

**Notes (not a transcript) from the General Education Open Forum
Held Tuesday, October 9, 2012, IG Greer Auditorium
Sponsored by Faculty Senate and Academic Affairs
Kristin Hyle, notetaker**

Andy Koch (GJS and Faculty Senate) welcomed all in attendance and asked a representative from the General Education Advisory Group (GEAG) and the General Education Review Task Force (GERTF) to make some brief remarks listing the rationale of each group.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG) remarks regarding General Education Advisory Group:

Timeline and history of 2 committees that Andy Koch mentioned:

In November 2010, Interim Provost Baumhover appointed the General Education Review Task Force, which issued a report in July 2011 identifying 6 areas of concern.

In December 2011, Provost Gonzalez created the General Education Advisory Group to consider possible solutions to the concerns identified. She solicited feedback from students, faculty, and advisors across campus and received hundreds of suggestions and comments. These suggestions and comments were compiled by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning and shared with the members of the General Education Advisory Group.

Some thoughts of the group:

The current curriculum is a problem for student flexibility and transfer student concerns due to layers

Removing designation would help but would not make a big enough difference

We considered removing themes, but felt that it would remove the focus on integrative learning that is the centerpiece of our Gen Ed program.

Should break science inquiry away from the other perspectives and replace the other 3 perspectives with the 9 hour theme in the Appalachian Integrative Learning Experience and the 12 hour Liberal Studies Experience

A lot of faculty who have worked very hard to integrate in themes

Would also encourage themes to integrate more fully and deeply. The people teaching in themes would actually want to be in a theme rather than feeling they had to be in a theme in order for their course to attract students. The office of General Education could support integration in a more focused way.

To complete the Liberal Studies Experience, students would take 4 courses from across campus from at least 2 disciplines.

The change to the perspectives structure might take care of the problem of funneling students into particular themes because of the availability of designations. Over 1400 students completed a survey about what factors drive their choice of themes. The availability of designations in themes was the third

highest response. The placement of required major courses in themes and transfer/AP credit received more responses.

Some survey comments suggested adding new designations, but the committee's charge was not to overhaul the curriculum but to tweak based on specific identified concerns.

Math and Science- a recurring theme in the survey was that students coming in with a 3 hour math or science is a major problem.

There is a great deal of pressure from above to promote "seamless transfer" so that all or close to all courses taken anywhere will count toward requirements at our institution and students are not taking any redundant courses.

Paulette feels that having a different requirement for transfers gives the impression that the education of transfer students is not as important as the education of students who start at Appalachian as freshmen.

Changing the hours required for Quantitative Literacy and science could provide an opportunity for math and science departments to ease pressures to offer seats.

The science departments have now indicated a willingness to develop one hour labs to allow transfer students to make up that one hour.

In literature from the National Academy of Science, inquiry is a subset of literacy. More recent feedback from the science departments indicate that they feel that inquiry is more in keeping with what they do in their courses.

No remarks from a representative of the GERTF

Andy Koch (GJS and Faculty Senate) invited questions and comments from the audience. He asked that speakers give their name and department.

Diane Mines (ANT)- I can see the advantage of the increased flexibility of the proposed changes and can see the inelegance of adding designations. However, her department was concerned that students could get through the curriculum without taking a social science besides history; it seems that the social sciences could be erased from General Education to a heavy degree; they are currently well-represented in the Historical and Social and Local to Global perspectives.

Scott Marshall (GLY)- Is this the committee that made the proposals or the committee that is going to vote on them?

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- The two groups represented on the stage are the General Education Review Task Force and the General Education Advisory Group. General Education Council is the group which will vote on the recommendations. The Office of General Education has been distributing all feedback to the General Education Council as it comes in to inform their decision. Following the

standard process of curriculum change, the proposal from General Education Council will go to University College Council and then on to Academic Policies & Procedures.

Kim Hall (P&R)- I have a quick comment about procedure. Diane Mines asked a question but nobody responded.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- Diane had a legitimate concern, but I would be concerned about making global changes to the curriculum, essentially designing a new curriculum (the charge of the General Education Advisory Group was not to redesign the curriculum but to respond specifically to the concerns raised by the General Education Review Task Force and Faculty Senate). Adding a Social Science designation itself is not a huge change, but if the General Education Council were to start making additions to the curriculum instead of specific changes in response to the recommendations of the General Education Advisory Group, that could open a whole new can of worms.

Jim Denniston (PSY and GERTF)- the General Education Review Task Force recommended changing the designations to Humanities/Fine Arts and Social/Behavioral Sciences to be consistent with SACS requirements. They did not feel that the current Historical Studies designation requirement fully covers the scope of the social and behavioral sciences.

Howie Neufeld (BIO)- I am glad to hear that the sciences are moving toward offering a 1 hour lab to help with the transfer student issue. However, we need to think out of the box. We can't say that a student is fully educated in science by taking only 2 biology courses. We need to have the science requirement go across different sciences. We should not change the name to Science Literacy; the point is for students to do science, that's why the lab is so important. It's naïve to think that students taking science in their freshman and sophomore years get all the science they need. We have a junior writing requirement; at some time (maybe way in the future), we should have something similar for science, an upper-level class to teach students to apply science to what's happening in the real world. Democracy itself depends on science. Regarding the Quantitative Literacy requirement, I don't support dropping it to 3 hours; we need to ask ourselves, what is the quantitative requirement we want our students to come away with.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- The recommendation is not to reduce Quantitative Literacy to 3 or Science Inquiry/Literacy to 7, it is to create a range of 3-4 and 7-8 hours.

Jane Rex (Transfer Articulation and GEAG)- 40% of our incoming transfer students are coming from a 4 year institution; 14 UNC schools require a 3 hour math and 3 hour sciences. Also, keep in mind that 10% of our incoming freshmen have transfer credit.

Mike Hambourger (CHE)- I would like to mirror a lot of what Howie said. The Chemistry department is very concerned about the proposed changes. I would be very surprised to find any students who would take an 8th hour of science voluntarily. Allowing transfer students to take a 3 hour science would open up the possibility of a double standard for students. As far as quantitative goes, in the sciences, we are already seeing students with inferior math skills. I see no benefit in renaming inquiry to literacy. In order to have an informed citizenry, there are repeated calls for strengthening STEM disciplines. These proposals seem to be completely at odds with every report that suggests that we need to strengthen

science and math. The number of transfer students who would be affected is only 3.24% for the Chemistry department. This would mean weakening the education of 97% of our students for the benefit of 3%.

Tim Silver (HIS and GEAG)- As a historian, I don't know if I should even be talking about science; I teach environmental history and have an interest in science. There has been a lot of emphasis on the 1 hour. At UNC-Chapel Hill, there is a 7 hour science requirement with 1 lab; math requirement is 3 hours; is there any empirical data that you have (study of graduates or employers) that our students are better equipped than the students coming out of Chapel Hill?

Mike Hambourger (CHE)- Do you have data that students who come out with 7 hours would be any better off than with 8 hours?

Tim Silver (HIS and GEAG)- Why do we need 4 hours to do what UNC can do in 3 or 8 to do what they can do in 7?

Phillip Ardoin (GJS, GERTF, and GEAG)- One of the issues that several departments and faculty said to the General Education Review Task Force is that there are too many hours in Gen Ed; we need to cut Gen Ed from 44 to 36 or 40 hours. The General Education Review Task Force brought in many groups, and every group said that their department was important but the other departments were not as important. How do we balance those competing opinions? How do we get our students the broad range of courses and still graduate and get all their courses needed for their major?

Jennifer Burris (PHY) I am the chair of the Science Inquiry faculty coordinating committee. I was recently at Chapel Hill and looked at their 3 hour course without lab. I met with faculty and sat in on one of their classes for about 30 minutes. What they do at Chapel Hill is inquiry-based lectures happening in the classroom. It is not possible to do that on our campus because we do not have the resources to do that. She has heard from all chairs of departments that teach in science inquiry and there is a commitment to offer the one hour course for transfer students. She believes that the issue has now been taken off the table. As of the beginning of next semester, we can handle the students.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- All this feedback will be shared with Gen Ed Council for them to use in making their decisions.

Eric Marland (MAT)- In the 1960s, our Science requirement was 4 courses; now we are down to 2 courses. What we are doing is not working so we can hardly argue that lowering the number of hours in science would be helpful. The question is what do we do to make it better? The answer is not to reduce the number of hours.

Scott Marshall (GLY)- Science is inquiry based and inquiry happens in the lab. Appalachian is not equipped to offer the lab-lecture combos. All it takes is for 1 department to offer a 3 credit class and students will flock to it. We have done some cursory analysis and it seems to be an administrative issue. The sciences have agreed to make this commitment.

Ray Williams (BIO and GEAG)- I don't agree that this would be an administrative issue at all; over the years several science chairs have said they would accept 7 hours of science and would not offer the additional hour for students. Changing to a range of 7-8 hours would not stifle innovation in how to teach science. The problem may not lie just in the amount of science but in how we teach science. Biology teaches most of the General Education science to non-majors. We would love to be able to dump some of those students to other departments for their Science Inquiry courses. Are there ways that we can use resources better? Even if one department offered a 3 hour course, there would be no way for that department to teach all students. There are already a lot of things happening in lectures (even on this campus) that require students to do inquiry-based learning (i.e. use of case studies). I don't think there will be a flood of proposals to offer 7 hour themes, but this could open the door to innovative ways to teach science.

Jennifer Burris (PHY)- Nobody is suggesting that we are simply trying to be different. The physics literature definitely supports inquiry based lectures, but it requires massive amounts of resources (multiple people in the classroom or smaller classes). I don't think those resources will be coming.

Scott Marshall (GLY)-We have to remember that we're not a liberal arts college.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- Actually, we are a liberal arts institution with a responsibility to provide students with a broad-based liberal education.

Marianne Adams (T&D)- My department is heavily involved in Gen Ed, but not in science. The feedback in my department was positive for the possibility for 7-8 hours in Science in that it does address transfer issues. There are a lot of transfer students in the performing arts; 7-8 hours would allow departments to design new courses; Theatre and Dance has designed new courses that are not embedded in the major.

Sue Keefe (ANT)- While I appreciate all the discussion about science, there is still a science requirement. There is no social science requirement. The current General Education curriculum does have the Historical and Social and Local to Global perspectives which include social sciences. Now we have designed social science out of the curriculum; I suggest that we add a Social Science designation or require that students take at least one Social Science course as part of the Appalachian Integrative Learning Experience or the Liberal Studies Experience.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- You make a compelling argument. I would encourage your department to put together a statement that addresses this issue.

Cindy Liutkus (GLY)- We have heard from several departments, mostly math and science, and it sounds like most of the departments have weighed in. We have heard from members of the Council of Chairs and they are not in favor of this. Individuals involved in teaching these courses are opposed to this change. It is not just faculty members, it is multiple organizations across campus.

Ozzie Ostwalt (P&R)- Actually, Council of Chairs has not formally discussed this. Some colleagues and I have written to Faculty Senate and the advisory group. First, the idea of creating themes with gateway

and capstone courses reduces student flexibility if the student has 2 of 3 courses and the order of taking courses predetermined. It runs counter to the integrative model and the need for greater flexibility. While we support the FYS model, we would like to see a model that would allow the disciplines to offer their own FYS and reserve a few FYS on the current model for truly at risk students. That would return curricular decisions to the disciplines. The Council of Chairs had a series of motions they were going to consider but tabled them until after this forum.

Jill Ehnenn (ENG and chair of Academic Policies on Faculty Senate)- Although Senate is not an official part of the curricular approval process, they became involved because there was feeling that faculty did not have a voice in process. There is now a senator from each department on campus. The advisory group proposal came to the Academic Policies subcommittee, which put forth a series of motions going piece by piece through the recommendations. Faculty Senate postponed a vote on the motions at their September meeting to get more information; they postponed a vote again at the October meeting so they could consider the feedback from this forum. Senate can make changes to the recommendations; if the curriculum truly belongs to the faculty, we should listen to the science folks and take that recommendation off the table. Senate can recommend that a social science designator be added. Senate can recommend that First Year Seminar be moved into the departments; the GERTF had recommended changes to First Year Seminar. There is a structural block in getting tenure track faculty to teach FYS because departments are not responsible for getting their own courses scheduled. If every single department participated (3000 students, half spring, half fall) each department would be responsible for 1.5 courses per semester. I'm not saying that we should do away with FYS as an office or coordinator. If FYS were administered by departments, we could get the increased quality that we want.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- I spoke with the Provost and asked if we should be revising the recommendations based on feedback. She asked that we follow the standard approval process. The General Education Council will consider the recommendations as laid out by GEAG in the process. The General Education Council may make changes in the process of approving it.

Paul Gates (COM and GERTF)- It is important to point out that all the comments save one have been from the College of Arts and Sciences. The attendance at this forum is similarly distributed. All comments have been directed to the GEAG; the GERTF plays a role here, too. After the GERTF had submitted its report, a committee was formed of the chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences to discuss the recommendations. 14 of 15 chairs supported the GERTF recommendations; some supported them strongly. That should receive some consideration, which it seems not to have. I urge you all not to lose sight of that.

Lucinda McCray (HIS)- I am very interested in the recommendation to redesign FYS such that it can be handled within the departments. From my perspective one of the greatest difficulties with FYS is sourcing it. It makes me nervous that there is a recommendation that it should get more resources but that we can't do anything about the funding. The recommendation suggests continuing it as an unfunded mandate.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- It aids with retention.

Lucinda McCray (HIS)- I certainly hope that's true since it costs enough. I hope we get a commitment for funding for tenure-track lines for departments that provide faculty for FYS or move it to the departments.

Kim Hall (P&R and AP&P)- It seems that groups are being asked to approve recommendations without clarity on how things will get approved. I would like to see the specific approval process before voting up or down on it.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- The General Education Council will be charged with course approvals. We had planned that the meeting after the vote on recommendations would be devoted to fleshing out the approval process. I think we need to flip the order of that. We have had those discussions with the General Education Council and envision it to work this way: in fall 2013, for courses currently in the Aesthetic, Historical and Social, and Local to Global perspectives, departments would fill out proposal forms (different from current form) requesting to be included in one of the 2 new components of the curriculum (Appalachian Integrative Learning Experience or Liberal Studies Experience). Everybody who wants to participate in the Liberal Studies Experience or in a theme for the Appalachian Integrative Learning Experience would fill out the form. We would have been doing the course renewal process in the 2013-14 academic year anyway and General Education Council has not yet discussed what renewal process would look like. The original plan was to carry out the renewal process during the 2012-13 academic year, but that was delayed by a year due to the upcoming SACS visit. As part of the proposal, courses would outline how they meet General Education goals and course-level learning outcomes; General Education is phasing out the 21 program level learning outcomes.

Kim Hall (P&R and AP&P)- For people who wanted to be a part of themes, there were some faculty who knew about themes that were coming up and others who had to scramble to get into a theme at the last minute. Has any assessment been done on the effectiveness of the themes themselves? What was the rationale for including them in the new recommendations? What data do you have on themes?

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- We have not assessed on the theme level; we have assessed at program level. However, we know from theme coordinators which themes are active and which are working to enhance integration within the theme.

Bill Bauldry (MAT)- When one reduces the number of hours, they should be able to make some learning outcomes optional.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- When phasing out the 21 program level learning outcomes, we are asking each course to establish learning outcomes related to at least one of the four General Education goals

Bill Bauldry (MAT)- I was thinking more specifically of the definitions of a quantitative literacy and science inquiry course.

Victor Mansure(MUS)- I am glad to see the 21 learning outcomes go away. Please expand on how each course coming up with its own learning outcomes will address the General Education goals. Were the 21 learning outcomes put in by AP&P? Does another body need to consider this?

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- There is a question about whose purview it falls under to change learning outcomes. It seems logical that General Education Council would change the learning outcomes. I will be meeting with Kern Maass of AP&P to discuss this.

Victor Mansure (MUS)- If General Education Council is not allowed to get rid of the 21 program level learning outcomes, we will need to revise the calendar for when this happens. How these learning outcomes intersect with courses is a major problem. If we are not given permission to do this right away, we can't do this by November; one of the reasons we have problems is that we moved too quickly last time.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- It makes sense that General Education Council, as the body charged with guiding the program, is charged with determining the learning outcomes.

Kim Hall (P&R and AP&P)- I'm on AP&P and I hope this does come before AP&P. I don't think General Education is like other programs. It has impacts across campus. We should be looking at integration across the curriculum. I feel that learning outcomes should be considered by AP&P.

Mike Mayfield (Academic Affairs)- Regarding resources for First Year Seminar, 30 tenure track lines have already been given to colleges to pay for faculty to teach FYS. If the deans did not distribute the money the way you would wish, that is a separate issue.

Mark Ginn (MAT)- From the resources which were given, I gave senior faculty to FYS to have our own classes taught by Master's level faculty.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- Chapel Hill has their FYS taught by all tenured faculty members.

Andy Heckert (GLY)- You have been trying to get feedback but are not doing a lot to seem that what people are saying is being taken in. Many of the problems were pointed out as problems 4-5 years before today but nothing has been done before today. What happened to the comments received via the online portal? [The Provost sent a message to all faculty and staff on October 10 with an attachment that included all comments from the online portal.] I don't see enough to feel comfortable that things are not going into a black box. No one is even here to record what is being said today. [It was indicated that the Assistant Director of General Education was taking notes.]

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- Every piece of feedback received has been posted to the General Education Council ASULearn site. In addition to the General Education Council members, all Faculty Coordinating Committee members have access to that site, as does at least one representative from each college dean's office or advising area. [All feedback has now been posted to a public website so that it is viewable by those who are not members of the General Education Council ASULearn site. The Provost sent a link to all faculty and staff on October 16.]

Victor Mansure (MUS)- As much as the proposal process can be streamlined, that would be fantastic, since I anticipate a flood of proposals next year. Specifically, if a course is already in General Education, asking to get into the Liberal Studies Experience should be really streamlined.

Paulette Marty (Gen Ed and GEAG)- The process to articulate course level learning outcomes has been vetted but not yet approved by the General Education Council.