



UWSP General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC)

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

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

- *Approved May 2008*

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

- *Approved February 2009*

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

- *Approved April 2009*

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

- *Approved March 2010*

Step 5) Develop course criteria for the GEP.

- *Approved April 2011*

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

- *Approved February 2012*

At each stage, GEPRC will submit a draft to the campus for comment by posting the item on "Message of the Day." GEPRC will then gather comments for at least one week through our Web site, by email, and from at least one open forum at which members of the campus community will be invited to ask questions and offer advice regarding the proposal under review. GEPRC will then consider these comments and make revisions where necessary before formally submitting the item to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). (All campus comments will be included with this revised proposal as an appendix.) AAC will then vote on the proposal, either sending it back to GEPRC for further revision or submitting it to the Faculty Senate for consideration and approval.

Implementation target: Fall 2013

UWSP General Education Program: Overview of Approved Changes

Step 1: Mission Statement (Approved May 2008)

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

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

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

Step 2: GEP Learning Outcomes (Approved February 2009)

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

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

Step 3: Model & Relationship to Degree Types (Approved April 2009)

The committee recommends that UWSP employ a distribution model in creating a curriculum to meet its recently approved GEP Program Outcomes. By its very nature, the distribution model allows substantial flexibility in the shaping of a curriculum. Consequently, to this broad recommendation, the committee adds the following specific proposals:

- a) The General Education Program should apply to all students regardless of degree type (BA, BS, BM, and BFA).
- b) In addition to the GEP, separate degree requirements for the BA, BS, BM, and BFA should be developed at the university-level by the Academic Affairs Committee after Step 4 is complete.

General Education Program (GEP) Curriculum

Students will fulfill these program outcomes (in Step 2 above) by completing the following General Education requirements:

FOUNDATION: DEVELOPING FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

Courses listed under this category are intended to provide students with the basic skills necessary for intellectual development and to succeed in their studies at UWSP, including critical thinking, quantitative literacy, information literacy, written and oral communication, and wellness. Students will complete 16 credits in this area, including the following:

First Year Seminar (3 credits)

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of a liberal education and the ways in which academic study is structured at UWSP.
- Describe the importance of critical thinking and information literacy and apply the associated skills.
- Identify and apply appropriate note-taking, test-taking, and time-management strategies to their academic studies.
- Describe the importance of co-curricular involvement and how it enhances their academic study at UWSP.
- Identify and utilize UWSP programs, resources, and services that will support their academic studies and co-curricular involvement.
- Develop a plan that demonstrates their responsibility for their own education, specifically how it relates to their interests, abilities, career choices, and personal development.

Written and Oral Communication (9 credits)

Written Communication (6 credits): Introductory writing classes provide an essential foundation of communication skills on which students can build throughout the rest of their university careers and beyond. They develop students' skills in analyzing audience, structuring written documents, and understanding and applying the conventions of effective writing. Subsequent writing courses build upon these skills by helping students learn to locate sources, critically analyze information, and synthesize their ideas with those of others to write well-

supported academic arguments. They also provide an essential starting point for the more specialized writing students will be expected to do in the future within their fields of study.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

Oral communication (3 credits): Learning to speak effectively is an essential part of a liberal education. However, effective communication in today's society requires more than the acquisition of oral presentation skills. UWSP also expects students to develop skills in using visual communications technologies and other media tools in order to enhance presentations and connect more meaningfully with audiences.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

Quantitative Literacy (3 credits)

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

Wellness (1 credit)

Wellness is a dynamic process of becoming aware of and making conscious choices toward a more balanced and healthy lifestyle. It is multi-dimensional and holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual wellbeing, and the environment. Wellness is an essential

attribute of a well-rounded, liberally educated person and of strong societies. Understanding the dimensions of wellness and their impact on individuals, families and societies is essential to being a responsible global citizen.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify the seven dimensions of wellness.
- Recognize the interaction between each dimension of wellness and their overall impact on personal, national and global health and well being.
- Develop an individual plan for healthy living that demonstrates an understanding of the principles of wellness.

INVESTIGATION: UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL WORLDS

Building on the skills and knowledge from the foundation level, courses listed under this category are meant to encourage students to acquire broad knowledge of the world in which they live, as well as the various disciplinary methods by which this knowledge is produced. Students will complete 21 credits in this area, including a minimum of 3 credits and a maximum of 6 credits from each category below.

Arts (3-6 credits)

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify aesthetic, cultural, and historical dimensions of artistic traditions and techniques.
- Demonstrate an understanding of creative expression by critiquing, creating, or collaborating on a specific work of art.
- Express their own understanding and interpretation of works of art critically and imaginatively.

Humanities (3-6 credits)

The humanities explore the fundamental ideas and values shaping cultures and civilization, in life and as represented in the written word, using scholarly approaches that are primarily analytical, critical, or interpretive. By introducing students to concepts and beliefs within and outside their own perspectives, courses in the humanities help students to understand and critically engage a variety of worldviews and the ideas that give them meaning.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, speak clearly, think critically, or write persuasively about cultures and cultural works/artifacts (including texts, images, performances, and technologies, as well as other expressions of the human condition).
- Identify and analyze how beliefs, values, languages, theories, or laws shape cultures and cultural works/artifacts.
- Engage a variety of ideas and worldviews critically by formulating reflective and informed moral, ethical, or aesthetic evaluations of cultures and cultural works/artifacts.

Historical Perspectives (3-6 credits)

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe events from past cultures, societies, or civilizations.
- Recognize the varieties of evidence that historians use to offer diverse perspectives on the meaning of the past.
- Identify the role of human agency in shaping events and historical change.
- Explain historical causality.
- Evaluate competing historical claims that frequently inform the present.

Social Sciences (3-6 credits)

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

Natural Sciences (3-6 credits)

As the progress of our society becomes more dependent on science and technology, our future becomes increasingly dependent upon a scientifically literate population. Individuals today must be sufficiently knowledgeable about scientific facts, science applications, and the process of scientific inquiry in order to make reasoned decisions concerning their use in

addressing society's problems. Courses in this area must contain a laboratory component to help students develop an understanding of scientific inquiry.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Courses listed in this area are meant to foster greater awareness of cultural and environmental issues that currently shape today's world as a means of better preparing students for responsible citizenship. Students will complete 3 credits in each area below. But since these courses are intended to be cross-listed as requirements in other parts of the general education curriculum, for most students, they should require no additional credits.

Global Awareness

Global Awareness courses examine the unique cultural, political, economic, intellectual, and/or religious components of societies, countries, regions, and peoples that are distinct from those found within the United States. By learning about these cultures, students can appreciate the key differences and similarities between diverse modes of human life and reach a better understanding of the human condition on a global scale. Moreover, this understanding will prepare students to act thoughtfully and responsibly in a global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain various components of a culture that is distinct from those found within the United States.
- Analyze how cultural similarities and differences are negotiated in ways that help shape the modern world.

U.S. Diversity

U.S. Diversity courses are designed to consider the role of diversity in American life, where diversity is defined to include both individual differences (e.g. personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and other group and social differences (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, country of origin, class, sexual identity/orientation, religion, ability, or other affiliations). Satisfaction of this requirement will prepare students to act thoughtfully and responsibly as a U.S. citizen in a global society.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Describe the various dimensions of diversity and marginalization within the United States.
- Explain the means by which one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have negotiated the conditions of their marginalization.

Environmental Responsibility

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

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Recognize areas of interaction between human society and the natural environment.
- Identify the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing scientific claims that inform environmental debates.

INTEGRATION: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Courses listed under this category are meant to build on the earlier components of the General Education Program, giving students the opportunity to develop, integrate, and apply the knowledge and skills they learned. Students will complete at least 3 credits in this area, as well as several additional requirements.

Interdisciplinary Studies (3 credits)

Under this category, students are asked to complete one of three options: a single three-credit interdisciplinary course; an Interdisciplinary Certificate; or an Interdisciplinary Major or Minor. Each option encourages students to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in the context of a topic of their choosing, and to do so in ways that facilitate making connections across disciplines. In this way, students learn to recognize that issues can be viewed in multiple ways, and that solving problems requires integrating and harmonizing these perspectives.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

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

Experiential Learning (non-GEP credit)

Students benefit from opportunities to learn by reflecting on experiences beyond their typical classroom activities and by applying the knowledge and skills they gain from traditional courses in new settings.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete an approved experiential learning project.
- Reflect on the experiential learning project in order to gain further understanding of their university education, and an enhanced sense of one's personal responsibility as a member of a larger community.

Communication in the Major (non-GEP credit)

Communication in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles.

Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

Capstone Experience in the Major (non-GEP credit)

A capstone experience is either a single seminar or a broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of a student's program of study. It is meant to provide students the opportunity to make connections between the key learning objectives of their majors and the General Education Program Outcomes, and to consider how their educations have prepared them for the world beyond the university.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

GENERAL CRITERIA

1. These criteria apply to the Foundation, Investigation, and Integration levels of the General Education Program (GEP).
2. All courses to be considered for the GEP must be proposed by an academic department or functional equivalent.
3. All courses to be considered for the GEP must be approved by the General Education Committee through the submission of a course proposal. The proposal will typically include:
 - a. Basic course information, including course number, title, credits, and catalog description.
 - b. A representative course syllabus, including learning outcomes aligned with those of the General Education program.
 - c. A narrative describing how student learning will be assessed.
4. All courses must address the approved learning outcomes in the category in which they are taught.
5. All courses should be taught by an instructor with teaching, research, or professional expertise in an appropriate area of study in order to satisfy the relevant learning outcomes in each category. Typically, instructors should possess at least a Master's degree appropriate to the area or category of the proposed course..
 - a. Note: If there is a question about instructor qualifications, the General Education Committee must seek advice from the appropriate department(s) and may request a brief curriculum vitae describing the instructor's qualifications.
6. No course in the Foundation or Investigation Levels may satisfy more than one general education requirement, unless it is paired with one of the following categories: Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, Environmental Responsibility, or Experiential Learning.
7. Courses that exceed the GEP credit requirements satisfy the requirement.

FOUNDATION

1. All requirements in the Foundation Level must be completed before students reach 60 credits. If not, students will be restricted to enrolling for a maximum of 12 credits each semester until the Foundation Level is complete.

First Year Seminar

1. All First Year Seminars must be numbered according to the following scheme, with appropriate subtitle:
 - a. FYS 101: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS)
 - b. FYS 102: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Global Awareness)
 - c. FYS 103: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and U.S. Diversity)
 - d. FYS 104: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Environmental Responsibility)
 - e. FYS 105: Foundations of Critical Inquiry (GEP: FYS and Experiential Learning)
2. All First Year Seminars should focus on topics about which instructors have both expertise and interest, and which are engaging to a general audience of first-year students.

- a. The primary function of the First Year Seminar should NOT be to serve as an introduction to a major.
 - b. Ordinarily, no First Year Seminar may be required for a major.
- 3. Current non-instructional staff are invited to seek adjunct teaching appointments with academic departments in order to teach first-year seminars.
- 4. All First Year Seminar instructors must attend a workshop coordinated by the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement.
- 5. FYS courses should have sufficiently small enrollments so that students will receive appropriate individual feedback.

Written Communication

- 1. The Written Communication outcomes will be satisfied by English 101: Freshman English and English 202: Sophomore English.
- 2. English 150: Advanced Freshman English may be substituted for English 101/202, with the appropriate placement.
- 3. English 101 should be taken during the student's freshman year.
- 4. English 202 should be taken during the student's sophomore year and will have a prerequisite of English 101.
- 5. Written Communication courses should have sufficiently small enrollments so that students will receive appropriate individual feedback.

Oral Communication

- 1. The Oral Communication outcomes will be satisfied by Communication 101: Fundamentals of Oral Communication.
- 2. Oral Communication courses should have sufficiently small enrollments so that students will receive appropriate individual feedback.

Quantitative Literacy

- 1. All Quantitative Literacy courses will have a prerequisite of Math 90 or higher.

Wellness

- 1. Wellness is a one-credit requirement that may be satisfied by a one-, two-, or three-credit course.

INVESTIGATION

- 1. All courses at the Investigation Level should be designed to serve one of two student populations:
 - a. Survey courses designed to serve all students regardless of major; such courses do not presume academic or disciplinary preparation beyond the Foundation Level;
 - b. Courses designed to serve students in specific majors; such courses presume more advanced background preparation appropriate to the discipline.

2. Ordinarily, courses in the Investigation Level will not have prerequisites beyond the Foundation Level. Departments must provide a rationale when proposing General Education courses with prerequisites.
3. A single course may not be designated for more than one Investigation Level category.

CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

1. The instructor and course criteria for the categories of Global Awareness, U.S. Diversity, and Environmental Responsibility are driven exclusively by the approved learning outcomes. A combination of education, research, and professional development related to these categories that allow the learning outcomes to be met is considered qualifying.
2. Ordinarily, courses offered in this area will fulfill one other requirement in the General Education curriculum at the same time, either at the Foundation, Investigation, or Integration Levels.
3. A single course may not be designated for more than one Cultural and Environmental Awareness category.

INTEGRATION

Interdisciplinary Studies

1. Students will complete either: a single Interdisciplinary Studies course or an approved Interdisciplinary Major, Minor, or Certificate.
2. "Interdisciplinary" shall be defined as "integrating content, data, methods, tools, concepts, and theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge in order to advance fundamental understanding, answer questions, address complex issues and broad themes, and solve problems" (from Julie Thompson Klein, *Creating Interdisciplinary Campus Cultures: A Model for Strength and Sustainability*, 2010).
3. The course content, methods and related learning outcomes must be closely related to two distinct categories in the Investigation Level, namely Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences.

For single Interdisciplinary Studies courses:

4. Students shall have a minimum of sophomore standing before enrolling in any Interdisciplinary Studies course.
5. If the course is co-taught by two instructors:
 - a. The instructors should represent two distinct disciplines, as defined above.
 - b. The instructors should provide a written explanation regarding the division of work.
6. If the course is proposed by a single instructor:
 - a. In some cases, a single instructor may have a Master's Degree in two distinct disciplinary fields that will be used in the course.
 - b. In other cases, in addition to a Master's Degree in one discipline, a single instructor should possess adequate teaching or research experience in another discipline to allow students to satisfy the approved learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies. The instructor should provide a written explanation of how their teaching experience,

research, or other academic training has prepared them to teach an Interdisciplinary Studies course.

For Interdisciplinary Majors, Minors, and Certificates:

7. Interdisciplinarity, as defined above, should be the organizing principle of the coursework involved. An interdisciplinary program is an intentional integration of multiple disciplines. In other words, it is not meant to focus largely on a single discipline or methodology with one or two extra courses added to the requirements.
8. The program must include a plan from the department or coordinator for how student achievement of the approved interdisciplinary learning outcomes will be assessed.

Experiential Learning

1. Experiential Learning will provide students with meaningful learning experiences and activities that go beyond traditional classroom settings.
2. The Experiential Learning requirement may be completed through one of two different options: (a) structured, recurring credit-bearing course(s) or learning experience(s), or (b) a student-initiated learning experience that could be either credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing. Each option must meet the approved learning outcomes.
 - a. The first option, as proposed by an academic department and approved by the General Education Committee, includes (but is not limited to) the following possibilities: service-learning courses, internships, externships, practicum experiences, field experiences, student teaching, or credit-bearing study-abroad experiences. Students transferring to UWSP can request to have a previous experiential learning course satisfy the requirement.
 - b. The second option, as proposed by an individual student, is an “Experiential Learning Activity” (ELA), and includes (but is not limited to) any of the following possibilities: credit-bearing independent studies, undergraduate research opportunities, or creative performances; community service projects; student leadership experiences; professional development through paid or unpaid work experiences or internships. Students must complete the ELA while enrolled at UWSP.
3. All ELAs (option 2b above) must meet the following criteria:
 - a. All ELAs must be coordinated with an ELA Mentor. Any UWSP faculty or academic staff (instructional or non-instructional) member may serve as a Mentor for an ELA.
 - b. Students must meet with their ELA Mentor and complete an ELA Plan form before beginning the activity.
 - c. The ELA Plan must be approved by the Mentor before the student begins the activity.
 - d. An ELA must consist of a minimum of 16 hours of service and/or experience.
 - e. Students must reflect on their activity through oral and/or written communication with their Mentor.
 - f. The Mentor will evaluate the ELA.
 - g. The Mentor will record when the ELA has been completed.

Communication in the Major

1. The Communication in the Major requirement addresses discipline-specific communication that builds on the Written and Oral Communication learning outcomes of the Foundation level.
2. Departments or units will designate a minimum of six credits at the 200-level or above within each major to meet the Communication in the Major requirement. Departments may distribute this requirement over any number of courses. These courses may, when appropriate, come from other departments but must be included as part of the major.
3. These courses must include a plan for how student achievement of the approved Communication in the Major learning outcomes will be assessed.
4. All instructors teaching Communication in the Major courses must complete a workshop coordinated by the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement.
5. Communication in the Major courses should have sufficiently small enrollments so that students will receive adequate personal feedback, from both instructors and their peers, on their communication skills.
6. Assignments should be based on the kinds of communication typical of the relevant discipline or profession.
7. Both writing and speaking instruction should be integrated into course discussions and activities and include grading criteria, revision experiences, and opportunities for student peer review. Writing and speaking instruction can be taught together in a single course or divided among courses.

Capstone Experience in the Major

1. Departments will designate a Capstone course(s) or experience for each of its majors.
2. The Capstone course(s) or experience should require the use of skills, methodology, and knowledge which demonstrate continuity between the General Education Program Outcomes and the major.
3. Capstone courses or experiences should have sufficiently small enrollment caps to allow for active participation by each student and feedback by the instructor.

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

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

Year 1:

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

Year 2:

- Investigation-Level Courses (Arts, Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences)

- Program Outcome 2 (Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced)

Year 3:

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

Year 4:

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

Year 5:

- Comprehensive Review of General Education Program and Assessment Plan

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

Course-Based Measurements

The GEC will regularly gather course-level information on student learning through the collection of course portfolios. A course portfolio is a selection of materials from a given course—including the syllabus and relevant examples of student work—along with reflective statements written by the instructor that explore how the course structures and assessment strategies contributed to student learning. Faculty members teaching designated General Education courses will be required to prepare a course portfolio according to the five-year cycle noted above. (Note: the GEC will consult with departments offering multiple sections of the same GEP course to establish a plan for assessment; such a plan will specify a subset of instructors/sections who will submit course portfolios.) Each course portfolio will contain the following elements:

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

2. Assessment Information:

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

The General Education Assessment Process

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

1. At the beginning of each academic year, the GEC will establish faculty learning communities for each area of the curriculum being assessed during that year. Each faculty learning community will include 4-6 faculty members teaching courses in the categories under review and includes the Assessment Coordinator and a member of the GEC representing the particular GEP category. The faculty learning community will coordinate with faculty across campus to ensure the body of course portfolios will provide adequate evidence of student learning for each of the learning outcomes in the GEP category.
2. Instructors teaching courses in areas under review in the fall semester will prepare and submit course portfolios to the Assessment Coordinator by February 1
3. Each faculty learning community will review course portfolios provided by the Assessment Coordinator and provide feedback to instructors. This feedback will only be shared with the instructor.
4. The Assessment Coordinator will collaborate with the faculty learning communities to aggregate findings from the course portfolios, along with data from the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning, and prepare a report for the General Education Committee by May 1. No information identifying instructors, students or specific courses shall be included in the report.
5. At the beginning of the next academic year, the GEC will report to the Faculty Senate on its assessment of student learning, including any recommendations to improve the curriculum. The report may also recommend further action research projects to investigate particular aspects of student learning or to explore the impact of particular changes to the curriculum. The report must be submitted to the Senate by November 1. This report will be shared with the Provost, the Deans, and the department chairs. In addition, it will be posted online to be available to the campus community and others.

Institutional-Level Measurements

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

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

The Use of Assessment Results

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

1. Each instructor submitting a course portfolio will receive individual feedback from the faculty learning community, including an evaluation of the assessment method utilized in the course and recommendations for the improvement of student learning. This evaluation will include the rubric used by the faculty learning community in forming its opinions. This information will be provided only to the instructors themselves and will not be shared with departments, Deans, the Provost, or the GEC.
2. Working in concert with the faculty learning communities, the Assessment Coordinator will compile reports on student learning for the GEC, removing references to specific courses and instructors. The GEC's final report will contain:
 - a. A summary of student attainment of the learning outcomes in the relevant General Education areas.
 - b. Recommendations based on these assessment results for the improvement of the General Education curriculum. These recommendations may include proposals for further action research projects related to particular courses, GEP categories, GE Program Outcomes, or specific groups of students.
3. The GEC will report annually to the Faculty Senate sharing its evaluation and recommendations with the Provost, the Deans, and the department chairs. The report will also be posted online to be available to the campus community and others.
4. In conjunction with the Director of General Education and the Assessment Coordinator, the GEC will work with various units on campus in order to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. In this manner, the GEC will help to "close the loop" by allowing assessment of student learning lead to curricular and pedagogical improvements. Such professional development opportunities might include:
 - a. Workshops on effective assessment of student learning in the General Education curriculum.
 - b. Instructional development necessitated by Faculty Senate-approved changes to the curriculum or learning outcomes.
 - c. Action research projects intended to provide further information on student learning within the curriculum.