

SENATE AGENDA ITEM II.D

General Education Review Committee Recommendations

In May 2005, the Faculty Senate created the General Education Review Committee to consider 6 charges. Each of the charges is addressed below, including 1) the GERC recommendation(s) in bold, 2) a bulleted list, referencing relevant CGE documents, and 3) the committee's rationale for each recommendation, in italics.

Charge 1. An examination of the purpose and necessity of each individual category

The General Education Review Committee (GERC) recommends that the current category structure of WIU's General Education Curriculum be retained. Several changes are being recommended to the current structure. The first is that Category IV, the Humanities, would be retitled "Humanities and Fine Arts" category

environment that supports the development of wellness, ethical decision-making and personal responsibility.” Categories V and VI contribute to the achievement of this university mission.

Charge 3. An examination of the overall number of hours for the Gen Ed requirement

GERC concludes that the total number of hours to complete the General Education Curriculum is appropriate and does not recommend any change.

GERC considered several factors in making this recommendation. First, 43 hours is sufficient to provide a thorough liberal arts foundation to a student's major course of study. Forty-three hours is also sufficient to further develop a student's academic skills such as writing and critical thinking that will foster success in his or her major.

On the other hand, 43 hours does not provide an undue burden on students who have a comprehensive or hour-heavy major. Further, 43 hours places WIU's General Education Curriculum well within the parameters of peer institutions.

Charge 4. An examination of the purpose and effectiveness of the W requirement within Gen Ed

A. GERC recommends that the 6-hour "W requirement" be eliminated from the General Education Curriculum.

B. Relatedly, GERC recommends strengthening the current requirement that all General Education courses include writing. This would be accomplished in two ways. First, CGE will play a more pronounced role in educating faculty about the writing requirement and offering support to faculty who want to use writing more effectively in general education courses. Second, the recommended writing requirement is less ambiguous than the current requirement, while still providing flexibility for writing appropriate to a discipline and to the size of the class.

Please see the following documents, as amended:

- "Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education," Section D (pages 15-16).
- "Writing to Learn in General Education," (pages 17-18)
- Faculty Senate Bylaws, under Council on General Education, Sections 2.1 and 2.m (pages 19-20).
- "Request for Inclusion in General Education" form, section d. under "Justification for Inclusion in Gen Ed" (page 22).
- University Catalog, under "General Education Curriculum: Categories," Category I: Communication Skills, University Writing (page 29).

The recommendation to drop the W requirement was not made lightly. There was a strong consensus among members of GERC that writing across the General Education Curriculum is extremely important for a variety of reasons. First, writing can be an effective pedagogical tool. Second, writing is a skill that our students will need to succeed in their major courses of study and in their careers as they move beyond Western.

There were two main questions GERC grappled with in making this recommendation. First, is the W requirement effective in enhancing students' writing skills? This is difficult to ascertain. Anecdotes were shared that offered support to the continuation of the W requirement, while other stories pointed to the requirement's ineffectualness. We simply do not know whether the W requirement helps students write better.

The second question was whether the W requirement created an unreasonable hurdle for some students to complete their General Education requirements. Several factors seem to indicate that this is the case. Advisors, particularly in the area of education, have pointed out for years that their advisees often have difficulty finding enough W courses to take because of the inflexibility of these majors.6g0groomamhis exa asbcreatby(to thelafectlarfew des, pmtudentd that ofughseffestioty of their)Tj ET ζ

the goals themselves. As conceived by assessment personnel at the North Central Association at that time (now the Higher Learning Commission), general education assessment would be difficult to carry out with a broad list of goals. It was argued that learning goals for each category would allow assessment of student learning to be carried out more easily.

Today, the Higher Learning Commission is more flexible about methods of general education assessment. This gave GERC the opportunity to ask “what do we want the goals of General Education to be?” Do we want goals that apply only to a single category within General Education, or do we want a set of goals that reflect the curriculum as a whole? Ultimately, members of GERC decided the relevant question to be considered was “what is a generally educated student?” Assessment of student learning is still a factor to be considered when determining goals, but it was a secondary consideration.

It was determined that university-wide goals more effectively reflect general education as a unified curriculum, rather than portraying it as fragmented and disjointed. The category structure of our General Education Curriculum is a useful tool in that it allows students to receive a broad general education prior to taking the more specialized courses from their major, but the structure of the curriculum should not dictate the goals of the curriculum.

In regard to assessment purposes, Western has a team of people who are working with the Higher Learning Commission on general education assessment. Several members of GERC and CGE are part of this assessment group and took part in a 3 day workshop on assessment. The information and feedback we received at this workshop confirmed our conclusions that general education assessment could be effectively carried out without resorting to over 30 individual goals scattered across the six categories. A concise, curriculum-wide set of goals are just as assessable and much less cumbersome.

With this in mind, GERC recommends university-wide goals that reflect the overall intention of a strong general education program with an emphasis on basic concepts across disciplines.

B. Related to the above recommendation, GERC recommends that the current category specific goals now be used as descriptions of the General Education categories, rather than as statements of student learning. These descriptions of the categories would be used to help distinguish a course which is suitable to General Education from one that is not.

Please see the following documents, as amended:

- “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education,” Sections A and C.1 (pages 11-14).
- Request for Inclusion in General Education form, sections a and b, under “Justification for Inclusion in Gen Ed” (page 23).
- University Catalog, Philosophy and Goals of General Education and General Education Categories (pages 25-28).

While GERC has concluded that category-specific goals of student learning are cumbersome and largely unnecessary for assessment purposes, members do recognize that a great deal of work went into the creation of these goals. Faculty from the disciplines in each of the categories developed thorough descriptions of the categories, as well as category specific learning outcomes for students. These goals have been honed further through the goals reviews process CGE has conducted for the past several years.

The question GERC addressed was to what use these category-specific goals could be used if they were no longer to be General Education goals. It was concluded that the current goals were actually much better descriptions of the categories than they were statements of student learning. This provides several advantages.

First, the collaboration and effort that went into the creation of the category-specific goals is honored. The adoption of these goals was a useful exercise in that it prompted faculty to talk about their courses as general education courses and to talk across disciplines about what it is we want our students to learn in general education. It would be a shame to waste the effort and the expertise that went into the development of these goals.

Second, using the category-specific goals as descriptions of the categories helps clarify what is and what is not a General Education course in each of the categories. Currently, the “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education” is very sparse about what constitutes a General Education course. Current and previous members of CGE who are now on GERC expressed the frustration they often felt when considering courses for inclusion because there was so little guidance on what a General Education course should be. There was little foundation on which to base a decision either to include a course in General Education or to reject it.

To translate category-specific goals into new category descriptions, the original language of the category goals was simply transferred to the “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education.” The only change to the language was the sentence prior to the enumerated list of goals for each category. Rather than stating that “students will learn” the learning objectives for that category, the sentence was edited to read that courses in the category will teach students these objectives.

In addition to adjusting the “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education,” the catalog will be amended to reflect these category descriptions.

C. GERC reaffirms the inclusion of multicultural content and pedagogy across the General Education Curriculum.

Please see the following documents, as amended.

- “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education,” Section C.2 (pages 14-15).
- CGE’s “Request for Inclusion in General Education

D. GERC recommends that there be only one form to request that a course be included in the General Education Curriculum, rather than a form for new courses, as found on CCPI's New Course Proposal form, and a CGE form for existing courses.

Please see the recommended and original versions of the following forms.

- CGE's Request for Inclusion in General Education (pages 22 and 43).
- CCPI's Request for New Course (pages 24 and 46).

Currently, there are two separate forms to request that a course be included in the General Education Curriculum. Departments with new course proposals before CCPI can indicate on CCPI's form whether they want the course considered for inclusion in General Education. If so, departments answer a variety of questions related to General Education on CCPI's form, which is then forwarded to CGE. For existing courses, departments fill out a different form for CGE only. The two forms, for new or exi

course. Although it was not formalized as a policy, CGE has operated on this principle for the past several years.

GERC recognizes the need for two exceptions. First, there are currently upper division courses in the General Education Curriculum in several of the categories. Rather than second-guessing the decisions made by previous members of CGE or trying to ascertain the rationale for the inclusion of these courses, GERC decided to simply retain the upper division courses that are currently in the General Education Curriculum.

Second, Category V has always been the exception to this expectation that general education courses be lower division. Originally, this exception was made because there were so few courses which could be included in the newly created category when the General Education Curriculum was adopted in the early 1990s. This is clearly no longer a problem. However, another pragmatic consideration prompted GERC to maintain this exception.

Students who transfer to Western and who are not covered by Western's Articulation agreement with community colleges must complete Western's General Education Curriculum. This most often involves the student having to take courses in Categories V and VI (Multicultural Studies and Human Well-Being). Because many of these students have to be attentive to their 40 hour upper division requirement, GERC concluded that it was useful to continue having a category in the General Education Curriculum that provided the opportunity to take upper division courses.

Not everyone initially agreed that General Education should be limited to lower-division courses. However, the fact that students who transferred to and from Western might have difficulty transferring upper division general education hours prompted those who originally dissented to approve this recommendation.

G. GERC recommends a clarification of the policy on prerequisites for General Education courses.

- Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion in General Education, Section C.5 (page 15).

GERC has several objectives in making this recommendation. The first is to reaffirm the expectation that General Education courses should normally be lower division courses. The second objective is to help ensure that general education courses are accessible to most students. Particularly with the implementation of hard prerequisites, multiple prerequisites for a course may serve as a barrier to students who are not majoring in that particular discipline. Third, the current wording of the policy, particularly the parenthetical explanation, is cumbersome and, in places, inaccurate.

H. GERC recommends that the Bylaw on CGE's membership be amended to require both areas of Category I (Writing and Public Speaking) and Category IV (Humanities and Fine Arts) be represented.

- Faculty Senate Bylaws, under Council on General Education, Section 1 (page 19).

While not formally in the bylaws, the practice of the Faculty Senate's Committee on Committees has been to nominate the two representatives from Category I so that both areas, Writing and Public Speaking, are represented on CGE. This recommendation simply codifies that current practice.

GERC believes that a similar process should be followed for Category IV, so that both areas, Humanities and Fine Arts, receive representation on the Council.

Charge 6. A revie

Guidelines

- c. learn to identify, analyze, and interpret the historical, social, or cultural contexts for these humanistic works and expressions;
- d. examine and come to understand human values as they are represented, reasoned about, and justified through various humanistic works

b.

Revised

g

The above revised "Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in General Education Curriculum" report includes amendments approved at the Special Meeting of the Faculty Senate on 3 December 1991 and regular meeting of 31 March 1992.

4/1/92

Revised B. 2., 12/19/96, Faculty Senate

Revised C. 2., 9/23/97, Faculty Senate

Approved by

Writing to Learn in General Education Courses
(Changes approved by Senate 10-2-07)

The Council on General Education requires that all General Education courses include writing as an integral learning tool in their Gen Ed classes. Although the type and amount of writing is best determined by the instructor and department, the Council of General Education will use the following guidelines when considering courses for inclusion in General Education.

- a. For courses with an enrollment of 50 or fewer, students should have at least one written assignment with written

Excerpt from Faculty Senate Bylaws: (Revision approved by Faculty Senate 9/18/07)

I. Council on General Education

1. Membership:

The Council shall consist of sixteen members, including one undergraduate student selected by the Student Government Associations. The Faculty Senate shall appoint twelve members. There shall be two representatives per category from disciplines offering courses in categories I-IV. For the two members representing category I, one member must teach courses on college writing and one representative must teach public speaking. For the two members representing category IV, one member must teach courses in the Fine Arts and one representative must teach courses in the Humanities.

Categories V and VI shall each have one representative selected from the disciplines offered in those categories. There shall be two at-large representatives from disciplines not offering courses in categories I-IV and VI. All colleges shall have at least one member and no college may have more than six members. The Dean's Council representative, the Provost's representative, and the Council of Academic Advisers representative shall serve as ex-officio members.

2. Duties:

- a. To establish Faculty Liaison Committees for each area of the General Education Curriculum, make requests of them and receive their reports.
- b. To periodically review and evaluate the philosophy and goals of General Education.
- c. To review the General Education Curriculum, and ongoing assessments of that curriculum by other agencies, in order to insure that the curriculum reflects the University's philosophy and goals of General Education.
- d. To determine on the basis of assessment results the level of adequacy of students' achievement of the goals of General Education, as well as effectiveness of any changes made in the curriculum of General Education.
- e. To develop procedures designed to lead to the improvement of student learning and the instructional process in the General Education Curriculum and forward those to the Faculty Senate for approval.
- f. To receive and review departments' plans and reports on assessment of General Education.
- g. To consider and make recommendations about the means of delivery for General Education courses to enhance student learning.
- h. To respond to departmental requests regarding General Education courses and make appropriate recommendations regarding such courses to the Faculty Senate.
- i. On request, to deliberate about the articulation of WIU General Education requirements with those of community colleges and other colleges and universities.
- j. On request, to deliberate about the impact of any changes in General Education on certification and accreditation programs as well as respond to the needs of those programs.

- k. To maintain liaison with CCPI, CAGAS, the Advising Center, and other agencies in order to consider matters of interest in the area of General Education to any or all concerned.
- l. To communicate at the beginning of the academic year to administrators and faculty the writing requirement for all courses in the General Education Curriculum.
- m. To develop and offer programs, in conjunction with other University agencies, to foster awareness and understanding of General Education, to inform General Education instructors about specific pedagogical practices well-suited to general education courses, and to educate General Education instructors about writing as a pedagogy.
- n. To make recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding any or all of the duties described above.
- o. To perform such other duties as designated by the Senate.

Philosophy and Goals of General Education (*Changes approved*)

(Revision approved by Senate 10-2-07)

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR NEW AND EXISTING COURSES)

Submit 16 copies of completed form to Faculty Senate Office for distribution to CGE members. For new courses, please submit 16 copies of the new course proposal form as well.

COLLEGE: DEPT:

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

APPROVAL SIGNATURES REQUIRED BELOW:

DEPT.: _____ Date: _____

COLLEGE: _____ Date: _____

CGE: _____ Date: _____

SENATE: _____ Date: _____

PROVOST: _____ Date: _____

COURSE INFORMATION

JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION IN GEN. ED.

In addition to responding to the following questions, please provide a sample outline of course content.

Please refer to “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in the General Education Curriculum” and the General Education Goals of the “Philosophy and Goals of General Education” documents (both of which are available in Word format from the Faculty Senate office and online at <http://www.wiu.edu/FacultySenate/CGE.htm>) before responding to the following questions.

- a. Briefly describe which of the General Education goals your course will address and how it will address them.

- b. Briefly describe how your course meets the description of courses in the relevant category of the “Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in the General Education Curriculum.”

- c. If this course will also be required for the major, how will these competing demands (i.e., general education goals and major goals) be accommodated?

- d. As stated in the “Guidelines....” document, Section D., “Every course submitted for inclusion in categories II, III, IV, V, or VI of the General Education Curriculum must include writing as a pedagogical tool to help students master the course material.” Please explain how this course will meet the writing requirement. **[INSERT Weblink to relevant page of guidelines]**

- e. Where relevant, explain how this course incorporates multicultural perspectives (cultural pluralism). **[INSERT Weblink to relevant page of guidelines]**

SUGGESTED REVISION OF CCPI FORM

DESIRE FOR THE GEN. ED. CURRICULUM: YES: NO:

IF YOU ARE NOT REQUESTING INCLUSION IN GENERAL EDUCATION, please submit 23 copies of your request (for CCPI) to the Faculty Senate Office, Stipes 323, for appropriate routing to CCPI, the Faculty Senate and the President. Submit letters of support from departments where overlap may exist. You may ignore the remainder of this form

IF YOU ARE REQUESTING THAT THIS NEW COURSE BE INCLUDED IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM, please submit 16 copies of both the request for new course and the request for inclusion in General Education to the Faculty Senate Office, Stipes 323, for appropriate routing to CGE, the Faculty Senate, and the President. The Request for Inclusion in General Education form can be obtained either from the Faculty Senate office, or online at <http://www.wiu.edu/FacultySenate/index.shtml>.

Excerpt from University Catalog (*Changes approved by Senate 10/2/07*)

Univers

e. explore in depth at least one significant subject of aca

University General Education Requirements

Candidates for a baccalaureate degree at Western Illinois University are required to complete the General Education

course from each of the two groups of courses must be taken. No more than two courses from the same discipline may be counted.

Group 1: Humanities – Sel

- ! G H 101: Freshman Humanities Tutorial (2–3)
- ! G H 201: Sophomore Humanities Tutorial (2–3)
- ! G H 301: Advanced Humanities Seminar (2–3)

History

- ! Hist 105: American History to 1877 (3)
- ! Hist 106: American History since 1877 (3)
- ! Hist 125: Western Civilization to 1648 (3)
- ! Hist 126: Western Civilization since 1648 (3)
- ! * Hist 145: History of Asia (3)

Philosophy

- ! Phil 105: Philosophical Explorations (3)
- ! Phil 120: Contemporary Moral Problems (3)
- ! Phil 140: Logic and Reasoning (3)
- ! Phil 205: Philosophy, Law and Society (3)

Religious Studies

- ! Rel

Proposal for the
Assessment of Student Learning in General Education
At Western Illinois University

Approved by the General Education Review Committee
February 15, 2007

Underlying Assumptions:

C. Results: Through their assessment committees, departments are responsible for the following activities.

1. Departments will carry out the measurement in their General Education courses.
2. Departments will compile the results of the measurement.
3. Departments will analyze the findings in relation to the learning outcomes and the department's expectations of student learning.
4. Departments will report General Education assessment activities and results to their deans in annual assessment reports.

D.

writing assignments include an essay to be written during an examination, a take-home essay, a journal, a book review, a term paper, etc.

2. Any course in categories II, III, IV, V, and VI may be scheduled with the suffix "W" if it requires a significant amount of writing. Writing emphasis courses in the General Education Curriculum use writing both to help students learn course material and to improve their writing skills. Courses with the "W" designation must include at least one out-of-class writing assignment and at least one in-class writing assignment and either 50% of the final grade based on written work or at least 2500 words of writing that receives constructive feedback from the instructor. All "W" classes will include Hacker's Pocket Style Manual (or other campus-wide style manual) on the syllabus.

The above revised "Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in General Education Curriculum" report includes amendments approved at the Special Meeting of the Faculty Senate on 3 December 1991 and regular meeting of 31 March 1992.

4/1/92

Revised B. 2., 12/19/96, Faculty Senate

Revised C. 2., 9/23/97, Faculty Senate

Approved by President, 9/26/97

Revised C. 2., 4/25/00, Faculty Senate

Approved by President, 5/4/00

Excerpt from Faculty Senate Bylaws:

I. Council on General Education

University General Education Curriculum

Philosophy and Goals of General Education

General education is the component of the undergraduate curriculum devoted to those areas of knowledge,

b.

They appl

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR EXISTING COURSES ONLY)

Submit 13 copies of completed form to Faculty Senate Office for distribution to CGE members

COLLEGE:

DEPT:

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

APPROVAL SIGNATURES REQUIRED BELOW:

DEPT.: _____ Date: _____

COLLEGE: _____ Date: _____

CAGAS (if SU): _____ Date: _____

CGE: _____ Date: _____

SENATE: _____ Date: _____

PROVOST: _____ Date: _____

DEPARTMENT, COURSE NUMBER, COURSE TITLE, AND CREDIT HOURS:

GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY:

EXISTING CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

1. Integration of pluralistic concepts and themes into the course content;
2. Methods of presentation that ensure accessibility for students of all cultural backgrounds; and/or
3. Contributions from members of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Please consult “Considerations

EXCERPT FROM CCPI'S "REQUEST FOR NEW COURSE"

DESIRE FOR THE GEN. ED. CURRICULUM: YES: NO:

If yes, CATEGORY:

IF YOU ARE NOT REQUESTING INCLUSION IN GENERAL EDUCATION, please submit 23 copies of your request (for CCPI) to the Faculty Senate Office, Stipes 323, for appropriate routing to CCPI, the Faculty Senate and the President. Submit letters of support from departments where overlap may exist. You may ignore the remainder of this form

IF YOU ARE REQUESTING THAT THIS NEW COURSE BE INCLUDED IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM, PLEASE ANSWER THE REMAINING QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE, then submit 38 copies of your request (23 copies for CCPI and 15 copies for CGE) to the Faculty Senate Office, Stipes 323 for appropriate routing to CGE, CCPI, the Faculty Senate and the President.

JUSTIFICATION for GENERAL EDUCATION

In addition to responding to the following questions, please provide a sample outline of the course content (15 copies for CGE).

Please refer to "Guidelines and General Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in the General Education Curriculum" and the General Education Goals of the "Philosophy and Goals of General Education" documents (both of which are available at www.wiu.edu/FacultySenate or from the Faculty Senate Office) before responding to the following questions.

- a. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW YOUR COURSE WILL MEET EACH OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS FOR THE RELEVANT CATEGORY.**
- b. IF THIS COURSE WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED FOR THE MAJOR, HOW WILL THESE COMPETING DEMANDS (i.e. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND MAJOR GOALS) BE ACCOMPLISHED?**
- c. IF THIS COURSE IS NUMBERED ABOVE THE 200 LEVEL, WHY IS UPPER DIVISION CREDIT NECESSARY?**
- d. AS STATED IN THE "GUIDELINES....." DOCUMENT, C.1. "ANY DEPARTMENT SUBMITTING A COURSE OR COURSES IN CATEGORIES II, III, IV, V, OR VI MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE WRITING ASSIGNMENT IN EVERY ONE OF THESE COURSES." PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW THIS COURSE WILL MEET THE WRITING REQUIREMENT.**