**University General Education Improvement & Assessment Committee**

**Committee Proposal to Faculty Senate:**

**Creation of GE Area Committees**

**MARCH 2011**

As per PPM 1-13, Article B-V, 4.6, “the General Education Improvement & Assessment (GE) Committee shall articulate the mission and goals for the General Education program and University core requirements, and review these on a regular basis. The General Education Committee shall define the standards for the General Education program and oversee the assessment of the General Education program and University core requirements.”

**Proposal:** In order to serve its mission, the University GE Committee herein proposes the creation of four (4) GE Core area committees (Composition; American Institutions; Quantitative Literacy; Computer and Information Literacy) and five (5) GE Breadth area committees (Humanities; Creative Arts; Social Sciences; Physical Sciences; Life Sciences). to serve as an interface between the University GE Committee and the many departments which offer General Education courses.

**Proposed charge to GE Area Committees:** GE Area Committees are charged to collect, organize, and report on student performance measured against the established general education outcomes set forth in by the General Education Improvement & Assessment Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate. Each course is to be reviewed every three years. The committees may elect to review all courses every third year or they may review approximately one-third of the courses in each year to reach the same end result. Written reports are to be submitted to the University GE Committee chair by March 1 of each year.

While departments or programs are obligated to collect and report assessment data on each GE course they offer, the GE Area Committee will help departments to create, maintain, and execute strategies for GE assessment and reporting. It is worth noting that GE Area Committees serve a reporting and advising function as opposed to a voting or policy-making function.

**Goals for GE Area Committees:** The area committees will:

a) provide course by course-level assessment data to the University GE and University Curriculum Committees (and thereby also to the Provost for accreditation purposes) every five years,

b) hold discussions on how assessment is done on GE outcomes, both within and between specific GE Areas, and

c) provide feedback to individual departments on GE goals and assessment.

Note: GE Area Committee reports are required for university accreditation with data used to improve GE Program outcomes.

**GE Area Committee Composition:** Committee members will selected by the University GE Committee and shall serve a three year term, with a third of the committee being rotated out each year. Each GE Area Committee should have:

a) one GE Area Chair faculty member from a department that teaches a GE course in that area,

b) no fewer than 3 additional faculty members drawn from different departments that teach a GE course in that area, and

c) two faculty members from departments outside that GE area (one of which will be a standing University GE Committee member).

**Department/Program Role:** It is recommended that each department or program currently teaching a GE course create a departmental/program GE Committee and/or appoint a departmental faculty member to oversee assessment of how departmental/program offerings meet GE Program outcomes and goals. Each department or program has a vested interest in doing this for four reasons:

a) to improve GE offerings via intra- and inter-departmental conversations about what constitutes general education in that specific area;

b) to develop and maintain a departmental strategy for assessing student performance on GE outcomes in that area;

c) to implement that strategy (i.e. to annually collect and analyze data/artifacts to assess student performance on GE outcomes), and;

d) to provide assessment data necessary for GE course review (conducted every 5 years by the University Curriculum Committee) and university wide Accreditation (which now takes place in stages on an approximately annual basis).

**Example for Clarification:** The American Institutions GE Area Committee would be formed of 4 to 6 faculty members from that area (e.g. from the Departments of Economics, History, and Political Science) and two faculty members from outside that area. This committee would request each participating department to create a strategy for assessing student performance related to the American Institutions GE outcomes which are:

“Upon completing an AI course a student shall demonstrate a reasonable understanding of:

1. the significant political, economic, and social changes in American history.

2. the major principles of American civilization, including the concepts of popular sovereignty, liberty, and equality.

3. the institutions and practices of the government provided for in the United States Constitution.

4. the basic workings and evolution of a market economy in the United States.”

The strategy might involve multiple choice questions, essays, example artifacts, etc. Departments would do annual assessment on a subset of their GE courses and provide a summary report for each course to the GE Area Committee. The GE Area Committee Chair will forward this report to the University GE Committee, University Curriculum Committee, and/or Provost every third year. Each GE Area Committee Chair will also maintain these reports, passing them to his/her successor, thereby maintaining institutional memory on Area and Departmental GE issues and assessment.

**Closing remarks:** Given the diversity in GE courses and GE area outcome measures, the University GE Committee does not aim to impose standard methods of assessment but, instead, will ask each department (along with its GE Area Committee) to take ownership of the assessment strategy in this first round. We anticipate that this process will be iterative and that departments, the GE Areas Committees, and the University GE Committee will periodically revise the assessment strategies with experience.

It should be highlighted that the course-level GE assessment described herein is not intended to be, and need not be, onerous. We believe that many departments can develop useful and efficient systems for gauging the level of general education that their courses afford to students and that, once such a system is in place, the annual or semi-annual collection of data or artifacts will rapidly offer insight into how general education is offered at WSU.

Along these lines, it is the intent of the University GE Committee to advance general education at WSU in a meaningful way through a thoughtful, deliberative process that faculty can engage in at departmental, area, and university-wide levels.

Finally, the overarching goal is to assess the success of general education at WSU; the process is not intended to assess individual faculty members. Thus, any faculty identifiers on student work or artifacts used for GE assessment will be removed at the department level. The data collected during this assessment process will not be used during evaluations for tenure and promotion, unless permitted/requested by the specific faculty member.

General Education Core Course Areas (and currently associated departments/programs)

1. Composition.

* English

2. American Institutions

* Economics
* History
* Political Science

3. Quantitative Literacy

* Mathematics
* Philosophy

4. Computer and Information Literacy

* TBE
* LIBS
* TDI
* ART/COMM/ENGL/FL/LIBS/THEA

General Education Breadth Course Areas (and currently associated departments/programs)

1. Humanities

* Anthropology
* Art
* Communication
* Foreign Languages
* Honors
* Library Science
* Literature
* Music
* Philosophy
* Theatre

2. Creative Arts

* Art
* Computer Science
* Dance
* Honors
* Music
* Theatre

3. Social Sciences

* Anthropology
* Child and Family Studies
* Criminal Justice
* Economics
* Geography
* Gerontology
* Health Education
* History
* Honors
* Information Systems and Technologies
* Political Science
* Psychology
* Social Work
* Sociology
* Women’s Studies

4. Physical Sciences

* Chemistry
* Geography
* Geosciences
* Honors
* Physics

5. Life Sciences

* Anthropology
* Botany
* Health Education
* Health Science
* Honors
* Microbiology
* Nutrition
* Zoology

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