

**Report of  
General Education Curriculum Working Groups  
To Senate November 29, 2005**

**The General Education Review Committee would like to thank the participants of  
the working groups:**

- Barb Stengel: Suzanne McCotter, Leslie Colabucci, Len Litowitz, Steve Miller, Ed Rajaseelan, Carole Counihan, Debbie Sigel.
- John McLarnon: Ralph Anttonen, Derek Shanahan, Celica Milovanovic, & 3 faculty from outside of Millersville: Christopher McLarnon (chemical engineer), Arthur Charles (President International College of Lebanon), & Mary Ann Keeley (evaluator for Middle States).
- Lynn Marquez: Andrew Muller, Pat Hill, John Dooley, Gary Zopetti
- Steve Centola, Tim Miller, Kimberly McCollum-Clark, Sherri Brouillette, and Caleb Corkery.

**The reports of the working groups are shown in this document in the order that they presented to Senate:**

#1 Fred Foster-Clark Current System	2
#2 Fred Foster-Clark Task Force Proposal	3
#3 Scott Shaffer Member of Core, Explore, & More	4
#4 Len Litowitz Member of Core, Explore, & More	6
#5 Steve Centola English Working Group	10
#6 Lynn Marquez Science and Math	13
#7 Barb Stengel Core, Explore, & More	18
# 8 John McLarnon A Fresh Look at Gen Ed	23

**CURRENT GENERAL EDUCATION STRUCTURE**  
**(minimum 51 semester hours)**

**Fundamentals (G4)** (2 courses - 6 sh)

- ENGL 110: English Composition
- COMM 100: Fundamentals of Speech

**Liberal Arts Core** (12 courses – min. 36 sh)

- 4 each in Humanities and Fine Arts (G1), Science and Mathematics (G2), Social Sciences (G3)
- Three courses at 200 level or above
- Gen Ed Math (G2) course required
- Laboratory science (G2) required
- “Two in department” rules in all blocks

**Additional Courses (G4)** (3 courses - 9 sh)

- Perspectives course
  - Must have completed ENGL 110 and 24 sh in Liberal Arts Core
- Advanced Writing
  - At least junior standing
- WELL 175/352: Wellness: Concepts of Health & Fitness/Health Education in Elem. Schools

Six courses (18 sh) from Required Related course work in student’s major may be counted toward any of the Gen Ed requirements above.

**Other University requirements:**

Writing courses: 4 required; may be in General Education, the major or general electives.

Courses meeting any Gen Ed requirement will be approved according to existing procedures.

**Recommendation 2: A revised curricular structure for General Education**

**GENERAL EDUCATION TIER STRUCTURE  
(minimum 51 semester hours)**

**Foundations** (4 courses - 12 sh)

- UNIV 1\*\*\*: First Seminar (or other GenEd course) 3 sh
- ENGL 110: English Composition 3 sh
- COMM 100: Fundamentals of Speech 3 sh
- WELL 175/352: Wellness: Concepts of Health & Fitness/Health Education in Elem. Schools 3 sh

**Introduction to Critical Thinking in the Disciplines**<sup>1</sup> (4 courses – min. 12 sh)

- Math with statistics or calculus component
- Laboratory science
- U.S. Civics-related Social Science
- Literature (from the Humanities)

**Critical thinking in the Disciplines Electives** (6 courses – min. 18 sh)

- 2 each in Humanities and Fine Arts, Science and Mathematics, Social Sciences
- Three courses at 200 level or above

**Integration** (3 courses - 9 sh)

- Perspectives course
  - At least junior standing
- Gen Ed elective
  - At least junior standing
  - 300 level or higher
- Writing intensive capstone or Advanced Writing
  - Senior standing

Six courses (18 sh) from Required Related course work in student's major may be counted toward any of the Gen Ed requirements above.

**Other University requirements:**

Writing courses: 4 required; may be in General Education, the major or general electives.

Diversity<sup>2</sup> course: 1 required; may be in General Education, the major or general electives.

Courses meeting any Gen Ed requirement will be approved according to existing procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> Students select from a set of approved core courses in each area.

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the Diversity requirement is to help students understand people and cultures that they may have had limited understanding of before coming to the university. Courses meeting this requirement should focus on helping students deal constructively with prominent intercultural questions and differences that currently cause discord among citizens within the United States or between the United States and peoples from other countries.

**Recommendation 3 Scott Schaffer Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
General Education Program Proposal – The “Two Minors” Proposal**

**The Proposal:** To transform the General Education curriculum into the following program, which contains a *core set of competencies* and a *breadth and depth* component exposing students to a variety of modes of thinking and being in the world.

Core Competencies: All students would take the following courses; credit hours are indicated in parentheses. These core competencies work to ensure that MU students are prepared to communicate effectively with others; to utilize essential logical thinking and mathematical skills necessary for an increasingly technologized world; and have an exposure to another language and culture, preparing them for membership in a globalized society. (Total of 21-24ch, depending on MATH course and FORL coursework)

COMM 100 – Fundamentals of Speech (3)  
ENGL 110 – English Composition (3)  
ENGL 311-316 – Advanced writing course (3)  
MATH 101, 130, 151, 155H, or 161 – A math  
computation course (3-4)

A Perspectives (existing P courses), Diversity, or  
Service Learning course (3)  
The equivalent of one year foreign language (up to  
6ch) – this can be attained either through  
placement testing, through exemptions granted by  
the FORL department, or through course work

Breadth and Depth: In order to ensure exposure to a broad variety of perspectives on the world, as well as to ensure a depth of exploration, I propose the following: *that non-School of Education students be asked to complete two six-course minors in fields that are non-contiguous to their major and non-contiguous to one another.* In other words, students would pursue minors in fields in the G blocks outside of their major field (students in G1 majors complete minors in G2 and G3, students in G2 complete minors in G1 and G3, and students in G3 complete minors in G1 and G2). This approach would utilize the already-existing divisions, and treat interdisciplinary majors and minors as belonging to the G block of either their housing department or their Dean:

*G1: Humanities and Fine  
Arts*

Art  
Communication & Theatre  
English  
Foreign Languages  
Music  
Philosophy

(EHEM housed within its  
appropriate division – can't  
find that right now)

*G2: Science and  
Mathematics*

Biology  
Chemistry  
Computer Science  
Earth Sciences  
Mathematics  
Nursing  
Physics

*G3: Social Sciences*

African-American Studies  
Asian and Asian-American Studies  
(after approval)  
Business Administration  
Economics  
Geography  
Gerontology  
Government and Political Affairs  
International Studies (major and  
minor)  
History  
Latin@ Studies  
Social Work  
Sociology/Anthropology  
Women's Studies

NB: Original model for this comes from my own Gen Ed background at Earl Warren College, University of California-San Diego. Information on their program at [http://provost.ucsd.edu/warren/academiclife/requirements/warren\\_ge.php](http://provost.ucsd.edu/warren/academiclife/requirements/warren_ge.php).

Rather than offering a variety of courses that are not generally specifically themed either by the department or by students and advisors, this approach would enable departments to either develop new thematized minors/concentrations (we can decide on the status to grant these programs) or to utilize already-existing minor programs.

This approach would also lead to the creation of three additional minor programs:

Humanities and Aesthetic Perspectives (G1) (18ch)

Scientific Perspectives (G2) (18-21ch)

Social Scientific Perspectives (G3) (18ch)

These minor programs would be developed to allow students to take six lower-division courses across the entire school. It would also allow students who change their major and leave their original school (e.g., change from a G2 major to a G1 or G3 major) to not “lose” credits, but rather retain those courses as an integral part of the General Education program.

Total Credits for Non-Education Majors:

Core Competencies – 21-24 credits

Breadth and Depth – 36-39 credits

Total Gen Ed – 57-63 credits

Remaining credits for major, additional minors within home G block, required related – 57-63 credits

Adjustments for Education Majors: My proposal, particularly for BSEd Secondary Education majors, is to reduce the two non-contiguous minor requirement to two non-contiguous *areas of concentration*, in which students would take two three-course (9ch) sequences in two of the three G blocks (decided in consultation with the advisor). Other adjustments can be made to each of the School of Education majors.

**The Rationale and Gen Ed Characteristics Met:**

This proposal:

- Ensures that nearly all courses taken at MU – whether in the pursuit of a dropped major or because of interest – are able to be included in the graduation requirements, and thereby avoiding the “wasted credit” attitude carried by many of our students and faculty.
- Simplifies the Gen Ed curriculum by eliminating the “menu” approach, while keeping the intent of the previous Gen Ed curriculum to give students a “breadth and depth” exposure to fields outside of their major (GE Char 1, 4, 6);
- Enables departments to develop, both separately and in consultation with one another, notions of the ways in which they believe their minor/ concentrations would cohere with each other (GE Chars 2, 4, 5);
- Enables students to decide, in consultation with advisors, on which minors/concentrations would cohere most appropriately with the major program (GE Chars 2, 3, 5);
- Provides students with a deeper exposure to fields parallel to their own, which can serve to distinguish MU students from others in their professional lives by providing them with a credentialed statement of their expertise and broad exposure (the minor) (GE Chars 1, 5);

### #3 Scott Shaffer Member of Core, Explore, & More

- Prepares our students for fuller participation in a world characterized by increasing technological usage and skill requirements, increasing diversity both within and across national boundaries, and an increasing expectation that people will contribute to their communities (GE 1, 2, 4, 5);
- Addresses the Middle States Standard 12, by enabling students to “acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including *oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy,*” while at the same time extending these requirements to include *aesthetic appreciation and competencies* (GE Chars 1, 4).

### **Recommendation 4: Len S. Litowitz**

#### **Background**

The General Education requirements at Millersville University have changed very little in the past 20 years. I think most would suggest that they have served MU reasonably well during that time, although many of us have felt that the double grid system created by “W” requirements, rules like “two from one department but no more than two”, etc. have made gen ed. cumbersome and unnecessarily restrictive. Present day gen ed advisement has much less to do with encouraging students to explore various subjects that would broaden their horizons or support their major, but rather everything to do with recommending courses that will fulfill various multiple requirements so the students can have some hope of graduating on time. Now couple this situation with the recent SSHE mandate to reduce the number of credits in degree programs to the 120 s.h. minimum. Then throw in increasing accreditation requirements that have been placed upon the many professional programs throughout the institution. The result is that the present gen ed scheme has become untenable.

#### **Goals of this Proposed Revision**

This proposal seeks to accomplish the following:

- create a less restrictive gen ed scheme than our current scheme,
- maintain academic rigor while providing the increased flexibility that is needed to deliver quality degree programs within a four year span,
- work within the existing gen ed framework, maintaining much of what is good about the current framework,
- minimize affects on departmental load so as not to be particularly detrimental to any specific department,
- broaden gen ed so as to include more opportunities to for students within gen ed
- encourage students to pursue minors by allowing them to complete up to three courses (50%) of the minor within gen ed, and
- reduce general education requirements from 51 to 48 semester hours minimum.

## Proposed Credit Distribution

G1 Humanities & Fine Arts (9s.h.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

G2 Mathematics & Science (9s.h.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MAT \_\_\_\_\_

Must include at least one gen. ed. approved Math class and one gen ed approved Laboratory Science class

G3 Social Science (9s.h.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

G4 Core Competencies (12s.h.)

ENG Composition \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_(WELL)

\_\_\_\_\_(AW)

\_\_\_\_\_(P)

G5 Exploration (9s.h)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Proposed Modifications to Existing General Education Requirements

▪Courses selected in blocks G1,G2 and G3 must come from at least two different departments.

*Rationale: Encourages breadth*

▪Limit number of required-related courses that can be completed in gen ed to five (instead of six)

*Rationale: Proposal transfers three credits from gen ed back to the discretion of each individual major*

▪Omit “two from one department” rule in gen ed blocks G1, G2 and G3. Replace with a “two

from one department” rule that must be met once across all of gen ed. in addition to the two

ENGL courses that are already required as a feature of this proposal. (Note that all education

majors would have to complete two Math courses that are mandated by PDE) *Rationale: Helps*

*to achieve greater understanding in an area other than the major*

- Omit COMM 100 from gen ed, but require all majors to identify two courses where a significant speaking assignment will occur. Majors could choose to specify COMM 100 as a required related course in G1 if they have a strong affinity for this course. *Rationale: Many majors include speaking assignments as a natural portion of the major. These speaking assignments are delivered in context as opposed to a generic speaking environment.*

- Require five courses at 200 level or higher across all gen ed distribution blocks. Two of those courses would be met by the AW and P requirements. *Rationale: Would require that students take some courses with depth as opposed to all “Intro to”... courses*

- Modify the four course “W” requirement as it presently exists as follows:

- Keep existing “W” courses on the books
- Require that all Departments identify courses where significant writing assignments routinely occur.
- Departments would be free to designate courses from within the major as W courses, rely on W courses to be completed concurrently with gen ed electives, or use a combination of gen. ed. and major courses to ensure that students do significant writing in a number of courses while at MU

*Rationale: Would help to ensure significant writing is occurring in a number of courses*

- Create a new G5 block that is comprised of purely free electives including all courses presently approved for gen ed and additional courses that have not traditionally served as gen ed courses ( to be proposed by departments)

- Courses within G5 must be from at least two different departments
- Only one course within G5 could come from within the major
- A Freshman seminar course (departmental or campus-wide) could fulfill one G5 requirement
- Departments outside the mainstream of gen ed would have the opportunity to propose a limited number of courses to be approved as suitable for gen ed in the G5 block only. The procedure for proposing a course as a G1, G2 or G3 would remain the same as at present.

*Rationale: The G5 block would allow both students and major programs increased flexibility in gen ed that is desperately needed. Examples: At present education majors cannot take a computer science course in block G2 as a part of their gen ed program, but they could take one in the G5 block created within this proposal. Students cannot take any courses in gen ed from some departments on campus.*

**Recommendation 5 English Proposal presented by Steve Centola**

- I. **Foundations** (12)
  - University 179 (3)
  - English 110 (3)
  - Communications 100 (3)
  - Wellness 175/352 (3)
  
- II. **Explorations in the Liberal Arts Core** (36)
  - G 1 Humanities and Fine Arts (12)
  - G 2 Mathematics and Sciences (12)
  - G 3 Social Sciences (12)
  
- III. **Extensions** (6)
  - Advanced Writing (3)
  - Capstone Course or Perspectives (3)

Total Credits (54)

General Education Stipulations:

- At least 1 course in G2 will be a science lab course
- At least 1 course in G2 will be a mathematics course
- At least 1 course in G1 will be a literature course
- At least 1 course in G3 will be a civics-related social science course
- At least 4 “W” (writing-intensive) courses will be taken in the Liberal Arts Core, in the major, in the minor, or as a free elective
- At least 1 course in the Liberal Arts Core will have an emphasis on diversity issues

**Rationale:**

Our proposal maintains the best features of our present General Education curriculum while simultaneously striving to achieve greater coherence in the overall General Education curriculum. We approached the General Education curriculum as the place where our students can receive a Liberal Arts education that develops and provides opportunities to reinforce crucial critical thinking and communications skills necessary to our students’ growth as individual learners and vital to their success in college and in their careers.

### **Characteristic 1: A Clear Purpose**

*The MU mission statement clearly embraces the Liberal Arts tradition: “The primary mission of Millersville University is to promote intellectual development through an exemplary liberal arts-based education...[MU] resolutely embraces the conviction that all of its degree programs must maintain a strong liberal arts component while preparing students to engage in productive and contributive lives as professionals.” Our proposal allows students to explore subject matter across the disciplines in an attempt to provide them with a diverse experience in the traditional liberal arts areas: science, math, logic, rhetoric, grammar, and fine arts. Liberal arts are designed to expose students to disciplines whose focus is not necessarily tied to specific occupational goals. This is in direct alignment with the University’s mission.*

*In addition, our proposal, while providing the coherence missing to our existing General Education structure, allows students a great deal of choice in fulfilling the goals of the liberal arts. It is also designed to complement the concept of learning communities and learning across the disciplines.*

### **Characteristic 2: Intentional Alignment**

The system we propose includes three categories: Foundations, Explorations and Extensions.

**Foundation courses** transition students from high school to college, introduce them to important life and academic skills, and lay a foundation for advanced work in the Liberal Arts.

**Foundation courses** consist of the four courses we believe are necessary foundations on which the rest of the general education curriculum depends. These courses should also be taken early in the students’ career. In addition, we feel strongly that these courses should be part of a two- or three-part learning community (UNIV 179, ENGL 110 at a minimum, with perhaps the addition of WELL 175 and/or COMM 100). These communities would ideally expound upon the interconnectedness of the general education curriculum and help students understand its relevance to their lives.

**Exploration courses** provide students with opportunities to learn and discover from exploration and engagement in many disciplines. **Exploration courses** focus on three main ideas of the Liberal Arts tradition: humanities, social sciences and math and science. These are areas within which every student should have instruction. Our proposal provides for a great deal of freedom within this category, with a few caveats. We believe it is essential for all students to take at least one applied science course with a lab, at least one mathematics course, and at least one literature course. These courses will allow the students to better understand and participate in their world. Consider the variety of disciplines referred to in articles in a daily newspaper. Training in these specific disciplines will allow students to better engage in the common discourse of life.

**Extension courses** build on previous learning experiences and guide students through the process of directly applying their skill and knowledge and courses that are geared toward their major. **Extension courses** allow students to take their basic skills and both strengthen them and apply them to their chosen major. We believe both an advanced writing course and a capstone course are necessary elements of a General Education curriculum. **Extension courses** also position students for their upcoming role as graduates. Representing thoroughly trained liberal

arts students, Millersville graduates should be able to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences in their area of expertise as well as on general subjects. Capstone and Advanced Writing courses ensure a level of proficiency for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The Capstone course helps to bring coherence to the student's individual field of study. Advanced Writing prepares students to apply the writing skills acquired throughout the curriculum to specialized writing situations in and beyond college.

In consonance with the General Education Task Force recommendations, we also stress the necessity of four "writing-intensive" courses throughout the general education curriculum. Writing is a critical skill for all citizens, no matter what discipline they specialize in. In addition, the writing skills of most college students are underdeveloped and the only remedy to this situation is continued practice.

### **Characteristic 3: Coherence**

By requiring all students to enroll in University 179, we can guarantee that all freshmen will develop certain research, critical thinking, and communication skills while discussing a topic of personal interest to students and faculty alike. By linking the "passion courses" to other fundamental courses through learning communities, we can ensure that students gain a perspective on the role and value of General Education and study in the Liberal Arts to their overall college experience.

### **Characteristic 4: Intellectual Richness**

**Our proposed General Education curriculum is designed to add intellectual richness to the lives of our students by fostering the opportunity to explore a variety of disciplines that reflect the human race's most vital, permanent, and significant intellectual accomplishments. By completing various reading and writing activities, as well as exercises in quantitative problem solving and analytical and critical reasoning, our students will learn how to correlate observed data with knowledge about life and human problems. Ultimately, from their varied educational experiences, they will gain profound insight into the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and emotional life of human beings and provide standards of value for human activity.**

### **Characteristic 5: Academic Community**

By its nature, general education programs are interdisciplinary and help to illuminate the interconnectedness of both academic disciplines and their application to life outside of the university. Our proposal helps to highlight these issues through choice and required upper level "W" courses as well as capstone courses. In addition, all citizens need writing, math, reading, and science abilities. Our proposal provides for those needs.

### **Characteristic 6: Simplicity and Flexibility:**

*Our proposal is designed to simplify the general education requirements. Flexibility is key and its layout lends to increased comprehensibility.*

## Recommendation 6 Science and Math General Education Working Group

### *Rationale*

The Science and Math Working Group feel that the General Education Program at Millersville University is not irreparably broken. We believe that the current system does meet the characteristics proposed by the reform. However, we also believe the current curriculum is perceived by students and faculty alike as incoherent and lacking clear purpose. Therefore, our working group strongly encourages a reframing of the general education curriculum where all students are consistently encouraged by the general education structure and more importantly by advisors and faculty members to seek an intellectually rich curriculum. Our proposal creates thematic overlays for general education blocks whereby a clear purpose is intentionally stated and packages of courses are created that encourage coherence and intellectual richness within the current structure.

### *Our proposal*

- The G1/G2/G3 core requirements remain the same but overlays are created to frame General Education into coherent themes such as Our Changing World, Human Experience, or Tour de Science (see attached).  
36-37 credits
  - Life Skills: This three credit grouping may be fulfilled through freshmen seminar, wellness, or other newly designed courses.
    - Freshman Seminar may consist of 1-3 credits
    - Freshmen Seminar may be housed within the department or as a University seminar for undecided students
      - Strongly encourage freshmen seminars related to Themes
    - Redesigned physical education/wellness courses that teach sports for ½ credits may be used to reach 3 credit total  
3 credits
  - Foundations: ENGL 110 and COMM 100 remain the same but suggest they become part of genuine learning communities with linked general education course and freshman seminar
    - Topics covered in ENGL 110 and COMM 100 relate to the freshman seminar or general education theme  
6 credits
  - The Advanced Writing (AW) course also remains but individual sections are designed for students of similar majors and/or interests. For example, one section would be for meteorology and physics majors; another section designed for oceanography and marine biology majors; another section designed for environmental studies students.  
3 credits
  - The Perspectives Component (P) remains unchanged  
3 credits
- 51 Total Credits**

## **Recommendation 6 Continued**

### ***Implementation***

During freshmen orientation students will be humorously and sagely advised regarding the merits of general education and the value of coherence and depth. Then, after careful consideration and review freshmen will choose a particular theme for general education during orientation. Those students will then be enrolled in a learning community anchored in this theme. We propose that the learning community should include a freshmen seminar, English 110, and one course from the package. The second semester freshmen should also be enrolled in a theme anchored learning community that includes COMM 100 and another theme general education course. These learning communities can take place for both undecided students and those students with majors.

After the freshmen year, in consultation with the faculty advisor, a student may opt out of their chosen theme and complete the current requirements.

### ***The advantages:***

- 1) retains the integrity of general education
- 2) allows faculty and students to innovate freely across disciplines
- 3) allows students to imagine their future and experiment. They are not locked onto a track by their freshman choice - they still need to fill the old sheet and no more.
- 4) works within the present general education system. No need for lengthy implementation process
- 5) avoids turf battles.
- 6) opens the door for marketing general education packages as a reason to come to MU.

### ***Additional Thoughts related to General Education:***

- W courses should be reviewed for consistency across the curriculum
- Departments should review their general education offerings. Are there enough survey courses?
- Registration harms coherency for students left with little choice

**The following themes are simply meant as examples of intellectually rich and coherent general education curricula.**

**Recommendation 6 Continued**  
**Our Changing World**

***G1: Change in America***

Choose One

MUSI 267	Survey of American Music	W
ART 313	Art in America	

Choose 3 Courses: No more than 2 may be from the same department

COMM 220	Survey of History, Structure, and Social Impact of American Mass Media	
COMM 441	Political Communication	W
ENGL 235	Early American Literature	
ENGL 236	Later American Literature	
ENGL 250	The Press and Society	W

***G2: Change in the Natural World***

Required Courses

ESCI 102	Origin and Evolution of the Earth	
ESCI 221	Physical Geology with Lab	L

Choose One

BIOL 103	The Science of Evolution	
BIOL 205	Heredity and Human Affairs	BIOL 100

Choose One

MATH 130	Elements of Statistics	
MATH 235	Survey of Statistics	MATH 151 or 160

***G3: Humans and Change***

Required Courses

ANTH 122	Physical Anthropology	
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Choose One

SOCY 216	Human Population	W
SOCY 313	Sociology of Disaster	W

Choose Two

GEOG 101	Global Environment	
GEOG 202	Resources and the Environment	
GEOG 230	Physical Geography	
GEOG 333	Biogeography	GEOG 230 or BIOL 100
GEOG 336	Climate and Society	P: Perspectives Requirement

## **Recommendation 6 Continued**

### **The Human Condition**

#### **G1: Humans and the Arts**

Choose one

MUSI 100 Music and Culture

ART 100 Art in Culture

Choose 3 courses: 2 must be taken from the same department

COMM 217 Interpersonal Communication

COMM 317 Intercultural Communicology (W)

PHIL 202 Philosophy of Love and Sexuality

PHIL 313 World Religions (W)

ENGL 230 Introduction to Literature

ENGL 231 World Literature

#### **G2: Science and Humans**

Choose 2:

BIOL 103 Science of Evolution

BIOL 204 Human Biology (W)

BIOL 205 Heredity and Human Affairs

BIOL 207 Human Sexuality (W)

Choose One

CHEM 102 Science of Chemistry (L)

CHEM 103 General, Organic and Biochemistry 1 (L)

CHEM 205 The Molecular Basis of Color and Form- Chemistry in Art (L)

ESCI 109 The Atmosphere with Laboratory (L)

PHYS 103 Elements of Physics (L)

Choose One

MATH 100 Survey of Mathematical Ideas

MATH 102 Survey of Mathematical Ideas in Non-European Cultures

#### **G3: Humans and Societal Issues**

Choose 2 courses

ANTH 121 Cultural Anthropology

PSYC 100 General Psychology

SOCY 101 Introduction to Sociology

Choose One (must be in same department as one of above choices)

ANTH 226 Comparative Societies (W)

ANTH 323 Culture and Personality (W)

PSYC 228 Life Span Human Development (W)

PSYC 256 Psychology of Human Adjustment (W)

SOCY 211 Social Problems (W)

Choose One

GEOG 102 Human Geography

GEOG 226 Political Geography (W)

GEOG 227 Urban Geography (W)

GOVT 101 Introduction to Political Studies

#### **Perspective Courses (choose 1)**

CHEM 372 The History of Chemistry and Society

HIST 492 When Worlds Collide: A Clash of Cultures During the Age of Encounter

HIST 493 Chaos and Order in Classical Greece

MUSI 368 World Music

PHIL 391 Gender, Utopia and Human Nature

PHYS 302 Physics and the Evolution of Western Civilization

#6 Lynn Marquez Science and Math

PSYC 318      The Psychology of Racism  
SCMA/HNRS 383      Issues in Science and Religion  
SOWK 350      Encounters in Human Diversity

**Recommendation 6 Continued**  
**The Ancient World**

***G1: Greek and Roman Culture***

Choose Two from one Language

GREK 101      Intro to Greek  
GREK 102      Intro to Greek II

LATN 101      Intro to Latin  
LATN 102      Intro to Latin II

Choose 2 Courses:

HUMN 202	Classical Mythology	W
THEA 340	History of Theater	W
ART 301	The Ancient World	W
PHIL 321	Ancient Philosophy	W

***G2: Science and Humanity***

Required Courses

MATH 100      Survey of Mathematical Ideas

Choose One

PHYS 102	Elements of Physics	L
CHEM 102	Science of Chemistry	L
BIOL 100	Intro to Biology	L

Choose Two

PHYS 117      General Astronomy  
ESCI 107      The Atmosphere  
ESCI 104      The World Ocean  
CHEM 101      Chemistry for Better Living  
BIOL 208      Plants and People

***G3: The Ancient Civilization***

Choose Four: Two must be from the same department

HIST 206	World to 1500	
HIST 211	Greek Civilization	W
HIST 212	Roman Civilization	
GOVT 221	Intro to Comparative Political Systems	
GOVT 231	Intro to Political Theory	

#6 Lynn Marquez Science and Math

ANTH 123 Intro to Archeology  
ANTH 233 Topics in Archeology

***P: The Perspectives Requirement***

HUMN 302 Confession, Apology, Memoir  
HIST 493 Chaos and Order in Classical Greece

**Science Tradition**

***G1: View from the Humanities***

FREN 101 Introductory French 1  
FREN 102 Introductory French 1  
ART 133 Drawing and Perspective  
PHIL 341 Philosophy of Science (W)

***G2: Survey of the Sciences***

MATH 161 Calculus 1  
BIOL 100 General Biology  
BIOL 103 The Science of Evolution  
CHEM 102 The Science of Chemistry

***G3: The Environment of Science***

GEOG 230 Physical Geography  
GEOG 395 The Geography of Energy (W)  
HIST 320 Renaissance and Reformation (W)  
HIST 322 The French Revolution and Napoleon (W)

***Perspectives in Science***

PHY 302 Physics and the Evolution of Western Civilization

***Beyond the Minimum***

PHY 117 General Astronomy

## Core, Explore and More

Submitted by Barb Stengel:

(with the input but not necessarily the support of Debbie Sigel, Bonnie Duncan, Steve Miller, Suzanne McCotter, Lesley Collabucci, Carole Counihan, and Len Litowitz)

“Core, Explore and More” represents a visionary proposal (significantly different from our present general education plan) tempered with two interim steps that might lead us to the vision in three year increments. The vision is based on one central belief:

*Students can and should take responsibility for the content and quality of their MU education. Fewer limitations and more choice will encourage greater student freedom and responsibility. This, in turn will encourage more and deeper learning.*

The following principles are evident in the program we propose:

- 1) *Interest matters.* Core coursework should be rooted in questions of lived experience, questions about who we are and how we fit and function in the human-made and natural universe. Explore coursework should be individual chosen based on interest and need.
- 2) *Acknowledge fear; maintain rigor.* Most student are neither lazy nor clueless. They (some might say wisely) avoid challenges when they fear low grades that will affect academic standing or eligibility for specific majors. They will enter the domain of difficult concepts when invited and supported. □ Some opportunities for Pass/No Credit study will encourage academic risk-taking and content exploration.
- 3) *Minimize double-dipping.* Core general education courses -- differentiated from “explore” selections -- are not the same as those courses required in the major. Designate a core that does not overlap with major courses. Allow “explore” courses to include major courses of all kinds (subject to prereqs of course).
- 4) *Learn to write; write to learn.* Learning to write should always be linked to learning some subject matter. Consider ways to integrate teaching of writing with teaching of subject matter and/or professional responsibilities, especially in the major.
- 5) *Integrate.* Interesting innovative initiatives on campus (first year experience, diversity coursework, service learning, small learning communities, pedagogy seminars, study abroad, etc.) should have a place in general education. These are mind-expanding, relationship-building, cross-cultural integrative experiences.
- 6) *Think “thirds.”* As a rule, general education should occupy 1/3 of a student’s program, with 1/3 dedicated to the academic major and 1/3 available for supplementary and exploratory experiences (minors, electives, and related study that supports the disciplinary major).
- 7) *Faculty can be trusted.* Faculty time is better spent deliberating course content than preparing formal proposals to be scrutinized by other faculty members who may or may not be knowledgeable in the field. We can and should trust each other.

**The Vision: (where we would like to end up)**

**CORE (18 credits)**

The core will consist of six newly created course shells that

- a) directly address gen ed competencies
- b) are created as *shells* for varying content depending on the instructor's interests/expertise
- c) are designed to start from, affirm, critique, and make sense of students' interest and lived experience
- d) all have a significant writing component
- e) all include an opportunity for speech and/or performance
- f) all include a substantive element that addresses the reality of living in a culturally diverse community, nation and world.

The six courses – to be taken by every Millersville undergraduate within their first four semesters of study—include:

1. Scientific inquiry
  - a. The emphasis should be on the nature of science and the process of scientific inquiry, i.e. the process of asking and answering scientific questions. While the products of others' scientific inquiry matters and forms the backdrop for considering any scientific question, this course will focus on the how of scientific inquiry in a specific, narrow topic area.
  - b. Taught by BIOL, CHEM, ESCI, PHYS faculty, WELL faculty with doctorates in exercise physiology, NURS faculty if appropriate, ITEC faculty if appropriate (and others as approved by those faculties)
  - c. Example: The chemistry of art; Bugs and crime; Evolution; Sport physiology
2. Social scientific inquiry (qualitative and quantitative)
  - a. The emphasis should be on the nature of social science and the process of social scientific inquiry, i.e. the process of asking and answering social scientific questions. Course topics should be selected to enable the formulation of questions that must be considered using both qualitative and quantitative data. While the products of others' social scientific inquiry matters and forms the backdrop for considering any social scientific question, this course will focus on the how of scientific inquiry in a specific, narrow topic area.
  - b. Taught by PSYC, SOCI, ANTH, ECON, GEOG, GOVT faculty (and others as approved by those faculties)
  - c. Example: Why we hate, The economics of everyday life, Who governs?
3. Historical consciousness
  - a. The emphasis should be on the realization that facing history means facing ourselves as we interpret both old and new evidence, re-vision events, and re-tell the story of how the world we inhabit has come to be.
  - b. Taught by HIST faculty, PHIL faculty with expertise in Intellectual History (and others as approved by that faculty)

- c. Example: How we got to the Middle East crisis, Order and Chaos in Ancient Greece
4. Aesthetic experience and analysis
  - a. The emphasis should be on both experience and analysis as the course topic focuses on one medium of aesthetic experience and incorporates at least one other medium in a substantive way.
  - b. Taught by ART, MUSI, ENGL, FORL, COMM faculty (and others as approved by those faculties)
  - c. Example: Irish culture, Harlem Renaissance,
5. Critical analysis and written representation (link to major course or first year seminar)
  - a. We envision this as a freshman comp course explicitly infused with specific critical thinking and technological tools
  - b. Taught by ENGL faculty, preferably blocked with major course or first year seminar
  - c. Example: Citizenship SLC/Facing Fear
6. Applied mathematical reasoning
  - a. The emphasis should be on mathematical concepts in their application to particular fields
  - b. Taught by MATH faculty and by research methods faculty in other disciplines
  - c. Example: Statistical descriptions of human behavior, Algebraic expressions of economic behavior

N.B. We have opted to create a new “umbrella” course in each of these six critical areas rather than to create categories for which present or future courses could be approved. We do this in order to minimize the amount of oversight and scrutiny required. We assume that the appropriate faculty will be able to approve a course shell that can accommodate topical reconfigurations selected according to the instructors’ area of expertise and interest. This makes it possible for faculty to teach topics of special interest on an irregular basis without undergoing the rigors of seeking approval for a completely new course.

Quality control can be monitored simply by asking students to answer a few simple questions whether the general education goals and skills built into the shell course were 1) addressed and 2) achieved.

Departments may recommend specific core course topics for their incoming majors. (For example, students entering in BSE programs may be encouraged to take an Aesthetic Experience course that targets literature to meet the state requirement for a second English course in literature.)

### **EXPLORE (18 credits)**

Student will select 18 credits in **any** department or program as long as no credits are in their major department and at least six credits are outside the major academic division. Twelve of the 18 credits can be taken Pass/No Credit – after 15 credits earned with a 2.0 or better -- with a C- required to earn a passing grade and credit. (Student will have until the 11<sup>th</sup> week of the semester to elect P/NC; instructors will not know of any student’s choice.)

Departments may specify up to 12 credits of required related courses. However, students must be given the opportunity to take at least 6 of the 12 credits P/NC.

The open-ended nature of the Explore segment will allow students to try other majors, to test interest in a field, to take challenging instructors, and to experiment academically with minimal risk.

**MORE (Integration, coherence, diversity) (12 credits)**

Students may select 12 credits from any of the following experiences:

- Present perspectives courses
- Study abroad credits
- First year experience (1, 2 or 3 credit versions, including those offered by departments as long as they serve as “bridge” experiences – from high school to college, from academic study to practical application, from campus to community, etc.)
- Pedagogy seminars
- Interdisciplinary programs
- Small learning communities
- Service learning courses
- Internships (that are not requirements of a major, maximum 6 credits)

We believe, as do many MU faculty, that students would be well-served by competence in mathematics, by experience in public speaking, by second language skills, by understanding and valuing the concepts and skills of wellness and by both breadth and depth in their liberal arts studies. However, we also believe that student learning cannot be forced or mandated in the absence of some commitment or interest on the part of the student. And we have confidence that our colleague advisors are doing a good job helping students determine which among a nearly infinite set of subjects and skills they can productively build into a short four year education. Many students will continue to study mathematics (including for example all BSE students and those many students in majors that require specific math competence.) Most students will elect Wellness 175, though many will substitute other offerings in the wellness department. Perhaps more will elect both mathematics and foreign language if they can do it pass/no credit. Upper level writing will remain a highly recommended option, especially for those students whose weak writing skills are impeding their academic success. We believe that the best teaching and the most learning will result when both professor and student are passionately (or at least moderately) interested in the topic of study.

That is the vision. Here’s how to get there:

**Immediately,**

Lower the requirements in the G1, G2, and G3 blocks from 4 courses to 3.

#7 Barb Stengel Core, Explore, & More

**CORE:** 12 credits. Keep the present G4 as the core. (ENGL 110, COMM 100, WELL). With respect to AW, expand options. All departmental honors theses meet the AW requirement as long as a member of the English Department Writing staff is on the committee. Encourage departments/majors to partner with English staff to link major courses and internships with AW experiences.

**EXPLORE:** 27 credits. Use G1, G2 (including a lab science and a math course), G3 (3 courses each) as explore credits

**MORE:** 9 credits. Place the remaining 9 credits in the “more” category as described above. Students may choose from any of the listed possibilities.

Initiate the process of creating six new core course shells and pursue approval of those courses.

**Three years after the implementation of “immediately”:**

**CORE:** (18 credits) Pilot core courses in six areas for incoming students, allow departments to designate existing courses to meet the six area requirements for those not taking newly-designed core courses. Remove requirement for AW, wellness.

**EXPLORE:** (21 credits) Allow students to select one “G” to remain at 3 courses; other two areas drop to 2 courses. (P/NC still up to 12 credits).

**MORE:** (9 credits) Remains the same.

**Three years after “three years after”:**

Implement the vision.

**CORE:** (18 credits) All students taking core courses in six areas that address gen ed goals

**EXPLORE:** (18 credits) Distribution not specified except that 6 credits must be outside division and all credits must be outside major field. 12 credits may be taken P/NC

**MORE:** (12 credits) Integrative, diversity, global experiences

I realize that this is not exactly what was intended when the idea of Gen Ed Focus Groups was first suggested. However, after some reflection, two things occurred to me. First, the mission of the university – at least in part – is to prepare students to “engage in productive and contributive lives as professionals” and as citizens in a democratic society. Second, most of the faculty members at Millersville have spent their lives in academia at one level or another and thus may lack a certain practical understanding of what is required by the “professional environment” into which we send the majority of our students. Consequently, I decided to talk to three people who have been successful in various professional environments and who have spent a significant amount of their professional careers recruiting, interviewing, screening, and selecting college graduates for employment. Also, in order to get a more global perspective, I decided to include one Millersville faculty member who did his undergraduate study outside the U.S. Another member of the group did her degrees through the Ph.D. in Europe. Further, I consulted with two other non-Millersville people who work in academia but who have spent a significant part of their careers dealing with education outside the United States.

None of the people in the group were asked to craft a full-blown 48-credit curriculum, although one member of the group did so. Rather, everyone was asked to list those elements of a college curriculum that they consider absolutely essential. The focus was as much more on themes, skills, and ideas as it was on discrete disciplines. There were, however, a few disciplines or subjects that people felt strongly in favor of or opposed to.

So, this is not a curriculum proposal. Rather it is a collection of opinions – informed opinions but opinions nonetheless. While there is some disagreement about specifics and at least one about the abilities and education levels entering freshmen bring to college, there is far more commonality than there is divergence of opinion.

#### Members of the Group

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Professor, Millersville University
- Bush, Richard. MA Economics, DePaul University; MBA University of Chicago  
Chief Auditor, Federal Reserve, (ret)
- Charles, Arthur. Ph.D., Georgetown University, French, Linguistics  
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- Litowitz, Leonard. Ed.D., University of Minnesota, Industry & Technology  
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Professor, Millersville University
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- Shanahan, Derek P.: Ph.D. University of Minnesota Geography  
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## Comments

The first thing that emerged as I read through the comments and talked to some of the group members about their comments is that college courses should be, in the words of Alice Roggie, “hard.” Students need to be challenged far more than they are in many of the 100 and 200 level courses. Nothing is gained by designing courses (or curricula) in order to insure that students succeed so as to avoid damaging their self esteem. The real boost in self esteem comes from succeeding at an endeavor that is generally acknowledged to be difficult. “All education, Aristotle tells us, is accompanied by pain. Liberal Arts education is inescapably so accompanied, as well as by that magnificent pleasure that comes of stretching, rather than tickling, the mind.”

The second commonality is the general consensus (with one notable exception) that students need training in communication skills, both oral and written. One member of the group believes that students acquire these basic skills in primary and secondary school. But the majority of the educators in the group would keep the basic composition course. Some would also keep the public speaking course, although it is not perceived to be as necessary as English Composition. And at least one of those who would eliminate the Speech requirement would require a speaking element in other general education courses.

The non-academics are vehement on this point. They say the greatest frustration they face in recruiting college graduates is the general inability to communicate effectively either in writing or verbally. Recruits have poor writing skills and even poorer speaking skills. They would insist on what some at Millersville have referred to as “writing across the curriculum.” As for speaking, they too were split on the efficacy of a formal public speaking course. One suggested that a better approach would be to have students take a Theater Improvisation class. That, she argued, would teach them to think on their feet.

The third commonality is the need to develop critical thinking skills. The group members to a person believed this is of primary concern, although the suggested means by which to develop such skills varied greatly. One non-academic insisted that all students should take at least six credits in philosophy – preferably epistemology or metaphysics. All but two members specifically cited mathematics as essential to developing critical thinking/analytical skills. None, however, thought calculus necessary. College-level algebra was the consensus choice of math courses.

On the other hand, only one of the ten would absolutely keep the lab science requirement. As my brother Christopher put it, an introductory course in the life sciences is more than likely going to be like any other survey course – an exercise in memorization of “facts” rather than an exercise in a certain mode of thinking and in the development of analytical skills.

This relates to another concern shared by a majority of the group. Too many of survey-type courses do nothing to develop understanding – be it the understanding of the process of human development as explored through the study of history and geography or the understanding of the process generally referred to as the “scientific method.” Most courses should have students doing things, one group member argued, not simply sitting in seats like empty bottles waiting to be filled with “knowledge. This is the difference between courses with generative power and courses without such power. When one is taught how to tie shoe laces, for example, the subject is exhausted. It is self-terminating. Such knowledge is of no value for the acquisition of further knowledge. But once one has learned to read, he or she can decipher instructions for the tying of

shoe laces or any number of other skills. Once one has learned to read, listen, observe, and analyze, the potential for continued learning is virtually limitless.

So the consensus of the group would be two-fold: (1) limit the number of 100-level survey courses a student can take; and (2) drop the limit of two courses in any one discipline from the current curriculum.

The next point concerns the importance of understanding cultures – our own and others. At least one member of the group believes it is an absolute necessity to make students “fully aware of all the cultural riches that this country has produced” through the study of American literature and history. “That approach,” one member argued, “does not exclude diversity; at the contrary, since practically all the nations of the world have contributed one way or another to the making of American culture, such a series of courses can actually be conducive to the appreciation of cultural diversity.”

Most of the others concur on the importance of studying American culture, but add that of equal import is a substantive course in understanding the global village. “Most American college students have no idea, much less experience, with how the rest of the world lives. In the global village of 100, for example, how many are black? How many white? How many other? How many are Christian? Or Muslim? Or Hindu? Or Animists? How many live on less than \$2 a day? What implications do these and other facts have for the rest of the world?” Short of requiring a semester of study abroad, the best approach would be a compulsory seminar/discussion group on critical global issues – politics, religion, economics, media, environment, human rights, etc...

While two of the group members believe that the study of foreign language is essential in the development of a global appreciation, most think that a one or two-semester foreign language requirement would be of little use in this regard. While language study may develop mental discipline, lower-level language courses are concerned mostly with the mechanics of language – the “details that have no staying power” rather than the cultural issues that are important. It is worth noting that not a single member of the group saw any particular importance in courses that are commonly referred to in the academy as “multi-cultural.”

Some in the group would not be opposed to leaving the Wellness requirement in place. But nobody was really committed to the value of such a course. If anything, they believed that some kind of education in nutrition is important. But the prospect of walking around a track or meditating for credit they found to be extraneous.

Curiously enough, not a single member of the group thought that a course in some kind of computer literacy was important. One called it a “non starter.” Another suggested that a “course which examines technology not only from its current usage but also to its moral consequences” would be important. But the consensus was that students arrive at college with all the requisite computer skills. One member stated this way: “How do you know when there are no teenagers in the house? The clock on the VCR is not set.”

As for the Social Sciences, most acknowledged that some study of Social Sciences is important. But the same general attitudes prevailed. The Social Sciences should be studied not simply to acquire a collection of facts – historical, geographical, economic etc... They should be studied in

order to gain an understanding of fundamental processes and principals. And all such study should involve not only a healthy dose of reading and writing, but also oral presentation and debate that will further develop critical thinking, organizational, and rhetorical skills.

### **Conclusions**

Here, in no particular order of priority, is the list of what the majority of the group thought important in a general education curriculum:

1. The acquisition and mastery of certain skills:
  - a. Reading
  - b. Listening
  - c. Critical thinking
  - d. Writing
  - e. Speaking
2. The development of an understanding of and appreciation for American culture and the American political system
3. An appreciation for the global nature of human existence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the responsibilities of Americans as members of that community
4. The importance of a curriculum that has students “doing” rather than just sitting
5. The importance of a curriculum that develops an appreciation for and a love of reading
6. The importance of a curriculum that develops an appreciation for life-long learning
7. The importance of assuring that college is not merely a trade school through exposure in depth to at least some of the disciplines traditionally associated with liberal education. Such exposure is absolutely essential to keep future generations from becoming lost – of having little clue about what they are doing and no clue about why they are doing it. If nothing in a student’s college education has convinced him or her that Newton, Shakespeare, and Lincoln are both more interesting, more admirable, and more important than Michael Jordan, Garth Brooks, and Madonna, the student will find answers in Jordan, Brooks, and Madonna and not in Newton, Shakespeare, and Lincoln. If they have learned little or no history, geography, science, mathematics, foreign languages, or English they will, naturally enough, learn something else – tennis, computer gaming, barbecuing, and some specialized technique of buying and selling. In accordance with their luck and their temperament, they may become happily lost, or unhappily lost. But lost they will become. Lost they will remain. Lost they will die. And if society allows these lost ones to multiply indefinitely, they will see to it that our country and our civilization is lost also.