

General Education Program Proposed Plan

General Education Council Forum

March 24, 2014

Charcoal Room of the University Center

What will we propose to you today?

- New Learning Outcomes for the General Education program
- New structure for the General Education program
- New University Graduation Requirements
 - Composition competency
 - Mathematic competency
- This proposal will be sent to the Academic Senate for review and approval and, assuming approval, will then go on to the Provost and Board
- There is an opportunity for more input- TODAY! – and until we submit the final proposal to Senate

Question 1- What is the purpose of General Education?

University Mission

- Northern Michigan University challenges its students and employees to think independently and critically, develop lifelong learning habits, acquire career skills, embrace diversity and become productive citizens in the regional and global community.

University Learning Outcomes

- Think independently and critically
- Develop lifelong learning habits
- Acquire career skills
- Embrace diversity
- Become productive citizens and leaders in regional and global community

Question 2 – Why do we need to change the current Liberal Studies program?

- We do not currently have a way to tell if it is meeting its current learning objectives (education-speak= it is not well assessed)
- It is considered “outdated”
 - So what? If its good?
 - It does have excellent “timeless components” (writing, quantitative understanding, content areas)
 - But misses out on other elements that are considered important in the modern world by society (ethics, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, integrative thinking)
 - Most courses have not been periodically reviewed ... so we don't know if its good

Question 2 – Why do we need to change the current Liberal Studies program? (continued)

World is changing → Students have incredible access to content information (less need to expose them to content areas) BUT a great need to learn how to assess the quality of information in many spheres (reasoning, integration of content, etc.)

Our current program is not well valued by students or faculty, despite good elements

Program should be valued → must be relevant to students

Useful upon graduation to lifelong learners AND for their career/educational path

- Needs to be more “student friendly” (understandable, flexible)

Current program is intentionally separate from the rest of the student’s experience at NMU → would be better for it to be part of a coherent overall curriculum that is intentionally chosen by the student

Learning Outcomes

- Learning Outcomes are what students are supposed to get out of a learning experience
- Clear learning outcomes...
 - Make the program more coherent for all students
 - Give a common experience to all the students
 - This means learning the same important elements (L.O.), not necessarily taking the same classes
 - Allow everyone to understand what the program is really for (relevancy)
 - Allow us to have something to check to make sure that the program is doing its job (i.e. assessable)

Current LS Learning Outcomes

Through the liberal studies program, the faculty of Northern Michigan University seeks to develop in our students the skills necessary for becoming independent lifelong learners and effective citizens of a challenging and rapidly changing world. In order to complement a student's academic major, the liberal studies program promotes the integration of knowledge derived from multiple perspectives and stresses the development of problem-solving skills and intellectual creativity through the exploration of a broad range of disciplines and fields. In pursuit of these goals, we encourage our students to be rigorous and systematic in their thought and reflective about their learning, their lives and their world.

The liberal studies program focuses on developing the following skills:

- Ability to write and communicate clearly and effectively
- Ability to evaluate various forms of evidence and knowledge
- Ability to engage in analytical reasoning and argumentation
- Ability to engage in quantitative analysis
- Ability to engage in scientific inquiry and processes
- Ability to see across disciplinary boundaries

NMU stresses the application of these abilities in the pursuit of:

- Understanding cultural diversity in the United States
- Understanding the world as a diverse and interrelated community
- Understanding the relationship of the individual to society and its culture and institutions
- Understanding the role of the fine and performing arts and the humanities in shaping and expressing a culture's values and ideals
- Understanding natural phenomena and the physical world
- Understanding multiple problem-solving perspectives

Current LS Learning Outcomes...continued...

Division II - Foundations of Humanities

- Courses will help students to broaden their understanding of the human experience. Students will study the individual human condition, needs, values, and potentials and achievements within the multiplicity of cultural values that shape it. They will examine, using critical thinking strategies, how peoples in different cultures, times and places deal with common human needs and concerns. They will review and evaluate, using critical thinking techniques, the intellectual, spiritual and ethical concerns of the human experience as recorded in literature, philosophy, religion, or other similar areas.

Division III - Foundations of Natural Sciences - Mathematics

- Students who complete the science courses should be able to recognize and understand the scientific method; understand and use scientific concepts; understand and discuss general scientific articles; and apply their knowledge of science to everyday experience. Students who complete the mathematics courses should be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of mathematical logic; use mathematics to solve scientific or mathematical problems in college classes; express relationships in the symbolic language of mathematics; and appreciate the role of mathematics in analyzing natural phenomena.

Division IV - Foundations of Social Sciences

- Students completing these courses should be able to recognize and understand the principle of the scientific method as it applies to the social sciences and the study of the social universe; comprehend commonalities and differences among various social science disciplines; and communicate an understanding of the role of social science theories and perspectives in investigating and explaining social phenomena. They should also be able to distinguish between knowledge supported by social science scholarship and common sense assumptions; and apply forms of conventional wisdom and assess an understanding of ones place in societies culture, history and political and economic systems.

Division V - Formal Communication Studies

- These courses are designed to introduce students to the ways in which information and ideas are expressed using a communication system other than English. Such courses should foster the students ability to conceptualize and communicate in an orderly, rational manner. Characteristics of a communication system include: (1) possession of a grammar; (2) operation from an established set of rules; (3) reasoning properties such as deduction, inference drawing and problem solving. This division includes courses in languages and those in which the central focus of the course is on statistics, computers or formal logic.

Division VI - Foundations of Visual and Performing Arts

- Students completing these courses will be able to identify the forms of artistic expression (e.g., forms of music, dance, painting, sculpture, etc.) in relation to a historical and cultural context; they will also be able to recognize and articulate the reasons why these forms of artistic expression developed and evolved in the manner they did. Further, students will be able to demonstrate and articulate an understanding of the principles behind the evolution of judgment and taste.

Good conceptually, but...
TOO MANY
TOO COMPLICATED
TOO VAGUE TO ASSESS

How did we choose our new learning outcomes?

- Best practices (AACU-LEAP, HLC, other institutions)
- Faculty surveys
- Campus discussion of general education program structures and goals

New General Education Learning Outcomes

EIGHT proposed learning outcomes
All to be achieved by all students

Demonstrates critical thinking

Demonstrates communication skills that express and convey ideas clearly and effectively

Demonstrates interpretation of quantitative data leading to conclusions

Demonstrates engagement with local or global cultural diversity

Demonstrates integrative thinking by synthesizing disciplinary knowledge and applying this synthesis to new contexts

Demonstrates analysis and evaluation of artistic, literary or rhetorical expression

Demonstrates synthesis and analysis of major social issues within the context of human behavior, history, philosophy and ethics

Demonstrates use of scientific processes to investigate and report knowledge about natural or social phenomena

How do we make sure that these learning outcomes are met?

- Structure of the program
 - All students need to successfully work with each learning outcome
 - Need to ensure that the courses that they take are successful in presenting the learning outcome to the students
- Specifics
 - All courses will need to meet the Critical Thinking LO and one other (see following slides)
 - Rubrics to assess courses will be developed based on LEAP Value Rubrics
 - We are not providing our initial rubrics yet because they will be developed over the summer with input from the campus community
 - Rubrics will not be run through Senate for approval and they may change over time based on our assessment process (see later slides)

What did we learn from the input about the three Program Models that we sent to campus for review?

- Balance between disciplinary content and metacognitive goals
- Breadth of content desirable
- Integrative courses desirable
- Flexibility combined with still providing students a clear path through the program; not too complicated
- Transferability important (Michigan Transfer Agreement “stamp” and other transfers)
- Mixed response on the level of courses needed
- Needs to be different from what we currently have (or why change?), yet not so different that it would be impossible (or really expensive) to implement

PROPOSED GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM STRUCTURE

GENERAL EDUCATION COMPONENTS

Effective Communication (2 courses)

Demonstrates communication skills that express and convey ideas clearly and effectively

Rubric based on LEAP Creative Thinking, Written Communication, and Oral Communication

Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis (1 course)

Demonstrates interpretation of quantitative data leading to conclusions

Rubric based on LEAP Quantitative Reasoning and Problem Solving

Social Responsibility in a Diverse World (1 course)

Demonstrates engagement with local or global cultural diversity

Rubric based on LEAP Ethical Reasoning, Consequences of Decision Making, Intercultural Competence and Diverse World

Integrative thinking (1 course)

Demonstrates integrative thinking by synthesizing disciplinary knowledge and applying this synthesis to new contexts

Rubric based on LEAP Integrative Thinking

Human Expression (1 course)

Demonstrates analysis and evaluation of artistic, literary or rhetorical expression

Rubric based on LEAP Creative Thinking and elements of Artistic Evaluation

Perspectives on society (2 courses)

Demonstrates synthesis and analysis of major social issues within the context of human behavior, history, philosophy and ethics

Rubric based on LEAP Ethical Reasoning, Consequences of Decision Making

Scientific Inquiry (2 courses)

Demonstrates use of scientific processes to investigate and report knowledge about natural or social phenomena

Rubric based on LEAP Problem Solving and elements of Scientific Inquiry/Method

* Courses in all components would also address Critical Thinking Learning Outcome

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Demonstrates use of scientific processes to investigate and report knowledge about natural or social phenomena

- 10 courses (at least 3 credits each)
- “C” or higher in all courses
Without a “C”, it would not be possible to say that they have met the learning outcomes
- The model does not allow for double counting *within* the General Education program; however, courses *can* be double counted with major requirements and/or University Graduation Requirements
- Courses may be at any level
- Easy transfer of courses from community colleges according to the MTA
- World Cultures and Lab Science will be assessed using current standards and these courses may appear in any Component

* Courses in all components would also address Critical Thinking Learning Outcome

Where would my course fit?

- Departments proposing a course for the program would select the Component where they want it to appear and provide information about the course's fit to that Component, which GEC would evaluate.
 - GEC will not “put” a course in a Component → Departments will seek to “put” them where they wish
 - GEC will provide a clear application process and the rubrics for the Learning Outcome involved will be the means for assessing fit.
 - Remaining in the program will be based on continued demonstration of meeting Learning Outcomes

Assessment Plan

- Courses will be assessed on a 3 year rotation using rubrics (2-3 Components per year)
- Components (and rubrics) will be reviewed on a 3 year cycle (linked to how courses rotate) to ensure that each piece of the program is achieving its goals. Adjust if necessary.
- Entire program will be reviewed every 6 years (after two cycles through courses and components). Adjust if necessary.
 - Look at overall assessment data; Survey campus about value of the program etc; Evaluate fit of program into educational landscape
 - NO, we do not suggest that major changes will be made every six years. INSTEAD, we suggest a mechanism of constant attention to the program so that we do not have to do MAJOR overhauls. “*keep* up to date rather than *get* up to date”

What are University requirements

What we have currently

- Lab Science Course
- World Cultures Course
- HP 200 and HP elective

- *Specific* competencies (not general)
- Ensure all students, even transfers, will meet competencies
- University Requirements achievable through Gen Ed (except HP)

Proposed Addition of Written English Competency Requirement

I. First-Year Composition

Students should satisfy this requirement during their first or second semester in college. Students can satisfy this requirement in one of three ways.

1. Earning a B (3.0) in EN 109, *Intensive College Composition*, and its co-requisite, *EN 109W, Intensive College Composition Workshop*, **OR**
2. Earning a C (2.0) or better in EN 111, *College Composition I*, **OR**
3. Successfully completing one of the following:
 - a. CLEP – CLEP English Composition General Examination with Essay with a score of 50 or higher
 - b. AP – English Literature and Composition or English Language and Composition with a score of 3 or higher
 - c. IB – International Baccalaureate English Language Examination in English with a score of 5 or higher
 - d. COMPASS e-Write Exam -- with a score of 11 or higher (exam available to all students)

I. Intermediate Composition

Students should satisfy this requirement soon after completing the First-Year Composition requirement. To fulfill the Intermediate Composition Requirement, students have two options:

1. Students may complete EN 211, *College Composition II*; this requirement is met by earning a grade of C (2.0) or better. **OR**
1. Students may complete HON 101 and HON 111 or HON 112 which meets the EN 211 requirement. This requirement is met by earning grades of C (2.0) or better (as specified by the Honors Program).

These courses will also satisfy General Education outcomes.

Proposed Addition of a Mathematics Competency Requirement

1. Earning a C (2.0) in a quantitative literacy course (to be developed by Math/CS in summer 2014) **OR**
2. Earning a C (2.0) in MA104 **OR**
3. Earning a B (3.0) in MA171, PH201, PH202, PH220, PH221, CH111, CH112, EC101, EC201 or EC202 or other quantitatively-oriented courses as determined by Math/CS **OR**
4. Successfully completing one of the following:
 - a. CLEP score of 63
 - b. AP score of 3
 - c. IB score of 5
 - d. Math Placement Exam placement into MA111 or higher

These courses will also satisfy General Education outcomes.

What now?

- Input on our proposed plan
- Send Learning Objectives, General Education Structure, University Requirements to Senate for approval
 - If approved, goes to Provost and Board
- Once approved, immediately go into initial implementation plans
 - Help departments submit courses to the program
 - Firm up processes for assessment (L.O. rubrics etc)
- Implement in Fall 2015 with first cohort of students
 - Will go into that bulletin so will cover students using that bulletin

Questions and Comments?
