

Continuation of Elements and Alternatives to the Gen Ed Proposal (10/03/06)

Proposal Element	Rationale	Possible alternatives
<p>Retain the W course designation but change the requirement from 4 to 3 courses with reinstatement of a class size limit of 25 and the original elements of the W designation.</p>	<p>There are few who would argue against the idea of writing-across-the-curriculum. Response to the Gen Ed Survey last spring overwhelmingly supported the retention of W courses and advocated changes to increase their effectiveness. For budgetary reasons in the late 1990s, class size limits for W courses were raised and the original elements for designation as a W course were made optional. Our proposal reinstates the original intentions of the W initiative and is expected to increase its effectiveness. Changing the number of W's required will preserve some measure of cost savings.</p>	<p>Keep the current 4 W course requirement with reinstated class size and required elements.</p>
<p>Add more explicit encouragement of diversity by creating a D designation for courses (similar to W writing courses) and encourage students to take these courses through advisement.</p>	<p>It is vital for our students to grow in their understanding of diversity. This is part of our University's mission. It is important that this occurs in co-curricular activities, as well as in coursework. We recommend the creation of a D designation for courses and recommend that advisors and students use this designation during the advisement process. While "diversity" has many different meanings, we recommend using the objective below to inform course designation. <u>Proposed diversity objective:</u> Students will grow in their engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities, both inside and outside the United States. Aligned with Characteristic 2.</p>	<p>Add no specific course designations but encourage students to build diversity into their program of study through advisement.</p> <p>Create the D designation and require students to take at least one such course somewhere in their program of studies.</p>
<p>Eliminate the requirement that exactly two courses must be taken from a single department in each G block.</p>	<p>The "at least two but no more than two" rule was an effort to legislate depth while not sacrificing breadth, but it has caused excess complexity and confusion. With a commitment to increasing flexibility and simplicity (Characteristic 6) in a revised curriculum, these restrictions should be lifted. Breadth and depth are encouraged by good advisement, the distribution of courses into three academic blocks, P courses, and increased interdisciplinarity in the curriculum.</p>	<p>Keep the current requirement.</p>