**NEW**

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

**Submission Date: March 18, 2015**

**Submitter Name and Phone: Eric Amsel (per GEIAC) x6658**

**College: -**

**Department**: -

**Program Title: WSU course designation**

**1. Complete Program Description**

*Present the complete, formal program description.*

In light of concerns about how Gen Education is structured at Weber State University (see point 13), the General Education Improvement and Assessment Committee (GEIAC) is proposing to create a new category of courses given the course designation of *WSU*. WSU courses are proposed to be lower division classes that will fulfill multiple Gen Ed requirements by addressing a topic in an interdisciplinary manner. Each WSU course will fulfill requirements in two Gen Ed (breadth or core) requirements. The topical focus will ensure WSU courses are not a survey-style introduction to a discipline (as are most Gen Ed class now) and its offering credit in two Gen Ed area requirements will ensure its interdisciplinary status.

There will be 28 new courses designated as WSU, which are all possible pairs of core (QL, AI, EN) and breadth (PS, LS, SS, CA, HU) Gen Ed requirements.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Registrar has worked out the coding of such courses so that WSU course numbers will designate the two particular core and/or breath requirements being fulfilled. WSU classes must meet two different core and /or breadth requirements as there is no provision at this time for WSU courses to meet either one or three or more requirements.

WSU designated courses are proposed to be variable credit (minimum 3 to a maximum of 5 credit hours) and variable titled. The variable credit option is to ensure that sufficient class time is devoted to achieving multiple Gen Ed outcomes. Despite being variable credit, each WSU course a student completes successfully will count as fulfilling up to 3 credits in each of two different Gen Ed requirements. Students will receive one grade in a WSU course.[[2]](#footnote-2) The variable title option is to ensure an infusion of new topics within Gen Ed, offering faculty and students alike an opportunity for an interdisciplinary education experience.

This proposal includes a syllabus shell for each of these courses (See point 22). An actual WSU course will be proposed by WSU faculty members and reviewed and accepted by the GEIAC and Curriculum committees through a rigorous process (see point 4).

Finally, WSU designation courses are being proposed as a 5-year pedagogical experiment. This is to assess the learning outcomes of students enrolled in such courses and monitor the courses’ impact on the Gen Ed curriculum (see point 20). During this period, data will be collected by GEIAC about the effectiveness of WSU classes in fulfilling Gen Ed outcomes. After the 5 year period, those data will be shared with the Weber State community who will be called upon to review and possibly renew permanently the WSU course designation.

**2. Purpose of Degree**

*Summarize why the institution should offer this degree and the expected outcomes.*

The proposal does not include a new degree and the institution is already committed to the expected outcomes in the form of Gen Ed SLOs (see point 21)

**3. Institutional Readiness**

*Describe how the existing administrative structures support the proposed program and identify new organizational structures that may be needed to deliver the program. Describe how the proposed program will or will not impact the delivery of either undergraduate or lower-division education.*

The course proposals will be evaluated by GEIAC and already existing Gen Ed Area Committees (see 4) with no additional administrative support needed.

**4. Faculty**

*Identify the need for additional faculty required in each of the first five years of the program. State the level of preparedness of current faculty and the level of preparedness that will be needed by the fifth year. Clearly state the proportion of regular full-time, tenure track faculty to part-time and non-tenure contract faculty. Describe the faculty development procedures that will support this program. See Requirements in the Institutional Readiness Section.*

A WSU course could be proposed and taught in load by a single or multiple WSU faculty member(s) whose home department(s) will receive payment in support of hiring an adjunct in compensation. If the course is taught as overload, the faculty member(s) will receive the payment directly. WSU course proposal form will require written approval by the instructor’s or instructors’ chair(s) to confirm departmental support for the class.

To incentivize faculty to consider proposing a WSU course, a gift of $100 will be given to each proposal received and passed by the GEIAC and Curriculum committee (see below), irrespective of when or whether it is taught (see below for the process of approving WSU course proposals). The payment source for faculty proposing and teaching WSU courses will be the office of the Associate Provost & Dean of Undergraduate Studies, whose funding will limit the number of courses that can be offered in a given semester. We are presently proposing no more than 4 WSU classes a semester but that is subject to change.

Any WSU course proposal will be approved for a) its consistency with the interdisciplinary goals of the program, b) its appropriateness in the curriculum, and c) whether the multiple Gen Ed outcomes will be achieved and assessed. Different bodies will be designated to review proposals for these criteria, information for which will be specifically requested in the WSU course proposal form.

When a proposal first arrives, the GEIAC committee (or a standing GEIAC subcommittee) will review it for its consistency with the goals of the program, which is to enhance interdisciplinary course offerings in Gen Ed. A standard new course proposal form will be completed which requires a discussion of the value and uniqueness of the course and will require letters of support from departments with courses which may overlap in content with the proposed course. For WSU course proposals, the form will require a discussion of how the proposed course exposes students to multiple disciplinary perspectives on the same topic.

The Chair of the Curriculum Committee (who sits ex officio on GEIAC) will also review the proposal. A new course proposal will have to be reviewed and approved by the Curriculum committee for its inclusion into the curriculum.

Once passed by GEIAC and concurrently being reviewed by Curriculum Committee, the proposal will be reviewed by the two Gen Ed Area Committees (GEACs) targeted by the proposal. The targeted Area committees will affirm that its Gen Ed learning outcomes will likely be achieved and appropriately assessed. The course proposal form will require evidence of how the Gen Ed learning outcomes will be pedagogically addressed and formally assessed by instruction in the course. The assessment is mandatory even if the proposal passes Curriculum Committee. A new WSU course proposal will be sent for review to the entire membership of the two GEACs that the course addresses. The GEACs will consider whether the course has (a) *adequate content to support student achievement of the Gen Ed goal in the targeted area* and (b) *effective measures that assess students’ achievement of those area goals*. The GEACs will review the application and approve the course or seek additional information or clarification from the instructors who will then be able to revise and resubmit their proposals until it passes the GEACs or the proposal is withdrawn. For a new WSU course proposal, there can be no expectation of evidence that will guarantee success. The GEAC review should keep a high enough standard for success, but be flexible enough to embrace the experimental nature of the program and the courses.

All WSU course proposals will be subject to this review, even if a class has been taught previously with the WSU designation. For courses previously taught, the accumulated evidence should be presented in the proposal as should any modifications of the assessment in light of the evidence. A successfully taught WSU course proposal could be approved by the Chair of GEIAC, Curriculum Committee and the target GEACs to expedite the process of it being taught again as soon as possible.

**5. Staff**

*List all additional staff needed to support the program in each of the first five years; e.g., administrative, secretarial, clerical, laboratory aides/instructors, advisors.*

No additional staff is required.

**6. Library and Information Resources**

*Describe library resources required to offer the proposed program. Does the institution currently have the needed library resources?*

No additional library (see signature page) or information resources are required.

**7. Admission Requirements**

*List admission requirements specific to the proposed program.*

There are no admission requirements.

**8. Student Advisement**

*Describe the advising procedure for students in the proposed program.*

The Student Success Center will advise students on the WSU Gen Ed courses as they advise students on all Gen Ed Courses (see email exchange with Jill Ericson, Director Student Success Center below).

Dear Dr. Ericson:

As you know, the Gen Ed committee is proposing to add "WSU courses" to the curriculum for a 5-year trial period. WSU courses will be variable credit​ ​interdisciplinary ​ones. Students may need advising about these courses. I was hoping to get a letter from you stating that the Student Success Center will aid in the advising of students about WSU course options.

Thanks

Eric

Eric Amsel

Professor and Chair

Due Process Officer

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Dear Dr. Amsel:

Once the WSU-designated General Education classes are approved, the General Studies associate degree advisors will be provided information on them so they can share the expanded list of General Education course options with General Studies associate degree majors with whom they meet.

Jill

Dr. Jill A. Grob Ericson

Director

Student Success Center

Weber State University

jericson@weber.edu

(801) 626-7910

**9. Justification for Graduation Standards and Number of Credits**

*Provide graduation standards. Provide justification if number of credits or clock hours exceeds 63 for AA or AS, 69 for AAS, 126 credit hours for BA or BS; and 36 beyond the baccalaureate for MS.*

The credit hour requirement for any given WSU class is not fixed but variable, requiring instructors to justify the required hours to fulfill Gen Ed outcomes on *pedagogical* grounds (see point 15).

**10. External Review and Accreditation**

*Indicate whether any external consultants, either in- or out-of-state, were involved in the development of the proposed program, and describe the nature of that involvement. For a career and technical education program, list the members and describe the activities of the program advisory committee. Indicate any special professional accreditation which will be sought and how that accreditation will impact the program. Project a future date for a possible accreditation review; indicate how close the institution is to achieving the requirements, and what the costs will be to achieve them.*

No external review or *professional* accreditation required. General Education courses are subject to accreditation review by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

**11. Projected Enrollment**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Student Headcount | # of Faculty | Student-to-Faculty Ratio | Accreditation Req’d Ratio |
| 1 | 100 students in 4 classes | 8 faculty teaching the 4 classes | 12.5:1 | None |
| 2 | 150 students in 6 classes | 12 faculty teaching 6 classes | 12.5:1 | None |
| 3 | 200 students in 8 classes | 16 faculty teaching 8 classes | 12.5:1 | None |
| 4 | 200 students in 8 classes | 16 faculty teaching 8 classes | 12.5:1 | None |
| 5 | 200 students in 8 classes | 16 faculty teaching 8 classes | 12.5:1 | None |

**12. Expansion of Existing Program**

*If the proposed program is an expansion or extension of an existing program, present enrollment trends by headcount and by student credit hours (if appropriate) produced in the current program for each of the past five years for each area of emphasis or concentration.*

The WSU course proposal will account for a very small proportion of SCHs presently being generated by students completing General Education requirements. With 8 WSU courses (maximum) running per academic year with ~25 students enrolled for 5 credits per course, the maximum SCHs generated will be ~1000 SCHs / year out of the 10s of thousands of SCHS now generated by General Education per academic year.

**Need**

**13. Program Need**

*Clearly indicate why such a program should be initiated.*

General Education at WSU is now a complex smorgasbord of classes and requirements. Core and breadth requirements are tightly associated with particular classes, making the fulfillment of General Education a matter of students selecting one class from one list and another from a second, etc. There are negative consequences of this kind of structure for General Education:

* Although there is some evidence of students’ ability to divine conceptual links between some of their classes, there is typically little coherence or connection between students’ selection of General Education classes. Certainly, little information is provided about how to select classes that would align with students’ personal or professional interests.
* The number of credit hours required is on the high side for the USHE system, which has posed problems for some programs (e.g., Nursing) with curricula that entail high credit hour requirements in order to conform to professional accreditation standards.
* Many of the core and breadth General Education courses are survey courses meant to introduce students to a particular discipline: its unique language, methods, and theories. However, such courses may be too discipline-oriented to focus on General Education outcomes over program outcomes. It is one thing to teach students key concepts in, for example, Psychology or Sociology (respective program goals & outcomes) but perhaps quite another to train students to use social science to understand and improve the human condition (Social Science General Education learning goals and outcomes).
* The present structure of WSU General Education discourages the creation of interdisciplinary courses which are not tied to or housed in a particular department. Although some such courses may find a home in Honors (see point 15), it is not clear all interdisciplinary General Education courses would be so accommodated.

The feature that WSU designation courses simultaneously give credit for two Gen Ed requirements is not new to Weber State University. GEIAC, Curriculum Committee, and Faculty Senate have approved courses which simultaneously fulfill Gen Ed breadth requirements AND Diversity requirements. The Registrar has no difficulty managing courses fulfilling dual requirements and such courses have no transfer articulation concern when a student transfers to other USHE or non-USHE institutions. Thus, the proposal for WSU designation courses is just a scaling up of curricular and administrative practices which have been agreed to and successfully implemented at the institution previously. The Registrar sees no difficulties in creating WSU courses and having them transfer within the USHE system and to other colleges and universities outside the system.

**14. Labor Market Demand**

*Include local, state, and national data, and job placement information, the types of jobs graduates have obtained from similar programs. Indicate future impact on the program should market demand change.*

Generally speaking, the scholarship[[3]](#footnote-3) points to interdisciplinary courses building foundational skills and encouraging intellectual inquiry in students which should have a positive outcome on their job and career aspirations and equally positive impact on the community.

**15. Student Demand**

*Describe evidence of student interest and demand that supports potential program enrollment.*

The Honors Program has offered popular interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses, most recently combining Dance and QL, which preliminary reports suggest was successful in achieving multiple Gen Ed outcomes. We expect that students would similarly find other such interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses attractive. Moreover, for administrative reasons, the interdisciplinary Gen Ed Honors courses (where two areas are being covered) must be offered as 6 credit hours, irrespective of the pedagogical need for such contact hours. We expect students will enroll in classes where two Gen Ed requirements can be fulfilled in fewer than the 6 credit hour contact time that is presently required.

**16. Similar Programs**

*Are similar programs offered elsewhere in the state or Intermountain Region? If yes, cite justifications for why the Regents should approve another program. How does the proposed program differ from similar program(s)? Be specific.*

The program proposal does not require Regents’ approval. Other USHE institutions offer interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses such as being proposed here.

**17. Collaboration with and Impact on Other USHE Institutions**

*Describe discussions with other USHE institutions that are already offering the program that have occurred regarding your institution’s intent to offer the proposed program. Include any collaborative efforts that may have been proposed. Analyze the impact that the new program would have on other USHE institutions.*

No discussion were required or initiated.

**18. Benefits**

*State how the institution and the USHE benefit by offering the proposed program.*

It is worth noting that interdisciplinary Gen Ed classes are a mainstay at many other USHE intuitions and that Weber State University is late to the game in offering such courses.

**19. Consistency with Institutional Mission**

*Explain how the program is consistent with and appropriate to the institution’s Regents’ approved mission, roles, and goals.*

Adding a stable of interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses to the curriculum fulfills the institutional mission of providing “*excellent educational experiences for students*.”

**Program and Student Assessment**

*Program assessment and performance standards information, which is required for Regents’ review, will serve as information only during University Curriculum Committee review.*

**20. Program Assessment**

*State the goals for the program and the measures that will be used in the program assessment procedure to determine if goals are being met.*

WSU course instructors will be responsible to assess the student learning outcomes and report those outcomes back to GEIAC. These reports will be shared with GEACs. A GEIAC subcommittee responsible for WSU courses will assess the success of each course in achieving the SLOs and fulfilling the goals of WSU courses. This may include the committee seeking additional data from the students or instructors in the WSU course and other information about enrollments and outcomes in course in the targeted Gen Ed areas. This will enable comparison of WSU and non-WSU Gen Ed courses in selected areas. A final report of the evaluations of all WSU courses at the end of the test period will be presented to Senate by the GEIAC Chair.

**21. Expected Standards of Performance**

*List the standards and competencies that the student will have met and achieved at the time of graduation. How or why were these standards and competencies chosen? Include formative and summative assessment measures you will use to determine student learning***.**

The standards and competencies are listed in the SLO for Gen Ed classes which are available on the GEIAC web site.

**Program Curriculum**

**22. All Program Courses**

*List all courses, including new courses, to be offered in the proposed program by prefix, number, title, and credit hours.*

The WSU course proposal includes 28 possible interdisciplinary courses course which are all pairs of core (QL, AI, EN) and breadth (PS, LS, SS, CA, HU) Gen Ed requirements . Course syllabi shells are provided (<https://drive.google.com/a/weber.edu/folderview?id=0B-u5kPrVEFkZfmhVWS1XMkdSWjRoSGMyd1JsNllpYVBUS1ZKd0s1UVY0UmkyRVNfOC1weEE&usp=sharing_eid> ).

The actual courses will be proposed by faculty who will be teaching the courses. These proposals will be rigorously reviewed to ensure their interdisciplinary nature, uniqueness in the curriculum, and likelihood of success in meeting Gen Ed outcomes.

**23. New Courses to be Added in the Next Five Years**

*List all new courses to be developed in the next five years by prefix, number, title, and credit hours. Use the following format:*

The WSU course designation proposal is for 5 years, with likely no more than 8 courses running per year.

**INFORMATION PAGE**

Did this program proposal receive unanimous approval within the ~~Department~~ GEIAC? \_\_NO\_\_ If not, what are the major concerns raised by the opponents?

There was concern raised by one representative who argued that that no one other than the Mathematics department should be able to approve a WSU course which will address QL. However the objection is covered by policy (Creation of GE Area Committees, approved by faculty Senate March 21, 2011). Presently only Mathematics teaches QL courses at the institution, so by policy the QL Area Committee is composed of a Chair from Mathematics, no fewer than 3 additional members of the Mathematics department, and two other members (including one from GEIAC). So the members of the Mathematics department will have a majority vote in the QL area committee.

Explain how this program will differ from similar offerings by other departments. Also explain any effects this proposal will have on program requirements or enrollments in other departments including the Bachelor of Integrated Studies Program. In the case of similar offerings or affected programs, **you should include letters from the departments in question stating their support or opposition to the proposed program**.

The Honors Program has offered interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses like those being proposed by the WSU course designation. The WSU courses are different from the Honors ones in that the WSU courses are variable credit and involve a rigorous evaluation by Gen Ed Area Committees as to whether Gen Ed outcomes will be achieved. These are not presently features of Honors interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses. Please see the letter from Associate Provost Thomas supporting the WSU Course proposal

**A Master’s Degree program** must have a **minimum of 30 credit hours with a maximum of 36 credit hours**.

**A Bachelor** of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Music, or Bachelor of Integrated Studies must have a **minimum of 120 credit hours with a program maximum of 126 hours** (This is a state system-wide requirement). Exceptions for the maximum number of program hours are allowed if accreditation issues require a set number of courses within a given program, i.e. Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Radiology**.**

**An Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science must have a minimum of 60 credit hours with a program maximum of 63 credit hours**. **An Associate of Applied Science must have a minimum of 63 credit hours with a program maximum of 69 credit hours.**

**Major programs that require a minor will consist of not fewer than 30 credits and not more than 48** credits in the major field. **Major programs that do not require a minor** shall consist of **not more than 63 credits in the major field.**

**A minor is a program** of study generally selected to complement and strengthen a student’s major and/or enrich the student’s overall educational program. **A minor consists of not fewer than 15 credits**. Courses that are used to satisfy the general education requirements can be used as part of the minimum number of hours needed for the minor requirements, unless prohibited by a particular college or department.

**Indicate the number of credit hours** for course work within the proposed program. (Do not include credit hours for General Education, SI, Diversity, or other courses unless those courses fulfill requirements within the proposed program.)

The number of credit hours for Gen Ed will reduce because a single WSU courses will fulfill multiple Gen Ed outcomes in fewer than 6 credit hours.

**After the appropriate Approvals, Email the electronic file (Microsoft Word .docx) to bstockberger @weber.edu You may scan the Approval Page with the Signatures and email it, send a hard copy to MC 1033 through campus mail or bring to the Faculty Senate Office MA210J. Send all supporting documents pertaining to your proposal.**

1. Core DV outcomes are already integrated into other Gen Ed coursers and we expect a similar result will occur for CIL outcomes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NOTE: The grade defining successful completion depends on the Gen Ed area. There is a higher requirement for successful completion of QL classes than other Gen Ed core and breadth areas. So, it is conceivable (although unlikely) that a student in a WSU course which combines QL and some other area may earn a grade that gives credit in the other Gen Ed requirement but not in QL. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Klein, J. T. (2009). Creating interdisciplinary campus cultures: A model for strength and sustainability. John Wiley & Sons. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)