

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Wayne Senate

FROM: Educational Policy Committee
L. Wright-Bower, Chair

DATE: March 20, 2000

SUBJECT: General Education at IPFW: Update of Campus General Education Program Definition and Course Criteria (Supersedes SD 93-14 The Principles of General Education for Baccalaureate Programs and SD 94-4 General Education Core Course Proposals [Criteria]" (SD 99-25)

Disposition: To the Presiding Officer for implementation, beginning with the 2001-2002 academic year.

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee has reviewed various evaluations from those individuals taking and teaching general education courses over the years; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee was charged in April of 1999 to consider the Haw Proposal for general education and to report to the Senate during the 1999-2000 academic year; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee considered and studied the Haw Proposal along with the four other proposals for a general education curriculum; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee has considered numerous suggestions for the revisions and improvement of the campus general education program; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee has redefined each of the six areas of general education, outlined suggested methodology for each area, and determined criteria for each; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee has examined the need for exceptions in specific degree programs where accreditation bodies dictate specific curriculum content, courses or curriculum; and

Whereas, the General Education Subcommittee has responded to faculty, student, and advisor concerns and questions by providing guidelines for exceptions, exemptions, and double counting;

Resolved, that the Senate approve the attached document (General Education at IPFW) as a replacement for SD 94-4 and SD 93-14.

General Education at IPFW

The Principles of General Education

General Education ensures that, upon graduation, students will be familiar with the important modes of human thought that are the foundations of science, philosophy, art and social behavior. General Education expects students to understand the traditions that have informed one's own and other cultures of the world.

In order to do so, General Education at IPFW defines an integrated pedagogical framework for courses taken **outside** the student's major discipline. Furthermore, General Education requires that students consider the nature and diversity of individuals, cultures and societies around the world.

General Education courses should offer both substantive knowledge and an appreciation of multiple methods of inquiry and learning. While specific General Education approved courses may be foundational or advanced, the overall goals of the General Education requirements are achieved through cumulative course work.

Therefore, students who have completed the General Education requirements at IPFW are expected:

To be familiar with the important modes of human thought that are the foundations of science, philosophy, art and social behavior.

To possess effective foundation skills:

Read, write, and speak with comprehension, clarity, and precision.

Identify substantive knowledge and disciplinary methods.

Develop information literacy skills.

Reason quantitatively (as means of gaining and creating knowledge and drawing reliable conclusions)

To demonstrate the ability to think critically and to solve problems using the foundation skills:

Evaluate their ideas and the ideas of others based upon disciplined reasoning.

Understand the traditions that have formed one's own and other cultures.

Be able to articulate their ideas in appropriate media.

To complete a research/creative project outside the student's major discipline that requires synthesizing knowledge and applying skills gained.

Baccalaureate degrees

The General Education requirement for bachelor degree programs shall consist of 33 credits, as defined below, with specific exemptions as noted. One approved general education course in the major discipline may be counted toward fulfillment of Areas II-V. All students completing a bachelor degree program at IPFW must complete the AREA VI General Education Course at IPFW.

I. Foundation Skills Core (9 cr. --one approved course in each skill area and completion of a computer literacy requirement as defined by the degree-granting unit and approved by the General Education Subcommittee)

II. Physical and Natural Sciences (6 cr. in approved courses)

III. The Individual, Culture, and Society (6 cr. in approved courses)

IV. Humanistic Thought (6 cr. in approved courses)

V. Creative and Artistic Expression (3 cr. in an approved course)

VI. Inquiry and Analysis (one 3-credit approved course outside the major discipline)

Associate degrees

The General Education requirement for associate degree programs shall consist of 12 credits: Area I (9 cr.) plus one approved course outside the major discipline from Areas II-V.

Exemptions:

- a) Students who place out of a general-education course in Area I are neither required to take that course nor to replace it with another in that area. They will be exempt from taking such courses.
- b) Departments/programs may replace up to six (6) credits of the required 21 credits in approved general-education courses in Areas II-V by more advanced courses when the following criteria are met: (1) the replacement courses are specifically required by the major, (2) they are outside the major discipline, and (3) they meet the area definition, but are more advanced and/or more specifically focused on professional goals than courses approved for general education. Substitutions of this nature are subject to the approval of the General Education Subcommittee. Programs wishing to exercise this option should provide the General Education Subcommittee with a list of the proposed replacement courses for the specified area(s) and a brief statement of the rationale.

General Education Course Definitions and Criteria

The statements below establish criteria for determining whether a specific course qualifies as a general-education offering. The first set of criteria applies to *all* general-education courses; those that follow define the specific content areas.

Criteria for Evaluating Courses Proposed for Inclusion in

Any General-Education Area

- The course should provide a basis for life-long learning.
- From the course, students should gain both substantive knowledge and an appreciation of method.
- The course must be appropriate for nonmajors and for students who are unlikely to take another course in the discipline. This requirement does not preclude the possibility that the course might also be appropriate for majors.
- In its content and its approach, the course should satisfy the goals and criteria of the general-education area to which it belongs.
- The course syllabus should have clearly stated goals focusing on expected student learning outcomes.
- The course syllabus should indicate the relationships between the course goals and the assigned work (readings, other required work, exams, etc.), and should also clearly indicate how accomplishment of the course goals will be assessed.
- Regardless of the General Education area in which it satisfies a requirement, the course should help students advance their understanding and mastery of skills in the Linguistic and Numerical Foundations area and should help prepare students for successful learning in the Inquiry and Analysis area. It is understood that not all foundation skills can be addressed equally in any given course.
- Courses in Areas I-V should require no prior knowledge of the discipline(s) in which the course is based, beyond what might reasonably be expected of a high-school graduate.

Area I: Linguistic and Numerical Foundations

Linguistic and numerical foundations are requisite to thinking and communicating critically and creatively. Courses in this area teach students (1) to speak and write precisely, clearly, and persuasively; (2) to read and listen actively and with comprehension; and (3) to reason quantitatively as means of gaining and creating knowledge and drawing reliable conclusions. Every student's curriculum should be arranged so as to provide skills in each of these 3 areas, as well as skills in the area of computer literacy. Because of its fundamental nature, this requirement should be completed within each student's first 30 credits of enrollment.

The Area I requirement is fulfilled by completion of one approved course in each of three areas:

Reading and Writing; Listening and Speaking; Quantitative Reasoning, and evidence that computer literacy has been demonstrated through completion of a course approved by the General Education Subcommittee or acquisition of comparable skills in other courses required as a part of the degree program.

- Should include discussions that emphasize how core skills transcend disciplines. Developing skills that students may transfer or adapt to tasks inside and outside the university should be central to the course.
- Should require students to develop and apply appropriate information-gathering skills.
- Should require the development of skills that allow students to construct arguments and rationales in a variety of contexts, and to consider the arguments and rationales of others in a reasoned manner.

Area II: Natural and Physical Sciences

Understanding of the physical and natural world requires comprehension of the role of human intelligence and imagination in formulating concepts; the role of observation and inference in investigations; how theories are formed, tested, and validated; the limitations inherent to scientific inquiry; and the impact of science and mathematics upon intellectual history. Such learning fosters scientific thinking; knowledge of the physical and natural world; and understanding of the human, social, and political implications of theories and research.

- Should require the student to demonstrate understanding of the physical, chemical, and biological bases of living and non-living systems that make up our world and the larger universe.
- Should show how scientific knowledge is developed; how observations are made, hypotheses formulated and tested, and theories developed.
- Whenever possible, should involve students in demonstrations or hands-on participation to develop an understanding of data collection and analysis and quantitative problem-solving.
- May also expose students to the writing in this area, e.g., journal articles, reviews, and popular essays, and involve students in writing of their own, e.g., preparing laboratory reports, critically evaluating published articles.

Area III: Individual, Culture, and Society

Students must understand the nature and diversity of individuals, cultures and societies around the world. An exploration of behavioral, societal and cultural processes forms the basis for that understanding. This understanding of diverse systems assists the student in overcoming provincialism; in developing the willingness, confidence, and sense of responsibility for making informed decisions; and in acquiring the ability to assess personal behavior and that of others. Such learning requires an historical consciousness; familiarity with components of social structure and social institutions; knowledge of basic behavioral processes; comprehension of the interplay among ideas, technology, and social organization; and appreciation of the complex dimensions of personal and institutional rules.

- Should require the student to demonstrate understanding of the nature and diversity of individuals, organizations, cultures, and societies. May involve developing an historical consciousness; familiarity with social structures

- and institutions; knowledge of behavioral processes; comprehension of the interplay among ideas, technology, and social organization.
- Should show how knowledge of social and behavioral processes is developed; how information is gathered, hypotheses formulated and analyzed, and theories developed.
- Whenever possible, should involve students in writing of their own, e.g., critically evaluating published articles, reaction papers.
- May also involve students in demonstrations or hands-on participation to develop an understanding of data collection and analysis and quantitative problem-solving.

Area IV: Humanistic Thought

Humanistic thought is the attempt to resolve such abiding issues as the meaning of life, the role of the arts in our understanding of what it is to be human, and the limits of knowledge. Humanistic inquiry assesses-across temporal, cultural, disciplinary, and theoretical divisions-how humans view themselves in relation to other humans, to nature, and to the divine. Studies in the humanities offer students the intellectual resources to develop mature self-concepts and heightened social consciousness.

- Should require the student to demonstrate understanding of scholarly approaches to such abiding issues as the meaning of life, the role of the arts in our understanding of what it is to be human, and the limits of knowledge.
- Should lead students to reflect critically on the traditions that have shaped their values, beliefs, and aesthetic preferences, and make meaningful comparisons between the traditions that have shaped them and traditions different from theirs.
- Whenever possible, should expose students to the writing or creative works in this area, e.g., essays, works of art and music, and involve students in writing of their own, e.g., critical analyses, reaction papers.
- May also involve students in demonstrations or hands-on participation to develop an understanding of data collection and analysis and quantitative problem-solving.

Area V: Creative and Artistic Expression

Creative and artistic expression requires practicing the visual, the performing, the literary, the popular, or the applied arts as a means of exploring and enlarging human sensibilities.

- Should require the student to demonstrate understanding of the creative process and to perform and/or create a work of personal expression.
- Should show how the creative process develops from the idea stage to production; how elements of the particular medium are synthesized into the final work; and how applicable skills and techniques are used to bring the work to fruition.
- Whenever possible, should expose students to the processes of observation, reflection, and critical evaluation of their creative efforts, and should involve students in written or oral communication of the analysis of their work.

Area VI: Inquiry and Analysis

Building on Areas I-V, the Inquiry and Analysis requirement provides opportunities for synthesizing knowledge. Inquiry and Analysis courses are problem-oriented and require completion of a project. The requirement is fulfilled by completing one approved course outside the major discipline.

Inquiry and Analysis courses meet general-education criteria and require completion of the Area I requirement plus any applicable pre- or co-requisites specified by the program offering the course. Inquiry and Analysis courses are not open to students with A1 or B1 status.

- Should require students to demonstrate the ability to gather, evaluate, select, organize, and synthesize material in order to complete a research or creative project. To this end, area VI courses should require completion of a project that involves planning, research, and presentation in an appropriate medium.

- Should provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the ability to think critically and solve problems by applying knowledge and skills gained in earlier (prerequisite) courses.
- May also provide opportunities to work across disciplinary boundaries.

The General Education Subcommittee

Responsibility for administering the general education program resides with the chief academic officer, assisted by the General Education Subcommittee, which reports to the Faculty through the Educational Policy Committee, as specified in the Senate Bylaws.