

Faculty Senate Minutes January 30, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. All departments were in attendance except Educational Foundations, Geography, History, Nursing and Physics. Members of GERC and other faculty were also in attendance.

I. Presentation by General Education Review Committee

The GERC proposal for General Education reform [see Attachment #1] was presented while a number of handouts were distributed. The presentation included the following:

- Purpose & Objectives (purple) presented by Fred Foster-Clark [see Attachment #1, pg. #2]
- General Education Structure (gold) presented by Marjorie Warmkessel [see Attachment #1, pg. #3]
- Freshman Year Perspective courses (green) presented by Perry Gemmill [see Attachment #1, Section #1, pg. #4]
- Liberal Arts presented by John Ward [see Attachment #1, Section #4, pg. #5]
- Writing courses presented by Caleb Corkery [see Attachment #1, Section #5, pg. #6]
- Diversity courses (blue) presented by Chris Hardy [see Attachment #1, Section #6, pg. #7]
- Timeline (white) presented by Fred Foster-Clark [see Attachment #2]

Dr. Warmkessel distributed the GERC Proposal for Revised General Education Curriculum and indicated that all related documents would be available to faculty on the GenEd website: <http://muweb.millersville.edu/~gened/>.

II. Discussion of General Education Reform Proposal

Discussion of the GenEd proposal included the following:

- It was noted that Computer Science is not listed as part of the required 2 of 3 G2 courses. The response was that this is consistent with the current curriculum.
- Comfort with the overall proposal was expressed. Flexibility in the D requirement and focus on the purpose and intention is appreciated. Students in D courses will hopefully be immersed in positive thinking, but grading such courses may be difficult.
- The placement of Wellness in the Connections and Exploration component rather than Foundations for Lifelong Learning was questioned. The response was that several options were considered, but it was decided that Wellness fits into the holistic framework of this component. The Foundations courses reflect more academic fundamentals.
- A question about departments internally requiring a Freshman Year Perspectives course was raised. The response was that these are meant to be independent of these departmental courses. However, it was noted that current departmental seminars could be transitioned to 3-credit courses that fit the described criteria.

- It was pointed out that courses would need to meet the unique aspects laid out to be approved for the D designation. Current courses will need to go through the approval process and address the same criteria.
- Dr. Scott Schaffer indicated that the PCCD will be developing D courses, including tools for assessment in these courses.
- As noted in the presentation, there is published evidence that single courses can be effective in changing student perspectives on cultural diversity.
- It was asked how students would determine whether or not they would take an FYP course. The response was that there are many possibilities, particularly as more seminar options are introduced. Departments might opt to specify certain FYP courses for their majors. It was pointed out that converting seminar credits in some majors to the GenEd curriculum could free up credits within the major.
- The description of FYP courses as presented does not specify the current limit of 25 students in each section.
- A question was raised about whether D courses would be currently offered courses or ones developed specifically based on the guidelines. The response was that both are possible. A follow up question addressed how courses will be monitored to ensure that a desired positive experience is provided considering that unstructured experiences with diversity may actually be detrimental. The response was that the guidelines being developed by the PCCD should help faculty meet the proposed criteria. Proposals for D courses should reflect appropriate teaching strategies and evidence of a positive environment for experiencing diversity.
- Hopefully lists of D course options will include supporting information about the emphasis on inclusive attitudes.
- A comment was made that UCPRC has reviewed some P courses for DL approval that no longer meet the initial objectives of P courses. A need for periodic review was suggested. The response was that there is still a sub-group working on implementation and administration issues for GenEd.
- A reminder was made that the GenEd curriculum needs to be able to accommodate changes in certification requirements for education majors that are forthcoming from the state.
- The language regarding enabling programs to meet demands of accrediting bodies was questioned. The response was that the electives within the Connections and Explorations component would provide a cushion for programs where it is difficult to meet both needs of the major and GenEd requirements. It was noted that these elective credits cannot be in the major but could be required related courses. Specifically, these elective courses do not have to carry any G designation. A question was raised about whether these could be other courses in the major department that are not required for a specific major.

- A question was raised about whether all currently G designated courses would need to be reviewed for the new curriculum. The response was that G courses would not be reviewed but that W courses would undergo an expedited review process to address the revised guidelines for W courses. It was noted that a similar process might be relevant for P courses as well.

- It was suggested that the W guideline specification that a major project should undergo review seems to proscribe a specific methodology for this process. The response was that the idea was to encourage a more meaningful revision process in general rather than a specific mechanism for that. Another comment made was that the separation of the review process from the 3500-word requirement produces ambiguity about the requirements.

- It was noted that lab reports are listed under the types of writing not included in the 3500-word requirement even though these represent the most significant form of writing for science students. The response was that the intention was to separate analytical or persuasive writing from simply expressive or responsive writing and the specific examples listed in the guidelines may need to be revised to reflect this more accurately.

- It was noted that there would need to be increased faculty complement to allow for offering enough FYP courses to accommodate increasing numbers of students.

- A question was raised about the identification of approved courses in math. The response was that the math department would identify these, but they are expected to be current G2 courses.

- The FYP courses were suggested as an appropriate place for introducing students to academic integrity and any honor code adopted.

- The issue of a conflict between the requirement for an oral component and DL methodology was raised. The concern expressed was that accommodating student desires for limited social interchanges in traditional classrooms can shortchange opportunities for students to develop critical face-to-face communication skills. The response was that oral communication encompasses a variety of possibilities and that mechanisms exist for DL students to engage in verbal exchanges. A request was made for PCCD to discuss these issues.

III. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aimee L. Miller
Faculty Senate Secretary

Proposal for Revised General Education Curriculum

Presented to Millersville University Faculty Senate
by the General Education Review Committee
January 30, 2007

Introduction

This proposal is the culmination of three and a half years of campus dialogue and would be the first significant revision of general education since 1988. The proposed revision of the General Education objectives and curriculum preserves the values of the current system while providing a progressive step forward.

The changes from the current system emphasize greater coherence, flexibility, and preparation for a changing world. Greater coherence comes in part through better alignment of objectives and the curriculum and through opportunities for enhanced connections between general education and studies in the major. The proposal allows up to six credits of electives, providing increased flexibility to both students and programs. The addition of a Cultural Diversity and Community requirement fits with the central value of diversity and community at Millersville University and will better prepare graduates for the increasing diversity of the United States and the growing importance of the international community in all facets of life. Other changes, such as revision of the W requirement, and redefinition of criteria for Wellness courses, do not change current curricular requirements but are clear improvements.

In the view of the General Education Review Committee, this proposal meets the learning needs of our students and is one that Millersville faculty can believe in and teach with passion, commitment, and intentionality¹.

¹Paraphrase of Ann Ferren, June 2002.

Purpose

Consistent with Millersville University's mission to provide a liberal arts-based education, the purpose of General Education is to provide breadth of knowledge as a balance and complement to the depth provided by the major. This is necessary for the holistic development of Millersville graduates as responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community.

General Education Objectives

Students, working with advisors, and taking into consideration prior knowledge and experience, purposefully select courses in the General Education curriculum that meld with required courses, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and courses in the major to achieve the following objectives:

Foundations for Life-Long Learning

1. Students will think, speak, and write clearly. This is evidenced by:
 - a) the clear presentation of ideas in formal spoken, written, and media forms.
 - b) the use of effective communication for ongoing dialogue.
 - c) the ability to find appropriate sources of information, evaluate that information, and integrate that information into a final product.
 - d) the use of statistical methods and other techniques of mathematics to analyze and solve problems.

Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts

2. Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the important ideas and methods of different ways of knowing as follows:
 - a) in the humanities students will analyze and interpret existing works of literature and the arts.
 - b) in the sciences students will engage in the scientific method, laboratory study, appropriate technology, and mathematics to investigate, evaluate, and apply scientific concepts and theories.
 - c) in social sciences students will develop the necessary tools of critical thinking, inquiry, and diplomacy to participate effectively in our democracy and the increasingly complex global society.

Connections and Exploration

3. Students will connect important ideas and methods of inquiry from different disciplines as a means of becoming holistic and responsible citizens in a diverse and technologically complex, global community. Students will:
 - a) demonstrate civic and social responsibility.
 - b) grow in their engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities, both inside and outside the United States.
 - c) build the foundation for a lifelong process of understanding, developing, and monitoring healthy lifestyle behaviors in all dimensions of wellness, including physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and environmental wellness.
 - d) gain personal enrichment by developing new interests that can be enjoyed throughout a lifetime.

GENERAL EDUCATION STRUCTURE (Minimum 51 credits)

Foundations for Lifelong Learning

- ENGL 110: English Composition 3 credits
- COMM 100: Fundamentals of Speech 3 credits
- Approved MATH Course 3-4 credits
- ENGL 311, 312, 313, or 316: Advanced Writing 3 credits

Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts (9 courses – min. 27 credits)

- Three courses (min. 9 credits) each in Humanities and Fine Arts (G1), Science and Mathematics (G2), Social Sciences (G3).
- *Exactly 2* courses must be taken from one department within G1, G2, and G3.
- In Science and Mathematics, 2 of the 3 courses must come from Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and/or Physics including one which has a Laboratory (L) component.
- At least 3 courses taken throughout blocks G1, G2 and G3 must be at the 200 level or above.
- Courses in a student's primary major discipline cannot fulfill a Liberal Arts Core requirement; courses from the minor or second major can fulfill a Liberal Arts Core requirement.

Connections and Exploration

- First Year Perspectives course 0-3 credit hours
- Approved Wellness course 3 credit hours
- Perspectives course 3 credit hours
- Elective(s) [outside of primary major] 3 - 6 credit hours
- Cultural Diversity and Community course¹: 1 required; may be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.
- Writing courses: 4 required; may be in General Education, the major, the minor or general electives.

Additional Stipulations:

- Six courses (18 credit hours) from Required Related course work in student's major may be counted toward any of the Gen Ed requirements above.
- Courses meeting any Gen Ed requirement will be approved according to procedures to be specified in the Governance Manual.
- Junior standing required for Advanced Writing and Perspectives.

¹ Is intercultural and/or cross-cultural, with culture being a worldview that reflects beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences as shaped by gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, national background or placement in the global system, language, material/economic background, religious background, age, and/or physical ability.

Recommendations for Specific Changes:

1. Encourage incoming students to take a First Year Perspectives (FYP) course which will count as part of a Connections and Exploration block.

FYP is a component of General Education specifically designed for first semester freshmen and offered in a seminar format, typically linked to a foundations course (either ENGL 110 or COMM 100) as part of a living/learning community. Students will choose from several varieties of FYP courses offered each semester. A major function of these FYP courses is to introduce a process of critical inquiry applied to important social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems. Each FYP course will introduce multiple perspectives related to the understanding and resolution of these problems. A second function of these FYP courses is to support students' transition into the college experience academically, socially, and personally. Each FYP course topic will be approved according to guidelines to be specified in the Governance Manual.

Specifically, each FYP course:

- a) involves 3 credit hours at the 100 level.
- b) has a meaningful written and oral component, but may not carry a W label.
- c) requires students to consider multiple perspectives in advancing their understanding of the importance of social, cultural, scientific, technological, and/or aesthetic problems.
- d) enables quality interaction.
- e) provides intellectual richness through its assignments and assessments.
- f) promotes an understanding of the importance of the liberal arts and the General Education program at Millersville.
- g) supports the students' successful transition into college life by fostering connections between and among students, teachers, and the college community.
- h) strengthens students' information literacy.

Rationale:

- Provides coherence and intellectual richness to the General Education program.
- Data collected through student focus groups, faculty interviews, and student surveys during the recent implementation of First Year Perspectives courses (i.e., UNIV 101 and 179) all point to the success of this initiative.

2. Institute clarified guidelines for a required WELLness course.

The WELLness requirement is designed to assist students in making positive lifestyle changes that reduce their health risks, modify their consumer behavior, and enhance their personal well-being and productivity.

Criteria for the General Education WELL requirement are as follows:

- a) must be a 3 credit course.
- b) requires students to participate in a weekly physical or experiential component.
- c) must be a comprehensive approach to wellness employing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and social learning strategies to encourage and assist students in accepting responsibility for their own wellness.
- d) engages students in critical thinking about wellness.
- e) emphasizes the development of life-long holistic learning.

3. Require students to take at least three credits of Elective courses outside of their primary major. Students who are exempt from the Perspectives requirement and/or did not take or satisfactorily complete a FYP shall take additional Elective credits to satisfy the 12 credit Connections and Exploration block.

Elective courses details:

- a) include any 100-level and higher University courses except the English Composition, Fundamentals of Speech, and Mathematics General Education Foundations courses.
- b) may not include courses in a student's primary major (BSE students may not count required professional education courses).
- c) may be credited toward a second major or minor program.

Rationale:

- Adds flexibility and choice to the curriculum.
- Promotes exploration of and experimentation with subjects of interest.

4. Change from a 4-4-4 distribution to a 3-3-3 distribution in Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts.

In order to create the flexibility and choice embedded in Recommendations 1, 2, and 3, Critical Thinking across the Liberal Arts is reduced from 12 to 9 courses. All the previous guidelines to structure students' course selection are maintained, including the "2 in 1" department rule, the number of required related courses allowed, the definitions of the G blocks, and the number of required 200-level courses. Note that the required Mathematics course is moved to the Foundations for Lifelong Learning block.

Rationale:

- Provides the ability to add 2 courses to the "Connections and Exploration" block while retaining the current 51 credit load.
- Fulfills Characteristic 6 (i.e. "Simplicity and Flexibility") of a reformed program.
- Enables programs to meet both the demands of accreditation and State System limits on the total number of credits.
- Provides students a greater range of choice by allowing them to explore new areas of study.
- Provides an avenue for innovative programming, such as FYP courses, to count within the curriculum.

5. Institute stronger guidelines for Writing Intensive (W) courses including a “revised prose” component. Class size limits for W courses should be reset to 25.

This recommendation re-affirms the faculty’s commitment to writing-across-the-curriculum which has been eroded from its original design with increases to class size and the resulting lowering of expectations for writing and revising. The original 1988 guidelines have been updated and made slightly more flexible while maintaining the original spirit of revised prose and the centrality of the writing process to teaching and learning.

Proposed Revised Guidelines:

- 1) Students practice forms of writing typical of the field. Writing assignments are designed to develop their content knowledge and enhance their communication skills.
- 2) Students are required to submit at least 3500 words of graded analytical and/or argumentative prose (about 14 standard double-spaced pages)--drafts, exercises, ungraded logs, etc., are additional. Some examples of how this requirement might be met include:
 - (A) a research paper in which the student is required to define a problem, select, organize, and synthesize information around a stated thesis.
 - (B) short analytical essays that explore a topic with reasoned evidence and informed opinion.
 - (C) position papers prepared by students that address pros and cons of controversial topics.
 - (D) microthemes that ask the student to find academic sources, organize ideas, develop a thesis and show evidence, but condense the final paper to a single page or two.
- 3) For one major project in the course, students submit a draft on which the instructor provides detailed feedback, after which students submit a revised draft.
- 4) Though not counting toward the 3500 word requirement, students may also be assigned reflective and/or observational writing tasks, such as:
 - (A) journals
 - (B) problem-solving notebooks
 - (C) logs
 - (D) double-entry notebooks
 - (E) case studies
 - (F) laboratory reports

Rationale:

- Provides clear purpose, intentional alignment and coherence to the General Education program.
- Restored rigor of writing and revision will add to students’ intellectual experience.

6. Add a Cultural Diversity and Community (D) requirement such that students will be required to take one approved D course as part of their major, minor, or General Education requirements.

To satisfy the Gen Ed Cultural Diversity and Community (D) requirement, all students must successfully complete one approved 3-credit course meeting the D criteria. This course may also count for credit in a student's major or minor program or may satisfy another Gen Ed requirement.

Cultural diversity refers to the differences among people in terms of beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences. In essence, culture is a worldview; it is both learned and evolved. The following factors are seen as underlying these differences: Ethnicity, geography, language, sexual orientation, education, economics, age, and occupation among others.

Specifically, a D course:

- a) involves 3 semester hours at the 100 level or above.
- b) is intercultural and/or cross-cultural, with culture being a worldview that reflects beliefs, customs, values, politics, and experiences as shaped by gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, national background or placement in the global system, language, material/economic background, religious background, age, and/or physical ability.
- c) helps students to identify, critically analyze, and apply scholarship and experience related to cultural diversity.
- d) examines historical and environmental factors that underlie cultural differences.
- e) provides academic structure in support of students' positive engagement with peoples of diverse histories and communities.
- f) challenges students to evaluate their own personal worldview.
- g) has a meaningful written and oral component.
- h) may also count as part of any additional requirement (major, minor, or Gen Ed) of the Baccalaureate degree.

Rationale:

- Aligns general education curriculum with University mission to foster in students an appreciation for cultural diversity.
- Professional literature supports the value of a structured educational approach rather than simply an experiential approach to exposing students to cultural diversity.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2000 reported that 62% of all colleges and universities either already had some form of a diversity course requirement or were in the process of developing one.

Attachment #2

Millersville University
General Education Timeline (Rev. 1/30/07)

Fall 1988	Major Gen Ed revision implemented
Fall 1997	Modification of Gen Ed Requirements as result of Task Force on General Education Curriculum and Its Resources
May 1999	Revised Gen Ed Objectives approved by Faculty Senate #
Fall 2001	FYE Undecided Program begins
November 2002	Faculty Senate creates Gen Ed Task Force (GETF)
Fall 2003	Initial round of GETF Focus Group meetings #
Fall 2003	Elimination of G4 Gen Ed Elective becomes effective
Spring 2004	Second round of GETF Focus Group meetings #
April 2004	External Reviewer (Steve Briggs) visits (Program Review) #
January 2005	Final recommendations of GETF to Faculty Senate #
Spring 2005	Third round of GETF Focus Group meetings #
Spring 2005	LCSI Resource Faculty visit MU
Fall 2005	Phase 1 of First-Year Learning Communities Initiative (UNIV 179)
November 2005	First Special Senate Meeting on Gen Ed Reform #
February 2006	Gen Ed Reform Survey – Voting by Departments #
April 2006	Second Special Senate Meeting on Gen Ed Reform #
Fall 2006	Phase 2 of First-Year Learning Communities Initiative
October 2006	Third Special Senate Meeting on Gen Ed Reform #
January 2007	Presentation of Final GERC Proposal for Gen Ed Reform #
Spring 2007	Senate & Faculty Votes on Gen Ed Reform
Fall 2007	Phase 3 of First-Year Learning Communities Initiative
Fall 2008	Proposed Implementation of Revised Gen Ed Curriculum

Note: # → Supporting document(s) available at Gen Ed website (muweb.millersville.edu/~gened)