

**The Bergen Community College Committee on General Education**

**DEFINITIONS AND SYSTEMS OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

**A Sampling from Various Sources\***

**George Cronk**

- \* Ventura College
- NJ Administrative Code
- Bergen Community College
- University of Cincinnati
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Anderson College
- Washington State University
- New Mexico State University
- Salisbury State University

March 26, 2004

## **A Concise Definition**

### **VENTURA COLLEGE (a two-year college in CA)**

**General Education:** A program of courses in the arts and sciences that provides students with a broad educational experience. Courses typically are introductory in nature and provide students with fundamental skills and knowledge in mathematics, English, arts, humanities, and physical, biological, and social sciences. Transfer students often take these classes while attending a community college. Completion of a general education program is required for a baccalaureate degree.

## **THE NJ LEGAL DEFINITION**

### **NJ Administrative Code 9A:1-1.2**

"General Education" means instruction that presents forms of expression, fields of knowledge, and methods of inquiry fundamental to intellectual growth and to a mature understanding of the world and the human condition, as distinguished from "specialized education," which prepares individuals for particular occupations or specific professional responsibilities.

[The NJ specification of the structure of community college general education programs was established in the early 1980s in NJAC 9:4-1.6(d)1.-5. There, the following discipline categories are listed: i. Communications; ii. Mathematics and Sciences; iii. Social Sciences; and iv. Humanities (including literature, philosophy, languages, history, the arts, and "other"). "Theoretically-based physical education courses" are also permitted (not required) if a given college so decides.

NJAC 9:4-1.6(d)1. defines general education as "a broad distribution of courses . . . which emphasize the acquisition of knowledge, comprehension and evaluation of ideas, the ability to think constructively and creatively, and the capacity to communicate effectively."]

**From *General Education at Bergen Community College* (1983), 13-15.**

### **THE CONCEPT OF GENERAL EDUCATION: SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The concept of general education is a modern expression of an ancient idea: the idea of the well-educated, and therefore cultured and liberated person, in touch with the realities of human existence, both past and present. A general education is what all truly educated people have (and ought to have) in common. As such, general education is opposed to excessive academic "individualism" and "overspecialization," to the fragmentation of the learning process via "disciplinism" and "departmentalism." General education stresses common or shared learning, the communal-social rather than the private-individualistic aspects of the educational enterprise.

General education requirements are to be distinguished from elective and "major" requirements. "Free" electives and academic "majors" express the private and individual concerns of both students and faculty; but general education, which is oriented toward common learning, is an attempt to create a sphere of higher education shared by all students and faculty.

We must also be careful not to confuse general education with either "liberal" or "humanistic" education. A liberal education includes the general education, free elective, and major components of a comprehensive A.A. or B.A. degree program, general education comprising only one component thereof. And a humanistic education involves a relatively narrow program of studies in the so-called "humanities" (the arts, history, literature and languages, philosophy, religion, etc.), a program which need not include studies in mathematics, the natural sciences, or the social sciences. A general education differs from a "humanistic" education in that it includes systematic studies in all major academic spheres (humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, communications, health and physical education, etc.).

In summary, then, general education should be general, i.e., not focused upon "majors" or academic and vocational specializations. Its object is "common learning," based upon those realities, experiences, and concerns which all humans share by virtue of their common participation in "the human situation." While majors and free electives give expression to the private or individualistic interests of students and teachers, general education is an attempt to concentrate upon the public or communal dimensions of human existence. Its emphasis is upon our shared values and beliefs, our shared sense of time and history, our shared relationship with nature, our shared membership in institutions and societies, our shared cultural experiences, and so on. Thus, in addition to the requirement that a general education program speak meaningfully to the problems of the human condition and of modern culture, such a program should also serve the purpose of transmitting to students a common (and therefore shared) cultural and intellectual heritage. And to achieve the goals of general education, we must seek to foster a spirit of common enterprise and unity of vision among both students and faculty.

**Preface to "The Goals and Objectives of the BCC General Education Program," approved by the BCC Faculty Senate on February 3, 1998.**

## **THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BCC GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **PREFACE**

The concept of general education is a modern expression of an ancient idea: the idea of the well-educated, and therefore cultured and liberated, person, in touch with the realities of human existence, both past and present. A general education is what all truly educated people have (and ought to have) in common. As such, general education is opposed to excessive academic "individualism" and "overspecialization," to the fragmentation of the learning process via "disciplinism" and "departmentalism." General education stresses common or shared learning, the communal-social rather than the private-individualistic aspects of the general educational enterprise. (Cronk, 1983, 13)

Bergen Community College recognizes that a general education is composed of two inextricably related components: (1) a set of processes that involves the gathering, interpretation, and presentation of knowledge and (2) a body of knowledge that is common to all well-educated individuals. Although some courses will focus on process activities (e.g., English Composition I and II and Speech Communication) and other courses will focus on presenting a discrete body of knowledge (e.g., courses in the Natural Sciences, Mathematics, the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and Wellness and Exercise Science), there is a fundamental interaction between the process and content levels of education, which is evident throughout the general education program at Bergen Community College.

Therefore, with the help of their general education courses, students will develop process skills (e.g., critical thinking, effective writing and oral communication, and research techniques) and will become familiar with discrete bodies of knowledge from the Humanities, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Social Sciences, and Wellness and Exercise Science. Students will develop an understanding of the basic themes in each of these areas through course-specific applications of process skills. The aim of all general education courses is to take students beyond the acquisition of course-specific knowledge and beyond the immediate application of learning and to provide an enduring foundation of basic general knowledge on which they can build (Hirsch, *passim*).

The goals and objectives of the general education program at Bergen Community College have been developed with reference to the college's mission statement. In particular, the following points from the mission statement are reflected in the general education goals:

1. To develop in students a desire for lifelong learning.
2. To provide students with the motivation, knowledge, and skills necessary for continued and independent living.

3. To improve the reading, speaking, writing, mathematical, and interpersonal skills of students.
4. To assist students in clarifying their personal values and their philosophies of life.
5. To assist students in thinking critically about current events and issues and in acquiring an adequate understanding of society and its institutions.
6. To develop in students an understanding and appreciation of the histories and cultures of both western and non-western societies.
7. To assist students in acquiring the attitudes and skills necessary to apply systematic, critical, and discriminating thought to the solution of problems.
8. To provide a general education program calculated to equip students with a broad academic and cultural background and to enable them to think and communicate effectively.

General education programs have been criticized for requiring students to take widely varied groups of courses that appear to have little or no connection to one another.

It appears that there is little or no effort to synthesize and integrate within and across courses and disciplines in the general education program. The general education courses are too often taught as a simplified introduction to a discipline rather than as courses that are part of a program providing a liberal arts foundation (Luckenbill and McCabe, 18).

Bergen Community College recognizes the importance of synthesizing and integrating the information and processes taught in its general education courses. This concern for integration is an integral part of the program and is reflected simultaneously on two separate levels:

1. The content and process components of a general education are largely inseparable, and courses will systematically present both levels of knowledge, and
2. The content of a general education includes overlapping bodies of knowledge that may be presented in a variety of courses with a variety of foci and a variety of emphases. Students and faculty will endeavor to recognize and understand the significance of these overlapping substantive areas.

The general education goals and objectives that appear on the following pages assume that students will demonstrate the knowledge of content and processes at a level that is at or higher than a minimal competency level. Some students may not achieve competency in all areas, but the college will determine a level of minimal overall competency that is necessary for the fulfillment of

general education requirements. It is expected that most students will exceed these minimal levels in all or most of the components of a general education.

Nevertheless, colleges do not create a final product; they are way stations on the road from life's beginning to its conclusion. College general education programs assist students in the development of skills and knowledge that will aid them in their life's journey. There is no finality to the tasks that are engaged in by college students; they are tasks that were started before entering college and that will be continued throughout the remainder of the individual's life. Thus, the following goals and objectives are steps in a learning process that is a lifetime activity. As a result of an effective general education program, students should demonstrate growth in each of the goal areas designated in the following pages.

## REFERENCES

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# **UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI**

## **The Meaning of General Education**

### **General Education as a Unifying Ideal for the University**

This document outlines a general education approach at the University of Cincinnati that proposes common goals for all baccalaureate students at this complex institution. This plan embodies a coherent educational vision shared by the diverse academic units of the University that has emerged from extensive faculty discussions over many years.

### **The Definition of General Education at the University of Cincinnati**

General Education embraces the traditional subjects normally required of educated persons that form the shared intellectual heritage of our diverse culture. It teaches the skills of critical thinking, and of accurate and effective communication. It develops openness to the views of others, and allows revision of judgments after careful and critical thought. General Education promotes the integration, synthesis, and application of knowledge, and includes proficiency in information literacy.

General Education fosters an important intellectual attitude: commitment to and participation in a life of thought and continuous learning. General Education promotes global awareness. The educated person is conscious of the important social and ethical concerns of the day, sensitive to diversity, and cognizant of technological, scientific and societal changes, and their effects on humankind. Such understandings equip the individual to make meaningful contributions to society.

### **The University of Cincinnati General Education Program:**

- emphasizes critical thinking
- develops effective verbal, written, aural, and visual communication
- includes familiarity with multiple areas of traditional knowledge
- supports intellectual excellence and openness
- integrates study among disciplines
- encourages commitment to personal social accountability and responsibility
- promotes awareness of the world at large
- fosters information literacy
- values lifelong learning

### **Baccalaureate Competencies**

The Baccalaureate Competencies are the four primary goals and desired outcomes to be achieved by all University of Cincinnati graduates. They emerge from the above definition of general education. These goals and outcomes are pervasive components of all courses and experiences, and equip a student with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a full and productive life.

**Critical Thinking: Critical Thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas from multiple perspectives.**

The educated individual thinks critically and analytically about subjects. Critical thinking includes the capability for analysis, problem solving, logical argument, the application of scholarly and scientific methods, the accurate use of terminology, and information literacy. The particular critical thinking skills vary from discipline to discipline.

**Effective Communication: Effective Communication embraces aural, visual, and language arts, including the ability to read, write, speak, and listen; it is the effective use of various resources and technology for personal and professional communication.**

The educated individual must be able to understand and convey ideas in diverse contexts, using appropriate communication and information technology resources and skills. Aural and visual communication proficiencies are demonstrated through the performance and graphic arts. Among important language capabilities are proper usage, appropriate style, and the ability to formulate a coherent, well-supported argument using language appropriate to academic and public discourse.

**Knowledge Integration: Knowledge Integration is the ability to fuse information and concepts from multiple disciplines for personal, professional, and civic enhancement.**

A commitment to a life of thought and the ability to evaluate critically one's own views and those of others require that the individual be able to access, judge, and compare diverse fields of knowledge. The General Education Program promotes knowledge integration by encouraging courses and experiences that enable a student to discover connections between different disciplines and their real-life applications.

**Social Responsibility: Social Responsibility is the ability to apply knowledge and skills gained through the undergraduate experience for the advancement of society.**

Attention and service to the world at large is characteristic of a socially accountable, well-educated individual. One goal of the General Education Program is to introduce a student to historical ethical reasoning, contemporary social and ethical issues, and to promote knowledge, skills, and attitudes that encourage responsible civic engagement.

### **Information Literacy and Baccalaureate Competencies**

**Information literacy is a fundamental component of the four Baccalaureate Competencies.**

Information literacy includes, but goes beyond, information technology skills. It is the ability to determine the nature of required information, to access it effectively and efficiently, to evaluate it critically, and to incorporate it into one's knowledge system. It necessitates the responsible, legal, and ethical use of information.

## The Structure of General Education Requirements

### General Education Requirements

Attainment of the Baccalaureate Competencies of Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Knowledge Integration, and Social Responsibility is ensured through two sets of General Education Program Requirements: **Breadth of Knowledge Requirements** and **Program/Major Requirements**.

#### Breadth of Knowledge Requirements

The General Education Program encourages breadth of knowledge through distribution requirements. These include **English Composition** (2-3 quarters of entry-level courses), **Quantitative Reasoning** (the appropriate level of analytical and/or mathematical literacy determined by each academic unit/program), **Diversity and Culture**, **Social and Ethical Issues**, and six **Distribution Areas**: fine arts, historical perspectives, humanities, literature, natural sciences, and social sciences.

**Diversity and Culture** focuses on the analysis and understanding of the issues arising from individual (race, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or age) and cultural differences. Examples include courses or experiences in African-American Studies, Women's Studies, area studies (e.g., Asian, Latin American, Eastern European, and Russian Studies), Judaic Studies, cultural anthropology, geography, global and multicultural education, comparative literature, and fine arts. Also included are courses or experiences in foreign language and civilization, study abroad programs, and domestic programs that focus on elements of cultural difference.

**Social and Ethical Issues** includes ethical reasoning from historical and contemporary perspectives. Courses or experiences in these areas should introduce students to social and ethical issues and promote the use of critical thinking skills, analysis, and resolution. Courses or experiences fulfilling this requirement may include topics such as: professional ethics, human rights, environmental concerns, nuclear proliferation, ecology, genetic engineering, quality of life, and the social implications of science and technology.

**Distribution Areas** (eight courses [at least 3 credit hours] in a minimum of five of the following areas):

**Fine Arts** embraces music, dance, drama, and the visual arts.

**Historical Perspectives** refers to courses that, through exposure to and analysis of the past, provide an understanding of historical methodology and tradition.

**Humanities** encompasses learning concerned with human thought and relations not included in the other distribution areas. Disciplines include classics, communication, foreign languages, linguistics, philosophy, and rhetoric, among others.

**Literature** includes the study of literary texts and criticism in the original language or translation.

**Natural Sciences** comprises the systematized knowledge of nature and the physical world. Disciplines include earth, life, and physical sciences; computer science; and mathematics at a level beyond the basic mathematics requirement.

**Social Sciences** involves the study of society and the behavior of its members. Examples include cultural anthropology, economics, human geography, planning, political science, psychology, and sociology.

[Note: A listing of courses and the Breadth of Knowledge area(s) fulfilled by each is provided under <http://www.uc.edu/gened/reports.asp>]

### **The Program/Major Requirements**

Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Knowledge Integration, and Social Responsibility should permeate undergraduate, baccalaureate curricula. Students must integrate these competencies throughout the undergraduate experience and particularly within the major.

### **Methodology**

Each baccalaureate degree program or major must assure that its students participate in the systematic, detailed study of the discipline's history and methods.

### **The Capstone Experience**

The faculty of each degree program or major will define a capstone experience that obliges a student to demonstrate proficiency in the four Baccalaureate Competencies of the General Education Program as well as in the content of the degree program or major. The Capstone enables a student to draw upon and integrate knowledge and skills of the particular discipline using methods appropriate to the field, including information literacy and relevant communication skills.

### **Assessment and General Education**

The University of Cincinnati General Education Program emphasizes four Baccalaureate Competencies to be assessed: Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Knowledge Integration, and Social Responsibility. Throughout the undergraduate course of study, a student will be taught skills and mentored in experiences to develop these competencies. Faculty in each academic unit will define these competencies in terms of measurable objectives that can be assessed at the completion of the undergraduate experience.

Any general education program must be developed in partnership with a plan to measure its effectiveness. This information will then be used to guide refinement of the University of Cincinnati General Education Program.

## EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

### General Education:

#### An Invitation to Become an Independent Thinker

As you enter Eastern Kentucky University, you may wonder why the university devotes a significant part of your degree requirements to general education. The reason is fundamental. General education provides the foundation for your becoming an informed, independent thinker who can comprehend, evaluate, and address the issues you will face in your personal life, in your career, and in community and public affairs.

Why should you want to become an "independent thinker"? As an independent thinker, you can reason through ideas and issues for yourself. You liberate yourself as far as possible from the authority of other thinkers. If you do not do so, you let others do your thinking for you and accept uncritically what others lay before you.

You will become an independent thinker gradually, and you will do so more effectively in some areas of knowledge than in others. When you graduate, you may be most able to think for yourself in your major field. In other areas you will have attained some degree of independence, and you will want to broaden it. Enhancing your ability to think for yourself is a lifelong process. General education, then, begins the process by equipping you with **knowledge** and **skills** invaluable to an independent thinker who deals effectively with the problems of human living.

At Eastern Kentucky University, you will not be alone in your quest to become an informed, independent thinker. As you begin your general education, you will enter a community of learners – students and faculty alike. The members of this community recognize that their common goal – informed, independent thought – is best achieved in an atmosphere of collegiality. That last word (and the word *college* to which it is related) implies a partnership in the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of skills used to find and share knowledge.

#### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The primary goal of general education at Eastern Kentucky University is to make you an informed, independent thinker. Consequently, your general education is designed to ensure that you acquire the basic knowledge that **informed**, independent thinkers need in order to ask good questions, evaluate answers, and make informed decisions.

Traditionally, general education has been centered in the liberal arts and sciences, and that is still true today. Moreover, among these liberal arts and sciences we can identify certain areas and topics that will be helpful in building a general framework of knowledge. Since most of the problems and issues you are likely to face deal with your own life and the lives of other people, much of the foundational knowledge in general education is about human life. Problems often have scientific dimensions, and decisions about issues important to human beings always involve value judgments.

## **I. Understanding Human Beings**

Our understanding of human beings – as a species, as members of various groups, and as individuals – is often filled with unchallenged assumptions. If you do not question those assumptions, your understanding of others and of yourself is based on uncritical acceptance of received information.

Effective general education provides ideas, information, and questions that allow you to rethink your assumptions about human life. The people with whom you interact will have political, economic, religious, social, cultural, gender, and sexual differences that help to define who they are. It is important, therefore, for you to understand how all these differences shape who a person is. Furthermore, human lives have specific historical contexts. Knowing the histories of the communities, ethnic groups, or nations to which people belong will facilitate your comprehension of the problems with which they and you are faced.

People will be important in your life not merely as members of groups, but as distinct individuals, so it is also important that you know the general psychological characteristics of people and use such knowledge to better understand the people around you. Since people also belong to a biological species, you should also be able to comprehend them as organisms that inhabit evolutionary and ecological niches.

All of these studies provide the means to identify real and important differences among humans and the means to reflect on what is common to human life. In other words, the same studies that help you to re-examine your assumptions about yourself and human nature will also heighten your understanding of human diversity.

## **II. Understanding the Natural World**

Information about the natural world is complex and rapidly changing. Consequently, your current ideas about the natural world and how humans interact with it may be imprecise, incomplete, or outdated. General education courses about the natural world will help you re-examine these ideas and expand your understanding of the natural world and your place in it. Just as you are a physical, chemical, and biological being, so is the world around you. To be prepared to think for yourself about the natural world, you will need a basic understanding of these different ways of studying it.

Knowledge of the natural world is the means through which we have developed much of our ability to improve the quality of human life. Such knowledge allows us to deepen our understanding of our physical nature and to work with the natural environment in a variety of ways. That knowledge is crucial to your ability to understand the extent of human responsibility for ourselves and the natural environment we inhabit.

Knowledge of the natural world is relevant to all areas of human life, but you will often need knowledge of the natural world simply to understand the nature of the issues you face. Such knowledge will help you to address public problems, to develop possible solutions to them, and

to assess the impact of various possible solutions on both human life and the environment. Because scientific methods have proven to be effective means for appraising serious issues of public concern, familiarity with these methods will also enhance your ability to contend with such problems when they confront you.

### **III. Understanding Human Values**

You enter Eastern Kentucky University with values deeply rooted in your upbringing – values imparted by parents, teachers, and peers. Given the sources of your values, you may not have thought through many aspects of your value system for yourself. To become more independent in your thinking about values, you will find it helpful to examine your own values in the light of various important systems of values and the reasoning that supports them. You will also need to acquaint yourself with sources – sacred and secular – that help you to envision the impact of your value choices on your life and on the lives of others.

Value judgments will be very important whether you are dealing with personal or public issues. The most important value judgments are likely to be political or moral ones. Many value questions depend crucially on understanding political issues and legal procedures. Government can be conducted in both just and unjust ways. We should want our actions in the political arena to be just, and we should want to give our support to just political leaders and causes. To do this effectively, you need knowledge about standards of justice. Many decisions you reach will depend on moral issues. Since moral disagreements are common, you need to understand and examine different moral viewpoints and the reasoning and sentiments that support them. These will provide you with an important means for re-examining your own moral values.

Another important kind of value is aesthetic value, the appreciation of things for their beauty or general artistic merit. Having aesthetically pleasing things around you will enhance your life and open up new possibilities to you. Since people everywhere have their own aesthetic sensibilities, cultivating your own aesthetic sensibilities will improve your ability to understand and appreciate others.

### **IV. Integration of Knowledge**

The issues and problems that confront us in life are complex. They never fall within the domain of a single area of human knowledge. A social problem, for example, may have historical, political, economic, physical, biological, psychological, moral, and other dimensions. The solution to it is likely to require information from all of these studies and others as well. Independent thinkers understand that effective action in human life requires them to integrate knowledge from a variety of fields of study. A crucial component of your general education, then, will be the development of your ability to combine and interrelate the different sorts of knowledge you acquire.

### **FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS**

To acquire foundational knowledge, you must develop certain basic skills. Effective independent thinkers have a variety of skills that allow them to critically examine their own thoughts and the

thoughts of others, and to exchange their ideas with others through various modes of communication.

### **I. Critical Thinking Skills**

Independent thinkers must be able to examine objectively their own and others' assumptions. Most importantly you will want to examine assumptions you have made about what is valuable and about what other human beings are like. You will also want to critically examine the information that flows toward you from many sources. To ignore all this information leaves you isolated and alone as a thinker. To accept all the information that is presented to you leaves you prey to the inaccuracies and faulty judgments of others. Developing your own critical thinking skills will help you distinguish trustworthy ideas from less reliable ones.

### **II. Mathematical Skills and Knowledge**

Independent thinkers possess mathematical skills that range from reading simple graphs to performing complex computational operations. You will find that information about many issues is often represented mathematically. Consequently, mathematical knowledge is crucial to you as an independent thinker. It also provides you with alternative forms of, and structures for, problem solving that complement and enhance verbal problem solving.

### **III. Research Skills**

Independent thinkers need to acquire information on their own. You should know where to find information, how to retrieve it, and how to evaluate the quality of various information sources.

### **IV. Communication Skills**

Independent thinkers are able to express their ideas clearly in writing and speech. You need to be able to express your ideas well so that you can effectively receive criticism from others. You need to listen and read well so that you can understand and evaluate what others tell you. Good communication skills will be a crucial element in your ability to continue learning throughout your life and to continue to develop as a person who can think effectively.

### **V. Skills of Imagination**

Independent thinkers make effective use of their imagination. To free yourself from unexamined assumptions and to improve and enrich your own life and the various communities to which you belong, you need to be able to imagine new ways of living and new ways of conducting human affairs. These new possibilities can both challenge and inspire all of us to rethink our old familiar ways of looking at ourselves and our world. To create new artistic works or to appreciate adequately the creative achievements of others, you must use your imagination well.

## **VI. Cultural Skills**

Independent thinkers recognize the value of and seek out the ideas and perspectives of those from other cultures. To do so you must possess a great deal of knowledge about other cultures, but you must also develop certain skills. To see life from a different cultural perspective, you will need to develop the skill of imaginatively placing yourself, as far as it is possible, in a different cultural context. Likewise, you should develop the capacity to see yourself and your culture as those from other cultures do. Such skills will enhance your ability to be self-critical and to free your thinking from unquestioned assumptions and the authority of others.

### **OBJECTIVES**

To become an informed, independent thinker, you must acquire knowledge and cultivate certain skills. This list of objectives is an attempt to identify what kinds of knowledge and skills a person needs to become and remain a lifelong, independent thinker.

### **FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

#### **I. To know about *human beings*, ourselves included, independent thinkers need to understand:**

- The political, economic, religious, social, cultural, gender and sexual differences that define human beings
- The historical contexts in which human beings belong
- Human psychological characteristics
- Human beings as members of a biological species and the evolutionary and ecological niches humans fill
- The evidence and reasoning that underpin these various ways of understanding human beings
- How to analyze and criticize that reasoning and evidence

#### **II. To know *the natural world*, independent thinkers need to understand:**

- The physical, chemical, and biological composition of the world
- The various methods of scientific inquiry used to comprehend the physical, chemical, and biological world
- How to evaluate the evidence and reasoning used in scientific discourse

#### **III. To know *human values*, independent thinkers must understand:**

- The need for assessing their own value systems
- The value systems of others
- The issues and controversies that surround any effort to develop and adopt just laws and political practices

- The issues and controversies that surround any effort to lead a morally good and happy life
- The issues and controversies that surround any effort to develop sound aesthetic judgment
- How to evaluate evidence, reasoning, and sentiments that underlie all value judgments.

**IV. To *integrate knowledge*, independent thinkers must:**

- Recognize the complexity of most human problems
- Recognize how various areas of knowledge are interrelated and how they may work interdependently to solve human problems

## **FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS**

**I. To engage in *critical thinking*, independent thinkers must:**

- Examine their own thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions
- Examine the thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions of others
- Analyze and evaluate information presented to them

**II. Independent thinkers who possess *mathematical skills and knowledge* are able to:**

- Recognize and use a variety of mathematical forms and structures
- Analyze and interpret graphical and mathematical information
- Apply mathematics to complement and enhance other forms of problem solving

**III. Using appropriate *research skills*, independent thinkers are able to:**

- Use various information resources
- Distinguish valid information resources from unreliable information resources

**IV. Using *communication skills*, independent thinkers are able to:**

- Convey their ideas clearly in writing
- Convey their ideas clearly in speech
- Listen to the ideas of others and apply them critically to their own ideas

**V. The *skills of imagination* exhibited by independent thinkers enable them to:**

- Envision new ways of looking at ourselves, our world, and our problems
- Use their minds for self-expression in the arts

**VI. The *cultural skills* of independent thinkers allow them to:**

- See themselves and their culture from the perspective of other cultures
- Place themselves in a different cultural or ethnic context in order to see life as others see it
- Recognize the contributions of many groups to American life
- Appreciate the place of their culture in a global context

## **ANDERSON COLLEGE (a Christian College in South Carolina)**

General education comprises the learning experiences we want all our students to have in common, regardless of their major or degree program. It is the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions which the College determines all its graduates should possess in order to be prepared for a life of enhanced citizenship, service, and continued learning. It is the means by which students experience the connections between academic disciplines.

Curricular experiences in general education are intended to shape informed thought and action, preparing an Anderson college student to be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of oneself as an engaged learner;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the core knowledge in, the modes of inquiry of, and the interconnectedness among humanities/fine arts, the social/behavioral sciences, and the natural sciences/mathematics.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Christian values and their connection to academic knowledge and personal dispositions;
- Demonstrate skills in effective communication, critical and creative thinking, analytical reasoning and problem solving, sustaining interpersonal relationships, and information access and discernment;
- Demonstrate understanding of the connections between local, national, Western, and global culture.

Certain skills and program experiences are essential to accomplish the goals of general education.

Specific skills include:

- Communication Skills – writing, speaking, reading, listening in English; achieving basic competency in a second language; developing observation skills and an awareness of aesthetics
- Critical Thinking Skills – logic, quantitative skills, research, computation, problem solving, scientific method, analysis
- Interpersonal Skills – cooperation, teamwork, leadership
- Technological Skills – accessing, processing, and transmitting information electronically

Program experiences include:

- Research activity that allows for practice of critical and creative thinking skills
- Cultural experiences including study abroad
- Four-year experience in general education including an introduction to general education, interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary studies, and a capstone experience
- Service learning and/or community service

- Cultivate personal responsibility and decision making

**NOTE:** The program may involve educational units in something other than the traditional three-credit course. Assessment of program goals is primarily course embedded.

## **WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Definition and Purposes of General Education**

While the greater part of students' courses of study will be devoted to their major field or specialization, the foundation of the undergraduate curriculum is the General Education Program. General Education is designed to accommodate the increasing specialization of the University within the broader, traditional objectives of higher education while encouraging students to develop themselves to the fullest extent possible. The role of General Education in the modern higher educational curriculum is to address needs and objectives not adequately served by academic specialization. It encompasses the following aims:

#### **Realizing Individual Student Potential**

One purpose of higher education is to foster and nurture potentials in the individual; hence, General Education aims at personal enrichment, cultural awareness, and breadth of knowledge. These goals imply a curriculum that emphasizes the aesthetic and appreciative faculties, encourages experiment and creativity, and offers opportunities for introspection and the testing of one's own values.

#### **Preparation for Membership in the Community**

General Education is also a recognition of the role of higher education within the larger community; it prepares people for their common activities as citizens in a free society. Thus, it should provide opportunities for leadership and service while attending to "education for the common life." Shared values growing out of common educational experience help to bind society together and to make communication possible. Consequently, the General Education curriculum attempts to define and explore the ever-changing body of knowledge which is valuable for all to know. The needs of citizens also include formal literacy; writing proficiency is accordingly a priority at WSU, and all students must satisfy writing proficiency standards for graduation. The curriculum is designed to emphasize study of the relevant past, with the objective of developing an informed, mature, and critical mind. All these goals are designed to contribute to the development of higher level intellectual skills, such as critical thinking.

#### **Providing a Foundation for the Major**

"Education for the common life," however, must also include the skills and knowledge useful as a base for careers as well as for citizenship. Communication and reasoning skills have multiple functions; they serve as a base for the major, and they enhance the student's overall abilities and intellectual maturity. To function well in the workplace, one must be able to see beyond its confines. Consequently, exposure to different values, perspectives, and cultural traditions is a valuable preparation for the kinds of work that college graduates do, and the General Education curriculum can enrich the student's sense of the context and meaning of his or her career activities.

## **Methodological Competence and Integration of Knowledge**

The organization of the General Education curriculum is an expression of our historical experience of how new knowledge has been acquired in the past and how it is likely to be acquired in the future. Consequently, the curriculum stresses the acquisition of a working knowledge of a broad range of scholarly disciplines. One of the goals of General Education is therefore "understanding of the major fields of knowledge and the interrelationships between them." However, since students cannot possibly learn everything they need in the four or five years of their undergraduate experience, the curriculum prepares students for continued, life-long learning. Library skills and a general competence with computers are increasingly important in "learning to learn."

These four goals of General Education promote not only awareness of the world, but self-awareness within the students' expanding knowledge. They also encourage integration of the students' anticipated economic roles within the whole of their experience. Toward the attainment of those goals, the faculty has established minimum standards in terms of credit hours, grade points, and distribution requirements within the General Education Program.

As outcomes of their education, WSU students must be able to:

### **A. Reason critically**

1. Define and solve problems
2. Integrate and synthesize knowledge
3. Assess the accuracy and validity of findings and conclusions
4. Understand how one thinks, reasons, and makes value judgments
5. Understand diverse viewpoints, ambiguity and uncertainty
6. Understand differing philosophies and cultures

### **B. Conduct self-directed or independent learning projects**

1. Demonstrate research and information retrieval skills in the library and on the internet
2. Evaluate data and apply quantitative principles and methods
3. Show evidence of continued self-directed learning
4. Demonstrate creativity in framing and solving problems
5. Understand how one thinks, reasons, and makes value judgments

### **C. Understand the roles of normative views and values, including ethics and aesthetics**

1. Understand distinctions between value assertions and statements of fact; recognize and evaluate evidence
2. Derive the premises upon which systems of value are grounded
3. Understand historical and contemporary systems of political, religious, and aesthetic values
4. Understand diverse viewpoints and respect the rights of others to hold them; understand the contingent nature of truth; tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty
5. Develop aesthetic sensibilities in regard to art, literature, nature

**D. Communicate conclusions, interpretations and implications clearly, concisely and effectively, both orally and in writing**

1. Critically analyze written information
2. Define, evaluate, and solve problems
3. Organize for clarity and coherence in writing and speaking tasks
4. Show awareness of contexts--audiences, styles, & conventions
5. Be able to use correct standard English
6. Show evidence of copy-editing skills
7. Work cooperatively

**E. Acquire and assimilate knowledge in a variety of modes and contexts and recognize diverse disciplinary viewpoints and methods**

1. Understand and apply scientific principles and methods
2. Understand and apply quantitative principles and methods
3. Understand and apply the principles and methods of the arts and humanities
4. Understand and apply the principles and methods of the social sciences

**F. Understand the historical development of human knowledge and cultures, including both Western and non-Western civilizations**

1. Demonstrate awareness of a broad overview of human past
2. Understand perspectives linked to race, gender, ethnicity both in American society and in international contexts
3. Understand differing philosophies and cultures
4. Understand the interaction of society and the environment
5. Recognize one's responsibilities, rights, and privileges as a citizen

# **NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **Objectives of General Education University-Wide Program in General Education for Undergraduate Students at New Mexico State University Approved by the Board of Regents, May 12, 1989**

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### **PREAMBLE**

The University Committee on General Education (and its predecessor committee) have reviewed much that has been written on general education, have surveyed faculty opinion directly and studied summary statements from college deans as well as comments from a cross-section of individual faculty members regarding our preliminary recommendations of February 2, 1987. To the greatest extent possible we have been guided by faculty opinion regarding changes which should be made in the general education curriculum. In particular, we have noted that more than three-quarters of the faculty have expressed the view that (1) general education courses should be more coherent than they are at present, (2) general education courses should consist of a selected set of core subjects with a limited number of courses in each area, (3) courses meeting the aims of general education should be selected and reviewed by a university-wide committee of faculty, (4) faculty from all colleges should be involved in teaching general education courses, and (5) general education should occur throughout a student's course of study at NMSU. We have tried to follow these views in what is proposed below.

More than ninety-five percent of the faculty were in agreement with the following statement of objectives of general education. The statement is given here to emphasize the point that all recommendations as to specific subject areas or courses listed below should be judged in terms of meeting these objectives to the greatest extent possible.

General education attempts to foster intelligent inquiry, abstract logical thinking, critical analysis, and the integration and synthesis of knowledge; it strives for literacy in writing, reading, speaking, and listening; it teaches mathematical structures, acquainting students with precise abstract thought about numbers and space; it encourages an understanding of science and scientific inquiry; it provides a historical consciousness, including an understanding of one's own heritage as well as respect for other people and cultures; it includes an examination of values and stresses the importance of a carefully-considered values system; it fosters an appreciation of the arts; and general education provides the breadth necessary to have a familiarity with the various branches of human understanding.

In addition, the members of the General Education Committee clearly recognize that no significant improvement in general education is likely to occur unless the faculty most suited are engaged in trying to convey to students the intellectual pleasures of the various subject areas which have been selected here. Also, we recognize that the curriculum proposed represents a minimal requirement, and we would encourage colleges and departments to add to these courses those which they deem most appropriate for developing broadly educated graduates.

In summary, we are proposing a program in general education which is comprised of a total of 38 credit hours distributed as follows: 7 hours in English composition, 3 hours in mathematics, 6 hours in critical thinking/analysis, 16 hours in liberal studies, and 6 hours in professional studies. The organization and rationale for these proposals are developed in the following document.

## **I. Developing Critical Thinking and Modes of Expression**

**1. English composition** - All students matriculated at the main campus of NMSU will take one year of English composition. This requirement will be satisfied by taking English 111 (4 credit hours, must be taken in the freshman year) and one of the following in the freshman or sophomore year: English 203, 211, 218, 301, or 318 (3 credit hours each). Rationale: No skill is more important than being able to express oneself clearly in writing. Given the level of proficiency of the average student entering NMSU, we believe a second semester of composition is very much needed to help raise the ability of each student to adequately express himself or herself.

**2. Mathematics** - All students matriculated at the main campus of NMSU will complete one semester of mathematics past the current basic skills requirement. At such time as intermediate algebra becomes the basic skills requirement, the general education requirement in mathematics will be reconsidered by the general education committee. (It is the intent of the committee that all students will eventually be required to take, at a minimum, a college-level course in mathematics.)

**3. Information retrieval** - While it is important for instructors in all courses to encourage students to be conversant with materials and tools in the University Library, this training process should not be left to chance. We propose a two-tier process. During the freshman year students will be given an orientation tour and talk describing the library holdings and operation, perhaps in connection with an English composition course as all students will be enrolled in at least one such course. In a later year students will take a course (see Recommendation III) in which a detailed literature search in a specific area is required, thereby giving them direct use of various reference sources and search procedures available in the library.

**4. Critical thinking/analysis** - All students matriculated at the main campus of NMSU will complete, sometime during their freshman or sophomore year, 2 courses from the following subject areas.

### **SUBJECT AREA\* / CREDIT HOURS**

- Oral communication / 3 cr.
- Philosophy (introductory survey) / 3 cr.
- Computer science (some programming) / 3 cr.
- Statistics / 3 cr.

It is the intent of the committee that each of these is to be concerned with the organization, relationships, and validity of thoughts, concepts, arguments, or data in the most fundamental

ways. The intent of these requirements is that students would gain sound intellectual and methodological approaches which would be applied, subsequently, to their own fields of specialization.

\*See Appendix below for course intent/content and rationale.

## **II. Establishing a Common Background**

All students matriculated at the main campus of NMSU will complete, sometime during their course of study leading to baccalaureate degrees, the following set of general education courses.

### **SUBJECT AREA\* / CREDIT HOURS**

Historical perspectives / 3 cr.  
Basic natural sciences (with lab) / 4 cr.  
Human thought and behavior / 3 cr.  
Social analysis / 3 cr.  
Literature or fine arts / 3 cr.

\*See Appendix below for course intent/content and rationale.

## **III. Viewing a Wider World**

All students matriculated at the main campus at NMSU will take, preferably during their junior or senior year, two general education courses (at the 300 or 400 level) from two colleges other than their own. To be approved for inclusion here each of these courses must include an assignment which will require the student to do a detailed literature search involving the use of library facilities. In addition we recommend to the General Education Steering Committee that, where applicable, they give strong preference to those courses which strongly emphasize the international character and multicultural influences in the fields of study.

### **Rationale**

Each of the colleges at NMSU represents one or more active fields of human endeavor and thus can present to students unique ways of viewing the world. (The titles listed below are given merely to suggest the breadth of the courses which might be given.)

### **SAMPLE COURSE/CREDIT HOURS**

Ministering to Human Needs / 3 cr.  
Man and Commerce / 3 cr.  
The Impact of Engineering on Humanity / 3 cr.  
Agriculture and the Environment / 3 cr.  
Education and Civilization / 3 cr.

International Perspectives / 3 cr.  
Science, Technology, and Society / 3 cr.

#### **IV. Formal Designation of General Education Courses**

Courses selected as filling the general education requirements will be designated in the catalog with the prefix GE, followed by the normal course designation of the department, for example, GE/ENGL 000. At an appropriate place in the front of the undergraduate catalog, all university courses approved as meeting the general education requirements will be listed by subject areas.

#### **V. Certification of General Education Courses**

A permanent standing committee, comprised of one member of the library staff and one faculty member from each college (each selected by the deans of the colleges in consultation with the Executive Vice President) will be charged with certifying that a course meets the criteria for a general education course. We propose that the permanent standing committee report directly to the Executive Vice President, who will serve as the chairman of this permanent committee. Recertification of courses will be required every four years, following an initial probationary period of one year. During the first year, the standing committee will meet with the faculty member in charge of each GE course to review the content and hear the faculty member's assessment of the effectiveness of the course in meeting the desired ends of the course. Annually the committee will be supplied with the course records (enrollment and grade distributions) for each general education course.

#### **VI. Development of General Education Courses**

Any college or department may offer a general education course, provided it meets the criteria stated above and is certified to do so by the permanent standing committee. Similarly, any faculty member (or team of faculty members) may teach a general education course.

#### **VII. Alternatives for Meeting General Education Requirements**

1. Students taking nine or more credit hours in a specific subject area, even though the courses are not designated as GE courses, will be judged to have met the general education requirements for that subject area. For example, an engineering student who takes Physics 215 and 216 and Chemistry 114 (all lab courses) will be considered to have met the intent of the 4-credit hour general education requirement in basic natural sciences, even though those courses are not designated with a GE prefix.
2. Students who wish to be given credit for a general education course without enrolling in it may request to challenge it. An exam set by the instructor in charge of the course will be

administered one time at the beginning of the semester; the results of the exam will be made available to the student prior to the last day for registration.

3. Students who have successfully completed Advanced Placement, ACT or CLEP requirements in areas appropriate to General Education may be exempt from certain GE requirements, upon approval by the dean of the student's college.

## **APPENDIX**

The intent/content, rationale, and types of courses which the committee members considered suitable for each of these subject areas are given in detail below. It is the intent of the committee members that the courses selected as general education courses will be both intellectually stimulating and rigorous.

### **I. Developing Critical Thinking and Modes of Expression**

#### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this subject should deal with the theory of oral discourse, such as Aristotelian rhetoric, analysis of audience and types of argumentation, as well as the practice of delivering oral presentations to large and small groups.

##### **Rationale**

Every educated person needs the ability to present, orally, his or her ideas in a clear and logical way and to discern weak and illogical arguments presented by others.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

##### **Intent/Content**

Courses in these subject areas would be designed to provide students with some understanding of the role of mathematics in civilization and with the ability to read, understand, and use mathematics.

##### **Rationale**

An educated person cannot function intelligently in modern society without a substantial ability to understand numerical data and recognize the interpretations the data permit or exclude.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

### **Intent/Content**

Philosophy deals in the most fundamental way with the clarification of concepts. Thus, the nature of the knowledge, how knowledge may be acquired, the relationship of knowledge to belief, and the meaning of a moral act, are important philosophical questions.

### **Rationale**

For any idea to be firmly held, it should first be well considered. The study of philosophy can help a student to develop a rational approach to inquiry, regardless of his or her field.

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE**

### **Intent/Content**

The operation of computers to process all sorts of data at high speed has invoked an interaction between a machine and the mind of man which is unique in human history. The logic and structure of programs, the organization and preparation of data, and the languages available to express these thoughts and data can have a powerful impact in dealing with many of the complex questions of our technical society.

### **Rationale**

The various applications and the technology of computers are having an increasing impact on all areas of human endeavor and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. A knowledge of computers will be of benefit to all educated people.

## **STATISTICS**

### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this area should deal with ideas related to analysis of data, testing of hypotheses, the nature of correlations and their distinction from cause-and-effect and other basic concepts in statistical inference.

### **Rationale**

Perhaps no methodology is more widely used and misused in describing data in an enormous range of fields than statistics. It is important that an educated person recognize the valid application of statistics to problems of interest.

## **II. Establishing a Common Background**

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this area should present a coherent body of knowledge to help students acquire a sense of the main currents of his or her culture or that of others over an extended period of time. Courses should stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events.

#### **Rationale**

A knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the only means for an educated person to fully gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary society.

#### **Types of Courses**

Suitable courses will be those which deal broadly with major cultural themes over a significant period of an important civilization.

### **BASIC NATURAL SCIENCES**

#### **Intent/Content**

Courses should center upon the study of the behavior of matter, energy, and environment within representative biological or physical science disciplines; these are to deal with basic or fundamental questions of science, not applied ones. Scientific inquiry should be stressed, with weekly laboratories providing hands-on exposure to scientific phenomena and methodology within the discipline. A college-level treatment of some, but not necessarily all, of the following topics would be expected: atomic and molecular structure, electrical processes, chemical processes, elementary thermodynamics, electromagnetics, optics, dynamics, and mechanics.

#### **Rationale**

Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions which occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. An understanding of the behavior of matter (all tangible creation including the "environment") energy provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader ranges of understanding about natural phenomena. As well, the study of the behavior of matter and energy illustrates the usefulness of mathematics in precisely describing and rationalizing certain physical phenomena.

## **Types of Courses**

Courses meeting the above criteria might be formulated from traditional basic courses in biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, agriculture or geology, but each course must have a laboratory course associated with it.

## **HUMAN THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR**

### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this category should focus on understanding the individual, his/her evolution, situation, relationship with others, place in the environment and universe, achievements and problems, and meaning and purpose.

### **Rationale**

Courses should strive to equip students for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities.

### **Types of Courses**

Courses satisfying this requirement examine systems of human thought and belief, with emphasis upon matters of causation, value and choice. They also emphasize the ideal of the fully functioning person: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and vocationally. Such courses might come from the areas of psychology, cultural anthropology, philosophy, and holistic health and wellness.

## **SOCIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Intent/Content**

The social analysis requirement provide students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behavior in a systematic way. A course fulfilling this requirement should focus on one or more of the following units of analysis: families, organizations, communities, economies, or governments.

### **Rationale**

In order for individuals to live responsibly and to fulfill their promise as individuals and as citizens of society, they should understand the patterns of human relationships which underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units.

## **Types of Courses**

Courses which would satisfy this requirement are found in the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, government, and sociology. In addition, certain courses oriented to the study of the family and of organizations might be appropriate.

## **LITERATURE**

### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this area are expected to introduce students to a systematic study of major literary texts in a context that emphasizes critical reading and writing; to represent the cultural, historical, and artistic frameworks in which the classic works of the world's civilizations were created; and to expose students to major features of literary genres and instruct them how to make and defend critical/valuative judgments about literature.

### **Rationale**

Students need to appreciate and understand the classical writing which serves as the artistic, literary, and philosophical foundation of the Western tradition.

## **Types of Courses**

Literature courses which survey literary classics from Homeric and Greek models to the modern century, or which span several centuries within a culture and language, will meet the intended aims.

## **FINE ARTS**

### **Intent/Content**

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of the arts in human affairs, of the artist's perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and, ideally, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

### **Rationale**

The ability to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of an individual's life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student's cultural and self-awareness.

## **Types of Courses**

Any introductory course in music, art or theater arts which rigorously examines the subject matter of the discipline, not necessarily only courses which survey a field, should be acceptable.

**Guidelines for Preparation of  
General Education Proposals**

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**When completing the course proposal form, consider the following questions:**

1. Does the course fit the intent/content of the category proposed?
2. Is the course too discipline-specific or too applied to make it appropriate for a general education course?
3. Is the course sufficiently rigorous?
4. Is the course numbered at an appropriate level?
5. Is the answer to question 10 specific enough? (This answer often provides the committee the key to whether the course is appropriate for general education.) Does the syllabus deliver what the proposal - particularly the answer to question 10 - promises?
6. Is the syllabus comprehensive enough so that detail and emphases are clear? Recommended syllabus components include course title and number; instructor's name; office hours and location; instructor's telephone number and e-mail address; course description; textbooks required and optional; learning objectives; tentative calendar of activities, including dates for reading assignments, papers, projects, tests, and field trips where applicable; information on assignments including research paper if applicable; information on exams, quizzes, etc. (including percentage of grade); grade scheme and scale; attendance/absence policy; late/incomplete work policy; make-up policy; a description of the research/writing project for Part III courses; ADA statement. Syllabus examples are available upon request.
7. Does the course include challenging reading and writing components? (For example, are the texts named, are reading lists included, is the writing component substantial?)
8. If proposal is for Part III, is the library component challenging? Library faculty have offered to work with faculty to create innovative and imaginative library use.
9. If appropriate, is the international, multi-cultural component adequate?
10. Are lab hours carefully listed in the credits? Is lab required?

11. Does the course have prerequisites that will prohibit it for most general education plans? Is the prerequisite an approved general education course?

Additional comments:

The college representative on the General Education Course Certification Committee is available to work with departments as they prepare proposals.

Gender-neutral language should be used where appropriate. (For example, avoid the use of "mankind," "man's search for...", "he" when both sexes are implied.)

Multiple sections of a proposed course should be coordinated so that all sections meet the spirit and letter of general education requirements.

New Mexico State University - Forms

**Course Proposal for University  
General Education Requirement**

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Please print out and complete this form, and submit 12 copies to Dr. Jozi DeLeon, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, MSC 3445. Proposal must first receive the approval and signature of the college dean.

1. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Department making the proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

3. General Education requirement involved (Part/Category): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Course title: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Course prefix: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit hours: \_\_\_\_\_

6. This course is: proposed \_\_\_\_\_ existing \_\_\_\_\_

7. Course prerequisites: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Brief description of course (appropriate for flimsy/catalog):

9. Describe the instructional format of the course.

10. Describe how this course meets the overall goal of the NMSU general education program as stated below and the specific category to which it would belong.

**General education attempts to foster intelligent inquiry, abstract logical thinking, critical analysis, and the integration and synthesis of knowledge; it strives for literacy in writing, reading, speaking, and listening; it teaches mathematical structures, acquainting students with precise abstract thought about numbers and space; it encourages an understanding of science and scientific inquiry; it provides a historical consciousness, including an understanding of one's own heritage as well as respect for other peoples and cultures; it includes an examination of values and stresses the importance of a carefully-considered values system; it fosters an appreciation of the arts; and general education provides the breadth necessary to have a familiarity with the various branches of human understanding.**

Flowing from the above philosophy, the following objectives were identified. Indicate which objective/s this course addresses and describe how students will meet these objectives.

- a. Be able to think critically.
- b. Be able to integrate and synthesize knowledge.
- c. Demonstrate literacy in reading, writing, and oral communication.
- d. Be familiar with mathematical structures.
- e. Understand science and scientific inquiry.
- f. Have a historical consciousness, including an understanding of his/her own heritage.
- g. Have an appreciation of the arts.
- h. Be familiar with the various branches of human understanding.
- i. Be able to examine values and develop a carefully considered values system.

11. a. Number of students enrolled in this course this fall: \_\_\_\_\_

11. b. Number of students enrolled in this course last spring: \_\_\_\_\_

12. a. Number of sections of this course taught this fall: \_\_\_\_\_

12. b. Number of sections of this course taught last spring: \_\_\_\_\_

13. What additional resources might be needed to teach this course when the general education requirements are implemented?

14. Please attach a course syllabus.

(Recommended syllabus components: course title and number; instructor's name; office hours and location; instructor's telephone number and e-mail address; course description; textbooks required and optional; learning objectives; tentative calendar of activities, including dates for reading assignments, papers, projects, tests, and field trips where applicable; information on assignments including research paper if applicable; information on exams, quizzes, etc. (including percentage of grade); grade scheme and scale;

**attendance/absence policy; late/incomplete work policy; make-up policy; a description of the research/writing project for Part III courses; ADA statement.)**

**Approved:**

**Dean:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Associate Provost for Academic Affairs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair, General Education Course Certification Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_

rev. 6/23/00

## **SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY (in Maryland)**

### **GENERAL EDUCATION**

#### **Introduction:**

The General Education Program at Salisbury State University is designed to introduce undergraduates to the fundamental knowledge, skills, and values that are essential to further study in the academic disciplines, to the pursuit of life-long learning, and to the development of educated members of the community and the world.

#### **General Education Program Goals:**

To be included in the University's General Education Program, courses must focus on one or more of the following knowledge, skill, and value goals:

- Introduce students to the fundamental principles, concepts, and methodologies essential for the acquisition of knowledge basic to mathematics, the physical and natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, and composition.
- Develop in students an ability to connect knowledge across disciplines.
- Foster in students qualities of open-mindedness, inquiry, and rational assessment of data.
- Develop in students the ability to think and express themselves analytically, critically, and creatively, and to read with comprehension.
- Provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in solving complex problems.
- Provide students knowledge needed to apply ethical principals to inquiry.
- Prepare students to adapt to the increasing integration of information technology in all fields of knowledge.
- Develop in students the ability to communicate effectively in oral and written English and to perform numerical analysis at the college level.
- Provide students with an understanding of their social, aesthetic, political, and physical environment.
- Foster in students an understanding of and respect for diverse human cultures.
- Provide students with an understanding of the principles of personal health and wellness.

## APPENDIX C

### CRITERIA FOR GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT BEARING COURSES AT SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Structure of the General Education Program:

The University's General Education Program consists of four groups of courses, and each course approved for general education must fit within one of these four groups. The groups are as follows:

#### Group I

Courses designed to develop students' competence in written and oral expression and to encourage them to appreciate the beauty and truth embodied in the traditional disciplines of the humanities.

#### Group II

Courses designed to offer perspectives and insights on the interaction of humans with each other in a social world in the areas of history and social sciences.

#### Group III

Courses designed to provide experience in the scientific method and structures on which it is based, and which lead to an appreciation of the interdependence of humans and the natural world.

#### Group IV

Courses in physical education designed to enhance students' understandings of the body, its movement, and the values of fitness.

#### Characteristics of General Education Courses:

- General Education courses are foundation courses. Most often, general education courses are designed to be taken in the freshman and sophomore years to provide a foundation for further work and lifelong learning. Upper-level courses may also provide such foundations if they connect to the general education goals and help students achieve general education outcomes.
- General Education courses provide students with a breadth of knowledge by doing the following:
  - a. offering either a broad survey view or focus on microcosms that promote students' understanding of larger wholes.
  - b. having no or minimum prerequisites.

- c. not presupposing students' command of highly technical/specialized language.
  - d. not being designed primarily to prepare students for a particular profession.
- General Education courses contribute to students' intellectual development by engaging them in active learning experiences that promote one or more of the following outcomes:
    - a. abilities to integrate and synthesize ideas.
    - b. abilities to make informed and responsible judgments.
    - c. abilities to communicate.
    - d. abilities to think analytically.
    - e. abilities to inquire critically.
    - f. abilities to function as responsible citizens.
- Courses in the fine and performing arts may be approved for general education credit when their emphasis is on the experience of performance itself. The greatest part of such courses is given over to the actual practice of the creative or performing art. In these courses, students achieve the following outcomes:
    - a. increased competence in expression over the course of a semester through assignments that become more demanding as the semester proceeds, rather than being repetitious.
    - b. knowledge and understanding of aesthetic approaches to performance beyond mere skill development.
    - c. knowledge about context, history, and/or methodology, as appropriate.
    - d. opportunities to reflect on and develop a conceptual framework for understanding what they are performing, rather than displaying role skills.