

**GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

FINAL REPORT

May 1, 2007

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Task Force Members

Dr. Susan E. Keefe, Chair

Dr. James Barnes

Dr. Dan Friedman

Dr. Paul Gates

Ms. Carter Hammett-McGarry

Dr. David Haney

Dr. Timothy Harris

Dr. Alexandra Hellenbrand

Dr. Tina Hogan

Mr. David Humphrey

Dr. Doris Jenkins

Dr. Michael Mayfield

Dr. Paulette Marty

Dr. Georgia Rhoades

Dr. Gregory Rhoads

Dr. Ivan Roten

Dr. Laurie Semmes

Ms. Samuella Sigmann

Dr. Scott Townsend

Dr. Ann Viles

Dr. Ray Williams

Dr. Jennifer Wyatt

Assisted by Ms. Kelly Edge, Mr. Andrew Hill, Dr. Elaine Gray, Dr. John Whitehead.

2005-06 members: Ms. Nikki Crees, Mr. Chris Eklund, Ms. Joni Petschauer, Dr. David White

FINAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The General Education Task Force was established by the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Stan Aeschleman in January, 2005, to develop a signature general education program for Appalachian State University. In October, 2006, the Task Force submitted a set of educational goals and learning outcomes that will provide the basis for the curriculum (see **Appendix 1**). The four educational goals are (1) Thinking Critically and Creatively, (2) Communicating Effectively, (3) Making Local to Global Connections, and (4) Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership. These were accepted and approved by the Provost in January, 2007. A report summarizing the process of arriving at these goals is available in **Appendix 2**. Task Force reports summarizing specific data collection projects are listed in **Appendix 3**.

In this report, we lay out a curriculum model designed to meet the four goals and twenty-one learning outcomes. This model is based on our understanding of the national conversation on general education mediated by an appreciation of the interests, capacities, and concerns of our particular campus community. As with the process of developing the educational goals, the Task Force held numerous public forums throughout 2006-07 to present and discuss the developing model.

The model we propose is characterized by a number of general features. First, it provides required coursework grounded in a liberal education in the arts and sciences. It employs a vertical model which provides opportunities in each year of enrollment for students to improve their skills in critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, written and oral communication, information literacy, and technological literacy. It advocates synergy between general education and the academic major. Finally, it advocates integrative learning through thematic coursework in four Perspectives: Aesthetic, Historical and Social, Local to Global Connections, and Science Inquiry. These closely mirror the “essential learning outcomes” advocated by AAC&U’s National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise which recently issued their report entitled College Learning for the New Global Century (2007).

In this report, we first describe the curriculum model; then we offer discussion and recommendations concerning approaches for teaching and learning, administration, and assessment in the general education program.

Curriculum Model

The general education curriculum model requires a total of 44 semester hours (see Diagram 1).

This includes the following required coursework:

- 3 s.h. First Year Seminar
- 3 s.h. First Year Writing
- 3 s.h. Sophomore Writing
- 4 s.h. Quantitative Literacy
- 2 s.h. Wellness Literacy
- Information and Communication Technology Literacy (to be determined)
- 29 s.h. Perspectives (including 3 s.h. each in fine arts, historical studies, literary studies)

- 44 s.h. TOTAL

Coursework in the major:

- Junior Writing
- Senior Capstone Experience

In order to encourage a broad-based general education, most courses for students will be outside their majors. Students will be allowed to count a maximum of two courses taught in their majors toward general education requirements (up to 8 s.h. of the total 44 s.h.).

General Education Model

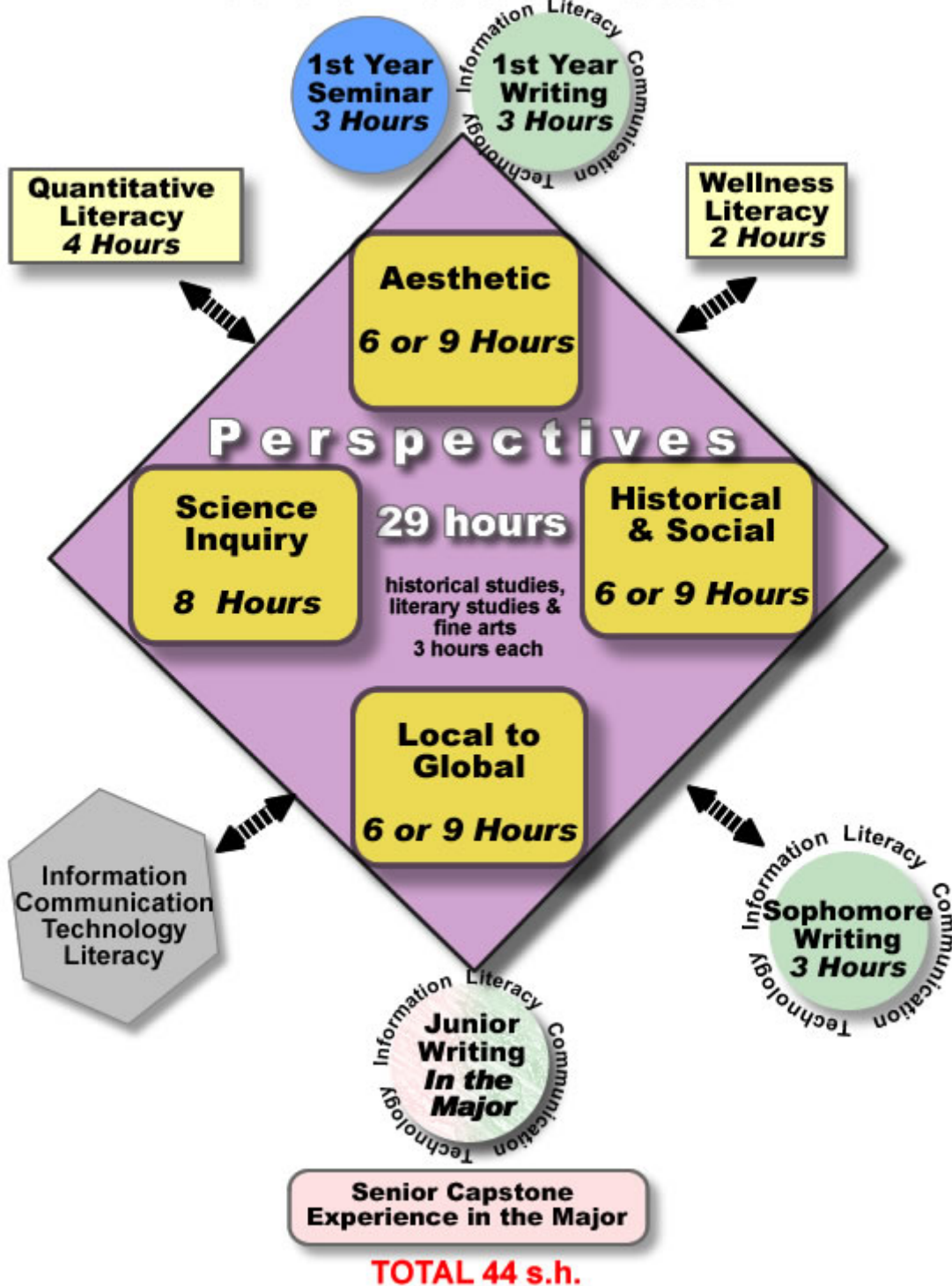


Diagram 1 - General Education Model

NOTE: The term “literacy” is used in this model to indicate the acquisition of knowledge in a particular subject or area of activity, an understanding of the process of acquiring that knowledge, and an understanding of the application of that knowledge.

The Task Force recommends the following guidelines for each of these requirements. In addition, each of these components must meet a subset of the general education goals and learning outcomes (see **Appendix 1**).

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR

The First Year Seminar should engage students and faculty in a shared process of inquiry around a broad, interdisciplinary topic or question. Utilizing at least two different modes of inquiry, as well as varied and engaging pedagogies, this seminar will help students develop their abilities to think critically and communicate effectively. It will also help students make connections with faculty, peers, the university, and the curriculum.

The seminar should be taught primarily by fulltime, tenure-track faculty. Faculty should be given multi-year appointments to teach the seminar, which should be built into the departmental evaluation process. Credit hours should reside in the faculty member's home department. Maximum enrollment should be 22 students.

The First Year Seminar is an opportunity to introduce first year students to the fulltime faculty and to academic work at the university. It is designed to meet learning outcomes at the entry level in the goals of "Thinking Critically and Creatively" and "Communicating Effectively."

- First Year Seminar should incorporate speaking and writing requirements.
- The course should utilize at least two different modes of inquiry. In this sense, it should not be an introduction to a specific discipline, but inquiry broadly conceived. Faculty members teaching First Year Seminar will design course topics.
- The course should be based on active learning pedagogies, including problem-based learning, and involve students in a shared process of inquiry.
- It should incorporate research with an Information Literacy component and attention to the Academic Integrity Code.
- Ideally, some attention should also be given to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in this seminar.

First Year Seminar is also an opportunity to help students make connections with faculty, other students, their courses, and the university. Given a seminar setting, it is possible to focus on community building, ensuring that students build an academic community, make a connection with faculty members, and develop a sense of belonging. It also offers the opportunity to begin to incorporate new students into the life of the university through involvement in co-curricular activities such as Cultural Programs and lecture series. One of the most important ways to do this would be to require discussion of the Summer Reading book and attendance at Convocation.

The purpose of First Year Seminar is to help students succeed in college. Instructors should pay attention to specific needs of new students and refer students to appropriate campus resources when necessary. Peer leaders and links to other courses in learning communities will contribute to community-building and ensure access to support services.

The First Year Seminar is conceptually different from the current Freshman Seminar. For some students with special transition needs, Freshman Seminar will continue to be appropriate, and we recommend retaining a small number of Freshman Seminar sections for these student populations. The CSI (College Student Inventory) and PGPA (Predicted GPA) might be relied upon to help place special need students into these sections.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing in general education should be based on a recursive vertical model which provides continuity in the curriculum, allowing students to return to material in earlier courses and review and refine rhetorical skills as they apply them to new contexts. For this reason, the model incorporates three writing courses and writing in the Senior Capstone, spanning the first through the fourth year in residence. In the model, we see writing as fundamental not only to general education but to the major. We recommend that writing courses have a maximum enrollment of 22 students.

The model incorporates Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), an approach based on process theory, which prepares students to write and to use writing to learn in several university contexts. WAC will also support teachers in disciplines other than English in providing writing instruction in their classrooms. The WAC program will support faculty in writing course development and instruction in conjunction with the Writing Center and the Hubbard Center. This model is described further in **Table 1**.

We recommend that three writing-intensive courses be required in general education:

- **First year composition and rhetoric** in the Composition Program, with a link to an Information Literacy program/module and possible links to First Year Seminar.
- **Second year composition and rhetoric with WAC focus** in the Composition Program, with a link to an Information Literacy program/module and possible links to Perspectives.
- **Third year Writing In the Discipline (WID) course** in the major with faculty support through WAC consultants; guidelines and standards for writing in the major to come from the major field. This writing course in the major will build on earlier experience with Information Literacy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy.

In many cases, the **Senior Capstone Experience** in the major will provide a writing component (with WAC program support) and may also provide instruction specific to the major in Information Literacy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy. In addition, the third year WID course or the Senior Capstone will include a requirement in Oral Communication skills.

EPortfolios

An ePortfolio is an electronic collection of a student's artifacts selected for student reflection which can serve as a resource for the student's further education and career

Gateway Skills – Writing in the university through development of skills and voice		Intermediate Skills – Writing in the discipline	Advanced Skills – Writing in the Discipline/ Capstone in Major	Portfolio –
First year: Introductory course with research component in collaboration with information literacy program	Second year: Writing course focusing on reinforcement of skills in new, multiple WAC contexts with information literacy component	Third year: Writing in the major at entry level with information literacy component.	Fourth year: Capstone: Writing in the major at advanced level, to be designed by majors, with information literacy component	Portfolio/ePortfolio compiled over academic career as resource for further education or career investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writes to discover •Drafts, revises, and edits effectively •Writes with strong voice and authority •Gathers and interprets data •Analyzes writing situations rhetorically •Demonstrates primary and secondary research and writing skills •Reflects critical thinking and choice in writing projects •Participates actively in writing community •Reflects upon semester’s writing with ability to evaluate own work and that of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Practices basic skills from first year •Reads and analyzes texts rhetorically across genre and from different academic communities •Interprets a variety of texts •Writes in different genre for different academic communities •Uses rhetorical skills in matching research to needs of writing situation •Applies different methods of documenting •Reflects upon semester’s writing within the context of academic writing with more sophisticated evaluation of own work and that of different communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Applies skills from first and second years •Applies rhetorical knowledge of texts from writing across the curriculum •Reads and analyzes texts in the major field •Writes effectively in the models of the major according to the major's guidelines for entry-level writing •Participates in a larger writing community •Reflects on semester’s writing with emphasis on writing within the major community and connections to other academic communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Writes at advanced level in the major field •Demonstrates rhetorical knowledge of major writing models in the major field •Uses language of field effectively •Participates in a community of readers and writers in field •Reflects upon semester’s writing within the context of academic writing in the field and one’s own writing in the conversation of the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Addressing all cumulative Goals and Outcomes of writing experiences •Includes examples of strong, polished writing from college career •Reflects on pieces of writing and collection as a whole in the context of multiple academic communities with application inside and outside the university Practices basic skills from first year

Table 1 -Vertical Model for Writing Skills

investment. The WAC program will investigate the possibility of a student ePortfolio program, piloting ePortfolios with the Honors Program in 2008.

In addition to the focus on writing, these courses should incorporate Information Literacy at all levels and, where possible, an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) component/module. Information Literacy refers to “the ability to evaluate information across a range of media, recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, synthesize, and use information effectively, with print and electronic media” (Perrault 2006:10). Library faculty members on our campus are specialists in information literacy and are a resource we should draw upon in designing writing courses. The ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education approved by the Association of College and Research Libraries in January 2000 and endorsed by the American Association for Higher Education (1999) and the Council of Independent Colleges (2004) lists standards, performance indicators, and learning outcomes for assessing higher education students’ progress toward information literacy. See **Appendix 4** for a chart of the learning outcomes arranged according to basic, intermediate, and advanced information literacy proficiency levels. Writing courses also offer the potential of incorporating speaking and, thus, a Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC -- speaking and writing) approach.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

The Task Force recommends a vertical development model for oral communication, similar to that described for writing. Oral communication skill development will be integrated into the First Year Seminar and into either the Junior Writing Course and/or Capstone experience. Other courses in general education may also be able to incorporate oral communication skill development, although this is highly dependent on class size. The General Education Council should encourage any small-size classes (perhaps the potential upper-division courses) in the Perspectives to incorporate oral communication skills. These skills may also be supported in the co-curriculum and through activities supported by Student Development. Oral communication includes the principles of rhetoric and public address, as well as dyadic and small group communication. Faculty expertise could derive from original professional preparation and related continuing education and/or from specific faculty development activities. We recommend support of faculty development in these areas and reliance on assistance from oral communication specialists on campus.

The proposed vertical model for developing oral communication skill has components similar to those proposed for developing writing skills: orally communicating through development of basic skills in the first year of study and development of intermediate/advanced skills during a student’s third and/or fourth years of study (orally communicating in the discipline).

The oral communication focus in the First Year Seminar should be on the development of basic skills in multiple speaking activities pertinent to the particular course topic. Intermediate/advanced skill development in the upper division courses will introduce students to communicating in the major, possibly in a variety of contexts or activities (e.g., dyadic – such as interviewing, small group – such as working on course projects,

and public speaking – such as senior seminar presentations), and then increase the sophistication of those skills.

QUANTITATIVE LITERACY

Quantitative literacy is concerned with developing the reasoning skills needed to make judgments based on quantitative information. Quantitative literacy is not a set of elementary technical skills, but a knowledge base that will give students the ability to analyze, synthesize and represent quantitative information from real-life problems and experiential data.

The general education of all students should include four hours of content developing reasoning and numerical skills related to quantitative literacy. Courses that satisfy quantitative literacy should not be remedial, and their level of content should exceed the requirements for admission to the university. This content must focus on mathematics, exploratory data analysis, statistics, probability, or modeling, and could be linked with a Perspective theme (although the hours would not count towards the hours in the particular theme or total Perspective hours).

All courses in quantitative literacy must provide students opportunities to develop these skills:

1. Recognize situations where quantitative methods can be used to model and solve problems, and employ appropriate tools (specifically technology) in formulating, analyzing and solving those problems
2. Communicate quantitative ideas and concepts using a variety of representations, including numerical, graphical, and algebraic
3. Recognize and draw upon connections between the mathematical sciences and other disciplines, and between the mathematical sciences and life experiences

Courses in quantitative literacy must provide students with opportunities to develop one or more of the following skills:

4. Collect and interpret quantitative data in order to draw appropriate inferences, understand the role of chance in data collection and statistical inference, question and validate assumptions
5. Develop skill in forming generalizations from recognized patterns in numerical and spatial information, and in forming sound arguments using quantitative information and mathematical analysis
6. Demonstrate number sense and recognize quantitatively reasonable and unreasonable solutions to problems

Quantitative literacy is best developed in stages with increasing levels of complexity and culminating with specific applications across disciplines and in the major discipline. Thus, second and subsequent levels, if appropriate, should require application, refinement, and reflection upon the quantitative skills and methods developed in the initial content. Goals of this experience could include the goals listed above. Insightful understanding of quantitative information and the ability to transfer understanding between contexts would indicate highest levels of achievement.

WELLNESS LITERACY

A high level of wellness includes 1) health as a positive state, 2) health in all dimensions (physical, intellectual, social, emotional, environmental, and spiritual), and 3) wellness as an instrumental value (helping one achieve other goals). Health or Wellness Literacy is “the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (adapted from US Department of Health and Human Services). The person who is literate in wellness has a strong foundation in science-based health and fitness concepts, selects reliable sources of health and wellness content, and is capable of applying wellness skills.

A wellness course should minimally provide the opportunity for students to develop these skills:

1. Assess personal and family history to determine individual health risk
2. Develop a plan for personal wellness to address specific health concerns
3. Demonstrate appropriate skills to maintain and/or improve one’s condition of wellness

In addition, wellness courses should also assist students to develop these skills:

4. Identify potential barriers to wellness and develop a plan to overcome those barriers
5. Identify social and cultural influences that impact health on both a personal and global scale

Application, analysis, and evaluation of knowledge and behavior can best be achieved by drawing from several different disciplines and experiential settings. Wellness literacy must be developed over time for knowledge and/or skills to become habits and affect quality of life. Therefore, we recommend that students follow this vertical model:

1. Students would select a minimum of 2 s.h. in wellness in their first year.
2. Students might have the opportunity to select an additional course in the sophomore year as part of one of the four thematic perspectives. Self assessment would continue as in the first course, perhaps using an e-journal.
3. Throughout the college experience appropriate wellness behavior would be reinforced through optional co-curricular programs available to students delivered by faculty and/or staff in the wellness area. Opportunities for reinforcement of knowledge and behavior might include intramural activities, varsity sports, peer health education, club sports, campus fitness programs, health-related service learning, or residence hall education.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ITC) LITERACY

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy is “the ability to use digital technology, communication tools and networks appropriately to solve information problems in order to function in an information society” (Perrault 2006:13). “The new literacies of the Internet and other ICTs include the skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully use and adapt to the rapidly changing information and communication technologies and contexts that continuously emerge in our world and

influence all areas of our personal and professional lives” (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack, 2004:1572).

At the basic ICT level, students should be able to achieve these goals:

1. Understand basic computer terminology and concepts
2. Locate and critically evaluate information
3. Apply basic to advanced skills in word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation, and web authorship applications to information and communication problems
4. Use personal information management skills, such as email filtering, password selection and protection, personal computer backup, virus/malware scanning, and firewalls
5. Understand the fundamental ethical and legal issues related to information and communication technology
6. Understand the fundamental social, political, and cultural issues related to digital identities in complex networks of information

A number of options exist for the ICT requirement in general education. Appalachian students should be able to demonstrate ICT skills and understanding at increasingly sophisticated levels as they progress through their academic careers. The Task Force recommends establishing a special task force charged with gathering information and designing and carrying out pilot studies prior to making a decision regarding this requirement.

The ICT general education requirement may include these options:

- Require students to pass a proficiency test or successfully complete an introductory level course which addresses basic terminology, fundamental concepts of ICT, and basic skills before the end of the sophomore year
- Require students to complete and pass an online tutorial and test or successfully complete a course before the end of the sophomore year
- Address discipline-specific ICT literacy learning outcomes in seminars or mid-level courses within the majors

A number of ICT assessment options should be studied carefully before implementation:

- National standardized information technology literacy tests, such as the ETS ICT test or the Tex.Xam Assessment Suite, a group of online assessment tools for measuring technology literacy developed by the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges
- EPortfolios which exemplify technological literacy
- Locally developed assessment tests, such as the College of Business test

SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The capstone experience represents the culmination of the university educational experience by linking the content and methods of the major with the goals of general education. Capstone projects provide evidence of how well a student integrates and applies principles, concepts, and abilities.

Common Expectations for Capstone Experiences

1. Each capstone must be at least one-credit hour at the senior level and synthesize the knowledge, approaches, and results from the major discipline with the foundation established in the general education program.
2. Capstone experiences will be conceived, designed, and implemented within academic programs. The appropriate capstone experience will vary from discipline to discipline.
3. The capstone experience will address selected outcomes at the highest levels in at least three of the four general education goals.
4. While capstone projects may be used in the assessment of the general education, departments will determine both the capstone project and the rubric for grading it in the context of the capstone course.
5. Students in the course will be responsible for articulating how they have met all general education goals in their college experience.
6. Oral communication skill development must occur in either the Junior Writing in the Major or the Senior Capstone Experience.

The capstone course should include a writing experience in the major which adds to the conversation of the field. The WAC Program will support departments in developing the writing component of capstone experiences and guidelines for writing in the major. Those departments and programs without a capstone writing experience might require majors to take an advanced writing course in a related program or a proposed course in English which would allow students to write in their majors at a level appropriate to the capstone.

The senior capstone experience will offer an appropriate opportunity for the assessment of various elements of all four goals of the general education curriculum. Students in the capstone experience should produce assessable artifacts (e.g writing, performance, etc.). Traditional portfolios and ePortfolios might provide an opportunity for student reflection on their general education experience. While the opportunity to assess the general education program goals within the capstone experience is appropriate and convenient, it is not the responsibility of this one course to instill all of those skills and areas of knowledge.

Each department or degree program will decide how to implement the capstone for its major(s), whether it is a course, thesis, creative product, or internship. We envision progressive implementation of the capstone requirement, as there are many departments and degree programs that do not yet have such courses or experiences. It will take time for those programs to modify existing courses or initiate courses that meet the requirements described above.

Several forms of senior capstone experiences are already being offered at Appalachian and others will be developed as the new general education curriculum is adopted. Among the more common forms offered at Appalachian and across the nation are senior honors theses, senior seminar courses, internships, and student teaching. Each of those will require somewhat different forms of assessment to ensure attainment of both general education and discipline-specific goals.

PERSPECTIVES

The majority of required credit hours is organized into four integrated, interdisciplinary units called Perspectives: (1) Aesthetic Perspectives, (2) Historical and Social Perspectives, (3) Local to Global Perspectives, and (4) Science Inquiry. Students are required to take a theme (6, 8, or 9 s.h.) from each Perspective. A theme is a set of courses taught by faculty from at least two departments, connected in a systematic and deliberate way and addressing the same topic from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

An exception to interdisciplinary study is allowed for Science Inquiry, because a potentially appropriate way to teach science is through a two-course sequence in a single science discipline. Therefore, Science Inquiry may contain some themes consisting of a sequence of courses from only one discipline. The Task Force, however, urges the development of interdisciplinary themes throughout the curriculum.

The four Perspectives are not conceived as marking bounded disciplinary categories. Many disciplines and courses might fit logically into themes in more than one Perspective. Faculty will have the responsibility of designing themes and associated courses so that they fit the selected Perspective. Many departments will find that they can propose coursework to fit multiple Perspectives. There are many opportunities for creativity and interdisciplinary collaboration in the new general education program.

Students would be required to take one theme in each of the four Perspectives. In order to accumulate 29 s.h., a student would have to take 8 s.h. in Science Inquiry and one 9 s.h. theme and two 6 s.h. themes from the other three Perspectives. Some students might opt to take more than the minimum required hours. If a student starts a theme and decides to switch to another, the student must complete all required coursework in the new theme.

THEMES

Themes will be developed by interdisciplinary faculty committees and have a multi-year renewable lifespan, with possible multi-year faculty appointments to the general education curriculum. This will allow faculty members to teach a course multiple times and would aid departmental planning and advisor training. The multi-year approach will also allow for experimentation and responsiveness to changing world issues.

Themes must be proposed as 6, 8, or 9 semester hour requirements. Themes must include enough courses and instructors to ensure that students electing the theme can complete their coursework in a timely way.

Themes might achieve integration in a variety of ways. First and foremost, integration will require that faculty teaching in the theme meet regularly to share information and discuss options for integration. Options could include team teaching, learning communities, sequential courses, writing consultants linked with multiple courses, discussion sections paired with a lecture series, etc.

In keeping with the vertical nature of the new general education model, we envision the possibility that some themes might be based on upper-division general education courses appealing to special student constituencies.

In order to ensure integration across the courses in a theme, we recommend that themes be limited to a maximum of 5 courses. Along the same lines, we recommend that a course might be integrated into a maximum of 2 themes. No course may be counted more than once in a student's choice of 29 s.h. in the Perspectives.

The following **hypothetical** examples (including some invented courses) represent possible themes and means of course integration:

Aesthetic Perspectives

1. Creative Expression around the World (9 s.h.)

- ENG "World Literature"
- ENG "World Folklore"
- THR "World Theatre"
- MUS "World Music"

Students would take three courses (not necessarily concurrently). Faculty would agree to align their syllabi so that they focus on the same cultures (e.g. Russian, Israeli, Nigerian, Indian, and Native American). The faculty would refer to the content of the other cultures within lectures in order to place all cultural forms within their broader cultural contexts. Faculty would work to tie cultural programming to the theme.

2. Design in American Culture (6 s.h.)

- ART/TEC "Design in American Culture" (6 s.h.)

This would be a 6 hour course team-taught by an art professor and a technology professor. It would meet for five hours per week in two consecutive course blocks (e.g. 9:30 am -12:15 pm).

Historical & Social Perspectives

1. Immigrant Experience in the USA (9 s.h.)

- HIS "A History of U.S. Immigration"
- REL "Islam in America"
- SOC "Hispanic Americans in Contemporary U.S."

The HIS class logically comes first in the theme, providing a survey of immigration in the USA. The other two classes examine specific ethnic and religious immigrant groups. In this theme, integration is further provided by the invitation of a guest speaker to campus each year, complementing the three courses. In the first year, for example, the guest speaker might give a presentation on Muslim American immigrants, and the REL class could incorporate a writing assignment on the topic.

2. Science, Technology, and American Society (6 s.h. sequence)

- HIS "Major Scientific Discoveries of 20th/21st Centuries"
- BIO/CJ "DNA, the Courts & Punishment"

In this theme, students would first take the HIS course for a broad introduction to the history of science. The BIO/CJ course is team-taught by faculty from the two departments, providing an examination of the extraordinary significance of the discovery of DNA transcription for the US criminal justice system.

Science Inquiry

1. General Education Chemistry (8 s.h.)
 - CHE “General Education Chemistry I”
 - CHE “General Education Chemistry II”

This theme consists of a sequence of courses designed to educate non-chemistry majors about general knowledge in chemistry by exploring contemporary scientific questions and findings.

2. Evolution (8 s.h.)
 - BIO “Evolutionary Processes” (required)
 - ANT “Human Evolution”
 - GLY “Paleontology and Evolution”

This theme focuses on the theory of evolution approached from different scientific disciplines. The BIO course would be required initially of all students. It could approach the topic from a broad overview, using an historical approach to put the theory into context with other disciplines. Students could then continue an investigation of the evolutionary process through either a geological perspective (GLY) or a specific focus on the human species (ANT).

Local to Global Perspective

1. Global Sustainability Transition (9 s.h.)
 - PHY “Global Climate Change”
 - SD “Sustainable Choices and the Environment”
 - SOC “Social Consequences of Environmental Change”
 - TEC “Alternative Energies and Technologies”

This theme consists of four courses; students would take three of the four to complete the theme. Integration of this theme will be especially challenging, as students will likely take the courses over a span of two semesters. That integration will occur primarily through the sophomore writing course, which will be taken concurrently with two of the courses during the fall semester. The third course in the theme will be taken during the spring semester. During that time, a writing consultant will help faculty and students build on what was learned in the prior semester. Further integration will occur through the coordination of courses by the instructors.

2. Brazil: The Land and People (6 s.h.)
 - GHY “Cultural and Physical Geography of Brazil”
 - POR “Intermediate Portuguese”

This theme could be delivered in at least three configurations. First, it could be conceived as a summer study abroad program where students would take an intermediate Portuguese course on location in Brazil concurrently with the GHY course. This theme could also be delivered as two concurrent courses on campus in a more traditional format. A third option would be to have students take the Portuguese course on campus before taking the 3 s.h. GHY course on location in Brazil. The integration occurs in the connections between the language and culture and the course.

The Task Force recommends the following guidelines for themes in each of the four Perspectives. In each case, it is the theme as a whole that must meet these guidelines by proposing an integrated set of coursework. In other words, each course in the theme may not meet all the guidelines, but the set of courses as a whole must fulfill all the guidelines.

Theme Design Guidelines: Aesthetic Perspectives

Aesthetic interpretation and creative expression are fundamental human activities. In this Perspective, students develop their reflective engagement with the creative process by interacting with a variety of forms of creative expression, interpreting forms of creative expression through various paradigms, and developing their ability to identify the processes through which meanings are produced and interpreted.

Aesthetic Perspectives themes will enable students to

1. Identify and describe the emotional, intellectual, psychological, and/or kinesthetic effects of their interactions with various forms of creative expression
2. Analyze the structural components of various forms of creative expression
3. Interpret forms of creative expression within various theoretical frameworks
4. Analyze how products of creative expression reflect, respond to, and shape their social, religious, political, and/or intellectual contexts
5. Analyze how cultural and personal aesthetic criteria affect the processes of creation and interpretation

Theme Design Guidelines: Historical and Social Perspectives

Themes in this Perspective are designed to explore social phenomena in their respective historical contexts and are expected to challenge students by employing a variety of pedagogies. Concurrently, themes in this Perspective are expected to equip students with the intellectual tools that are essential for sophisticated analyses of a broad range of social, cultural, behavioral, economic, and political issues.

Historical & Social Perspectives themes will enable students to

1. Assess primary and secondary sources and synthesize knowledge within appropriate historical, cultural, and social contexts
2. Identify, conceptualize and evaluate social, cultural, economic, and political processes and to understand and explain human behavior
3. Promote an understanding of these processes in historical and cultural context and assist students in formulating and articulating, orally and in writing, the methodologies that they employ

4. Examine individuals' relationships with one another and with their environments and societies, as well as examine relationships between social institutions

Theme Design Guidelines: Local to Global Perspectives

Recognizing the growing significance of an interconnected world, Appalachian's general education program encourages meaningful connections between local regions and global contexts. Knowledge of other cultures, diverse cultural frames of reference, and alternative perspectives is essential to thinking critically and creatively and to understanding the responsibilities of membership in local, regional, and global communities. The cultivation and maintenance of intercultural relationships require active cultural understanding, which is achieved by exploring multiple strategies for interacting with other peoples and cultures.

Local to Global Perspectives Themes are based on the General Education Task Force's Educational Goal "Local to Global Connections" which has the following five learning outcomes (see Appendix 1).

Local to Global Perspectives themes will enable students to

1. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems
2. Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures

AND to do at least one of the following:

3. Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world
4. Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment
5. Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability

Implementation guidelines:

- Themes must address at least three of the learning outcomes. Individual courses may address only one or two of the learning outcomes.
- Linkages between study abroad or international experiences and other courses in the theme should be clear. Academic advisors should encourage study abroad and international experiences as part of this perspective and help freshmen plan for study abroad, which often occurs during junior year.
- The themes in "Local to Global Perspectives" would logically encourage language study as a complement to any of the desired learning outcomes (whether those outcomes are met on campus or abroad). Local to Global Perspectives themes that include study abroad programs or courses abroad should include language prerequisites when appropriate.

Theme Design Guidelines: Science Inquiry

Science encompasses our knowledge about the physical world. The process of gaining this knowledge involves a systematic method of inquiry called the scientific method.

This involves the recognition and formulation of a problem, collection of data through observation and experimentation, development and testing of hypotheses and presentation of results. Measurements are typically made and the findings expressed mathematically. Whatever the approach, it is important that results be validated. The outcomes of scientific endeavors are theories and paradigms that scientists can debate and continue to research.

The study of science educates students in the difference between knowledge that is presented as fact, with little or no verification, and knowledge that is generated and validated based on rigorous testing. In scientific study, questions are never fully answered and indeed should lead to more in-depth investigations into complex phenomena. Science is not absolute; rather, scientists produce models and data that are then subject to discourse and debate.

Themes designed to teach the process of science should enable students to

1. Gain knowledge about the physical world and an understanding of scientific methodology
2. Investigate questions through inquiry-based pedagogy that involves experimentation and inferential analysis
3. Interpret scientific information where a synthesis of ideas is achieved
4. Use quantitative and mathematical concepts, especially data presented in graphical or tabular form, to interpret results
5. Discuss scientific findings and examine the nature of contemporary scientific debates

COURSES IN THEMES

In addition to these guidelines, courses in themes will have to specify the general education goals and learning outcomes to be achieved (see **Appendix 1**). No course is expected to address all four goals, much less all 21 learning outcomes.

COURSE DESIGNATIONS

Reflecting our belief that general education must be anchored in “the ideals and practices of liberal education,” general education requirements include one course each in the fine arts, historical studies, and literary studies. These courses must be situated in themes in the four Perspectives. These designations are not conceived as anchored in and bounded by particular departments, since faculty with expertise in related disciplines might be located in various departments. The Task Force recommends the following guidelines for courses with these designations.

Course Design Guidelines: Fine Arts Designation

Courses that meet the Fine Arts designation will:

1. Develop interpretive skills and aesthetic discernment by closely examining individual works of art
2. Analyze the relationship between specific works of art and their historical, cultural, and/or artistic contexts
3. Analyze the structural components and composition of various works of art

4. Examine the creative process as exemplified by the distinct processes of various artists
5. Create artistic products and/or attend live performances or visual art exhibitions

Course Design Guidelines: Historical Studies Designation

Courses that meet the Historical Studies designation will:

1. Introduce students to historical methodology, the process by which one locates, evaluates, and utilizes primary documents and other evidence to reconstruct and understand the past
2. Provide an understanding of historiography, or the study of the way history has been written. Students should understand that historical perspective changes with generations and that historical understandings and perspectives continue to evolve. Students should learn to reconcile multiple and competing perspectives.
3. Offer historical perspective to contextualize contemporary issues, and thus help students appreciate the continuum between past and present in order to understand the complexity and richness of the human experience
4. Offer a critical assessment of the manner in which humans have politically, socially, and culturally occupied space across time

Course Design Guidelines: Literary Studies Designation

Courses that meet the Literary Studies designation will:

1. Introduce students to the analytical and interpretive strategies of literary studies
2. Analyze the structural components and composition of various literary and cultural texts
3. Help students appreciate and interpret the language/linguistic artistry, the rhetoric, and/or the aesthetics of literary texts.
4. Identify and examine relevant contextual factors that influence the composition and reception of literary or other cultural texts

Approaches to Teaching and Learning in General Education

The Task Force advocates a number of changes in the way coursework is delivered in the new general education curriculum. Students will be required to take a number of small-size seminars in writing and communication skills. Other coursework will be delivered in a variety of ways, and large-size classes will clearly be a part of general education. It will be incumbent on the new administration in charge of general education to facilitate development of the most effective environments and strategies for teaching and learning.

Based on the growing evidence of their benefits, the Task Force encourages the development of the following best practices for teaching and learning:

- The use of active learning pedagogies
- The development of learning communities

- The support of international experiences and global learning
- The integration of learning experiences outside the traditional classroom

Finally, several new components in our model of general education will require additional faculty development support. We make a number of resource recommendations in this regard.

ACTIVE LEARNING PEDAGOGY

Active learning engages the learner in participating directly in tasks related to the learning outcomes with instructional facilitation. The key to active learning is the dynamic involvement of students in their learning process. Teachers facilitate the challenges, encourage risk taking, and provide context. An active learning process might be in the form of reflective writing, researching, presenting, or discussing.

One way to actively engage students is through Inquiry Based Learning (IBL), which will reinforce learning outcome IV3 (collaboration in inquiry and problem-solving) of the General Education Goals. Problem Based Learning (PBL) is one inquiry based method. In PBL, students are presented with a relevant, real world problem and must follow through a series of steps that will enable them to integrate (organize, synthesize, and communicate) new knowledge with known knowledge to pose a possible solution to the problem. There should be ample time allowed to assess, correct, and re-synthesize knowledge between steps. Ideally, PBL will be incorporated into small groups and classes such as seminars and laboratories. Service learning, learning communities, and co-curricular activities can also provide opportunities for active learning.

Some challenges of this method include student discomfort with the PBL format, the requirement of group work, and teacher discomfort with a nontraditional teaching strategy. We recommend ample faculty training and support for those who wish to employ various active learning techniques. In general education, students will be introduced to the concept of Inquiry Based Learning in First Year Seminar, so they might be comfortable with the process at more advanced levels.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Learning communities are based on the premise of enrolling groups of students in a common set of thematically or substantively linked courses. Malnarich et al. (2003) define learning communities as “a variety of approaches to curricular reform that departs from the usual pattern of teachers teaching separate classes in separate subjects to separate groups of students. Learning communities link or cluster classes during a given term, often around an interdisciplinary theme or question, and enroll a common cohort of students. This represents an intentional restructuring of students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students, among students and their teachers, and to build curricular connections” (2003:37). The themes in the new general education model’s Perspectives are designed to operate as learning communities. A significant number of First Year Seminars will also be paired with another course as learning communities.

The Task Force believes that faculty members’ participation in learning communities should be encouraged and that involvement must be recognized in the faculty rewards

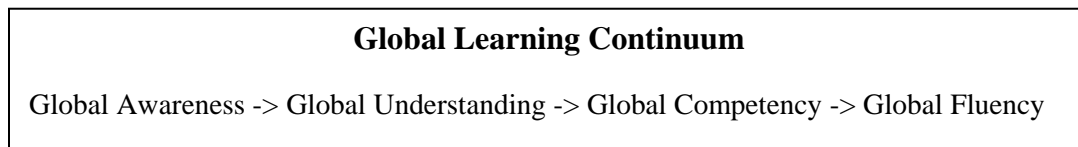
and evaluation systems. Institutional grants should be provided for creating new and innovative learning communities. Workshops, retreats, and faculty meetings should be provided to demonstrate ways of teaching effectively and maximizing student learning within learning communities. Learning community faculty should meet regularly to discuss ideas about themes, common assignments, events, and student participation and progress. Email discussion lists, websites, and other electronic resources should be available to support learning community faculty development. Faculty should use student mentors or instructional assistants when possible.

Learning communities will require significant administrative support. Funding and resources for learning communities should come from many administrative units, including both Academic Affairs and Student Development. Leadership teams for learning communities could include faculty, staff, academic advisors, peer mentors, residence life staff, etc.

GLOBAL LEARNING

According to the American Council on Education, global learning includes all curricular and co-curricular efforts that increase students' awareness of the world in which they live by exposing them to the diverse heritage of human thought, action, and creativity. Global learning emphasizes the changes in communication and relationships among people throughout the world, through the lenses of human conflict, economic systems, human rights and social justice, commonality and diversity, literatures and cultures, and the impact of the technological revolution. Through interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies, global learning can foster understanding and creative solutions aimed at solving human and environmental problems. This approach should not be limited to the "Local to Global Perspectives," but should permeate each component of the general education curriculum and extend into the majors.

The Task Force endorses the idea of a vertical model of curricular and co-curricular options supporting students as they move along a global learning continuum from global awareness and exploration of other cultures to cultural practice and heightened awareness of various approaches to direct communication with people from other cultures. Global fluency might best be accomplished through international studies.



Upon their arrival at Appalachian, students in consultation with their academic advisors should be encouraged to assess themselves along the Global Learning Continuum and design a plan that guides them toward achieving global fluency, either during their academic careers at Appalachian or through lifelong learning opportunities. In addition, faculty teaching global learning classes should assess placement of those classes along the continuum.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a scan of existing courses in the curriculum to determine whether there are sufficient numbers of courses at each level to afford our students the opportunity to reach the highest levels of Global Competency or Global Fluency within the constraints of a 4-year degree. Gaps in the course inventory should be addressed at the appropriate college and/or departmental level.
- Develop a program in Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) that complements an integrated approach to global learning by providing the opportunity to integrate language and culture into the disciplines across the curriculum. For example, a history course might include discussion sessions taught in a target language.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

The Task Force acknowledges the importance of co-curricular and other learning experiences outside the traditional classroom in students' undergraduate education. The proposed model does not require specific experiences; however, the Task Force strongly urges the faculty and the administration of the general education program to include co-curricular and other experiences as a necessary part of general education. International study abroad, service learning, and experiential learning activities such as the UNC in Washington program are examples of ways in which learning takes place beyond the university and often under the supervision of both faculty and non-faculty. Other examples of co-curricular opportunities for students to apply their developing skills and knowledge include events sponsored by the Office of Arts and Cultural Programming, the Summer Reading Program, and lectures by guest speakers on campus.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

As part of a large, newly formed administrative unit of Appalachian, the University College structure housing the General Education curriculum will play a large role in the teaching lives of many of our faculty. As such, it will also require a number of initiatives to support and develop innovative pedagogies, interdisciplinary cross-fertilization and assessment at the program level, among others. The unit largely responsible for preparing the faculty to perform many of these functions will be the newly reorganized and supported Hubbard Center for Faculty Development.

Both the Faculty Evaluation and Development Task Force and the Faculty Evaluation and Development Subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Commission are working on ways to aid the transition to the new General Education curriculum. Both groups are addressing the needs of both current and newly hired faculty in making the connections at the Hubbard Center and elsewhere on campus to learn about opportunities and interests among colleagues that will be helpful in preparing faculty for participation in the themes that will comprise General Education beginning in Fall 2009.

Increased support for faculty development has been called for in many areas of this report:

- Writing across the curriculum (WAC)
- Oral communication

- Problem Based Learning
- First Year Seminar development
- Theme-development opportunities in the Perspectives in 2007-8

Summer Faculty Grants

In September, 2006, the Task Force announced a \$40,000 initiative funded by the Provost to begin developing the new general education curriculum. In January, 2007, we selected the 20 recipients representing 17 departments (see **Appendix 5**). These grants will fund work in math and the sciences, the social sciences, wellness, the humanities, and the arts. Recipients will enter their syllabi and course assessment data on our website to serve as models for the campus.

Next year, we urge the new general education administration to develop another round of grants that will encourage the development of themes in the four perspectives of the model.

TRANSFER STUDENTS/TRANSFER CREDIT

The Task Force recognizes the challenge posed by incorporation of transfer students into the new general education program. We acknowledge the North Carolina Articulation Agreement that exists with cooperating colleges. The Task Force recommends that a committee be formed to prepare for the questions posed by students who transfer into Appalachian. This committee might also deal with the questions that exist with regard to AP, CLEP, and IB credit and the required general education curriculum.

Administration

The new general education curriculum is complicated and interconnected and will require a new form of administration. Plans are already in motion to form a University College in part for this purpose. The Task Force is particularly determined to ensure that instruction in general education has strong institutional support.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND GENERAL EDUCATION

The Task Force recommends that the general education program be administered within a new administrative unit called University College (see Diagram 2). The University College would be led by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

The program will be overseen by the General Education Council and administered by a fulltime EPA Director as well as an Assistant Director of General Education and a half-time reassigned Faculty Coordinator of General Education (see Diagram 3). Several faculty committees will be appointed to approve designations for courses in fine arts, historical studies, and literary studies and to approve themes for the four Perspectives. The development and approval process for general education courses and themes will be faculty-led.

The General Education Council, chaired by the Faculty Coordinator, will be composed of the following 20 individuals:

- a. Faculty Coordinator of General Education (1)
- b. Chairs of the Perspectives committees (4)
- c. Chairs of the Fine Arts, Historical Studies, and Literary Studies committees (3)
- d. Chairs of Quantitative Literacy, Wellness, and Information and Communication Technology committees (3)
- e. First Year Seminar coordinator (1)
- a. EPA General Education Director and Assistant Director (2)
- f. WAC Coordinator (1)
- g. Liaisons for assessment, advising, and the library (3)
- h. Liaison from Student General Education Advisory Board (1)
- i. Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (1, non-voting ex-officio)

The Council will provide vision for the general education program. It will discuss policy, make recommendations to AP&P (it could have a curriculum subcommittee), and, making use of assessment data, plan for the future.

The Faculty Coordinator of General Education will be appointed by the Provost, who will probably seek nominations and applications from the faculty. The Faculty Coordinator will be reassigned half-time to handle responsibilities in general education.

The Coordinator's responsibilities will include these duties:

1. With the General Education Council, coordination of the academic program, including quality and appropriateness of perspective themes and the first-year seminar
2. Coordination of the faculty committees and convening the General Education Council
3. Recruitment of faculty to teach in general education
4. Coordination of academic issues with departments (capstones, relation to major, etc.)
5. Coordination with the EPA General Education Director on planning and troubleshooting

Faculty members will constitute membership of the committees administering components of general education. Committees will consist of three to five faculty members, with no more than two faculty members from any one department on a committee of five and no more than one faculty member from any one department on a committee of three.

Proposed Gen Ed Administration

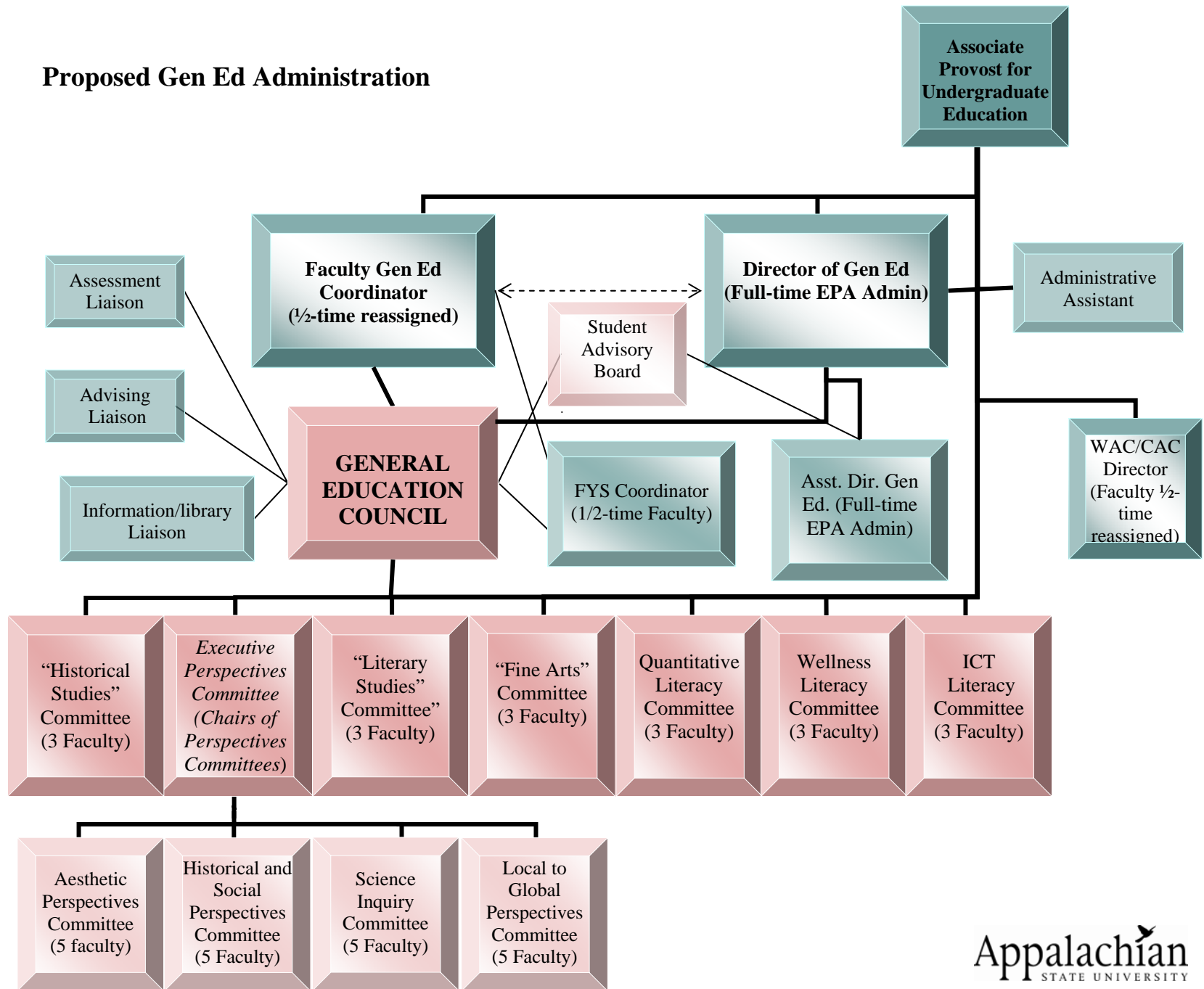


Diagram 2 – Proposed General Education Administration

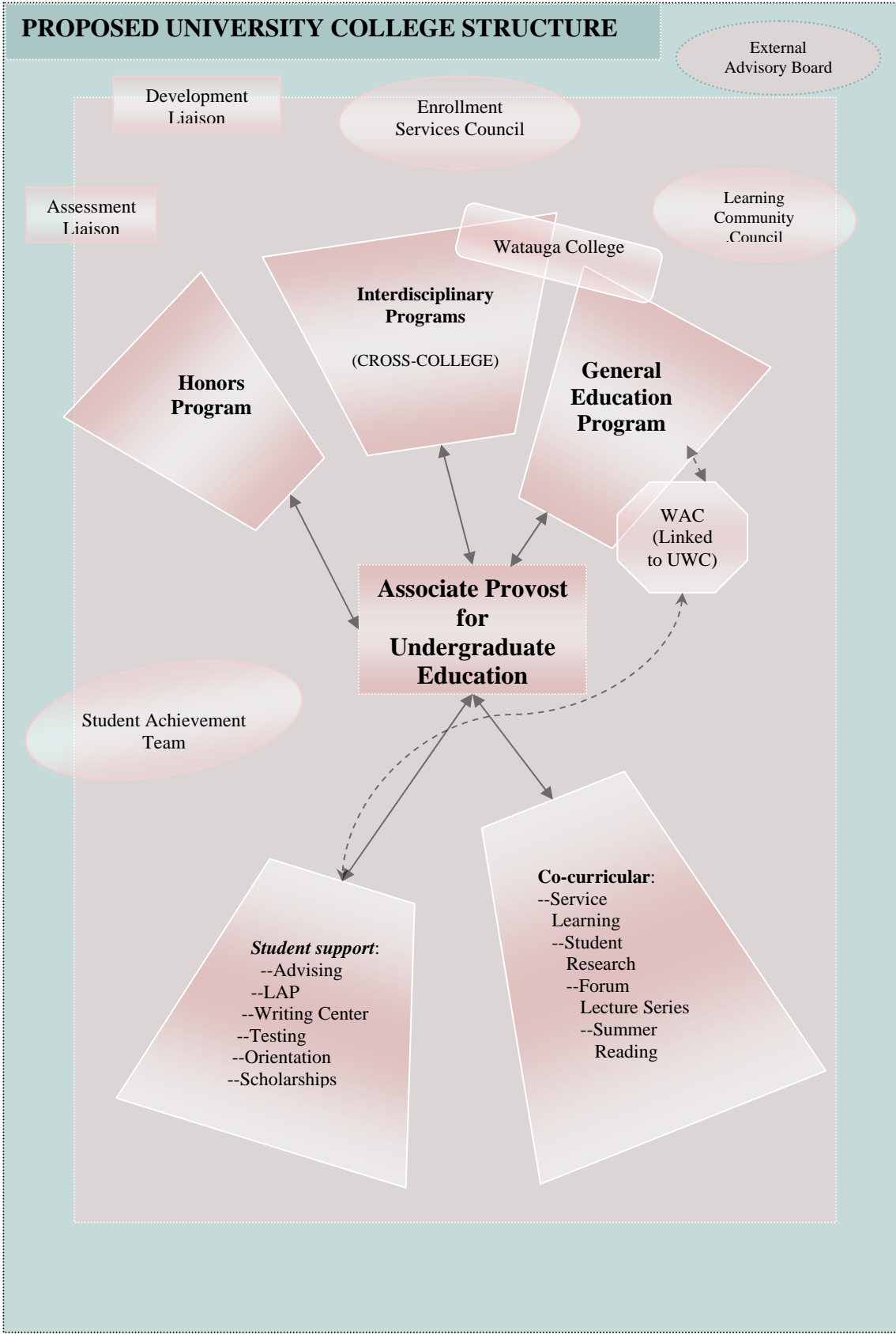


Diagram 3 – Proposed University College Structure

These committees will be responsible for these aspects of general education:

1. First Year Seminar (3 members)
2. Fine Arts, Historical Studies, and Literary Studies Committees (3 members each)
3. Aesthetic Perspectives, Historical and Social Perspectives, Local to Global Perspectives, and Science Inquiry Committees (5 members each)
4. Quantitative Literacy (3 members)
5. Wellness Literacy (3 members)
6. Information and Communication Technology Literacy (3 members)

Members of faculty committees will initially be nominated by the General Education Task Force and departments and deans, and initially appointed by the Associate Provost, Director of General Education, and Faculty Coordinator. Afterward they will be nominated by departments and deans and appointed or approved by the General Education Council. Committee chairs (to coordinate meetings and serve on the next level committee) will be elected by the committee.

Faculty members will serve 3-year terms on committees (staggered at first with 1- 2- and 3-year terms).

The Perspectives committees will need an executive committee, since there will likely be overlap among the Perspectives (courses might fit into themes in more than one perspective).

The current approval process for new courses will be preserved. New courses will go up the approval chain to AP&P. Matters that are more strictly general education related, such as approval of course designations (Fine Arts, Historical Studies, Literary Studies), course requirements (First Year Seminar, Writing (First, Second and Junior Year), Quantitative, Wellness, Information and Communication Technology, Senior Capstone), and themes in the four Perspectives will be approved at the level of the General Education Council. The General Education Council will hear appeals of any denial of approval at lower committee levels.

The EPA Director of General Education will be responsible for day-to-day administration of the program, and will report directly to the Associate Provost. The EPA Assistant Director will assist the Director and be responsible for handling special projects such as learning community links, coordination of First Year Seminar events, etc. Graduate assistants will be assigned as needed to the general education program.

The EPA Director of General Education's responsibilities will include these activities:

1. Directing the daily operations, staff, and budget of the General Education Program
2. Monitoring General Education curricular components for demand analysis and seat availability
3. Ensuring that informational materials are accurate and that communication about general education is effective and timely
4. Serving on relevant committees within the University College and across campus
5. Advising the Student General Education Advisory Board

6. Serving as the General Education liaison with the Registrar's Office for curriculum delivery, including models such as learning communities, intensive study abroad experiences, embedded modules in themes, etc.
7. Partnering closely with the Faculty Coordinator of General Education in implementing, planning for, and encouraging the overall success of the General Education Program

NON-TENURE TRACK FACULTY

General Education courses at Appalachian, particularly in the Composition Program in English, are often taught by non-tenure track faculty (NTT faculty). While we hope to see more tenure track faculty teaching in general education, we see general education reform as an opportunity for the university to invest in NTT faculty teaching in general education by improving their working conditions and the programs they teach in.

In 2002, the UNC Board of Governors issued a report on its recommendations for improving the working conditions of NTT faculty, including recognition of teaching load, provision of benefits and continuing contracts, and opportunities for faculty development (see http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/UNC_NTT_Fac_Report_20021.pdf). In 2006, Appalachian's NTT Faculty Committee recommended that the university invest in NTT faculty, and as a result the university recognized the work of thirty-nine NTT faculty who had taught at $\frac{3}{4}$ teaching loads for three or more years by moving them to $\frac{3}{4}$ positions with benefits (see http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/NTTF_Report1.pdf).

We endorse the proposals of the UNC Board of Governors and Appalachian's NTT Faculty Committee. Large-scale employment of contingent faculty is not in the best interests of students or faculty involved in the general education program. We recommend that Appalachian adopt a policy of hiring NTT faculty in fulltime positions with benefits and continuing contracts with opportunities for faculty development and full participation in the work of the university.

Assessment

The purpose of program assessment is to determine if students are achieving the predetermined learning outcomes of the program. If there is no measurable evidence that students are achieving the goals and outcomes at an acceptable level, the curriculum of the program will be examined closely to determine where appropriate changes need to be made.

For the purpose of assessment, general education will be treated as a separate academic program. As a program, general education will have its own assessment plan and follow the same process of assessment planning and reporting as other academic programs (see Appalachian's *Developing a Program Assessment Plan*). Assessment of general education will focus on the general education *program*, not individual students, courses, or faculty members.

PRELIMINARY EXPECTATIONS

- Direct evidence (which requires students to demonstrate achievement of an outcome) will be utilized for general education assessment whenever possible
- Multiple measures will be used to assess each outcome
- Whenever possible, assessment measures will be integrated into regular graded class work to eliminate need for special assessment sessions (such as our former Focus Day) and help with the problem of student motivation
- An assessment cycle will be established for general education: every outcome need not be assessed every year
- Only a sample of students will be used for assessment
- Rubrics will be created for the assessed outcomes to guide the evaluation of student work
- Assessment approaches will include both criterion referenced (focused on students' achievement of an objective criterion) and value-added (focused on measuring how students have changed over time)
- The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education will approve assessment plans in regard to focus and rigor

STRUCTURE

An Assessment Advisory Group for General Education will be assembled to provide oversight for the assessment of the general education program. This group will be responsible for determining the reasonable evidence needed to determine the level of attainment of the goals of general education, consulting with appropriate faculty in the development of assessment rubrics and other instruments, and disseminating assessment data to the key decision makers for the general education program. A curriculum map will show the links between the goals and outcomes and the curricular components of general education. The Assessment Advisory Group will use this map to determine courses from which to collect student work that pertains to the outcome to be assessed.

The purpose of a curriculum map is to identify where within the general education curriculum each learning outcome is addressed (see **Table 2**). To ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve every outcome, the matrix below shows the minimal general education learning outcomes that should be addressed by each general education curricular component. We recommend that the curriculum map be revisited each year to determine if any revisions need to be made and to ensure that there are not any gaps in the curriculum. The curriculum map is also an important tool for assessment. Those charged with assessment of general education will look to the map for guidance in identifying appropriate time points for conducting assessment activities and in identifying courses for collecting samples of student work relative to a particular learning outcome.

The Assessment Advisory Group for General Education should consist of the Director of General Education, the Faculty Coordinator of General Education, the General Education Assessment Liaison, and one faculty member from each of the general education curricular components (First Year Seminar, Writing Across the Curriculum, Quantitative Literacy, Wellness Literacy, Information & Communication Technology Literacy, Aesthetic Perspectives, Historical and Social Perspectives, Local to Global Perspectives, Science Inquiry, Fine Arts, Historical Studies, and Literary Studies). Initially, faculty

members of the Assessment Advisory Group would serve a term of two or three years to avoid complete turnover in any given year. All subsequent faculty appointments would be two years.

PROCESS

Currently, a university group is investigating software options which will make the process of reporting, sharing, and using assessment information as efficient as possible. We recommend that assessment software not only be used for reporting assessment plans and results, but also as a repository for the collection of artifacts or portfolios. A repository such as this would allow for assignments in general education courses to be tagged for the appropriate learning outcome and deposited into the system for future review. For example, students in First Year Writing, Sophomore Writing, Junior Writing in the Major, and the Senior Capstone courses might be asked to maintain a writing ePortfolio. With the help of professors in the selection of appropriate writing assignments, the student would upload writing samples into the portfolio database repository. This would allow students the opportunity to reflect on the development of their writing throughout their undergraduate careers and would provide samples of student work for assessment purposes. The WAC Program will develop standards, in conjunction with the majors, to assess student writing in ePortfolios.

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM MAP-TABLE 2

The purpose of a curriculum map is to identify where within the general education curriculum each learning outcome is addressed. To ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve every outcome, the matrix below shows the minimal general education learning outcomes that should be addressed by each general education curricular component. We recommend that the curriculum map be revisited each year to determine if any revisions need to be made and to ensure that there are not any gaps in the curriculum. The curriculum map is also an important tool for assessment. Those charged with assessment of general education will look to the map for guidance in identifying appropriate time points for conducting assessment activities and in identifying courses for collecting samples of student work relative to a particular learning outcome.

Learning Outcomes	General Education Curricular Components										
	First Year Seminar	Quantitative Literacy	Wellness Literacy	ICT Literacy	Freshman Writing	Sophomore Writing	Junior Writing	Historical and Social Perspectives	Aesthetic Perspectives	Science Inquiry	*Local to Global Perspectives
Goal 1: Thinking critically and creatively											
A. Recognize, differentiate, and effectively employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated strategies to collect and interpret information	X			X	X	X	X	X			
B. Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
C. Examine and evaluate how their own personal, historical, and cultural perspectives affect the discovery and generation of knowledge	X				X			X	X		
D. Construct persuasive arguments in increasingly complex contexts		X			X	X	X				
E. Apply theories from a variety of disciplines and advance convincing reasons to connect as well as differentiate theories from different domains of knowledge.	X					X		X	X		
Goal 2: Communicating Effectively											
A. Articulate and comprehend effectively, using verbal or non-verbal communication suitable to topic, purpose, and audience	X				X	X	X		X	X	
B. Use writing effectively to discover and develop ideas and to articulate positions in contexts of increasing complexity	X				X	X	X				
C. Make rhetorical decisions appropriate to topic, purpose, and audience while correctly using the conventions of standard written English					X	X	X				
D. Determine the scope of information needed in specific research contexts and successfully identify, locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information from various media				X	X	X	X				
E. Read actively and analytically at the college level and synthesize and apply information and ideas from their reading across disciplines						X	X	X			
F. Know, apply, and communicate college-level quantitative concepts and methods		X								X	
G. Select and use hardware, software applications, databases, and other technologies effectively for both inquiry and communication		X		X	X	X	X				

Table 2 – General Education Curriculum Map

Learning Outcomes	General Education Curricular Components										
	First Year Seminar	Quantitative Literacy	Wellness Literacy	ICT Literacy	Freshman Writing	Sophomore Writing	Junior Writing	Historical and Social Perspectives	Aesthetic Perspectives	Science Inquiry	*Local to Global Perspectives
Goal 3: Making Local to Global Connections											
A. Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment										X	x
B. Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability										X	x
C. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems								X			X
D. Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world								X	X		x
E. Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures				X							X
Goal 4: Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership											
A. Identify potential consequences that personal choices as well as political, economic, and other social forces may have on individual, societal, and environmental health			X					X			
B. Apply moral reasoning skills to an array of ethical issues confronted by individuals, groups, and communities								X			
C. Collaborate effectively with others in shared processes of inquiry and problem solving	X	X			X	X	X			X	
D. Apply principles of responsible community membership within and beyond the campus community					X	X	X				

Table 2 – General Education Curriculum Map, cont.

Conclusion

This report completes the work of the Task Force.

Several aspects of the general education curriculum remain to be addressed:

- Specific incorporation of oral communication in general education
- Determination of the Information and Communication Literacy component
- Investigation of further ways to incorporate global learning
- Determination of ways to incorporate Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum
- Investigation of better ways to incorporate learning outside the traditional classroom
- Determination of ways to better incorporate programs offered through the Office of Arts and Cultural Programming in general education
- Recommendations concerning transfer students and transfer credit

Members of the Task Force attended and found helpful the week-long Institute on General Education in May, 2006, led by the American Association of Colleges & Universities. The Task Force urges the new general education administrative leaders to attend the Institute in 2008.

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GLOSSARY

Active learning: The engagement of the learner in participating directly in tasks related to the learning outcomes with instructional facilitation.

Artifact: A product of a student's work that may provide evidence of student achievement.

Assessment: The systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning.

Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC): An integrated emphasis on speaking and writing in general education and the disciplines.

Criterion referenced assessment: Assessment focused on students' achievement of an objectively defined criterion.

Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC): A program that facilitates global learning across the curriculum by providing the opportunity to integrate languages and cultures into the disciplines. For example, sections of a history course might include discussion sections taught in a target language other than English (e.g. Spanish or French). References include programs at UNC Chapel Hill (<http://www.unc.edu/areastudies/degreeprograms/lac.html>) or Binghamton University (<http://lxc.binghamton.edu/>).

Educational goal: A broad statement meant to relate the educational aims of a program stated in terms of what the program wants students to know or do.

EPortfolio: An electronic collection of a student's artifacts selected for student reflection which can serve as a resource for the student's further education and career investment.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy: The ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and networks appropriately to solve information problems in order to function in an information society.

Information Literacy: The ability to evaluate information across a range of media, recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, synthesize, and use information effectively, with print and electronic media.

Learning outcome: A concise description of what students will be able to do as a result of participating in a program.

Liberal education: The term liberal education traces its history to John Henry Newman's *The Idea of the University* (1852) in which it refers to education in which the mind "is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its highest culture" instead of "being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science." The term has been taken

up in the 20th and 21st centuries by organizations such as the AAC&U to refer to “a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement” (<http://www.aacu.org/issues/liberaleducation/index.cfm>).

Literacy: The acquisition of knowledge in a particular subject or area of activity, an understanding of the process of acquiring that knowledge, and an understanding of the application of that knowledge.

Perspectives: Integrated, interdisciplinary curricular units organized into themes. An exception is Science Inquiry which may contain some themes consisting of a sequence of courses from only one discipline.

Portfolio: A collection of a student’s work that may provide evidence of student achievement.

Problem Based Learning (PBL): This is an inquiry based method of teaching and learning in which students are presented with a relevant, real world problem and must follow through a series of steps that will enable them to integrate (organize, synthesize, and communicate) new knowledge with known knowledge to pose a possible solution to the problem.

Quantitative Literacy: The development of reasoning skills needed to make judgments based on quantitative information. Quantitative literacy is not a set of elementary technical skills, but a knowledge base that will give students the ability to analyze, synthesize, and represent quantitative information from real-life problems and experiential data.

Rubric: A scoring tool developed to help evaluate a piece of work by providing a specific set of criteria to be rated and what is needed to achieve each level of performance (from poor to excellent) for each criterion.

Theme: A set of courses, taught by faculty from at least two departments, which are connected in a deliberate and systematic way and address the same topic from multiple disciplinary perspectives. An exception is found in Science Inquiry which may contain some themes consisting of a sequence of courses from only one discipline.

Value-added assessment: Assessment focused on measuring how students have changed over time.

Wellness Literacy: The ability to read, understand, assess, and act on health and wellness information.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC): Is an approach to writing, based on process theory, which prepares students to write and to use writing to learn in several university contexts.

Writing in the Disciplines (WID): An approach to writing instruction that helps students learn about the conventions of writing in a particular field.

APPENDIX 1 - GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

General Education Task Force
Approved October 3, 2006

GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

MISSION STATEMENT

General education at Appalachian is anchored in the ideals and practices of liberal education and is designed to prepare students to fulfill the responsibilities and meet the challenges presented by a changing world. By engaging in the discovery, interpretation, and creation of knowledge throughout the undergraduate curriculum and becoming involved in educationally focused co-curricular activities, students learn to adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from diverse sources, and continue learning throughout their lives. Recognizing the growing significance of an interconnected world, Appalachian's general education program also encourages meaningful connections between local regions, especially in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, and global contexts.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Appalachian's general education program prepares students for

- I. Thinking critically and creatively**
- II. Communicating effectively**
- III. Making local to global connections**
- IV. Understanding responsibilities of community membership**

I. Thinking critically and creatively

RATIONALE:

Appalachian's general education program seeks to cultivate lifelong learners who can understand, question, revise, and generate knowledge through thinking that is both *critical* in its analysis and evaluation of knowledge and *creative* in its integration and generation of knowledge. Critical and creative thinkers are conscious of how their own positions as well as the history of ideas influence their thought, and they also adjust their thinking as they interpret, evaluate, and reflect based on increasingly sophisticated intellectual values. Critical and creative thought requires the ability to integrate knowledge from a variety of domains and to transfer knowledge from one domain to another, while at the same time recognizing the distinctiveness and limitations of different methodologies and theoretical paradigms. This ability is best fostered by a combination of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to learning and by the employment of a variety of critical and creative strategies, including reading, writing, observing, quantifying, using the scientific method, translating, creating, and performing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will

- A. Recognize, differentiate, and effectively employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated strategies to collect and interpret information;
- B. Successfully integrate disparate concepts and information when interpreting, solving problems, evaluating, creating, and making decisions;
- C. Examine and evaluate how their own personal, historical, and cultural perspectives affect the discovery and generation of knowledge;
- D. Construct persuasive arguments in increasingly complex contexts;
- E. Apply theories from a variety of disciplines and advance convincing reasons to connect as well as differentiate theories from different domains of knowledge.

II. Communicating effectively

RATIONALE:

The general education program prepares students to employ modes of communication that can help communities reach both authentic consensus and respectful disagreement. In a two-way interaction, communicating effectively leads to discovery and productive changes in the sender, who may be a writer, speaker, dancer, musician, visual artist, or actor, as well as in the receiver, who may be listening, reading, or watching. As both senders and receivers, successful communicators interact effectively with people of both similar and different experiences and values. They adapt their communication skills with increasing fluency and sophistication to new and increasingly complex situations. Communicating effectively requires sophisticated reading skills in conjunction with a high level of quantitative, technological, and information literacy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will

- A. Articulate and comprehend effectively, using verbal or non-verbal communication suitable to topic, purpose, and audience;
- B. Use writing effectively to discover and develop ideas and to articulate positions in contexts of increasing complexity;
- C. Make rhetorical decisions appropriate to topic, purpose, and audience while correctly using the conventions of standard written English;
- D. Determine the scope of information needed in specific research contexts and successfully identify, locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information from various media;
- E. Read actively and analytically at the college level and synthesize and apply information and ideas from their reading across disciplines;
- F. Know, apply, and communicate college-level quantitative concepts and methods;
- G. Select and use hardware, software applications, databases, and other technologies effectively for both inquiry and communication.

III. Making local to global connections

RATIONALE:

Appalachian State University is both in and of the southern Appalachian region, and it is also part of a world that is globally connected. Life in the twenty-first century requires an understanding of the connections and multi-layered interactions among diverse local and global human cultures, as well as between humans and the natural and physical environments. In this context, the general education program helps to cultivate an active understanding of global change and the effect of human agency on both natural and cultural environments. Students should understand the importance of biodiversity, ecological integrity, and the need to achieve sustainable benefits for communities. Knowledge of other cultures, diverse cultural frames of reference, and alternative perspectives are essential to thinking critically and creatively and to understanding the responsibilities of membership in local, regional, and global communities. The cultivation and maintenance of intercultural relationships require active cultural understanding, which is achieved by exploring multiple strategies for interacting with other peoples and cultures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will

- A. Analyze past and present relationships between humans and the natural and physical environment;
- B. Evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability;
- C. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems;
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world;
- E. Employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated means for communicating with people of other cultures.

IV. Understanding responsibilities of community membership

RATIONALE:

General education prepares academically skilled and engaged citizens capable of contributing to the betterment of society and taking responsibility for the common good. Responsible contribution to a vibrant democracy governed by the rule of law requires a basic understanding of the ways in which governments, economies, and societies function. Moral reasoning skills, necessary in a world characterized by often conflicting beliefs and attitudes, enable students to reflect critically on ethical issues and to make reasoned, intelligent judgments about complex moral problems. Effective moral reasoning includes questioning one's own assumptions and beliefs, understanding the reasoning of others, and accepting disagreement about important matters. An understanding of the broad range of past and present moral positions should be accompanied by shared beliefs regarding honesty, integrity, and obligation to others. In addition, fostering the well-being and personal development of students will help them lead thoughtful and purposeful lives in their communities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will

- A. Identify potential consequences that personal choices as well as political, economic, and other social forces may have on individual, societal, and environmental health;
- B. Apply moral reasoning skills to an array of ethical issues confronted by individuals, groups, and communities;
- C. Collaborate effectively with others in shared processes of inquiry and problem-solving;
- D. Apply principles of responsible community membership within and beyond the campus community.

APPENDIX 2 - GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

In January 2005, the General Education Task Force was appointed by the Provost and charged with developing a signature general education program involving a small number of measurable objectives. The 22 member Task Force was encouraged to keep the campus informed and involved throughout the process. Meeting weekly for the past three semesters, the Task Force has accomplished a great deal. This report briefly summarizes this work and the context for the Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes document.

The Current Curriculum

The Task Force began its work by setting up a website so that the public could access information and reports easily (http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/). Full Task Force reports summarized in this statement can be found on our website. In September 2005, the Task Force undertook focus group research on campus to understand the attitudes of faculty and students toward the current core curriculum (*Focus Group Research Preliminary Report, 2005*). Ten focus groups were conducted with 15 students, 18 non-tenure track faculty who teach in the core, and 45 tenure-track faculty from departments with fulltime faculty who teach undergraduates.

Students and non-tenure track faculty had the most difficulty conceptualizing the goals of general education. Students said they yearn for the culture of an intellectual community and that this is incompletely captured on our campus. Faculty universally felt the need for more emphasis on practical communication skills, such as writing and speaking, and critical thinking and problem solving abilities. Students and faculty had a strong interest in fostering more study of international issues and the global system, in interdisciplinary work, and in studying diversity in all its forms. There was considerable interest in service learning, internships, and civic engagement. A number of students and faculty saw a connection to place in the Appalachian Mountains as part of the Appalachian State University experience.

Frustration was evident among both students and faculty with the difficult-to-interpret core curriculum check sheet, the designator system, and the advising process in general education. In general, assessment was poorly understood, but many felt that general education should be monitored and evaluated regularly. The Task Force concluded that the current core curriculum is not providing the best foundation for our students and that there was openness to considering a new model of general education on campus.

Upon further examination, it became apparent that numerous problems exist in the current core curriculum. These can be grouped into four areas: the core curriculum, the instructional staffing of core courses, the administration of the core, and assessment (*Critique of the Core Curriculum, 2006*).

Current Core: Our current core curriculum, with minor alterations, is basically unchanged since the 1960s. Courses are largely introductions to disciplines and do not

attempt to integrate knowledge. Although the core provides a large menu of courses, the majority of core credit hours come from one science course (biology), English, history, math, P.E., eight particular social science classes, and fifteen particular humanities and fine arts classes. Also, the large number of courses in the core, along with the extensive designator structure, has created a cumbersome system that is difficult for both students and advisors to understand. Moreover, courses reflecting emerging best practices in general education, such as interdisciplinary work, international study abroad, experiential and service learning, problem-based learning, seminar work for freshman, and the development of civic engagement and social responsibility, are missing from the core.

Staffing: Instructional staffing of the current core curriculum is also problematic. The majority (56%) of SCH in the core are taught by non-tenure track faculty members, mostly part-time faculty members. As we discovered in our focus group research, part-time faculty members tend to identify, even more than full-time faculty members, with their particular department, rather than with the mission of the university or, in particular, the goals of general education. Many of these part-time faculty members have contracts and working conditions that prevent them from participating fully in curriculum development and student advising and mentoring.

Administration: The administration of our current core curriculum is poorly coordinated with insufficient interaction between the Core Curriculum Committee and AP&P. Both the Core Curriculum Committee and AP&P are reactive rather than proactive in guiding the core curriculum. No one has the responsibility for general education curriculum development and providing vision for the core curriculum as a whole.

Assessment: There is little thoughtful coordination of the core curriculum and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and Planning. Specific learning outcomes for the core have not been articulated. Most of our evidence in support of the current core curriculum goals (see page 59 of the Undergraduate Bulletin) is based on student self-report, an indirect measure with less validity than direct measures of learning. Lastly, assessment results are not regularly used to make improvements in the curriculum.

Information Gathering

Current Campus Resources: During 2005-2006, the Task Force gained familiarity with resources on campus, collecting information from a variety of units and programs contributing to the goals of general education including: academic advising; Freshman Seminar; learning communities; the Writing Center and writing-across-the-curriculum; student research; service learning; information literacy; technical and computer literacy; international programs; integrative and interdisciplinary studies in the Honors Program, Watauga College, Women's Studies, and Sustainable Development; Student Development; the Core Curriculum Committee; and faculty development in the Hubbard Center.

External Consultations: In May 2005, five members of the Task Force attended a helpful week-long conference on general education sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Members of the Task Force also read a number of national publications on general education, including AAC&U's Greater

Expectations and Strong Foundations, and hosted the President of AAC&U, Dr. Carol Geary Schneider, on campus for a workshop and public lecture in February 2006.

Campus Community Feedback: We have engaged the campus community in dialogue. Our continuing discussions are aimed at uncovering our shared educational principles: What knowledge, skills, methods, and perspectives are important marks of an educated person? Regardless of their major, what qualities do we want to cultivate in those who graduate from ASU? The Task Force has sponsored six public forums thus far attended by several hundred faculty members, staff, and students and six small discussion groups, of five to ten people each, holding “Conversations about General Education.” We have also welcomed and received written comments and blog contributions from dozens of campus community members. In response to a call issued in November 2005, we received 24 statements from departments and programs on campus replying to a number of questions on general education (all available on our website). These departmental statements indicate a general support for most of the goals and learning outcomes articulated in the Task Force document that follows this report (*Summary of Departmental Statements*, 2006). Finally, we took an earlier version of the goals and learning outcomes to both the Dean’s Council and the Council of Chairs in May 2006, asking for feedback. The current goals and learning outcomes statement represents the third public version and was unanimously approved by the Task Force on October 3, 2006.

External Constituency Feedback: Early on, the Task Force began to share information with community colleges and high schools in our region, as these institutions would most certainly be affected by our work. Information has also been collected from alumni and employers (all reports are available on our website). The Task Force tapped into data gathered from the Walker College of Business to gain insight into state employers of ASU students, as well as surveys from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NCAE) for employers on the national level. According to these data, the most important skills for employers in the state are: problem analysis skills, listening skills, oral communication, teamwork, persistence, leadership, decision-making skills, honesty and integrity, and reliability. Two highly ranked categories in which ASU students are judged average or below, are multi-cultural appreciation and decision-making skills.

National data indicate that employers rate verbal and written communication skills, honesty and integrity, and teamwork skills most highly. The NCAE also reports that communication skills are the very skills employers most often say candidates lack.

Task Force members also conducted focus groups with employers and alumni when they visited our campus. Employers in the focus group emphasized interpersonal skills and the ability to interact with people with ethnic, economic, and generational differences as well as good written communication skills and leadership experiences. The focus group with alumni indicated a good general education should develop speaking and writing skills and a global perspective in the students. They also felt the need for students to be exposed to a variety of disciplines (to help undecided students choose a major) and ideas that pertain to today’s world, and that a rigorous introduction to college and academic life should be required.

Faculty/Alumni Survey: Finally, in the spring of 2006, we administered two surveys and received responses from 256 ASU faculty members and 484 alumni who had completed their general education at ASU (*Report on the General Education Faculty and Alumni Surveys*, 2006). There was a high degree of consistency between the two groups in the ordering of importance of 26 potential goals or outcomes of general education. The top three responses for both groups included written communication, critical thinking, and oral communication. Ethical behavior was also included in both groups' top five responses. Faculty also ranked highly the goals of problem-solving and research skills, information literacy, integrative thinking, understanding issues facing the world, and awareness and appreciation of the world's diversity. Faculty were more critical than alumni of the quality of an Appalachian education, perceiving greater performance gaps between the importance of goals and the extent to which education at Appalachian contributes to student learning in those areas. Furthermore, while the majority of alumni favorably assessed our general education, only 20% of the faculty agreed that general education courses at Appalachian are engaging.

State and National Contexts: General education reform has been a state and national concern for a number of years, both within universities and in the public arena. For the past decade, the transformation of general education has been the primary focus of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, which has issued a number of influential reports (see especially *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Student Achievement in College*, 2005). National advocates for reform in higher education have weighed in with books (Derek Bok's *Our Underachieving Colleges*, 2005) and reports (Spellings Commission Report, *A National Dialogue: the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education*, 2006). The State of North Carolina has commissioned reports on higher education (Pappas Group Report to the NC General Assembly *Developing Regional Educational Networks*, 2006). On our own campus, general education reform was listed #3 in ASU's Top Ten Objectives written in response to University President Bowles's recent request for information on the major concerns/directions of UNC campuses. Clearly, the impetus to revise Appalachian State University's general education curriculum comes from all directions, and the Task Force has sought to remain faithful to the principles of general education reform throughout the country.

The Process

There are four phases involved in developing a revised general education curriculum: (1) establishing educational goals and learning outcomes, (2) designing a model for the general education curriculum, (3) creating an effective administrative structure for the process, (4) implementing the model by selecting courses that fulfill the new educational goals and learning outcomes and (5) implementing internal and external assessments of the program to facilitate improvement.

The Task Force has completed the first phase in developing a set of goals and outcomes (see attached). We hope to have a preliminary version of the model by December 2006. Minimally, this will include required courses or course clusters and student credit hour distribution requirements. As a means of encouraging innovative courses that might fit the developing model, the Provost has provided a \$40,000 initiative for Summer Faculty

Grants for General Education Curriculum Development (guidelines, application form, and assessment information are on our website). The Task Force plans to bring the general education curriculum model and these course initiatives to AP&P in the spring of 2007. Approval will allow implementation to begin in 2007-08. The Task Force also plans to make recommendations regarding the administration of general education and assessment in its final report to the Provost.

Guiding Principles

The Task Force has a developing vision of general education that includes a number of guiding principles. The first of these is the need to focus on the development of students' capacity for skills, competencies, and an understanding of concepts that might be useful in many different situations. In other words, we value above all the ability to transfer learning to new situations. Of course, students will be gaining many forms of knowledge in the process, but our priority is the development of skills and fundamental competencies that will be useful as students become life-long learners.

The Task Force realizes that in order for general education to be most effective, these skills and competencies must be practiced by students many times over during their university career. Above all, they must be practiced throughout not only general education core courses, but also in the major. This means that all disciplines and faculty must be stakeholders in general education goals. This is one of the reasons the Task Force has tried to incorporate flexibility in the language of the educational goals and learning outcomes so as to be applicable across disciplines. One common means of creating a more vertical model of general education that goes beyond the first two years of college is through the major.

The Task Force has also attempted to be inclusive rather than exclusive in its work by reaching out beyond the classroom to other units on campus that are also significant in the development of students. There are many extra-curricular contexts in which students might practice our educational goals both on and beyond the campus. For the sake of efficiency, every opportunity should be taken to use the university's resources to reinforce these goals. At the same time, of course, faculty will have the primary responsibility of ensuring the learning outcomes are achieved by guiding the curriculum and classroom activities.

Terms and Concepts

The Task Force has received considerable public comment indicating the need to clarify certain terms and concepts that shape our understanding of general education and a core curriculum. The following have provoked the most comment and misunderstanding.

Liberal Education

The term liberal education is used in the mission statement of the Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes to indicate something broader than the term liberal arts (as it is in the current core curriculum description on page 59 of the Undergraduate Bulletin). The term liberal arts (*ars liberalis*) was used in the medieval university to refer to the *trivium* (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). In modern usage, liberal arts education is often contrasted with vocational education, and the term has become strongly associated with the humanities. The term

liberal education traces its history to John Henry Newman's *The Idea of the University* (1852) in which it refers to education in which the mind "is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its highest culture" instead of "being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science." The term has been taken up in the 20th and 21st centuries by organizations such as the AAC&U to refer to "a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement" (<http://www.aacu.org/issues/liberaleducation/index.cfm>).

The Co-Curriculum

The term co-curriculum has evolved in the last two decades to refer to learning experiences outside the traditional classroom. It is one aspect of a paradigm shift in general education that aims to cultivate connections between learning within and beyond the classroom and to encourage partnership between academic affairs and student development divisions within the university. With a focus on student learning, those involved in general education matters have come to recognize that students are involved in classroom-related activities for a relatively small number of hours per week. Concern only for these curricular activities ignores a large portion of students' time, much of which is shaped by other university-sponsored activities including student government, the student newspaper and radio station, the arts and lectures series, student clubs, and intramural sports. Appalachian first began to officially recognize student involvement in co-curricular activities in 1991 by establishing the Student Record of Involvement and Honors as part of the student's transcript. By tying the co-curriculum to general education goals and learning outcomes, these activities provide additional opportunities for students to practice those life skills valued by the university and the faculty.

More specifically, the co-curriculum can include activities outside the traditional classroom that are given academic credit. Internships, service-learning classes, field schools, cooperative education, and experiential learning experiences such as the UNC in Washington program are examples of ways in which learning takes place beyond the university and often under the supervision of both faculty and non-faculty. In addition, international study abroad is recognized as a prime example of the significance of experience beyond the traditional classroom.

The Southern Appalachian Context

Reference is made to Southern Appalachia in both the mission statement and in Goal III, Making Local to Global Connections. In part, this is due to the fact that our university is located in and named after the Appalachian Mountains. Of course, it also reflects the university's mission to serve the region. More importantly, it makes clear the university's connection to "place" in the sense of understanding one's own history, identity, and cultural roots as well as having pride in that connection. Goal III does more than ask students to become aware of the world around them; it urges them to locate the self in that global context and, although it is not the only local place of importance to our mostly non-Appalachian-origin students, this region undoubtedly contributes in some way to that process. Moreover, our focus group research made it clear that our location in the Appalachian Mountains is an important part of our appeal to students and we should take advantage of this.

Sustainability

In Goal III, Learning Outcome B states that students will “evaluate community, natural, and global change through the lens of sustainability.” Sustainability is a commonly accepted term in areas connected to global development and environmental fields. It refers to the nexus of ecological, economic, and social needs to be considered when seeking to ensure that prosperity in the present is not attained at the expense of future generations. The term is meant to encompass a broad approach to community, natural, and global change that is inclusive rather than exclusive and incorporates contributions from any program or discipline concerned with change.

Ethics and Social Responsibility

Goal IV, Understanding Responsibilities of Community Membership, recognizes a commitment to ethical judgment and social responsibility. Not only do we want students to learn skills and competencies; we also want them to develop independent critical judgment in their practice of these skills and competencies. The university has a commitment to educate students to become engaged and informed citizens capable of forming their own judgments about complex or controversial questions. The term moral reasoning is used in the academy to refer to this scholarly endeavor, a subject of academic rigor and not a matter of ungrounded personal opinion. Moreover, we believe that sustaining a society that is free, diverse, and democratic requires the cultivation of a strong sense of responsibility to self and others. This was confirmed in a recent joint initiative of AAC&U and the Council of Europe which stated that “Educating for personal and social responsibility is a core component of a 21st century liberal education.”

Assessment and Learning Outcomes

The new general education program will require assessment. This comes in response to SACS requirements as well as other accrediting bodies such as NCATE in teacher education and AACSB in the business college. Assessment is necessary for improving courses and programs because it is circular in design; once courses and programs are in place, evidence is gathered on the achievement of goals, and this informs decisions about and changes in the courses and programs. This contrasts with student evaluation, which promotes change in student behavior. Assessment can also be used for accountability purposes. Assessment is a process that initially includes the establishment of program goals, or the broad ideal objectives. While we might do many worthwhile things in our curriculum, we must select for our general education, a few crucial outcomes that we feel are essential for all of our students so they may thrive following graduation. The term “learning outcome” refers to a measurable piece of a goal that is specific, realistic, and attainable. These outcomes are not simply valuable on their own, but become indirect measurements of intangibles such as insight and understanding. Assessment tools include student and faculty self-reports, exams or tests that are course-based, course-embedded projects, and overall work products such as those produced in portfolios, capstone projects, or theses (see the Assessment Workshop Power Point on our website). The best assessment is faculty-driven and course-embedded with measures built into the curriculum rather than being added on later.

APPENDIX 3 - General Education Task Force Website Documents

Focus Group Research Preliminary Report

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/FocusGroupPreliminaryReport.pdf

Critique of the Core Curriculum

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/ASU_CORE_CRITIQUE.pdf

Department Statements on General Education

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/dept/index.html

Summary of Department Statements on General Education

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/Departmental_Statements_Final_Summary.pdf

Report on the General Education Faculty and Alumni Surveys

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/GETF_Fac-Alum_Survey_Report.pdf

Summary of Alumni Focus Group

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/GETF_Alumnifocusgroup.pdf

Report on Employer Surveys

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/GETF_Employer_Report.pdf

Summary of Employer Focus Group

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/GETF_Employerfocusgroup.pdf

Building Assessment into New General Education Courses

http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/Gen_Ed_Course_Assessment.pdf

APPENDIX 4 - Information Literacy Outcomes for Proficiency Levels

Information Literacy Outcomes for Proficiency Levels: Basic (1) , Mid-Level (2), Advanced (3) Based on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards (2000)

Level	Performance Outcome
1	1.1.c. Explores general information sources to increase familiarity with the topic
1	1.1.d. Defines or modifies the information need to achieve a manageable focus
1	1.1.e. Identifies key concepts and terms that describe the information need
1	1.2.b. Recognizes that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed
1	1.2.d. Identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g., popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)
1	1.3.a. Determines the availability of needed information and makes decisions on broadening the information seeking process beyond local resources (e.g., interlibrary loan; using resources at other locations; obtaining images, videos, text, or sound)
1	2.2.b. Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed
1	2.2.d. Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines; internal organizers such as indexes for books)
1	2.3.a. Uses various search systems to retrieve information in a variety of formats
1	2.3.b. Uses various classification schemes and other systems (e.g., call number systems or indexes) to locate information resources within the library or to identify specific sites for physical exploration
1	2.4.a. Assesses the quantity, quality, and relevance of the search results to determine whether alternative information retrieval systems or investigative methods should be utilized
1	2.4.b. Identifies gaps in the information retrieved and determines if the search strategy should be revised
1	2.4.c. Repeats the search using the revised strategy as necessary
1	2.5.a. Selects among various technologies the most appropriate one for the task of extracting the needed information (e.g., copy/paste software functions, photocopier, scanner, audio/visual equipment, or exploratory instruments)
1	2.5.c. Differentiates between the types of sources cited and understands the elements and correct syntax of a citation for a wide range of resources
1	2.5.d. Records all pertinent citation information for future reference
1	2.5.e. Uses various technologies to manage the information selected and organized
1	3.1.a. Reads the text and selects main ideas
1	3.1.b. Restates textual concepts in his/her own words and selects data accurately
1	3.1.c. Identifies verbatim material that can be then appropriately quoted
1	3.2.a. Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias
1	3.2.c. Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation
1	3.3.c. Utilizes computer and other technologies (e.g. spreadsheets, databases, multimedia, and audio or visual equipment) for studying the interaction of ideas and other phenomena
1	3.4.a. Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need
1	3.4.b. Uses consciously selected criteria to determine whether the information contradicts or verifies information used from other sources
1	3.4.c. Draws conclusions based upon information gathered
1	3.4.e. Determines probable accuracy by questioning the source of the data, the limitations of the information gathering tools or strategies, and the reasonableness of the conclusions
1	3.4.g. Selects information that provides evidence for the topic
1	3.6.a. Participates in classroom and other discussions

1	3.6.b. Participates in class-sponsored electronic communication forums designed to encourage discourse on the topic (e.g., email, bulletin boards, chat rooms)
1	3.7.a. Determines if original information need has been satisfied or if additional information is needed
1	3.7.b. Reviews search strategy and incorporates additional concepts as necessary
1	4.1.a. Organizes the content in a manner that supports the purposes and format of the product or performance (e.g. outlines, drafts, storyboards)
1	4.1.b. Articulates knowledge and skills transferred from prior experiences to planning and creating the product or performance
1	4.1.c. Integrates the new and prior information, including quotations and paraphrasings, in a manner that supports the purposes of the product or performance
1	4.1.d. Manipulates digital text, images, and data, as needed, transferring them from their original locations and formats to a new context
1	4.2.a. Maintains a journal or log of activities related to the information seeking, evaluating, and communicating process
1	4.3.b. Uses a range of information technology applications in creating the product or performance
1	4.3.c. Incorporates principles of design and communication
1	5.2.b. Uses approved passwords and other forms of ID for access to information resources
1	5.2.c. Complies with institutional policies on access to information resources
1	5.2.d. Preserves the integrity of information resources, equipment, systems and facilities
1	5.2.e. Legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds
1	5.3.a. Selects an appropriate documentation style and uses it consistently to cite sources
1	5.3.b. Posts permission granted notices, as needed, for copyrighted material
2	2.2.e. Implements the search strategy in various information retrieval systems using different user interfaces and search engines, with different command languages, protocols, and search parameters
2	2.5.b. Creates a system for organizing the information
2	3.4.f. Integrates new information with previous information or knowledge
2	3.5.a. Investigates differing viewpoints encountered in the literature
2	3.5.b. Determines whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints encountered
2	5.1.a. Identifies and discusses issues related to privacy and security in both the print and electronic environments
2	5.1.b. Identifies and discusses issues related to free vs. fee-based access to information
2	1.1.a. Confers with instructors and participates in class discussions, peer workgroups, and electronic discussions to identify a research topic, or other information need
2	1.1.b. Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need
2	1.2.c. Identifies the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/visual, book)
2	1.2.e. Differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognizing how their use and importance vary with each discipline
2	1.2.f. Realizes that information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources
2	1.3.c. Defines a realistic overall plan and timeline to acquire the needed information
2	1.4.a. Reviews the initial information need to clarify, revise, or refine the question
2	2.1.c. Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems
2	2.3.c. Uses specialized online or in person services available at the institution to retrieve information needed (e.g., interlibrary loan/document delivery, professional associations, institutional research offices, community resources, experts and practitioners)
2	3.6.c. Seeks expert opinion through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., interviews, email, listservs)
2	4.2.b. Reflects on past successes, failures, and alternative strategies
2	4.3.a. Chooses a communication medium and format that best supports the purposes of the product or performance and the intended audience
2	4.3.d. Communicates clearly and with a style that supports the purposes of the intended audience
2	5.1.d. Demonstrates an understanding of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use of copyrighted material
2	5.2.a. Participates in electronic discussions following accepted practices (e.g. "Netiquette")

3	1.1.f. Recognizes that existing information can be combined with original thought, experimentation, and/or analysis to produce new information
3	1.2.a. Knows how information is formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated
3	1.3.b. Considers the feasibility of acquiring a new language or skill (e.g., foreign or discipline-based) in order to gather needed information and to understand its context
3	1.4.b. Describes criteria used to make information decisions and choices
3	2.1.a. Identifies appropriate investigative methods (e.g., laboratory experiment, simulation, fieldwork)
3	2.1.b. Investigates benefits and applicability of various investigative methods
3	2.1.d. Selects efficient and effective approaches for accessing the information needed from the investigative method or information retrieval system
3	2.2.a. Develops a research plan appropriate to the investigative method
3	2.2.c. Selects controlled vocabulary specific to the discipline or information retrieval source
3	2.2.f. Implements the search using investigative protocols appropriate to the discipline
3	2.3.d. Uses surveys, letters, interviews, and other forms of inquiry to retrieve primary information
3	3.2.b. Analyzes the structure and logic of supporting arguments or methods
3	3.2.d. Recognizes the cultural, physical, or other context within which the information was created and understands the impact of context on interpreting the information
3	3.3.a. Recognizes interrelationships among concepts and combines them into potentially useful primary statements with supporting evidence
3	3.3.b. Extends initial synthesis, when possible, at a higher level of abstraction to construct new hypotheses that may require additional information
3	3.4.d. Tests theories with discipline-appropriate techniques (e.g., simulators, experiments)
3	3.7.c. Reviews information retrieval sources used and expands to include others as needed
3	5.1.c. Identifies and discusses issues related to censorship and freedom of speech
3	5.2.f. Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent work attributable to others as his/her own
3	5.2.g. Demonstrates an understanding of institutional policies related to human subjects research

APPENDIX 5 - GETF 2007 Summer Faculty Grants

1. William Anderson (GLY) & Kristan Cockerill (SD), "WaterResources:The Science Behind Water Policy"
2. Shawn Arthur (P&R), "Visions of Ourselves: Religion, Culture and the Body"
3. Tiffany Christian (SOC), SW 3535 "Class, Caste and the American Way" (fall)
4. Derek Davidson, Karla McGinnis, Andrea Roller (ENG), ENG 1100
5. Jill Ehnenn (ENG), "Introduction to LGBT Studies"
6. Kim Hall (P&R), "Ethics and Contemporary Issues: An Introduction"
7. Tim Huelsman (PSY), "Thinking Critically About Human Behavior"
8. Andrew Koch (PSCJ), "Politics, Aesthetics, and Interpretation"
9. Eric Marland, Katherine Mawhinney, & Hutch Sprunt (MAT), MAT 1010
10. Terri Mitchell (C&I), "Personal and Family Health"
11. Elicka Peterson (PSCJ), CJ 3400
12. Theme entitled "Truth": Patrick Rardin (P&R), "Theories of Truth," Jeffery Bortz (HIS), "The Truth in History and the Truth of History," and Gayle Weitz (ART), "Art and Truth"
13. Kathleen Schroeder (GHY), "Geography of the Non-Western World"
14. Carol Soule (FCS), "Global Awareness: Examining Human Conditions"
15. Susan Staub (ENG), "Body and Society in the Renaissance"
16. Anna Ward (T&D), First Year Seminar
17. Johnny Waters (GLY), GLY 1103
18. Jay Wentworth & Joseph Gonzalez (IDS), IDS 1103-107
19. Sue Williams (T&D), THR 2011
20. Michael Windelspecht (BIO), BIO 1103