**51**
8. General Education Program Workshops	**51**
9. Student Expectations and Responsibilities	**51**
APPENDIX	**53**

STEP 6: GENERAL EXPLANATION / SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The General Education Policy Review Committee is extremely thankful to those who commented on the Step 5 proposals during the last academic year. Step 5d, which outlined the course criteria, was passed by Faculty Senate on April 20, 2011. The committee worked over the summer to prepare a draft for Step 6. Our last activity as the General Education Policy Review Committee is to make recommendations regarding administration of the GEP. As in the previous steps the GEPRC is committed to partnering with the campus as a whole to implement a very strong General Education Program worthy of the educational reputation of UWSP.

The Step 6 document is split into two sections, Proposals for Action (Pages 4-42) and For Information and Recommendation (Pages 43-52). The Proposals for Action are specific GEPRC proposals for approval through faculty governance. The items for Information and Recommendation are GEPRC recommendations to various groups across campus for discussion and consideration.

The GEPRC is recommending a few changes to the *UWSP Catalog* and *University Handbook* language regarding Placement, Test-Out, Credit-by-Exam, Transferring Credit, and Catalog Year. The text below contains the current language for the policies governing such issues. The sections that we are proposing to change (below) include strikeouts (for deletions) and underline (for additions). In some cases, however, the strikeout / underline technique renders the text difficult to read. In these cases, we've provided a "clean" copy (set apart in a separate text box) to allow the reader to have a clear picture of what is being proposed.

The GEPRC recommends that various committees and units on campus examine the *UWSP Catalog* and *University Handbook* for references to GDR language and replace it with GEP language. In what follows, the GEPRC has identified a few key areas that require special attention because of proposed policy changes.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

1. PLACEMENT, TEST-OUT, AND CREDIT-BY-EXAM POLICIES

1A. EXPLANATION

The Placement, Test-Out, and Credit-by-Exam policies remain largely unchanged from our earlier system. As with the GDRs, departments will continue to administer test-out and credit-by-exam for all GEP courses. Placement into Quantitative Literacy, Written Communication, and Foreign Language courses will be guided by UWS and local placement tests.

Placement:

Currently, the UW System (UWS) only offers placement testing for English, French, German, Spanish, and Mathematics. After consultation with the UWSP Departments of English, Communication, Foreign Languages, and Mathematical Sciences, the GEPRC proposes to include a section in the *UWSP Catalog* about the application of the UWS placement tests at UWSP. We are not proposing any changes to the way the UWS English or Foreign Language placement test results are currently used at UWSP for those areas. We removed reference to the section referring to Communication 101 because there is no UWS placement exam for Communication. However, we are proposing that a code of 7 or higher on the Math placement test will exempt students from the Quantitative Literacy requirement. It is our hope that departments other than Mathematical Sciences will propose courses for the Quantitative Literacy requirement, and we see much value in our students taking courses outside the traditional algebra, calculus, and trigonometry courses to enhance their quantitative literacy. (Recall that in Step 5, the Quantitative Literacy course criteria states: "All Quantitative Literacy courses will have a prerequisite of Math 90 or higher.") See Appendix 1 for an example of what the Department of Mathematical Sciences will be proposing for determining placement into mathematics courses.

Test-Out and Credit-by-Exam:

The GEPRC is proposing a small change to the GDR Test-Out/Credit-by-Exam policies as stated in the *UWSP Catalog*. Students will still be able to request test-out of or credit-by-exam for all GEP requirements. Under the old system, the Writing Emphasis requirement was exempted from the GDR Test-Out/Credit-by-Exam policies. Similarly, the new policy will not allow students to request a test-out exam or receive credit-by-exam for Communication in the Major and/or Capstone Experience in the Major requirements.

1B. PROPOSAL (*UWSP Catalog*)

Placement, Test-Out, and Credit-by-Exam Policy

Application of UW System (UWS) Placement Tests at UWSP

~~You may test-out and/or receive credit-by exam for any General Education (GDR) course at UWSP, except for Writing Emphasis courses.~~

~~When you pass an approved test in a GDR course, the requirement to enroll in the course is waived. You don't earn credit when you test out, but the course applies toward fulfillment of that GDR. For example, if you test out of Communication 101, you satisfy the Communication 101 GDR without enrolling in the course. Each department that offers courses for general degree requirement credit has its own policy for test-out and/or credit-by exam. Each policy states:~~

~~Whether you will be testing out of the requirement or also receiving credit.~~

~~The process for making exam arrangements.~~

~~The type of exam, passing grade, any additional requirements, and whether you can take the exam more than once.~~

~~Fees, if any. UWSP will charge a flat fee of $20 per application to test-out or receive credit-by-exam for GDR courses for which departments devise their own exams. This should be paid to the department administering the test upon application for the exam.~~

The University of Wisconsin System Placement Tests are intended as part of the information to be used by students and advisors for placement into the most appropriate college-level courses.

English:
In addition to the UWS English Placement Test, ~~A~~all entering freshmen take the freshman English entrance assessment to measure writing competence based on an essay composed at the university during orientation. If your performance on the writing assessment indicates superior writing ability, you may be ~~exempt from English 101 and~~ placed in English 150 rather than in English 101/202. Successful completion of English 150 then satisfies your ~~freshman English~~Written Communication requirement.

~~**Communication:**~~
~~If you want to test out of Communication 101, make an appointment with the head of the Division of Communication. You must then schedule and take a written examination on the basic concepts in public speaking. If you receive a passing grade on this exam, you must deliver an eight minute original persuasive speech extemporaneously to a three-judge panel. If you receive an average grade of B or better on your oral presentation, you may either be exempt from Communication 101 or be placed in an advanced public speaking course. If you choose the second option and complete the course with a grade of B or better, you will receive 2 credits for Communication 101 as well as the credits for the course you complete.~~

Foreign Language:
~~You may test out of part or all of the foreign language requirement by taking the UW System foreign language placement exam either at one of the regional testing centers or from the Foreign Language Department. You may also receive up to 16 credits for prerequisite courses by passing foreign language courses 102-313 with a grade of B- or better. For further information, contact the Foreign Language Department, Room 490, Collins Classroom Center, (715) 346-3036.~~

The UWS Foreign Language Placement Test places you into courses in French, German, or Spanish numbered: 101, 102, 211, 212, or 313. Placement into 211 or higher satisfies the Foreign Language requirement for majors offering the Bachelor of Arts degree. In addition, you may also receive up to 16 retroactive credits for prerequisite language courses by passing the course into which you placed with a grade of B- or better. If you wish to take a placement test for languages other than those offered by the UWS placement process, contact the Department of Foreign Languages. Students whose native language is not English and who can document formal high school or university study of their native language may use English 101 and 202, or English 150 as a means of fulfilling the Foreign Language requirement. For more information, contact the Department of Foreign Languages, Room 490, Collins Classroom Center, (715) 346-3036.

~~Mathematics~~Quantitative Literacy~~:~~
~~You take this exam during regional testing. The code number you receive from the exam is listed in the table below. This tells you which courses you still need to take to satisfy the general degree requirements in mathematics.~~

- ~~If you are a new freshman, look up your code number on the chart below to determine the course for which you should register. C~~consult an adviser or ~~check with the Student Academic Advising Center, Room 102, Student Services Center for the most appropriate course for your major.~~
- ~~If you are a transfer student, go to the Admissions Office to determine the code number or course into which you place; then look up that course on this table.~~
- ~~If you are placed into Math 90,begin the course the semester when you first enroll and remain continuously enrolled in remedial courses until remedial requirements are complete.~~
- ~~If you do not believe that your placement is accurate, you may petition once to participate in an alternate placement process.~~

The UWSP Mathematics Placement Code you receive from the UWS Mathematics Placement Exam determines which Mathematics and/or Quantitative Literacy course(s) you are eligible to take.

- If you earn a placement code of 1, then you are placed into Math 90 and must complete the course before you earn 30 credits. If you do not, you will be restricted to enrolling in a maximum of 12 credits a semester until you complete Math 90. All Quantitative Literacy courses have a prerequisite of Math 90 or higher.
- If you earn a placement code of 3 or 4, then you must select an appropriate Quantitative Literacy course.
- If you earn a placement code of 7, 8, or 9, then you have satisfied the Quantitative Literacy requirement.

- If you receive a placement code of 99, your placement has not been determined. Do not register for any Mathematics or Quantitative Literacy course until you have completed a placement exam.
- If you do not believe that your placement is accurate, then you may retake the test once, or you may petition once to participate in an alternate placement process. Contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Room B246, Science Building, (715) 346-2120.

For placement into Mathematics courses, refer to the placement table in the Department of Mathematical Sciences section of the *UWSP Catalog* or contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Room B246, Science Building, (715) 346-2120.

You may take any of the following courses if your math placement is:	**For the B.A.:**	**For the B.S. and B.M/B.F.A:**
1. 90	90, 100 or 105[1]	90, 100, 4 cr beyond 100[2]
3. 100[3] or 105	100[3] or 105	100, 4 cr beyond 100[2]
4. Any of 109, 111, 118[4], 119[4], 228, 355	Complete	4 cr beyond 100[2]
7. Any of 109, 111, 118[4], 228, 355	Complete	Complete
8. Any of 109, 111, 119[4], 228, 355	Complete	Complete
9. Any of 109, 111, 120, 228, 355	Complete	Complete
99. Your mathematics placement has not been determined. Do NOT register for any mathematics course before taking an additional placement exam. Get details from the Mathematics and Computing office.		

NOTES:

1. You may not earn credit in both 100 and 105. You may not earn credit in both Math 112 and 119.
2. Courses which will satisfy the "4 credits beyond 100" are Math 109, 111, 118, 355, and Math/Math Ed 338.
3. Math 100 is a prerequisite for Math 109, 111, 112, 118, 119, 209, 228, and 355. Other courses in math have prerequisites at least 4 credits beyond 100, so students taking them will have already satisfied the GDR in math.
4. Math 118 (Precalculus Algebra) and Math 119 (Precalculus Trigonometry) are prerequisites for Math 120 (Analytic Geometry and Calculus I). If you receive placement code **8**, you only need to complete Math 119 before taking Math 120. If you receive placement code **7**, you only need to complete Math 118

~~before taking Math 120. If your math placement code is **4** or lower, you must complete both Math 118 and 119 before taking Math 120. In some cases, advisers may allow you to take 119 and 120 concurrently.~~

"CLEAN" COPY OF PROPOSED CHANGE:

Placement, Test-Out, and Credit-by-Exam Policy

Application of UW System (UWS) Placement Tests at UWSP

The University of Wisconsin System Placement Tests are intended as part of the information to be used by students and advisors for placement into the most appropriate college-level courses.

English:

In addition to the UWS English Placement Test, all entering freshmen take the freshman English entrance assessment to measure writing competence based on an essay composed at the university during orientation. If your performance on the writing assessment indicates superior writing ability, you may be placed in English 150 rather than in English 101/202. Successful completion of English 150 then satisfies your Written Communication requirement.

Foreign Language:

The UWS Foreign Language Placement Test places you into courses in French, German, or Spanish numbered: 101, 102, 211, 212, or 313. Placement into 211 or higher satisfies the Foreign Language requirement for majors offering the Bachelor of Arts degree. In addition, you may also receive up to 16 retroactive credits for prerequisite language courses by passing the course into which you placed with a grade of B- or better. If you wish to take a placement test for languages other than those offered by the UWS placement process, contact the Department of Foreign Languages. Students whose native language is not English and who can document formal high school or university study of their native language may use English 101 and 202, or English 150 as a means of fulfilling the Foreign Language requirement. For more information, contact the Department of Foreign Languages, Room 490, Collins Classroom Center, (715) 346-3036.

Quantitative Literacy:

The UWSP Mathematics Placement Code you receive from the UWS Mathematics Placement Exam determines which Mathematics and/or Quantitative Literacy course(s) you are eligible to take.

- If you earn a placement code of 1, then you are placed into Math 90 and must complete the course before you earn 30 credits. If you do not, you will be restricted to enrolling in a maximum of 12 credits a semester until you complete Math 90. All Quantitative Literacy courses have a prerequisite of Math 90 or higher.

- If you earn a placement code of 3 or 4, then you must select an appropriate Quantitative Literacy course.
- If you earn a placement code of 7, 8, or 9, then you have satisfied the Quantitative Literacy requirement.
- If you receive a placement code of 99, your placement has not been determined. Do not register for any Mathematics or Quantitative Literacy course until you have completed a placement exam.
- If you do not believe that your placement is accurate, then you may retake the test once, or you may petition once to participate in an alternate placement process. Contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Room B246, Science Building, (715) 346-2120.

For placement into Mathematics courses, refer to the placement table in the Department of Mathematical Sciences section of the *UWSP Catalog* or contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Room B246, Science Building, (715) 346-2120.

Test-Out and Credit-by-Exam Policy

You may test-out and/or receive credit-by-exam for any General Education Program ~~(GDR)~~ (GEP) course at UWSP, except for ~~Writing Emphasis courses~~ Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major.

When you pass an approved test in a ~~GDR~~ GEP course, the requirement to enroll in the course is waived. You don't earn credit when you test out, but the course applies toward fulfillment of that ~~GDR~~GEP requirement~~. For example, if you test out of Communication 101, you satisfy the Communication 101 GDR~~ without enrolling in the course. Each department that offers courses for ~~general degree requirement~~ GEP credit has its own policy for test-out and/or credit-by exam. Each policy ~~states~~ will include:

1. Whether you will be testing out of the requirement or also receiving credit.
2. The process for making exam arrangements.
3. The type of exam, passing grade, any additional requirements, and whether you can take the exam more than once.
4. Applicable ~~F~~fees~~, if any~~. ~~UWSP will~~ Academic departments may charge a ~~flat~~ fee ~~of~~ ~~$20~~ per ~~application~~ request to test-out or receive credit-by-exam for ~~GDR~~ GEP courses for which departments devise their own exams. ~~This should be paid to the department administering the test upon application for the exam.~~

You must check with each department and follow their specific requirements for testing out and/or receiving credit-by-exam for ~~general degree~~ General Education Program requirement courses. If you receive test-out or credit-by-exam approval for a course that meets multiple ~~general degree~~ General Education Program requirements, passing the test will satisfy all ~~GDR~~ GEP requirements that are designated for that course, excluding ~~writing emphasis~~ Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major.

"CLEAN" COPY OF PROPOSED CHANGE:

Test-Out and Credit-by-Exam Policy

You may test-out and/or receive credit-by-exam for any General Education Program (GEP) course at UWSP, except for Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major.

When you pass an approved test in a GEP course, the requirement to enroll in the course is waived. You don't earn credit when you test out, but the course applies toward fulfillment of that GEP requirement without enrolling in the course. Each department that offers courses for GEP credit has its own policy for test-out and/or credit-by-exam. Each policy will include:

1. Whether you will be testing out of the requirement and/or receiving credit.
2. The process for making exam arrangements.
3. The type of exam, passing grade, any additional requirements, and whether you can take the exam more than once.
4. Applicable fees. Academic departments may charge a fee per request to test-out or receive credit-by-exam for GEP courses. Departments will devise their own exams.

   You must check with each department and follow its specific requirements for testing out and/or receiving credit-by-exam for GEP requirement courses. If you receive test-out or credit-by-exam approval for a course that meets multiple GEP requirements, passing the test will satisfy all GEP requirements that are designated for that course, excluding Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major.

2. TRANSFERRING CREDIT TO UWSP

2A. EXPLANATION

We propose that if a student has earned an approved bachelor or associate degree from another UW System four-year institution, a UW College, or an approved associate degree from one of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Liberal Arts Transfer Programs, then the student will have satisfied the UWSP General Education Program requirements, except for the Communication in the Major and Capstone in the Major requirements.

Currently, those institutions affiliated with the Liberal Arts Transfer Program include Madison Area Technical College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Western Wisconsin Technical College, and Nicolet Area Technical College.

(Note: the above policy does not apply to the WTCS Associate of Applied Science degree)

In addition, we recommend that institutions not represented in the above policy work with the UWSP Admissions Office and other academic units to establish appropriate articulation agreements to expedite General Education Program transfer credit.

2B. PROPOSAL (*UWSP Catalog*)

Transferring Credit to UWSP

To transfer credits you have earned ~~elsewhere~~ at another institution to UW-Stevens Point, ask each college you have attended to send an official transcript of your credits to UW-Stevens Point's Admissions Office. The Admissions Office determines whether credits earned at another institution will transfer to UW-Stevens Point and how those credits ~~will~~ may apply toward the UWSP ~~general degree~~ General Education Program requirements.

Please note the following in regard to credit transfer:

- An official evaluation of your transfer credits will be completed after you are admitted on a final basis and have confirmed your intention to enroll at UWSP.
- ~~Generally, credits earned for college level courses at a regionally accredited college or university will transfer to UWSP if you received grades of D or higher.~~
- Credit is generally awarded for college-level courses completed with grades of D or higher at institutions accredited by a regional or national accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Courses must be similar in nature, level and content to course work in our undergraduate curriculum. Continuing education courses and courses that are remedial, technical, vocational or doctrinal in nature are not transferable.
- The appropriate academic department will determine which credits apply to your major and minor.
- We accept a maximum of 72 credits from two year colleges. You will receive lower division (100-200 level) credit for any of these courses. Exceptions can be granted by the appropriate dean. (There is no limit on credits accepted from four year universities.)

- ~~If you earned an approved associate degree from another UW System institution, you will automatically have met the UW-Stevens Point general degree breadth requirements in natural science, history, humanities, social science, environmental literacy, non-Western culture and, (depending on when the degree was earned) minority studies. You must still meet UW-Stevens Point skills requirements in mathematics, foreign language, communication (public speaking), freshman English, writing emphasis, and wellness, unless you took appropriate coursework to meet these requirements at the previous institution. You may also still need to complete certain general degree requirement courses if required within your specific major or program.~~
- Credits transferred from other institutions are not used in calculating the UW-Stevens Point grade point average. The UWSP grade point average is determined only by credits and grade points earned at UWSP. However, transfer credits and grades ARE included in the calculation of the grade point average in most majors and minors and in the determination of graduation honors.
- If your previous institution awarded "split" grades (AB, BC, etc.), those grades will appear on your UW-Stevens Point degree progress report as follows: AB = B+, BC = C+, CD = D+.
- To graduate from UW-Stevens Point, you must **earn at least 30** of the total number of credits required for graduation in residence at this university.

Transferring from another UW System Institution or Wisconsin Technical College System with a completed Bachelor or Associate Degree

If you earned an approved bachelor or associate degree from another UW System institution or an approved associate degree from one of the Liberal Arts Transfer programs at Madison Area Technical College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Western Wisconsin Technical College, or Nicolet Area Technical College, you will automatically satisfy the UWSP General Education Program requirements, except for the Communication in the Major and Capstone in the Major requirements.

3. CATALOG YEAR REQUIREMENTS AND ADVISING POLICY

3A. EXPLANATION

Because the degree requirements will now be embedded in the major, students will no longer have the option of choosing a pre-2013 set of major requirements with the post-2013 GEP requirements. We removed the "Note" at the bottom of the Advisors' Responsibilities section of the *University Handbook* because it is not relevant to the section.

3B. PROPOSAL (*University Handbook, Chapter 5, Section 3*):

CATALOG YEAR REQUIREMENTS

While students typically complete general ~~degree~~ education requirements and the requirements for their major and minor currently in effect at the time of their initial enrollment, there are additional options available to them:

- complete the general ~~degree~~ education requirements currently in effect at the time of the initial enrollment but select a more recent set of requirements for the major or minor (which requires the approval of the chairperson of the major/minor department), or
- complete the requirements for the major or minor currently in effect at the time of initial enrollment but select a more recent set of general ~~degree~~ education requirements (which requires the student to ~~declare~~ request this intention at the Registration and Records Office).
    - Note: If the student requests a general education catalog year of Fall 2013 or later, then their major catalog year must be Fall 2013 or later.

~~This policy applies to transfer students as if they had originally enrolled at UWSP.~~

Transfer students from the UW Colleges who are continuously enrolled have the option of observing UWSP general education requirements in effect when first enrolled at a UW College campus.

ADVISING POLICY

PARTICIPATING IN THE ADVISING PROCESS

Students' Responsibilities

Students are responsible for

- determining a course of study that satisfies the requirements defined for the appropriate degree in the UWSP catalog;
- scheduling and appearing promptly for appointments with the adviser when necessary (at least once each semester);
- preparing for an advising session by having the necessary forms available and a list of questions and courses (and alternatives) needed;

- being knowledgeable about policies, procedures, and requirements as published;
- being prepared to discuss personal values and goals as they relate to academic and career-related needs;
- following through with appropriate action after the advising meeting; and
- accepting responsibility for the academic decisions to be made.

Advisers' Responsibilities.

Faculty and academic staff who serve as advisers are responsible for

- providing timely and accurate advising on academic and career matters;
- making advising readily available;
- maintaining necessary files on advisees for monitoring progress toward advisee's educational goals;
- conveying information on academic requirements, policies, and procedures;
- assisting the student in identifying and pursuing educational goals and objectives and in securing information about career opportunities;
- helping the student
    - examine course offerings in the major;
    - relate these to courses in the student's broader field of study; and
    - understand the graduation requirements for the chosen curriculum;
- tailoring the advising approach to individual students and making referrals appropriate to their needs and interests;
- being responsive to discussions of students' personal values and goals as they relate to academic and career-related needs; and
- being sensitive to issues relating to the student's retention at UWSP, and making appropriate referrals when necessary/possible.

~~***NOTE***. A student normally is expected to complete all degree requirements current at the time of the student's initial enrollment. Students may elect to complete~~

- ~~a more recent set of general degree requirements;~~
- ~~more recent requirements for majors and minors (with the consent of the chairperson of the appropriate department); or~~
- ~~both.~~

4. GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN

4A. PROPOSAL (*University Handbook*, Chapter 7, Section 2)

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

The assessment of student learning in the General Education curriculum will be the responsibility of the General Education Committee. Assessment within the General Education Program is intended to be a formal process of inquiry into student learning. More than simply an exercise in documenting the level of student achievement within the program, assessment is an exploration of how and why students learn, or fail to learn, within a particular curricular and pedagogical context. It explores both the outcomes that students achieve as well as the processes through which they learn. In this way, assessment should be viewed as an open-ended scholarly activity, a collaborative action research project aimed at the improvement of teaching and learning. (For a detailed explanation of the theory underpinning this approach to assessment, see Peggy Maki, *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*, Second Edition (2010), 123-153.)

The evaluation of student learning in the General Education curriculum will be the responsibility of the General Education Committee (GEC). The role of the committee in this regard shall be to:

1. recommend policies and procedures for General Education assessment to the Faculty Senate;
2. facilitate the process by which General Education assessment data is gathered, evaluated, and communicated;
    a. assist departments and faculty to identify, develop, and utilize course-level assessment measures;
    b. identify, develop, and utilize institutional level measures in concert with the Assessment Subcommittee and the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning;
3. make recommendations to Faculty Senate regarding improvements to the General Education Program;
4. support instructional development and curricular improvements;
5. review and update the General Education assessment process regularly.

Assessment of student learning within the General Education curriculum will take place on a five-year cycle. The first four years of the cycle will be focused on courses in the four levels of the curriculum. In addition, during each of the first four years, information will be gathered related to one of the four General Education Program Outcomes from courses in the Investigation Level. Based on these results, the fifth year of the Assessment Cycle will be devoted to a comprehensive review of the General Education Program and Assessment Plan.

Year 1:

- Foundation-Level Courses (First Year Seminar, Written and Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Wellness)
- Program Outcome 1 (Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society)

Year 2:

- Investigation-Level Courses (Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences)
- Program Outcome 2 (Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced)

Year 3:

- Cultural and Environmental Awareness-Level Courses (Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, and Environmental Responsibility)
- Program Outcome 3 (Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability)

Year 4:

- Integration-Level Courses (Interdisciplinary Studies, Experiential Learning, Communication in the Major, and Capstone Experience in the Major)
- Program Outcome 4 (Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems)

Year 5:

- Comprehensive Review of General Education Program and Assessment Plan

Evidence of student achievement will be collected along three dimensions: (a) course-based measurements for each GEP level utilizing course portfolios compiled by instructors, (b) institutional-level measurements conducted through periodic standardized tests and surveys administered by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning and (c) course-based measurements for each of the four GE Program Outcomes, potentially utilizing course portfolios and departmental assessment. Each year, this information will be reviewed and evaluated by faculty learning communities under the direction of the GEC, the Director of General Education, and the Assessment Coordinator. In turn, the GEC will annually report these results and its recommendations for improving the General Education Program to the Faculty Senate, the Provost, the Deans, and others.

Course-Based Measurements

The GEC will regularly gather course-level information on student learning through the collection of course portfolios. A course portfolio is a selection of materials from a given course—including the syllabus and relevant examples of student work—along with reflective statements written by the instructor that explore how the course structures and assessment strategies contributed to student learning. Faculty members teaching designated General

Education courses will be required to prepare a course portfolio according to the five-year cycle noted above. (Note: the GEC will consult with departments offering multiple sections of the same GEP course to establish a plan for assessment; such a plan will specify a subset of instructors/sections who will submit course portfolios.) Each course portfolio will contain the following elements:

1. Course Information:
    a. A syllabus, including an explanation of how the intended learning outcomes of the course align with those of the General Education Program category.
    b. A brief narrative describing how the relevant General Education learning outcomes will be met by students through course experiences, assignments, and/or activities.
2. Assessment Information:
    a. A discipline-appropriate evaluation of student attainment of at least one learning outcome, including a brief explanation of how student learning was assessed. (Note: Although courses should be *designed* to meet all the approved learning outcomes in a particular category, the actual *assessment* can and should focus on a smaller subset of these outcomes.)
    b. Examples of student work related to the evaluation above showing a range of student achievement.
    c. The specific criteria or rubric that was used to evaluate student work.
    d. Results of any other feedback mechanisms used in the course that explore student perceptions of course assignments and their alignment with the general education learning outcomes.
    e. A brief statement explaining how assessment results will be used to improve learning in the course in the future.

<u>The General Education Assessment Process</u>

The annual process of evaluating student learning within the General Education curriculum will have the following steps:

1. At the beginning of each academic year, the GEC will establish faculty learning communities for each area of the curriculum being assessed during that year. Each faculty learning community will include 4-6 faculty members teaching courses in the categories under review and includes the Assessment Coordinator and a member of the GEC representing the particular GEP category. The faculty learning community will coordinate with faculty across campus to ensure the body of course portfolios will provide adequate evidence of student learning for each of the learning outcomes in the GEP category.
2. Instructors teaching courses in areas under review in the fall semester will prepare and submit course portfolios to the Assessment Coordinator by February 1
3. Each faculty learning community will review course portfolios provided by the Assessment Coordinator and provide feedback to instructors. This feedback will only be shared with the instructor.
4. The Assessment Coordinator will collaborate with the faculty learning communities to aggregate findings from the course portfolios, along with data from the Office of

Policy Analysis and Planning, and prepare a report for the General Education Committee by May 1. No information identifying instructors, students or specific courses shall be included in the report.

5. At the beginning of the next academic year, the GEC will report to the Faculty Senate on its assessment of student learning, including any recommendations to improve the curriculum. The report may also recommend further action research projects to investigate particular aspects of student learning or to explore the impact of particular changes to the curriculum. The report must be submitted to the Senate by November 1. This report will be shared with the Provost, the Deans, and the department chairs. In addition, it will be posted online to be available to the campus community and others.

Institutional-Level Measurements

The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will regularly administer standardized tests and student surveys in an effort to measure student learning and experiences on campus. The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will work with the GEC, the Director of General Education, and the Assessment Coordinator to share results that are applicable and useful for assessment within the General Education Program. These tests will include those institutional-level assessments required for external accountability or reporting.

Given that such measurements provide an institutional snapshot of student learning, the results will be utilized by the GEC in concert with other data gathered through course-based assessment.

The Use of Assessment Results

Assessment results are intended for two purposes: 1) to provide feedback to individual instructors to assist in their efforts to improve student learning within their courses; and 2) to make judgments about the effectiveness of the General Education Program and to inform recommendations for its improvement. To achieve these aims, assessment results will be shared in the following manner:

1. Each instructor submitting a course portfolio will receive individual feedback from the faculty learning community, including an evaluation of the assessment method utilized in the course and recommendations for the improvement of student learning. This evaluation will include the rubric used by the faculty learning community in forming its opinions. This information will be provided only to the instructors themselves and will not be shared with departments, Deans, the Provost, or the GEC.
2. Working in concert with the faculty learning communities, the Assessment Coordinator will compile reports on student learning for the GEC, removing references to specific courses and instructors. The GEC's final report will contain:
    a. A summary of student attainment of the learning outcomes in the relevant General Education areas.
    b. Recommendations based on these assessment results for the improvement of the General Education curriculum. These recommendations may include proposals for further action research projects related to particular courses, GEP categories, GE Program Outcomes, or specific groups of students.

3. The GEC will report annually to the Faculty Senate sharing its evaluation and recommendations with the Provost, the Deans, and the department chairs. The report will also be posted online to be available to the campus community and others.
4. In conjunction with the Director of General Education and the Assessment Coordinator, the GEC will work with various units on campus in order to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. In this manner, the GEC will help to "close the loop" by allowing assessment of student learning lead to curricular and pedagogical improvements. Such professional development opportunities might include:
    a. Workshops on effective assessment of student learning in the General Education curriculum.
    b. Instructional development necessitated by Faculty Senate-approved changes to the curriculum or learning outcomes.
    c. Action research projects intended to provide further information on student learning within the curriculum.

4B: EXPLANATION

UWSP has little history of assessing student learning in the current General Degree Requirements (GDRs). Responsibility for this task resides with the Assessment Subcommittee, but unfortunately, the subcommittee's workload makes it virtually impossible to carry out a comprehensive system of assessment for the GDRs. In addition, given the divided authority over the GDRs within the governance structure, there has been little formal opportunity to use any information that might be gathered to improve the general education curriculum, or in other words, to "close the loop."

This oversight was noted by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our institutional accrediting agency, in its most recent report on UWSP, and it was among the principal factors that led the Faculty Senate to create a new General Education Program. Consequently, as UWSP now looks to complete the final steps in creating this program, members of the campus must address how student learning will be assessed. The proposal above and explanation below is a result of a coordinated effort of the UWSP Assessment Academy Team, Assessment Subcommittee, and GEPRC.

Overview of Assessment

The term "assessment" refers to student learning, not the performance of the instructor. The assessment of student learning is an omnipresent part of teaching in that faculty are assessing learning all the time, not only by assigning grades at regular intervals through the administration of tests and assignments, but also by making informal evaluations of learning during every course session and even from moment to moment. Unfortunately, this kind of assessment does not always provide the types of information necessary to allow instructors to make improvements in teaching strategies. For example, if an instructor knows that the average grade on an exam is 82%, this does not facilitate the improvement of teaching in a focused area. By contrast, if an instructor knows that students are struggling with a particular concept, skill, or ability, then this allows the instructor to identify a specific area that can be improved. In this way, a more detailed approach to assessment (beyond assigning grades) is required for closing the loop and continuously improving teaching and learning.

<u>Learning Outcomes</u>

Usually, this more detailed assessment takes of the form of learning outcomes assessment; that is, building assignments and courses around a set of learning outcomes that are intentionally aligned to the intended learning outcomes of a program of study or of the GEC. Then, faculty can establish criteria for determining acceptable levels of performance based on the learning outcomes. An instructor who has identified the individual components of an assignment in this way can then evaluate student achievement in a more detailed, focused way. The term "rubric" refers to one example of a formal process of identifying the criteria upon which an assignment (course or program) will be evaluated and articulating different levels of achievement for each learning outcome (e.g., from low to high, acceptable to exceptional).

For example, suppose that an English instructor is offering a course that satisfies the Written Communication GEP category. If she has identified the development of a thesis statement as an

important learning outcome for a writing assignment, she can provide a separate assessment of that aspect of the assignment. If she determines that students are struggling with this aspect of the written assignment, she can address this in terms of making adjustments in her approach to teaching, thus supporting improved student learning.

Consider another example: suppose that a Biology instructor is offering a course that aligns with the learning outcomes of the Natural Sciences GEP category. If she has identified a learning outcome that includes knowledge of the various aspects of cell division, then she might develop a rubric for assessing student achievement with respect to cell division. If students are not learning what the instructor has identified as an important skill, knowledge, or ability, then she can make adjustments in her teaching that will lead to greater student learning in the area that the instructor has determined to be important.

Engaging in this assessment feedback loop is something that instructors already do, at least on an implicit, intuitive level. Many instructors use rubrics, at least to some extent. While they are not obligatory for assessment, rubrics make the process of closing the loop easier for the instructor, and they provide students with more meaningful, specific, and formative feedback (rather than just summative feedback such as points or a grade).

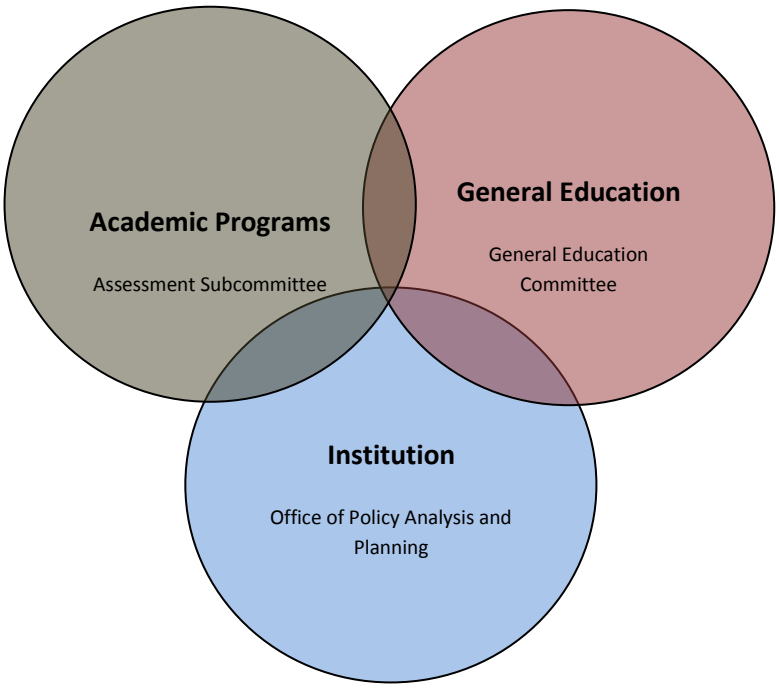
Colleague Conversations

Instructors also engage in this process of continuous improvement when speaking to each other informally, say, in the hallways, over coffee, or during other informal conversations on campus. These are extremely rewarding conversations, and they lead to improvements in the teaching and learning cycle within our individual courses and curricula. Such conversations also contribute to the overall collegiality of departments and programs, as well as a culture of sharing and mutual support among instructors.

It is important to note, however, that when addressing the common learning outcomes of a shared curriculum (say, the curriculum within a department, a major, or a program), it is valuable to engage in a more formal, explicit process of assessment and continuous improvement. This process will allow instructors to share their ideas publicly and to coordinate their efforts between classes so that students are able to get the best support and guidance we can offer. In the context of departments, majors, and programs, instructors are usually “housed” together as colleagues and have offices in the same place. So, when the “unit of analysis” for assessment is a common, shared curriculum (not just a single assignment or a single course), it makes sense to coordinate our efforts in a public, formal process that facilitates coordination, discussion, and support to ensure that students are meeting the outcomes that have been intended for their learning.

This same insight applies to the General Education Program. Just as it makes sense to coordinate our assessment efforts within a department or program, we must also coordinate our efforts within the GEP through a public, formal process. This is all the more important because instructors in this curriculum are scattered across campus and not typically housed together in the same space. Our General Education Assessment Plan is intended to create exactly this kind of shared, collaborative, and formal process of evaluating student learning.

Oversight of Assessment



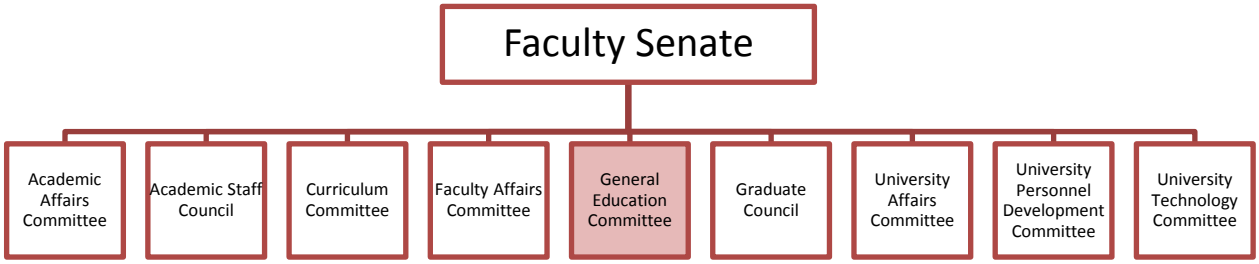
Assessment at UWSP

Assessment at UWSP must take place within a clearly-defined structure. Toward that end, program-level assessment will be carried out by academic departments who report to the Assessment Subcommittee; the assessment of general education, meanwhile, will be the responsibility of the General Education Committee, described below; and finally, institutional-level assessment (which will inform the work of both the Assessment Subcommittee and the General Education Committee) will be administered by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning. In addition, the university will facilitate a variety of faculty- and staff-led development efforts to support assessment. The key to the success of this structure is the intentional coordination of all these efforts, all centered on a model of continuous improvement with student learning as the focus.

<u>Governance</u>

Under the present governance structure, the Assessment Subcommittee, with the aid of the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning, is entirely responsible for the assessment of general education. This includes not only the collection and analysis of assessment data, but the use of this information as well. In practice, the Assessment Subcommittee has been unable to manage general education assessment on top of its responsibility for overseeing assessment in department-level academic programs.

The General Education Committee—a new standing committee of the Faculty Senate meant to replace the current GDR Subcommittee—has been created to assume responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the general education curriculum: the approval of courses for general education credit, the assessment of student learning within the curriculum, and the subsequent improvement of the curriculum based on assessment results.



Much as a department manages its own program(s), the new General Education Committee (GEC) will play the pivotal role in managing the general education curriculum.

- The committee will be responsible for designating courses as meeting general education learning outcomes, a procedure that must include specific discussion of how courses will be assessed in relation to those outcomes.
- The committee will then be responsible for collaborating with others to gather assessment evidence. This includes both course-based assessment data gathered from instructors and also institutional-level assessment data gathered by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning through the administration of standardized tests and institutional-level surveys.
- Once assessment data is gathered, the committee will be responsible for evaluating this information and making recommendations to improve the general education curriculum.
- The committee will then pass these recommendations to the appropriate governance and administrative units, including the Office of Academic Affairs, the respective colleges and departments involved in teaching courses within the general education curriculum, and the Faculty Senate. Further, the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement will be involved in designing instructional and faculty development programs intended to support continuous improvement in the curriculum based on identified needs.

<u>Administrative Support</u>

Administrative responsibility for both general education and the assessment of general education learning outcomes rests currently with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Programs. However, given that the effort to assess general education is sure to require more time and resources than it has in the past, it seems clear that additional administrative support is necessary. To that end, the General Education Policy Review Committee supports the creation of a Director of General Education and an Assessment Coordinator to facilitate the implementation of the GEP. Both positions will play critical roles in assisting the GEC to manage and evaluate the new curriculum, and in working with the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement to “close

the loop," or in other words, to utilize the information gathered through assessment directly to improve teaching and learning in the general education curriculum.

Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement (CAESE)

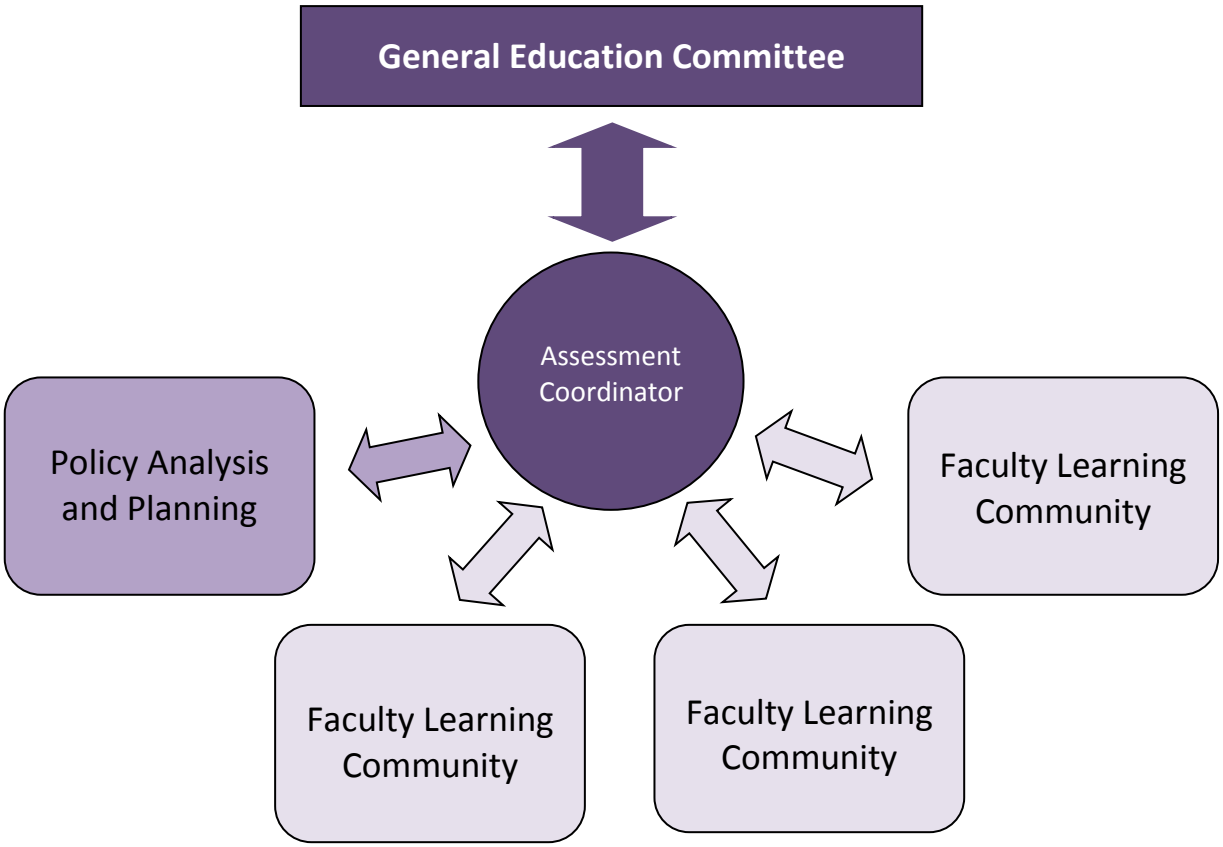
To help address this situation, the General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC) supports the idea of locating an Assessment Coordinator within the CAESE who could assume responsibility for facilitating assessment of the general education curriculum and resulting conversations about continuous improvement.

In addition, the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning (formerly known as Institutional Research) has a history of involvement with assessment efforts at UWSP through the administration of standardized instruments, student engagement surveys, and other home-grown general education assessment tools. In the current structure, the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning is charged with supporting the Assessment Subcommittee in its work as well as handling matters of institutional accountability.

As we implement the new General Education Program, institutional-level assessment will continue to be an essential component of efforts to assess and improve the curriculum. Though members of GEPRC propose using course portfolios as the primary means of gathering assessment data from individual courses and instructors (see below), this information must be supplemented by institutional-level assessment that attempts to measure student learning and experiences across the curriculum. Institutional-level measures also can be used for triangulation of data.

We support this continued collaboration and, as with the areas presented above, we support further definition of the role of this administrative function in assessment efforts, including the inclusion of a representative from the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning as a permanent member of both the new General Education Committee and the Assessment Subcommittee.

The Assessment Process



Evidence of student achievement in the general education program will be collected through course-based measurements that utilize course portfolios compiled by instructors and institutional-level measurements conducted through periodic standardized testing and surveys administered by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning. This information will be reviewed and evaluated by faculty learning communities under the direction of the General Education Committee, the Director of General Education, and the Assessment Coordinator. The committee, in turn, will then pass these results and its recommendations for improving the curriculum along to the appropriate faculty members, governance committees, and administrative units as described below. The university will be responsible for assisting faculty with implementing the recommendations made by the committee.

<u>Course-Based Assessment</u>

Our approach to course-based assessment is built on several core assumptions:

- Courses should be designed to meet *all* the approved learning outcomes. Among the most valuable aspects of assessment is the simple act of being explicit about intended learning outcomes and then employing backward design in constructing the course itself. In the case of the First Year Seminar, for example:

- If students are meant to understand the importance of a liberal education, what readings, assignments, or activities will help them to achieve this goal?
- If students are expected to practice their critical thinking and information literacy skills, how will this take place?
- If students are supposed to design a plan for their educations by the end of the semester, what assignments along the way will prepare them to do so?
- Given the desired learning outcomes, what evidence can be collected that allows students to demonstrate their achievement? And, what performance criteria will be used to evaluate evidence of student learning (rubrics, etc.)?

- Although courses should be *designed* to meet all the approved outcomes, the actual *assessment* can and should focus on a smaller subset of these outcomes.
- Because assessment is primarily concerned with improving student learning, the manner in which it occurs should be determined by the faculty involved in teaching the curriculum.
- Even more important, instructors should employ a problem-based approach to carrying out this assessment. In other words, assessment should involve not simply gathering evidence of student learning (which tends to reduce assessment to mere reporting), but rather asking specific questions related to particular learning outcomes and attempting to answer those questions through the gathering and evaluation of evidence. The most important such problem statement is simply: "How well are students learning and how do I know?" But faculty might also explore other closely related and more focused queries. Again, in the case of the First Year Seminar, for example:
  - What pre-conceptions about liberal education hinder students' ability to acclimate themselves to college?
  - How do first-year student reading skills affect their ability to think critically?
  - What do students expect from a college education, and how do these expectations influence their approach to the requirements of General Education and their majors?

Why a Problem-Based Approach?

Among the biggest challenges in creating an effective assessment program is to ensure that the information gathered about student learning is actually used to improve teaching and learning. Employing a problem-based approach can help to address this concern. To embed assessment work in faculty-inspired questions that arise naturally from their own experience in the classroom and their own curiosity as teachers and scholars is immediately to instill this work with greater relevance and meaning than simple reporting would normally encourage. Consequently, it also increases the likelihood that the results of assessment can and will be utilized for continuous improvement.

Although assessment is often viewed as a reporting activity, in essence it is action research—a systematic inquiry into the outcomes and processes of student learning designed to gather information and, more importantly, use that information to improve practice and monitor the impact of changes. One of the benefits of action research is that it mirrors the scholarly process, allowing faculty to employ

similar methodologies and skills they utilize in their disciplinary research to investigate student learning in their classrooms.

Among the principal advantages of the problem-based approach is the open-ended, yet grounded nature of the inquiry, which enables faculty to tailor their assessment efforts to their own experiences in teaching particular courses, and therefore to ensure its relevance. Take, for example, a faculty member teaching a First Year Seminar and attempting to gather information related to the expectation that students will be able to "describe the importance of critical thinking and information literacy and apply the associated skills." If assessment is reduced to mere reporting, the instructor is essentially asked to answer a question that hews very closely to this learning outcome; namely, "How many of my students are able to practice critical thinking?" Because this question is rather broad and general, it not only fails to suggest concrete ways in which the instructor can ground the inquiry in particular assignments within the course, it also yields results that fail to suggest concrete ways to improve the course. By contrast, problem-based assessment encourages much greater flexibility in determining the most relevant and meaningful approach to the investigation of student learning. In the case of the First Year Seminar, to ask "How well are students learning to think critically and how do I know?" is immediately to suggest a variety of teaching strategies and assessments that might be employed to explore the issue. Even more important, because these strategies and assessments come directly from the instructor's own experience in his or her course, the information collected will be immediately useful in changing how the instructor teaches critical thinking in the future.

For a detailed explanation of the theory underpinning this problem-based approach to assessment, see Peggy Maki, *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*, Second Edition (2010), 123-153.

The Course Portfolio

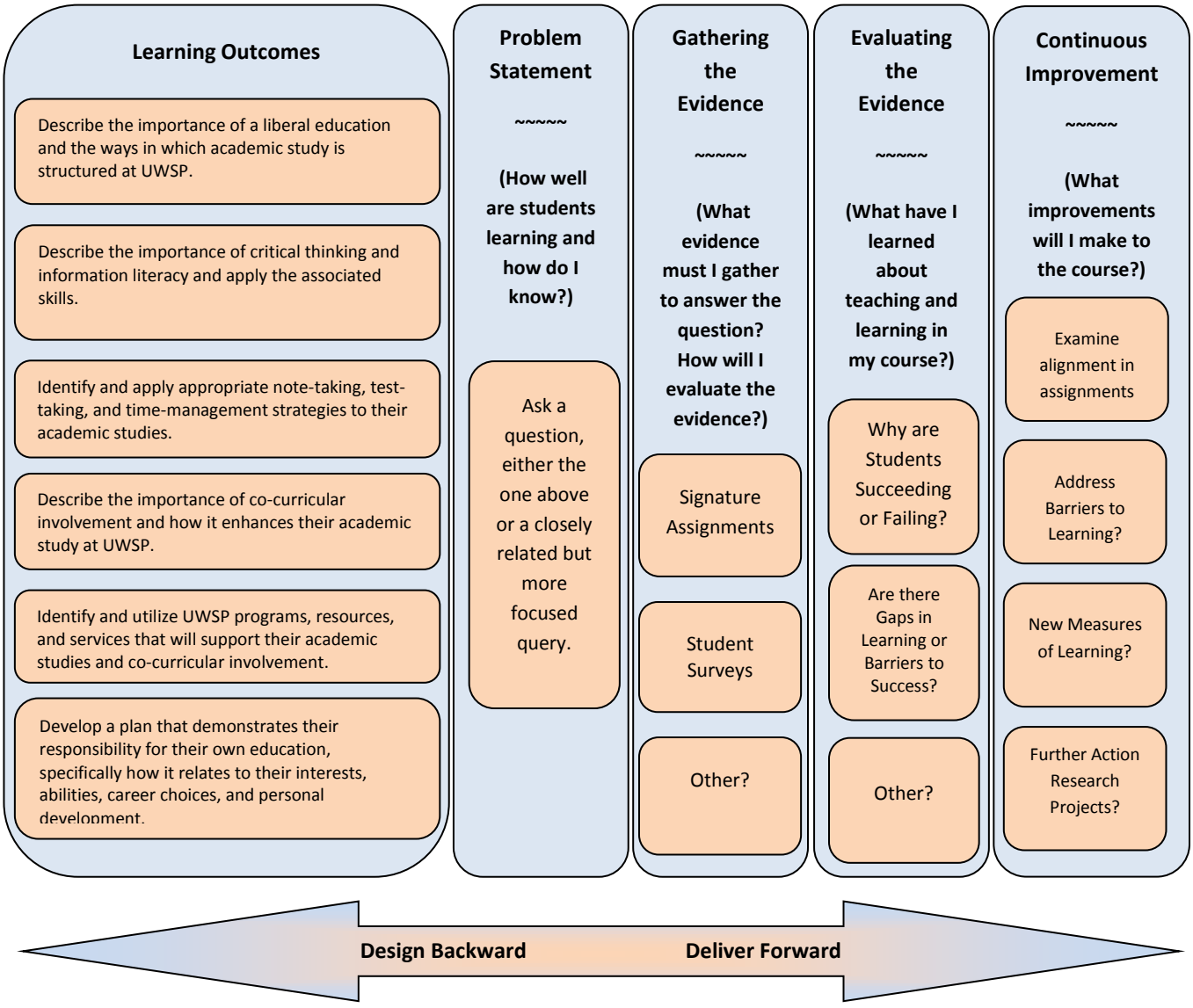
The electronic course portfolio provides an ideal instrument for facilitating this kind of self-reflective process of action research. The course portfolio is a selection of materials from a given course—including the syllabus and relevant examples of student work—along with reflective statements written by the instructor that explore how the course structures and assessment strategies contributed to student learning. (For the relative advantages and disadvantages of other methods of assessment, see "Methods of Direct Assessment: Advantages and Disadvantages" at the end of this explanation.)

Faculty members teaching designated general education courses will be required to prepare and submit a course portfolio on a pre-determined cycle. Each course portfolio should contain the following elements:

1. Course Information:
    a. A syllabus, including an explanation of how the intended learning outcomes of the course align with those of the General Education Program category.
    b. A brief narrative describing how the relevant General Education learning outcomes will be met by students through course experiences, assignments, and/or activities.

2. Assessment Information:
    a. A discipline-appropriate evaluation of student attainment of at least one learning outcome, including a brief explanation of how student learning was assessed. (Note: Although courses should be *designed* to meet all the approved learning outcomes in a particular category, the actual *assessment* can and should focus on a smaller subset of these outcomes.)
    b. Examples of student work related to the evaluation above showing a range of student achievement.
    c. The specific criteria or rubric that was used to evaluate student work.
    d. Results of any other feedback mechanisms used in the course that explore student perceptions of course assignments and their alignment with the general education learning outcomes.
    e. A brief statement explaining how assessment results will be used to improve learning in the course in the future.

The process of preparing a course portfolio in the First Year Seminar is illustrated in the diagram below:



Like any assessment tool, the course portfolio has potential disadvantages. Two in particular are worth noting. First, simply compiling the course portfolio will require time and effort from faculty members already working hard to balance many obligations related to their teaching, scholarship, and service. Second, unlike some methods of assessment, the course portfolio does not rely on nationally-normed benchmarks of student learning that allow comparison to other institutions. With that said, however, the course portfolio does possess a number of advantages that make it a good fit for conducting assessment at UWSP.

In particular, the course portfolio is an instrument designed more for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning than simply for compliance with assessment requirements. This is true precisely because it relies more on faculty reflection and faculty-driven modifications to the curriculum than it does on benchmarks of student achievement. Likewise, because the information required for compiling the course portfolio comes directly from the courses and the instructors involved, the instrument is adaptable to any discipline. The course portfolio, in fact, appears to be among the least disruptive and least time-consuming assessment instruments available: instructors have complete freedom to identify the measurements of student learning that are most appropriate and meaningful for their courses; the information they gather comes directly from their courses, which minimizes the potential burden on both students and instructors; and finally, because the course portfolio is focused on continuous improvement rather than compliance, the amount of information required from each course is relatively modest compared to other assessment methods. When utilized in the manner described below, the course portfolio functions as a means of faculty and instructional development, not simply assessment. Faculty can obtain individualized, constructive feedback from colleagues teaching in the same General Education area, without influencing decisions regarding retention, promotion, and tenure.

For further information on the scholarly underpinnings and use of course portfolios, see the following: Daniel Bernstein et al., *Making Teaching and Learning Visible: Course Portfolios and the Peer Review of Teaching* (San Francisco: Anker Publishing, 2006); http://www.courseportfolio.org, a Web site sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and http://web.wm.edu/sacs/pies/GER/?svr=www, the General Education assessment Web site of the College of William and Mary.

Institutional-Level Assessment

The university periodically has used standardized testing (specifically the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, CAAP) administered by the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning in the past. However, with increasing external calls for accountability, the university was required to select an instrument to be used with regularity as part of our commitment to the national Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) effort and for UW System accountability. In March 2010, Faculty Senate approved the selection of the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly called the MAPP test) as our instrument to be used for VSA. Among the best features of the Proficiency Profile is that it appears useful not just for providing the kind of "value-added" measurement of learning required by the VSA, but also for its potential in helping to assess general education, including program outcomes related to reading, critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. If the test is to be utilized for general education assessment and not just the VSA, the sample sizes required would likely need to be even larger than the minimum numbers (200 freshmen and 200 seniors) established by the testing company.

UWSP also has a history of participating in other surveys (such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE) as part of UW-System initiatives and requirements for accountability that are handled through the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning. Although NSSE is based on student self-reported perceptions, it is grounded in the principles of effective educational practice, which are drawn from the higher education literature. Its overall purpose is to inform improvement efforts at the

institution and, thus, items from the NSSE have been mapped onto UWSP's general education outcomes, to serve as a part of the overall assessment plan.

Although these measures will provide a useful snapshot of student learning in the General Education Program, they cannot provide the kind of fine-grained information required to facilitate continuous improvement of the curriculum. Consequently, the General Education Committee will need to utilize the information gleaned from these institutional-level surveys in the context of other data gathered through course-based assessment.

Evaluating Assessment Data

Within each General Education category, the evaluation of course portfolios will be facilitated by a faculty learning community. The Assessment Coordinator and a member of the GEC representing the general education category will work in conjunction with a small group of faculty who teach in the category under review. (Details about the composition and participation of this small group of faculty members will be developed by the Assessment Coordinator and the General Education Committee).

What are Faculty Learning Communities?

Drawing heavily on the work of Alexander Meiklejohn (*The Experimental College*, 1932) and John Dewey (*How We Think*, 1933), learning communities emerged in the 1930s as a response to increased disciplinary specialization and fragmentation. As a student-centered approach to shared inquiry, learning communities allowed students to work together to understand their varied college experiences, and to provide students with a sense of coherence across disciplines.

Learning communities are not limited to students, however. The use of faculty learning communities has also been successful in higher education. Whether organized by cohort or by topic, faculty learning communities provide an opportunity for curricular redesign, development of new pedagogies, professional development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, as well as other trans-disciplinary collaborations.

Many colleges and universities support faculty development by forming learning communities. Typically, learning communities have 8 to 12 participants and provide opportunities to meet regularly (somewhere between every week and every month) over a period of time (usually for a semester or an academic year). Some faculty learning communities take the form of a book group, while others take the form of a work group to implement some new program or initiative to improve student learning.

In general, however, faculty learning communities work toward a common goal in a structured and trusting environment. This ongoing, social aspect is especially important for the success of faculty learning communities. At their best, faculty learning communities allow for personal and professional growth, meaningful curricular development, and greater collegiality among educators.

Recently, faculty learning communities have been formed around various pedagogical and curricular issues. For example, faculty members in Ohio have used faculty learning communities to investigate the effectiveness of technology in instruction. In Michigan, faculty members have been meeting to figure

out the best ways to incorporate service-learning across various disciplines. In Seattle, educators have worked in learning communities to reflect upon and develop effective small group assignments that promote creativity, collaboration, and innovation. And at Miami University, tenured faculty members have formed learning communities to refresh, renew, and nurture their passion for teaching and learning.

Faculty Learning Communities and Assessment

Because the most meaningful assessment results will be produced through the direct involvement of the faculty members who are actually teaching the courses under review, faculty learning communities can play an important part in the assessment of the General Education program. In particular, groups of 4 to 6 faculty, each organized around the various general education categories (i.e., Humanities, Social Sciences, First Year Seminar, etc.), will gather information about student learning and make recommendations regarding the improvement of the curriculum ("closing the loop").

The process is two-fold: 1) results will be shared with individual faculty members to provide feedback that they can use to improve teaching and learning in their courses; and 2) the findings of the collective portfolio review will be aggregated and reported to the appropriate administrative and governance units to facilitate continuous improvement in the GEP curriculum.

However the process might unfold, each faculty learning community will be asked to generate a brief report about the successes and challenges that emerged in teaching and assessing student learning within its particular area of the curriculum. In addition to this, each faculty learning community will be asked to report what changes they are likely to make (as individuals), and what changes might need to take place (on a larger scale) to improve teaching and learning. To ensure that the reports are as candid and constructive as possible, all identifying information will be excluded. The reports will then be provided to the GEC. Based on this information, the committee will make decisions about potential changes to the GEP, and it will work with CAESE to continue to support faculty members in implementing its decisions.

For example, a faculty learning community might be formed around Quantitative Literacy. As a result of "comparing notes" some instructors might find that their students are struggling with specific mathematical concepts. Participants might choose to share effective educational strategies to remedy this (i.e., sharing of "best practices"). However, it might also turn out that students are struggling because they are placed into courses that are just too difficult for them. In this case, the faculty learning community might recommend that the process by which students "test into" courses be revised. This recommendation would be shared with the Assessment Coordinator who would pass the recommendation to the General Education Committee for consideration.

As another example, a faculty learning community might be formed to consider the U.S. Diversity GEP category. As a result of meeting regularly to discuss successes and challenges, instructors might learn that some students do not fully understand the concepts of marginalization and discrimination. After the faculty learning community finishes its work, participants might wish to collaborate to share resources, case studies, or other useful teaching materials. In some cases, multiple faculty members

might continue to work together and have students from both classes meet together for a common experience (a concert, a play, a guest speaker, etc.). In this way, the faculty learning community might give rise to innovative, cross-disciplinary collaborations beyond the faculty learning community's work and outside of teaching classes. In other cases, the faculty learning community might recommend additional faculty development activities for the campus at-large and the Assessment Coordinator would be in a position to address the need.

Using Assessment Data to Improve Learning

It is the role of each faculty learning community working in concert with the Assessment Coordinator to synthesize information derived from course-based and institutional-level assessment to create a report for the General Education Committee. Each report will evaluate student learning in a given general education category and program outcome and offer recommendations concerning the improvement of the curriculum.

The four program-level learning outcomes for UWSP's General Education Program are:

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

As shown in the General Education Program Curriculum Map (below), students will be expected to achieve these outcomes through courses taken in four levels: Foundation, Investigation, Cultural and Environmental Awareness, and Integration. Within each of these levels, students will take courses designed to develop their skills and knowledge in several categories. For example, in the Foundation level, students will complete a three-credit First Year Seminar course, nine credits of Written and Oral Communication, three credits of Quantitative Literacy, and one credit of Wellness. As is evident in the General Education Program Curriculum Map, student demonstration of achievement of the four program learning outcomes will be distributed across several curricular requirements. From a practical viewpoint, the assessment plan therefore focuses on collecting and evaluating evidence from the courses approved for each category at each level.

The procedure for collecting course-based evidence of student achievement within the General Education Program will be as follows.

1. The General Education Committee reviews and approves courses for General Education credit, based on the course criteria and learning outcomes.
2. Instructors teach General Education courses.

3. Each level of the General Education curriculum—Foundation, Investigation, Integration, and Cultural & Environmental Awareness—as well as each Program Outcome is assessed every five years (see the Assessment Cycle, below).
4. Instructors teaching courses in categories under review in the fall will prepare and submit course portfolios by February 1.
5. The Assessment Coordinator works with the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning to assemble institutional-level assessment information (see below).
6. The Assessment Coordinator facilitates the formation of faculty learning communities to review course portfolios and relevant institutional data.
7. In addition to providing individual feedback to instructors, each faculty learning community, working with the Assessment Coordinator, will compile a report for the General Education Committee, removing references to specific courses and instructors.

The collection of institutional-level data of student achievement within the General Education Program will be as follows.

1. The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will administer the ETS Proficiency Profile standardized test every three years and will work in concert with the Assessment Coordinator on using the results with the faculty learning communities and the General Education Committee.
2. The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) every three years, and will work with the assessment coordinator and GEC to share results that are applicable and useful for assessment of the GEP.
3. The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will oversee and administer other institutional-level assessments as needed or required for external accountability or reporting.
4. When opportunities to collaborate with General Education Program assessment arise, the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning will collaborate with the Assessment Coordinator and General Education Committee to maximize the potential uses of institutional-level data for overall continuous improvement efforts.

Evaluation and reporting of General Education Program assessment will be completed by the General Education Committee as follows.

1. The General Education Committee receives the comprehensive report from the Assessment Coordinator (which includes results from both course-based assessment from the faculty learning communities and the institutional–level assessment from the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning).
2. The General Education Committee reviews the comprehensive report and based on the evidence provided will consider recommended changes, develop additional recommendations, report back to the campus community, and coordinate with CAESE to support faculty who will then guide curriculum development efforts to improve student learning within the General Education Program.

3. If necessary, the General Education Committee submits recommendations for changes in learning outcomes, course criteria, assessment procedures, etc., to the Faculty Senate for discussion and approval.

The Assessment Cycle

Assessment of student learning within the General Education curriculum will take place on a five-year cycle. The first four years of the cycle will be focused on courses in the four levels of the curriculum. In addition, during each of the first four years, information will be gathered related to one of the four General Education Program Outcomes from instructors teaching within the GEP. This may include collecting information from GEP requirements that are embedded within majors (Capstone Experience in the Major and Communication in the Major). In this way, these embedded requirements can aid assessment within department-level academic programs and as a culminating experience for institutional-level evaluation of the General Education Program. (Coordination of this reporting cycle will need to be worked out between the General Education Committee and the Assessment Subcommittee.) Based on these results, the fifth year of the Assessment Cycle will be devoted to a comprehensive review of the General Education Program and Assessment Plan.

Year 1:

- Foundation-Level Courses (First Year Seminar, Written and Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Wellness)
- Program Outcome 1 (Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society)

Year 2:

- Investigation-Level Courses (Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences)
- Program Outcome 2 (Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced)

Year 3:

- Cultural and Environmental Awareness-Level Courses (Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, and Environmental Responsibility)
- Program Outcome 3 (Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability)

Year 4:

- Integration-Level Courses (Interdisciplinary Studies, Experiential Learning, Communication in the Major, and Capstone Experience in the Major)
- Program Outcome 4 (Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems)

Year 5:

- Comprehensive Review of General Education Program and Assessment Plan

A preliminary schedule for the first six years of this assessment plan appears in the table below. Note that because many of UWSP's existing General Degree Requirement courses will initially be "grandfathered" into the new General Education Program, the year preceding the implementation of the new curriculum will be devoted to an Alignment Project intended to allow faculty the needed time to incorporate the new General Education Program learning outcomes into their courses and make any necessary adjustments to their assignments and teaching strategies.

Teaching Year	GE Assessment	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
		Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
2012-2013	*Alignment Project*														
2013-2014	Foundation														
	Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.														
2014-2015	Investigation														
	Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.														
2015-2016	Cultural & Environmental Awareness														
	Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.														
2016-2017	Integration														
	Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.														
2017-2018	Comprehensive Review														
2018-2019	Foundation														
	Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.														

- Instructors teach GDR courses with new GEP outcomes and report on alignment of syllabi and assignments.
- Instructors teach General Education courses; prepare and submit course portfolios by the beginning of each spring semester.
- Faculty learning communities review portfolios and provide feedback to individual instructors.
- Assessment Coordinator aggregates findings and prepares report for General Education Committee by May 1.
- General Education Committee makes recommendations to improve curriculum through faculty governance.
- Instructors incorporate changes to support General Education Program.
- Faculty development opportunities provided through work groups, topical workshops, or action research projects.
- Ongoing teaching and faculty development programs.

Methods of Direct Assessment: Advantages and Disadvantages

Alternative methods of direct assessment:

- Course Completion
- Standardized Testing
- Capstone Course Activities
- Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Student Portfolios

1. Course Completion
    a. Advantages
        - Faculty already must assess the extent to which students meet expectations within their classes in assigning grades. Thus, one might ask simply if passing the course shows some level of educational growth.
        - This would be simple as it would not require new techniques for assessment.
    b. Disadvantages
        - Course grades provide a very blunt measure of assessment. While they provide a simple snapshot of achievement, they are inadequate for assessing achievement of multiple general education learning outcomes. The purpose of assigning a grade is to evaluate the achievement of a single student across a variety of learning outcomes. However, the purpose of GEP assessment is to evaluate the achievement on a specific learning outcome across all students in the course.
        - Grades alone do not provide formative feedback that is necessary for continuous improvement efforts.
    c. Overall reaction:
        - While the assigning of grades is related to assessment, they are not measuring the same thing. As such, one cannot serve as a substitute for the other.

2. Standardized Tests
    a. Advantages
        - Standardized tests are commonly used to assess student learning. These can be in the form of nationally-normed tests from external sources, or internally-designed tests that more closely match our specific learning outcomes.
        - They can be issued on a pre/post basis to identify value-added measurements of student learning. For example, the test can be administered to a statistical sample of incoming students and those who have completed their general education requirements. The results can then be compared to identify student growth occurring through the general education classes.
        - Nationally-normed tests provide the ability to compare our students' results to other institutions and provide a direct measure of relative quality. The Assessment

Subcommittee has proposed using the ETS Proficiency Profile to satisfy VSA requirements. An advantage to the ETS Proficiency Profile is that it allows for the inclusion of internally-designed questions to assess learning outcomes that might not be directly addressed in the standard test, such as environmental literacy.

- By administering the tests to seniors, standardized tests provide a measurement of deep knowledge that students retain beyond the semester that a specific class is taken.

b. Disadvantages

- There are numerous difficulties in determining how to interpret the results and use them to improve teaching and learning. It would be tempting to use statistical analysis to identify differences in average scores across courses that satisfy the same GEP requirement. While such correlations between class choice and test outcomes could be performed, the results are not scientific due to the potential for selection bias. For example, suppose that students who have taken a chemistry lab perform better on the exam than those taking other natural science lab courses. This may simply identify that students with strong, pre-existing, natural science skills are more likely to take a chemistry lab, compared to students that have previously struggled with natural science classes. As a result it is difficult to assess if stronger learning occurs from specific courses due to pre-existing differences in student skills that might shape their course selection.
- The administration of tests to a large sample could create significant budgetary strains as well as difficulties in getting (or requiring) students to take the exams outside of class time. The College of William and Mary has a special 'assessment day' during which all classes are cancelled to accommodate such tests. Other schools have used incentives to motivate students to volunteer to take the test. Still other institutions have looked at embedding common exam questions in final exams for all courses in the same general education category.
- There is a legitimate fear that such tests could encourage instructors to 'teach to the test,' in order to improve student performance on the test, which is not really the same as improving student learning.
- Such a test would need to be carefully designed to assess the general education learning outcomes without inadvertently favoring the methods and paradigms of specific disciplines within general education.

c. Overall reaction

- It is expected that the ETS Proficiency Profile will be administered to a cross-sectional sample of graduating seniors and incoming students in selected years to satisfy VSA requirements and those of the UW System. The test will also provide a useful value-added measurement of the achievement of general education learning outcomes, though it does not provide course-level feedback to foster continuous improvement. Thus, the test, by itself, does not satisfy all the goals of assessment, but should be used as one part of our general education assessment plan.

3. Capstone Course Activities
    a. Advantages:
        - Capstone courses allow students an opportunity to reflect and complete assignments which combine the knowledge and skills learned throughout a curriculum. Such courses provide a viable and attractive option for program assessment of major requirements which naturally build off the general education requirements.
    b. Disadvantages:
        - A number of academic programs have capstone course requirements. However, these courses are typically rigorous and focus on culminating the knowledge and skills of a specific discipline. This approach would seem to work best if there were capstone courses designed specifically for general education, separate from the students' majors.
        - Depending on how the capstone experiences were designed, they could have the same disadvantages as the standardized testing. Specifically, it would difficult to correlate results to the specific general education courses taken without selection bias, though this would alleviate the sample size issues.
    c. Overall reaction:
        - In the absence of capstone courses as a specific part of the general education curriculum, these do not seem to be a viable option.

4. Student Portfolios
    a. Advantages:
        - Student portfolios, if done well, can provide a mechanism for assessing both the overall achievement of learning outcomes and the growth of achievement as students progress through a curriculum.
        - Student portfolios enable assessment of complex sets of tasks and objectives, with examples of many different types of student work, including interdisciplinary learning and capabilities;
        - Student portfolios can capture a variety of work, potentially providing both qualitative and quantitative measures of achievement and in-class and out-of-class learning experiences with considerable flexibility in their design.
        - Student portfolios require artifacts demonstrating student learning, which are considered to be a form of "authentic assessment" – that is, a demonstration of knowledge, skill, or disposition
        - Student portfolios facilitate student reflection and metacognition, and the process of compiling the portfolio can facilitate additional understanding about what they have and have not yet learned.
    b. Disadvantages:
        - Student portfolios would need to be assembled either by students directly, or by requiring faculty to post examples of achievement from their courses. The result is

that either the students or faculty would have a substantial requirement present in assembling these documents.

- Once completed, the student portfolios would need to be examined by a group charged with evaluating the portfolios using a common rubric; this is a labor-intensive process. Given the number of students attending UWSP, we would recommend only reviewing a statistical sampling of portfolios. Without examining each portfolio, it would be difficult to monitor compliance and provide a mechanism for enforcement of this requirement.
- There can be added expenses in storing and organizing the portfolios.

c. Overall reaction:

- Student portfolios are very attractive in theory, though there are numerous complications in implementing such a strategy that would provide quality portfolios. Portfolios can be particularly useful for program assessment of major requirements, particularly when they can be blended with a capstone course or requirement.
- The proposed focus on course portfolios will provide a more manageable amount of data for both faculty assembling the portfolios and for those charged for evaluating the portfolios. In addition, course portfolios achieve two important outcomes: 1) assessment of the GEP, and 2) ongoing faculty development.

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: Applying Knowledge and Skills**				**Cultural & Environmental Awareness**		
Program Outcomes	*First Year Seminar*	*Written and Oral Communication*	*Quantitative Literacy*	*Wellness*	*Arts*	*Humanities*	*Historical Perspectives*	*Social Sciences*	*Natural Sciences*	*Interdisciplinary Studies*	*Experiential Learning*	*Communication in the Major*	*Capstone Experience in the Major*	*Global Awareness*	*U.S. Diversity*	*Environmental Responsibility*
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	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		M			
Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.	I			I						D	D		M	D	D	D
Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.					I	I	I	I	I	D	D	D	M			

I → Introduce D → Develop M → Master

FOR INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATION

5. ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

The Faculty Senate charged the General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC) with making "recommendations regarding the administration of the new GEP" in Step 6 of the review process.

The GEPRC recommends establishing the following positions to support the new GEP from among the existing faculty at UWSP:

- A Director of General Education
- An Assessment Coordinator
- A Coordinator of the First Year Experience (First Year Seminar and associated programs)

With respect to the Director of General Education, the GEPRC agrees with the AASCU report in 2006 which contained the following recommendation: "Finally, achieving a more focused and unified set of GDRs could be immeasurably helped by the creation of a Director of General Education at UWSP. As the campus moves toward greater focus in GDR and alignment with a refined University Mission Statement, the Director of GE could serve as a coordinator of the various departmental offerings and the need for assessment. The Director would ideally serve as a link among the various committees evaluating courses for inclusion in the GDR as well as with advisors, academic support personnel, and departments as they make decisions about scheduling and course offerings."

Based on the above, the GEPRC recommends that the Director of General Education will work in close conjunction with the General Education Committee to ensure a smooth transition from the old General Degree Requirements to the new General Education Program. The Director of General Education will also collaborate with other units on campus to support the various aspects of the GEP curriculum, and also ensure that enough courses will be offered in the new GEP. This will require working closely with the Curriculum Committee, Registration and Records, Deans, and Departments. In addition to this, to carry out the assessment of the GEP, the Director of General Education will collaborate with the Assessment Subcommittee, the Assessment Coordinator, and the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning.

The Assessment Coordinator will have knowledge of accreditation standards, assessment methods and practices, and data collection and analysis. The Assessment Coordinator will use this knowledge to support academic program assessment efforts, including both department-based academic programs and the GEP. The Assessment Coordinator will work with the GEC to form faculty learning communities, assist the faculty learning communities to develop a report of the course portfolios, and integrate institution-level assessment measures. The Assessment Coordinator will collaborate with the Assessment Subcommittee and offer ongoing opportunities to make improvements to our assessment approach. Finally, the Assessment Coordinator will help to facilitate the work of the Assessment Subcommittee by assisting with providing feedback on assessment reports, collecting and analyzing assessment data, and making recommendations for improvements to our assessment efforts to faculty governance.

The First Year Experience Coordinator will work to recruit instructors for the First Year Seminar, coordinate with the Curriculum Committee on new FYS course proposals, ensure that enough courses and sections are available each semester, and facilitate the type of collaboration between Academic

Affairs and Student Affairs necessary to make the First Year Seminars part of a broader First Year Experience. Additionally, the First Year Experience Coordinator might work with the Freshman Orientation staff to create additional opportunities to advertise FYS course offerings and engage students from the moment they arrive on campus.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSITIONING TO THE NEW GEP

One of the central challenges we face when implementing the new General Education Program (GEP) is the curricular transition from the old GDRs to the new GEP. This transition requires that we address two distinct challenges: first, we need to "populate" the new GEP with courses, and second, we need to develop a system of "dual designation" for courses that satisfy requirements under both old GDRs and the new GEP. Each challenge requires careful planning and coordination with several groups on campus.

"Grandfathering" existing GDR courses

The feedback we received from colleagues on campus suggested that the General Education Committee (GEC) should "grandfather" existing GDR courses into the new GEP. Not only does this expedite the process, it also honors existing courses that our colleagues have developed over many years. These are high quality courses and it makes sense to include them at the outset. Eventually, all courses in the new GEP will be considered on a more detailed basis, but as a start, this grandfathering effort will help us in the transition to the new GEP.

In order to support this grandfathering effort, every department chair on campus received a cover letter with instructions and a worksheet that lists each GDR course offered in their unit. We've asked that these completed worksheets be returned by mid-October so that the GEC can begin consideration of which existing GDR courses can be included in the new GEP. All that is required at this time is that departments indicate preferences/recommendations regarding new GEP category designations appropriate to each GDR courses. The GEC will consider these preferences, and if any additional information is needed, then the department will be contacted. For now, however, all that needs to be submitted are the worksheets with the preferences indicated (course syllabi aren't required unless requested by the GEC).

Approving individual courses for the new GEP

Later this fall and early next spring, we recommend that the GEC develop the policies and procedures for considering individual course proposals for the new GEP. This process will need to be fairly nuanced, however, and will require careful planning.

When the new GEC was formed, it replaced the old GDR Subcommittee. So, in addition to assigning GEP designations to courses, the GEC also has the authority and responsibility for considering any new GDR designations sought.

We recommend that the GEC prioritize those courses seeking GDR approval that are being offered in Spring 2012, as well as any new FYS sections that will be offered. In the short term, we recommend that the GEC request that departments complete the existing GDR forms and then use these completed forms as the basis for approving these "high priority" courses.

However, we also recommend that the GEC develop a process by which to consider new GEP course proposals, which may not be fully ready until the end of fall semester or even early spring semester. Consistent with the Assessment Plan being proposed above in this Step 6 document, we recommend that this approval process require several components, including at minimum: a sample syllabus (showing the alignment between the course learning outcomes and the learning outcomes for the GEP category being sought) and a sample assignment (not all assignments, just a sample assignment).

This second part, the sample assignment, is related to our need to collect assessment information from GEP courses, which is something we've never done on campus. Because it is new, we are being cautious with how we proceed so that we don't create too much work. That being said, however, we cannot continue offering general education courses without keeping an eye on assessment. (For more information about the Assessment Plan for the GEP, see the section above in this Step 6 document.)

If the course under consideration is a completely new course, it will need to first be approved by Curriculum Committee (and possibly approved by the Graduate Council if it is a "slash" course). Once approval is secured, then the GEC will consider the request for GEP designation.

During the transition period, when the GEC receives a request for GEP approval, it will work to assign appropriate GDR designations as well. So, if a course is submitted for the new U.S. Diversity category, the GEC will consider "reverse mapping" this course back onto the old GDR system (probably under the Minority Studies category). Similar reverse mapping processes will take place for other courses submitted for GEP designation. In this way, a new course seeking GEP approval will also be considered for inclusion in the GDR system (unless otherwise noted).

Developing a system of "dual designations"

We recommend that the GEC work in conjunction with the Admissions Office, Registration and Records, and the Catalog Editor to develop a "dual designation" system for both GDR courses and GEP courses. This system of "dual designation" is necessary during the transition period, and in order to serve students who remain enrolled under the old system, this practice may extend several years after the new GEP is officially implemented. So, for several years, our course offerings will carry a dual designation that includes both the GDR and GEP.

Programmers on campus have been busy developing a new format for Degree Progress Reports (DPRs) and in doing so, they have developed a new set of GEP course designations, and these include:

GEP Category:	**Abbreviation:**
First Year Seminar	FYS
Written Communication	WC
Oral Communication	OC
Quantitative Literacy	QL
Wellness	WLN
Arts	ART
Humanities	HU
Historical Perspectives	HP
Social Sciences	SS
Natural Sciences	NS

U.S. Diversity	USD
Global Awareness	GA
Environmental Responsibility	ER
Experiential Learning	XL
Interdisciplinary Studies	IS

So, under the dual designation system, courses may look something like the following, depending on the context.

In the CATALOG, courses could be listed as follows:

ANTH 110. Contemporary Cultural Diversity. 3 cr. Introduces the field of cultural anthropology, and with examples, explores the contemporary challenges faced by diverse peoples around the world. (GDR:SS1;NW) (GEP:SS;GA)

PHIL 380. Environmental Ethics. 3 cr. Philosophical, religious, and scientific concepts and values that have structured human attitudes toward the natural environment. (GDR:HU3;EL) (GEP:HU;ER)

PSYC 110. Introduction to Psychology. 3 cr. Introduction to scientific study of behavior and mental processes, and methods used in psychological research. (GDR:SS1) (GEP:SS)

In the TIMETABLE, courses could be listed as follows:

ANTHROPOLOGY 110 CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL DIVERSITY (GDR:SS1;NW) (GEP:SS;GA)

PHILOSOPHY 380 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (GDR:HU3;EL) (GEP:HU;ER)

PSYCHOLOGY 110 INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY (GDR:SS1) (GEP:SS)

And finally, in the TRANSFER INFORMATION SYSTEM (TIS) there is a six character limit for each designation, and must be listed individually. So, the TIS system could be programmed as follows:

UW Institution Course		**UW Stevens Point Matching Course**					**Special Conditions**
Course	**Title**	**Course**	**Title**	**Credits**	**Level**	**GenEd**	
ANTHRO 102	Introduction to Anthropology	ANTH 110	Contemporary Cultural Diversity	3.00	L	SS1 NW GE:SS GE:GA	
PHL 341	Environmental Ethics	PHIL 380	Environmental Ethics	3.00	U	HU3 EL GE:HU GE:ER	
PSYCH 101	Introduction to Psychology	PSYC 110	Introduction to Psychology	3.00	L	SS1 GE:SS	

Recommended timeline of changes

Please find below a suggested semester-by-semester timeline for implementing the new UWSP General Education program by the Fall 2013 semester. (Note: This timeline closely matches the timeline included in the "packet" of materials that was distributed to Deans and Chairs earlier this fall semester.)

FALL 2011:

General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC):

- Step 6 proposal will be submitted to Academic Affairs Committee concerning assessment and administration of the new GEP
- Step 6 will be distributed to campus for consideration, feedback, and approval
- GEPRC will provide recommendations to other groups on campus for related changes

General Education Committee (GEC)

- The new General Education Committee (GEC) will implement procedures for including courses in the new GEP curriculum, including:
    - "grandfathering in" existing courses
    - approving existing courses for the GEP

Curriculum Committee (CC):

- Begins receiving and reviewing changes to majors from Departments
- Continues receiving and reviewing new course proposals (including those being designed for new GEP)

First Year Seminar (FYS) Development:

- Ten faculty deliver FYS courses
- Additional faculty begin training for First Year Seminar, to be delivered Fall 2012

Assessment Subcommittee (ASC):

- Departments reviews feedback from ASC on draft Assessment Plans; revise Assessment Plans as appropriate
- Selected departments will submit regular Department Assessment Reports according to new schedule and new format (see updated timeline); ASC begins review of Assessment Reports

For Departments:

- Begin planning to submit revisions to Major to Curriculum Committee with respect to:
    - New Degree Requirements
    - New courses for the GEP:
        - Communication in the Major
        - Capstone Experience in the Major
- Faculty review approved GEP category learning outcomes; begin revising existing course syllabi
- Timetable:
    - Third week in September – final Spring 2012 Timetable due to Registration & Records
    - Last week in November – draft Fall 2012 Timetable due to Registration & Records
        - First week in February - Deadline for changes to the Fall 2012 Timetable
        - Second week in February - Fall 2012 Timetable appears on the web

SPRING 2012:

General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC):

- The GEPRC finalizes its work on Step 6; provides recommendations to other groups on campus

General Education Committee (GEC):

- The GEC continues populating the new GEP with courses (grandfathering in courses; proposals), including Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major courses

Curriculum Committee (CC):

- Begins receiving and reviewing changes to majors from Departments
- Continues receiving and reviewing new course proposals

First Year Seminar (FYS) Development:

- Continued support of new FYS instructors offering courses Fall 2012

General Education Program Workshops:

- Develop Communication in the Major Workshop(s)
- Develop Experiential Learning Workshop

Assessment Subcommittee (ASC):

- Review submitted Department Assessment Reports; revise reporting format and evaluation rubric as appropriate
- Continue working with departments to revise assessment plans

For Departments:

- Continue submitting Major revisions to Curriculum Committee with respect to:
    - New Degree Requirements
    - New courses (in general), as well as:
        - Communication in the Major
        - Capstone Experience in the Major
- Faculty begin incorporating GEP category learning outcomes into existing course syllabi that will be offered in the new GEP
- Faculty begin development of new courses based on GEP category learning outcomes (new courses require approval from Curriculum Committee before seeking GEP designation)
- Timetable:
    - First week in February – final Fall 2012 Timetable due to Registration & Records
    - First week in May – draft Spring 2013 Timetable due to Registration & Records
        - Third week in September - Deadline for changes to the Spring Timetable
        - Fourth week in September - Spring Timetable appears on the web

FALL 2012:

General Education Committee (GEC):

- The GEC continues approving courses for the GEP curriculum including Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major courses

Curriculum Committee (CC):

- Continues receiving and reviewing changes to majors from Departments

First Year Seminar (FYS) Development:

- New group of instructors teach First Year Seminar courses
- Applications for First Year Seminar, Fall 2013

Assessment Subcommittee (ASC):

- Selected departments submit regular Department Assessment Reports according to new schedule and new format (see updated timeline)

For Departments:

- Departments finalize revisions to major curricula, planning to implement:
    - New Degree Requirements
    - Communication in the Major (Faculty begin attending Communication in the Major Workshops)
    - Capstone Experience in the Major
- Faculty continue incorporating GEP category learning outcomes into existing course syllabi that will be offered in the new GEP
- Faculty continue development of new courses based on GEP category learning outcomes (new courses require approval from Curriculum Committee before seeking GEP designation)
- Departments begin preparing for advising students in new Major(s) and GEP
- Timetable:
    - Third week in September – final Spring 2013 Timetable due to Registration & Records
    - Last week in November – draft Fall 2013 Timetable due to Registration & Records
        - First week in February - Deadline for changes to the Fall 2012 Timetable
        - Second week in February - Fall 2013 Timetable appears on the web

SPRING 2013:

General Education Committee (GEC)

- The General Education Committee (GEC) continues to consider courses for the GEP curriculum

Curriculum Committee (CC):

- Continues receiving and reviewing changes to majors from Departments

First Year Seminar (FYS) Development:

- Training for First Year Seminar instructors, Fall 2013

For Departments:

- Departments finalize planning for changes to majors:
- Please encourage faculty to attend the Annual January Teaching Conference
- Faculty finalize incorporating GEP category learning outcomes into existing course syllabi that will be offered in the new GEP
- Faculty finalize development of new courses based on GEP category learning outcomes (new courses require approval from Curriculum Committee before seeking GEP designation)
- Timetable:
    - First week in February – final Fall 2013 Timetable due to Registration & Records
    - First week in May – draft Spring 2014 Timetable due to Registration & Records
        - Third week in September - Deadline for changes to the Spring 2014 Timetable
        - Fourth week in September - Spring 2014 Timetable appears on the web

FALL 2013

- New General Education Program (GEP) and new Degree Requirements become effective for incoming students
- Faculty offer courses in new GEP with learning outcomes clearly stated on course syllabi

7. ADVISING RECOMMENDATIONS

GEPRC recommends that the Academic Affairs Office form a working group made up of faculty and professional academic advisors with representation from each College to begin working on an advising manual for the General Education Program.

The GEPRC proposes that Deans and Chairs discuss how they want to organize training for advising the new GEP within each College and Department. All faculty and academic staff members who serve as academic advisors should be prepared to advise for the new GEP no later than 2012-2013 academic year.

8. GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM WORKSHOPS

Implementing elements new to UWSP in the General Education Program will require support and training for faculty and staff. The existing FYS pilot program is an example of this type of support. The GEPRC recommends that the Academic Affairs Office sponsor new training as needed, including the workshops discussed below.

As with the Writing Emphasis portion of the GDRs, instructors will need guidance in addressing the written and oral communication outcomes associated with the Communication in the Major requirement. The GEPRC recommends that the Academic Affairs Office work in conjunction with the Department of English and the Division of Communication to sponsor workshops for instructors of Communication in the Major courses.

Likewise, the Experiential Learning requirement is new to the General Education Program at UWSP. Some departments may decide to embed this requirement in their major as part of existing requirements, while others will not. Students whose majors do not include an Experiential Learning component will need to find another appropriate Experiential Learning course, or a faculty or academic staff member willing to be their Experiential Learning Activity mentor. Although the ELA Activity Guide in Step 5d (Appendix I) provides a thorough explanation of all the steps students and mentors need to complete, it's likely that faculty and academic staff may need additional guidance. The GEPRC recommends that the Academic Affairs Office work with appropriate groups on campus to sponsor workshops for ELA mentors in order to clarify expectations.

9. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The GEPRC also recommends that the Academic Affairs Committee (in conjunction with other appropriate faculty governance committees) address the issue of student expectations and responsibilities. This set of expectations and responsibilities could be organized under the larger idea of a "learning community" that helps students to make sense of the new General Education Program as well as their curricular and co-curricular experiences at UWSP. Student expectations

and responsibilities could be communicated to students in a variety of ways including: *UWSP Catalog*, admissions and orientation materials, FYS courses, appropriate UWSP webpages, etc. The text below is meant to be a draft to begin the conversation in the appropriate committees.

The General Education Program also serves to introduce students to the broad, shared learning communities of which they are members. Along with the many opportunities students will find at UWSP, there are responsibilities that the university asks students to shoulder while pursuing their educations. In particular, students will be expected to:

- Challenge themselves by setting ambitious goals, putting academic achievement first, and exploring new ideas, new cultures, and new opportunities.
- Choose a path by assuming responsibility for their educations, making deliberate choices, and crafting realistic plans for achieving their goals by analyzing the specific structure and requirements of the GEP and their majors/minors.
- Connect with others at UWSP through co-curricular activities, student organizations, and other campus and community events.
- Serve others by putting their knowledge, skills, and abilities to work for the larger community.

APPENDIX - Determining Your First Mathematics Course

The mathematics placement code you received from taking the UW System Mathematics Placement Exam during regional testing or at the beginning of the year determines which Mathematics course you are initially eligible to take.

- Look up your placement code on the chart below to determine the courses for which you have sufficient prerequisites to register. Consult an academic adviser for the course most appropriate for your educational and post-graduate plans.
- If you are a transfer student, check with the Admissions Office to determine which prerequisites your transferred courses will satisfy.
- If you are placed into Math 90, you should enroll in that course during your first semester and must complete the course before you earn 30 credits. If you do not, you will be restricted to enrolling in a maximum of 12 credits per semester until you complete Math 90.
- If you do not believe that your placement is accurate, then you may retake the test once, or you may petition once to participate in an alternate placement process. Contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Room B246, Science Building, (715) 346-2120.

Mathematics Placement Code	Initial Mathematics Course
Code 1	Math 90
Code 3	Either Math 100[1] or Math 105[1]
Code 4 or higher	Any of Math 109, 111, 112[2], 118, 119[2], 228[3], 355
Code 7	Must complete Math 118 before taking Math 120
Code 8	Must complete Math 119[2] before taking Math 120
Code 9	May enroll in Math 120[4]
Code 99: Your mathematics placement has not been determined. Do NOT register for any mathematics course. Contact the Department of Mathematical Sciences for additional placement information.	

NOTES:

1. You may not earn credit in both 100 and 105. Math 105 does not serve as a prerequisite for any other mathematics course.
2. You may not earn credit in both Math 112 and 119.
3. Only available to education majors. Requires concurrent registration in MathEd 228
4. Although both Math 118 (Precalculus Algebra) and Math 119 (Precalculus Trigonometry) are prerequisites for Math 120 (Calculus I), in some cases, advisers may allow you to take 119 and 120 concurrently.