

**Comments in Response to This Prompt:
Please take a moment to provide feedback on the General Education Advisory Group report.
Suggestions and/or alternatives would be particularly helpful.**

Shown in Order of Recency, Without Editing, and With Identifiers Removed

October 1, 2012, 8:30am

(Compiled by B Sharp)

Regarding this suggestion for FYS:

" 2) For tenured and tenure-track faculty who teach FYS, provide 100% of backfill money directly to the department, rather than the college. If this is not feasible, departments should at least receive enough backfill money to pay a replacement instructor at the terminally-degreed adjunct rate."

Is this not inane? If the point is that we want TT people teaching FYS because there is some implicit thought that these professors are better positioned to develop students, then are we not saying that FYS is more important than, for example, the gateway courses in these same professors' major departments?

And this suggestion for FYS is similarly impracticable:

"Allocate new tenure-track lines to specific departments in exchange for a binding agreement that the department will provide tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach six sections of First Year Seminar each year in perpetuity."

So basically big departments can get bigger by teaching FYS, but small departments that have to dedicate faculty to their upper level classes can't. Plus, this now invalidates the "matrix" presently used to make these decisions, except that experience with "the matrix" demonstrates that it is most charitably interpreted as problematic.

If resources truly are the limiting factor to reach the general education program's goals, let's think about this. FYS requires 3 hours, but has very little support from tenure-track faculty and, honestly, much of the data used to support it comes from self-reporting by FYS students that are, by definition, only beginning their college careers. On the other hand, we are in the midst of an economic downturn caused largely by poor investing strategies by bankers, brokers, and mortgage holders that reflect poorly on the state of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education in the USA---if people had not financed mortgages that folks were unlikely to be able to pay off, this economic disaster would not have been much less severe. Therefore, why doesn't Appalachian take the high road, and funnel resources from the 3 hours of FYS toward the 2 hours of STEM that need it---rewarding science departments that dedicate themselves to teaching general education and giving the Math department the resources it needs to join them in teaching courses such as a 1-credit hour, largely ASU Learn-based class that gets students the 8 hours of scientific inquiry and 4 hours of college-level mathematics that they will need to prevent, or at least prepare for, these kinds of crises. In short, if resources are limited, let's take resources from FYS and funnel them into STEM education.

Revising Gen Ed is essential. Here are a few comments:

Reducing the number of required hours in science seems counter to recurring reports that US students lag behind others in science and math. Why would we require less of our students in these fields? I am sensitive to concerns with total hours etc. especially for transfer students, BUT these are issues that students need to consider when they decide to transfer. I do not think weakening our curriculum is the way to address total hour concerns. Finding ways to support Dept. efforts to add 1-hour labs makes much more sense to me.

One way to fund this may be to reduce/eliminate First Year Seminar requirements. The report suggests that there are data to support First Year Seminar success in retention etc., and if that is the case, then it seems that there is no need to increase support for the program but to allow it to continue as structured. I do, however, have concerns with what "data" is being used. If sound data (NOT student self reporting surveys) do not show a strong, significant relationship between First Year Seminar and retention etc., then it should be eliminated or at least made optionally available for students who may benefit from it.

I do like the suggestions to streamline the requirements, reducing hours required in the "themes" and giving students more choice and allowing more courses to "count" as Gen Ed.

Various of the science departments are working to allow the occasional transfer student with insufficient science credit to take 1 (or 5) hours of science to make up for only having 7 (or 3) hours of science, so this should quell the Offices of Transfer Articulation and Academic Advising's concerns about transfers graduating.

Given that transfer students that come in with an associate's degree are considered "general education complete," isn't the onus to graduate better placed on the transfer students? Could we not raise the bar and admit fewer students that are not "general education complete"?

My experience as a 1000- and 2000-level suggests that many community college and junior college transfers are not as college prepared as are students with comparable experience at Appalachian, so I am firmly opposed to lowering the standards they are held to just to get them out of school.

This one is from the numerous faculty members who raised serious objections to the rash processes involved in discarding the previous core curriculum and reckless implementation of the new general education program in spite of numerous, reasoned objections regarding the logistical challenges of trying to run a 15,000-student state institution like a 1500-student liberal arts college.

I (we) told you so.

The proposed changes to only require 7 or 8 hours of science and reduction of math requirements from 4 to 3 hours are not in line with what we should be doing as an educational institute. The United States

trails many modern nations in science and math. By lowering our standards we look complacent. If anything, we should have a higher science and math requirement for all students regardless of major.

The sciences are coming up with proposals to deal with transfer students that are one hour short of the 8 required hours, and the fact is that this is a small issue that only affects a few transfer students per year.

In closing, reducing the number of science hours and math hours required is absolutely the wrong direction for our university and I hope that this proposal will not be approved.

As a general rule, I am opposed to committing resources to first-year-seminar (FYS). Those resources would be much better spent on strengthening existing courses with serious, college-level content. The fact that students finishing FYS think it had college-level content is not a statistic, it's an opinion poll by a group that is, by definition, minimally educated. None of my advisees ever say "FYS really got me ready for the content in my major classes" or even "FYS helped me perform at a college level generally."

Changes to the Perspectives: the recommendation to reduce the complexity (and confusion) within Gen Ed is a great idea. The proposed structure makes sense and should help students better manage their Gen Ed requirements.

Changes to Quantitative Literacy/Science Inquiry: Reducing the hours required for math and science is a mistake - we need to be encouraging MORE math and science, not less. In the sciences, lab experiences ARE the best way to engage students. You cannot do experiential learning in a lecture with 150 students. Students learn math and science by DOING it, not by reading about it or listening to lectures.

Transfer matriculation is always messy (I do speak from experience - I was a transfer student as an undergrad)- it seems imprudent to make such a potentially bad decision based on one group of students. Within the sciences I think there is support for teaching 1-hour labs to address transfer student needs.

Renaming Science Inquiry is problematic...Science Literacy is different from Science Inquiry. I am a non-scientist who teaches science literacy principles. Students need that AND to inquire into the actual science principles from practicing scientists.

Changes to First Year Seminar: I am opposed to dedicating any additional resources to First Year Seminar. IF the data reported are accurate and it is increasing retention rates and helping to develop academic skills as it is currently structured, then why does it need to attract T/TT faculty? IF it is not increasing retention etc. then it should be eliminated, freeing resources for other programs/projects.

I would like to add my concerns about the proposed decrease in hours for Science Inquiry and Math (from 8 to 7 or 8). I am sure that many other individuals have expounded upon the implications of decreasing the rigor of our Gen Ed program (which is a certain outcome if we reduce the Science/Math hours), and I will add my concerns about that below. But first, I would like to address a possible solution. If transfer students are truly the reason for this proposed reduction in hours, then why not

have the affected departments teach (as needed) 1 credit sections to accommodate transfer students? In my department (science), we have very few (maybe 1 or 2 per semester or year) transfer students, and it has not been a significant problem in the past to help these students gain their 8 hours of science credit. We have proposed to teach a 1 credit course, when needed, to help transfer students reach their needed 8 hours of Science Inquiry.

I realize that folks can point to the recommendations made by the University to the Gen Ed Advisory Committee in past years in which one of the comments was "make things easier for transfer students." But I think that comment was made with the underlying assumption that we do so without compromising their education (rigor within the curriculum, I mean). Making transferring into Appalachian easier does not need to be mutually exclusive from maintaining a high level of academic standard, which I fear is what will happen if the proposed changes to the Science/Math requirements are passed in the name of "making life easy for transfer students". Dare I quote Obama or many others who have recently discussed the global importance and need for STEM education in the US? I have seen the (well-referenced) letter sent to the Provost from the Math Department... and agree whole-heartedly with their opinions of why a high level of math and science requirements for undergraduate students need to be maintained.

I also wonder, after talking to folks about the "difficulty" (or lack thereof, as I've heard) in dealing with transfer issues, if that is truly the crux of the problem that prompted the proposed reduction of Science/Math hours. It seems like there is an easy solution (to offer a 1 credit option for transfer students) to this small problem (e.g., we were told that ~20-25% of incoming freshman at App last year had transfer credits, but I wonder how many of them had a 3 hour math or science class that needed to be augmented by 1 credit hour in order to satisfy their Gen Ed requirements? Surely not enough to warrant an entire University-wide curriculum change.) Are we reducing the rigor of our Science and Math requirements (for the entire campus, mind you) in order to address an administrative problem for transfer students? How many students are affected? 50? 1000? Transferring schools is hard; transfer students know that not all of their credits will transfer, and/or even if they do, they may need to take additional classes. They know our requirements coming in. You need 8 hours of science. If they have 7, the departments work with them to get 8. "Problem" solved, and academic standards remain high.

I thank you for allowing this forum for faculty/staff to express their opinions, and I thank you for your time in reading this.

I come from a department that has bent over backwards over the past few years to accommodate General Education's changes to the Core Curriculum. Accordingly, I (and many others) are vehemently opposed to a reduction in STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) standards. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to reduce the volume of STEM hours students have to take. We have taken the advisory group's report to heart, and are proposing ways that students needing an odd number of hours (e.g., one additional laboratory) can do so.

Because I teach extensively at the introductory and sophomore level, I can state with extreme confidence that transfer students, especially junior college/community college students, including those transferring into the sciences themselves, are not as prepared for my classes as students that have taken their introductory science here. I therefore I think it imperative to require that all students take at least 8 hours of science to maintain the standards that Appalachian prides itself on.

A colleague has asked me to note that a reduction in lab hours (as part of the attempt to reduce science inquiry from 8 to 7 hours) results in a reduction of 50% of the hands-on, inquiry-based, low student-teacher ratio instruction. This is yet another reason not to reduce the science inquiry perspective from 8 to 7 hours.

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(Compiled by B Sharp)

Furthering reducing the minimum numbers of hours that our students need to take in order to graduate from ASU will only harm them, not help them. More and more students are coming out of high school with insufficient mathematical skills and by only taking the minimum number of hours in math, those skills are not expanded. We need to increase our students understanding of math and science to bring the US back to first in the world.

Gateway and capstone courses should not be allowed in general education themes for the following reasons: they (1) are contrary to the meaning of general education and (2) create an unnecessary hurdle for students in the theme. Gateway and capstone courses give ownership of themes to whichever discipline offers the capstone course and/or gateway course, which forces other disciplines in the theme to adopt another discipline's framework as the authority for thinking about the theme and provide evidence of "integration." This is contrary to the meaning of general education because no one discipline should own themes and be able to define what general education in a theme would be. Instead, general education promotes a cross- or trans-disciplinary introduction to issues within the theme without giving students the false impression that one discipline (the discipline offering the gateway or capstone course) offers the authoritative/expert approach to issues considered within the theme. Gateway courses offer an unnecessary obstacle for students in the theme because they force students to take that course first before they can take other courses in the theme, and capstones within themes force students to take the capstone last. This forced movement within a theme can present unnecessary conflict in scheduling for students.

Suggested Alternative: Don't allow gateway and capstones in the themes. Allow students to choose which courses they want to take in the theme in whatever order they choose.

Clearly delineate what intellectual skills the taking of a lab science is supposed to engender. We know that the actual content of the science (biological, chemical, geological or laboratory skills etc.) is not important in and of itself or we would require all students to take something in every science. So then if content does not matter then the sciences need to defend just which skills or habits of mind can only be acquired through lab work. If they cannot, or if it is made clear that these intellectual skills are taught in other disciplines then I suggest we broaden student choices regarding how these skills are acquired. This would have the effect of relieving pressure on the overburdened science departments and alleviate some of the scheduling challenges for students.

If you are serious about teaching students (and faculty) to integrate require that all three courses of their chosen theme be taken the same semester. It would allow common assignments across the three courses. Though it would be a scheduling challenge, managing corequisites might be easier than theme gateway and "capstone" courses.

I am concerned about the lack of a social science requirement in the proposed gen ed requirements. With the elimination of the Social & Historical Perspective and the Global Issues Perspective and no addition of a Social Science Designator, I believe many students could complete gen ed with nothing more than a History Designator course. The open menu of Liberal Studies courses is worse than our old Core Curriculum menus which at least were divided into the Humanities and Social Sciences.

In support of my previous comment, here is a link to a NY Times Editorial decrying the lack of adequate STEM training for American college students and how that may negatively affect our economy. The article also has links to the National Academy of Sciences 2007 Report "Rising Above the Gathering Storm", and it's revisitation in 2010.

Here is the link: <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/07/09/does-a-skills-gap-contribute-to-unemployment/education-and-training-has-not-kept-pace-with-the-skills-gap>

Again, these reports and the editorial all support a continued and even strengthened emphasis on science and math skills by our students. I know of no report that suggests we should reduce or de-emphasize STEM.

Thanks.

Retain, or even increase, the 8-hour science and 4-hour mathematics requirement.

Given the poor state of STEM education in this country, I am absolutely opposed to lowering either the science or the mathematics requirements. If anything, math and science requirements should be raised. The science departments are working to make the occasional 1-credit hour class for transfer viable (and it is an occasional need, not an overwhelming one). Ideally students should be required to take both life and physical science courses and get through higher levels of mathematics—at least MAT 1025 (pre-calculus). If that means hiring more scientists and mathematicians, so be it.

Why can't we provide Dept. Mathematics the resources to develop a 1-credit hour course that relies heavily on ASU Learn for transfer students or others with only 3 credits of mathematics (e.g., the ones that choose to take a statistics course that's only 3 hrs?). My vision for a 1-credit course would be one with many, many real-world applications. This includes demonstrated ability to calculate compound interest, make unit conversions, read and understand graphs, especially misleading ones (e.g. advertising with funky scales exaggerating differences between products), decipher linear versus geometric rates of change, etc. Experience teaching lecture and labs at Appalachian suggests that many students lack these skills. I'm sure many in the Walker College of Business would agree. All of this should be standard knowledge coming out of high school, but the current economic collapse, triggered in large

part by folks investing in mortgages they couldn't make, suggests that the knowledge is not as standardized as one would think. By relying principally on ASULearn exercises, there would be little grading burden (but perhaps some in-class exams to prove that students can perform "in person."). E This seems like a much better investment of resources than does, say, Freshman Seminar.

The very idea of reducing STEM requirements for our students, for reasons that are poorly articulated and poorly justified, is the antithesis of what every report on STEM education suggests is required for our country to maintain its competitiveness in a global economy. Consider the fact that we are now considering providing special visas for STEM graduate students, since we are currently not producing enough such students to fill vacancies arising in the United States. A recent NAS report on the future of biology stated that students would need more, not less mathematics, in order to deal with future biological problems, ranging from ecological issues (ecoinformatics for one) down to molecular biology (bioinformatics). Climate modeling requires students who have had quantitative training in mathematics, statistics, and ecological modeling. Dealing with cancer and epidemiology also requires training in these disciplines.

Nearly half of all laws passed in the United States deal with either technology or science. A public that is scientifically illiterate is incapable of dealing with the ramifications of such laws, and therefore passes responsibility off on a few politicians or lobbyists, leaving one to question whether scientific illiteracy is a threat to our own democracy. It is in fact, a major security threat to the country.

I could go on, but the take home message is simple: we should be expanding, not contracting, science and math requirements for our students. That other universities have cut back is simply an example of how some schools have capitulated to short-term economic issues (the main driver for such changes) at the expense of the long-term goal of educating their students in these subjects. We should not jump on this train, but rather retain our current requirements for both science and mathematics in the Gen Ed curriculum.

1. We should retain a two-course, 8 hr science requirement for all students. These intro courses should be funded well enough to make the laboratory experience worthwhile. The Gen Ed report emphasizes the need to accommodate transfer students but does not adequately justify changing this policy for all of our students so that a few transfer students will not be disadvantaged. Furthermore, we can easily offer a 1 credit science course for these students, which would deal adequately with this situation. Capitulating to the needs of the few over the needs of the many is short-sighted and plain wrong.

2. Most importantly, in my opinion, is that students not necessarily (or even be allowed to) take both science courses in the same discipline. If the goal is to impart scientific understanding in students who won't take any other science courses in their college career, then diversifying and making them take science from different disciplines seems a more logical way to go. We used to have a course sequence where students took half semester inquiries into four different natural science disciplines - doing something like that would be more rewarding and they would gain a fuller perspective on how the different sciences approach their subjects.

3. It is wrong to call this Scientific Literacy. Without going into a long discussion of what scientific literacy is, just be assured this Gen Ed requirement won't do it. It should be called Scientific Inquiry. Changing the name reveals a lack of critical thinking on the part of the committee and suggests they did not give this recommendation enough critical thought.

4. We should consider how science is imparted to students. We always stress that "doing" science is how you really learn science. The intro courses serve that function. But Morris Shamos, who has written extensively on scientific literacy, says that people gain literacy only when they "appreciate" the role science plays in their lives. We don't teach that here at ASU. I have argued for years that there needs to be a higher level science requirement which is composed of science "appreciation" courses, at the 2000 or higher level, and which is taken in a student's junior or senior year, so they have the maturity to put into context the role of science in their lives. We require a junior writing course because we want a more mature and experienced student doing higher order thinking - the same argument can be made for appreciating science - it needs a more mature attitude and a history of learning behind the student so he/she can put the material into proper context. We cannot expect that students will gain the necessary science by taking only intro courses in their freshman year. That's probably the dumbest pedagogy I've ever encountered and the reason it's done is because it's easy and cheap, not because it's a best practice.

5. If a four hour course math course is making things difficult for some transfer students, then why not offer a one hour math course that provides additional math training to make up for that missing credit? Maybe there aren't enough faculty members to do this, but I don't suspect the number of students missing that one hour constitute a large number, so maybe this could be done. This way, we retain 4 hrs of math instruction.

Although I strongly support keeping the math requirement where it is, I think it is time for a university-wide colloquium on the content of that math - I don't recall, for instance, reviewing what math professors are teaching now and how what they teach relates to what we want our biology students to know. Are we teaching them the math they require for their discipline? Perhaps, but for departments teaching service courses, the served and the servee (if there is such a word) should regularly get together to discuss content and to make sure each side is satisfied with what is being taught. I also do not support allowing statistics to substitute for math. The two are entirely different things, and one does not replace the other. Rather, the two complement each other.

To sum up, we should, if anything, be increasing STEM instruction, NOT reducing it. I think there is a short-sighted attempt to save money at the expense of our true mission, which is to educate students. Furthermore, the Gen Ed report does not provide data that justify its recommendations, nor which are consistent with a myriad of reports showing that students need more, not less science and mathematics training.

As the old saying goes, pennywise and pound foolish.

The GEA recommendation for modification of the QL curriculum will not actually change the requirement for most students. The revised requirement is for 3 credits of approved QL courses. Most 3 credit transfer courses related to QL will not correspond to an ASU course number, and so will be listed as a MAT, STT, ECON, or CS elective. Since no "electives" are approved QL courses, the transferred courses will not meet the QL requirement, even if the number of course hours is reduced.

I suppose that the GEA could repair this flaw by recommending that every elective be accepted as a QL course. If we expand this and accept all electives as wild cards, transfer students can have remarkable flexibility in satisfying Gen Ed requirements. If we expand this solution to all students, we can eliminate advising related to Gen Ed requirements, and possibly realize significant cost reductions.

Thank you to the Gen Ed Advisory Group for providing this report and for all your time and effort. My feedback is as follows:

- 1) Page 4 contains two statements that seem to be conflicting: "Second, students would not be allowed to transfer course credit from other institutions into the themes" and "This component would offer flexibility for transfer students because a broad range of courses from other institutions could easily transfer into this component."
- 2) "Departments could be more selective about which courses they choose to submit for theme participation." This statement worries me as we already have difficulty offering enough seats in the classes our students need to complete themes. If we become more selective, we need a commitment from chairs and faculty to meet a demand we can't predict.
- 3) Bravo the flexibility with the Science Inquiry perspective and Quantitative Literacy requirement. The change to the number of hours is the sort of common sense solution we need to adopt.
- 4) Second Year Writing - Since this component is being retained and since we rarely accept transfer credit for this course, we need to find a solution to the existing problem. Almost every student needs this course, with the exception of transfers who have met Gen Ed or second-degree seeking students. We need seats.
- 5) We need a transition plan for currently enrolled students as the courses they need to finish themes may no longer be available. This needs to be clearly communicated before the new curriculum is implemented.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

I am puzzled as to why we should now encourage LESS science and math credit hours at a time when the US is falling further and further behind in science and math knowledge. Laboratory sections are invaluable in teaching science. Departments have a variety of ways to deal with the few transfer students who come in with a one-credit deficit. This is a problem that is easily fixed by some flexibility (and is really minimal in the grand scheme of things). But what is baffling is that the 7-8 requirement for science and the 3-4 requirement for math for all students, not just transfers. Why? What brought about this change?

As a tenure-track faculty who teaches both large lectures in addition to laboratory sections, I have first hand experience that students are far more engaged in the scientific process in laboratory sections than in these giant lectures... regardless of how many pedagogical innovations we use, or how engaged we can keep the students in lecture. There are just too many of them to have the necessary in-depth projects and conversations to make up for the lack of 1-1 time and hands-on work in laboratory sections. To make these 3-credit lectures effective in exploring the scientific method, one would need to have additional discussion sessions (requiring additional staff), develop completely different courses (requiring additional time), and completely re-invent how science is taught (which is basically not in line with the standards and practices of STEM courses nationwide). Give students a choice and they will take a non-lab 3-credit class because they perceive that they won't have to do as much work or and won't have to spend as much time in a classroom. Matrix and FTE pressures will then induce departments to

offer these 3-credit lecture courses, whether or not the department thinks it's a good idea in terms of student learning. I just don't understand why there is an attempt to dumb down the science and math requirements for a populace that desperately needs MORE science and math, not less.

As I also advise students (including numerous transfer students) I agree that some of the transfer advising is confusing, but it's honestly not THAT bad. I have students who came in during the 09-10 switchover from Core Curriculum to Gen Ed and the rules are all crazy for them, but it's not insurmountable. More recent transfer students have fewer issues. We went through this whole upheaval 4 years ago and the dust hasn't settled yet... give it a chance before throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Once DegreeWorks is in place it really isn't going to be that big of a deal.

I'm not super concerned with the merger of Appalachian Integrated Learning and the creation of the Liberal Studies unit (although the names for these are terrible! Can we have names that aren't in Edu-Speak?), because from what I can tell the credit hours aren't changing, just the combinations of classes. I think this is a good idea. But I am deeply, deeply concerned with the dumbing down of the science and math requirements - both for transfer students and for incoming students. I don't see what is wrong with keeping the science and math classes the way they currently are. It's currently consistent with the requirements at other universities, we already overhauled our entire curriculum to comply with Gen Ed requirements, and the problems with transfer students are relatively minor and are easily fixed.

I am really pleased with the changes. It makes it easier for transfers. It makes advising easier. It gives students wider choices. The only part that I was not as convinced of was the need to increase T/TT faculty in First Year Seminar courses. This adds layers of complexity to the tenure and funding process that are unnecessary and do not really improve the First Year Seminar experience for all the work they would entail.

I have two points to make;

1. It is astounding that ASU is on a path that will actually lower its science requirement at a time when the U.S. is behind the rest of the industrialized world in science and math. We should be increasing the math and science requirements; not decreasing them. I am in the social sciences and I believe strongly in a liberal arts education. But, to sacrifice science and math literacy to liberal arts is irresponsible. We are rapidly becoming a nation of unemployed artists and the proposal to weaken out math and science requirements only serves to hasten that process.

2. The report of the Gen Ed Advisory Group is the second report suggesting changes to Gen Ed. The GenEd Task Force report appears to have been discounted out-of-hand because its content was not consistent with what decision-makers had decided they wanted to do about GenEd. If I am correct in this, we have a bigger problem than a "dumbed down" core curriculum.

I am a Ph.D. level non-tenure track adjunct faculty member who teaches courses at the 2000-level and 4000-level as needed in my home department. I have done this for 4 years. I also teach as adjunct faculty for GenEd, specifically teaching 1-2 sections of FYS each Fall semester. The Advisory Report makes the assumptions that those of us teaching FYS who are non-tenure track have almost no

connection to and understanding of the educational needs of students beyond their first year at college. I beg to differ. My FYS course is purposefully designed to support student success by intentionally helping students develop skills that will assist them in future coursework. My students engage in group and individual research, collect and analyze qualitative data, do presentations, and engage in regular and ever-deepening class discussions. I also discuss the practical aspects of doing well in classes (like turning assignments in on time). I hold my students to high expectations and most of them achieve and exceed these expectations.

I share these comments in order to make you aware that it is detrimental to make the general assumption that non-tenure track and adjunct faculty provide a lower quality and less beneficial FYS experience for students. In fact, I would encourage you to consider the possibility that because we are NOT tenure track faculty and do not therefore have the pressures of tenured and tenure-track faculty, we can provide a HIGHER quality first year seminar experience for students.

It is unclear how it will be decided which themes will stay and which will go. And who will decide. This needs to be figured out asap. It does and the criteria need to be transparent and there needs to be input from people who are qualified to judge if the classes are appropriate and working.

I like the reduction of themes to one. I like the addition of a 12 hour liberal arts section that is not thematic.

Every effort must be taken to insure that increased focus on integration within the themes does not turn out to mean a lot more work for faculty.

I do not support gateways or capstone within the theme. Gateways will be driven by turf wars. They will cause the bottlenecks you are trying hard to eliminate. This will cut down on student choice, another problem you are supposed to be addressing. And students don't need to do two capstones. One in the major is enough.

I do not support reducing the number of science or math requirements. This is a dumbing down and loss of rigor in an area that is nationally recognized to be compromised. If it is difficult for transfers to get credits, then help the sciences and math to figure out how to offer a 1 credit course. It is not good pedagogy to have administrative red tape drive pedagogy!

Finally, I don't see how you are really going to get more TT faculty teaching FYS unless you move them into department so it is less complicated to staff them. Pick a number for FYS. 1234. There could be HIS1234, GHY124, CHE1234, ENG1234, MUS 1234 etc. Any dept that wants to offer a FYS can design a course or courses. Anyone who does not want to offer one does not have to. Keep it in the dept and it will be much easier to staff. Keep a skeleton FYS staff to special FYS events, common course goals, assessment, professional development. This is the only way you will succeed in getting the TT faculty teaching in the numbers you want. It is much less complicated than trying to make 3 year bargains, etc.

will there be an opportunity to explain our comments to anybody?

Thank you for removing layers from the perspectives and easing the way for transfer students. Will it be possible for a course listed in a theme (AILE) also to be listed under LES, particularly those with designations? This would help to address the paucity of LS courses. Of course, a course could only count in one category, if this were to be the case.

I appreciate the work of the GEA but am concerned about the implications of making such a quick turnaround in our General Education program. As a faculty member who attended numerous meetings, helped propose themes and worked on revising a number of courses for inclusion into our current Gen Ed program, it is inevitably dismaying to see this work dismantled. However, I also understand that this alone would not be a particularly good argument for keeping the current Gen Ed configuration. I think there are several other reasons that should compel us to take our time when considering substantial changes to Gen Ed.

My sense is that the root of many of the problems with our current system is that it was pushed through without careful consideration of its practical implications and without full faculty buy-in. I cannot help but wonder if the system would have worked better if it had been more fully discussed and if the transition had been better planned. For this reason, I am very wary of another rapid change to Gen Ed being pushed through without faculty buy-in and without full consideration of its implications for students, faculty and departments.

To give one example, issues for transfer students came to the fore as one of the main problems with the current Gen Ed configuration. I am not sure the newly proposed program solves these problems. While flexibility in terms of credit hour requirements in the sciences would alleviate some problems, and the Liberal Studies Experience greatly increases flexibility, the new "Integrative Learning Experience" seems by contrast quite rigid. For instance, if PSY 1200 is a part of various themes in this new component, what does one do with the transfer student who has already taken an Introductory Psychology course at another institution? Is that student automatically shut out of those themes because he or she has already taken the class but can't transfer credit in this case? This example of one class might seem a small problem but multiply it by various introductory classes and it could hamstring a significant number of students.

I also wonder if, under this new system, courses that are designated as part of the "Liberal Studies Experience" could be included in themes under the "Integrative Learning Experience". If so, it needs to be carefully articulated whether or not students can double count these courses. If they can double count them, then it will create the same great demand for certain designated courses that has been so criticized in the current system. If not, then it may push students to choose "Integrative Learning Experience" themes that do not contain these courses, so as to avoid potential problems with overlap and course availability. And if "Liberal Studies Experience" and "Integrative Learning Experience" courses cannot overlap at all, then I think this will create an odd disconnect in which we find that themes in the "Integrative Learning Experience" are bereft of basic areas of academic inquiry.

Finally, from a departmental standpoint these changes have the potential to throw off predicted enrollments and instructional needs in much the same way that was observed and criticized in the transition to our current Gen Ed system. In my department we have finally figured out how to manage enrollments in our current Gen Ed courses. The thought of starting anew with the guessing game is more than a little distressing.

I am reminded in this discussion of something that Theresa Sullivan said in regards to the debacle at UVA that so many of us in Higher Education followed earlier this year: "Sweeping action may be gratifying and may create the aura of strong leadership, but its unintended consequences may lead to costs that are too high to bear." I think we would do well to keep these words in mind as we contemplate, for the second time in 5 years, making sweeping changes to our Gen Ed program.

The proposal of the General Education Advisory Group to further erode science, mathematics, and quantitative literacy requirements in the General Education program runs contrary to the last 40 years of stated societal needs. Considering that a community college student has half the program time, but twice the quantitative literacy requirement clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of ours. What possible rationale can justify Appalachian having significantly weaker general education requirements than those of our community colleges?

A sweet moment.

The replacement of the Perspectives and their "nests" and restrictive complexity is a much-appreciated revision to General Education and we should applaud the committee for such a definitive step. The new scheme with its Component Areas that allow students free access to non-themed curriculum will offer much more flexibility for students and much less bottlenecks that our upperclassmen are experiencing now. I'm sure that academic advising is celebrating too.

Regarding the designations. The report says that the designations "would allow for a distribution of coursework from the liberal arts disciplines to be achieved".

The designations do the opposite. The three designations listed, Fine Arts, Historical Studies, and Literary Studies, depending where these courses fall in the component area, could eat up as much as 12 hours of coursework which would be equivalent to the full requirement of any one component area (e.g., Liberal Arts area requires 12 hours). As we experienced in the previous General Education scheme, these particular designation would continue to nudge the other liberal arts disciplines out of full participation in the General Education of our students.

Upon what authority or research findings do we make the decision that the three "designations" proposed are the only necessities of a well-educated student? Couldn't the same case be made around Philosophy or learning a new language?

The report acknowledges that the SACS standard 2.7.3 requires coursework in the social/behavioral sciences. But one could ask, why is the Historical Designation the only curricular area that satisfies this requirement in social/behavioral sciences? It is not. Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, and other important disciplines more than satisfy this requirement.

We could go one of two ways... back to the older check sheet with designations across all the liberal and scientific areas (e.g., language, lit, phil/rel, social science...) or drop designations altogether. Don't provide designations to a chosen few based on politics or some logic that lacks consensus among ASU's faculty.

The Faculty Coordinating Committee changes are much more reasonable and representative of the faculty teaching in GenEd. This represents a positive change to the governance of the system. However, the makeup of the FCC still requires the designation studies to have an overrepresentation in membership on these committees. This could further magnify the inequality among the offerings across disciplines and restrict student options.

It is still unclear why the existing structure of AP&P cannot simply handle the GenEd course adoption/revision process on its own. Why the extra layers of beaurocracy?

Finally, the Gen Ed council should revisit the Learning Objectives that were forced on the faculty community or do away with them altogether as they do not represent the full learning experience of our students.

After many, many focus groups, surveys, meetings, and more surveys I personally appreciate the earnest work of this most recent committee and would endorse these proposed changes with considerations to the concerns above.

Thank you,
