

reduce core for transfers? * academic unit? Crosstabulation

			academic unit?					Total
			CAS	SAS	SOBU	SON	other or unidentified	
reduce core for transfers?	strongly agree	Count	9	9	1	1	2	22
		% w ithin academic unit?	12.9%	32.1%	11.1%	16.7%	100.0%	19.1%
	agree	Count	41	11	7	4	0	63
		% w ithin academic unit?	58.6%	39.3%	77.8%	66.7%	.0%	54.8%
	disagree	Count	15	4	1	1	0	21
		% w ithin academic unit?	21.4%	14.3%	11.1%	16.7%	.0%	18.3%
	strongly disagree	Count	5	4	0	0	0	9
		% w ithin academic unit?	7.1%	14.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	7.8%
Total	Count	70	28	9	6	2	115	
	% w ithin academic unit?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Academic unit?

CAS **75 (60%)**
SOBU **10 (8%)**
SON **6 (5%)**
SAS **29 (23%)**
Other or
Unidentified **5 (4%)**
Total **125**

Teach general education courses? (CAS faculty only)

Yes **56 (76%)**
No **18 (24%)**
Total **74**

GENERAL EDUCATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

In accord with suggestions by the VPAA, and at the request of the Faculty Senate, the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) is considering possible modifications to our current General Education Program. To that end, the AAC will ask the curriculum committees of the College and Schools (except Law) and the General Education Committee to discuss General Education reform. Each curriculum committee, with input from the faculty it serves, will answer the same set of questions provided by the AAC. Attached is a previously circulated discussion paper by Dr. Wasserstein on that subject.

The survey that follows is intended to gather information that should provide additional guidance to the curriculum committees and to the AAC. It consists of twenty-eight questions and some explanatory paragraphs. Please complete it and return it to Jorge Nobo (jorge.nobo@washburn.edu) no later than May 15, 2006. As soon as they are available, the survey results will be made available to each committee and to all faculty.

Of course, participation in this survey is purely voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Results will be reported only in aggregate. You may print the survey, mark your responses, and mail it to Dr. Nobo, or you may fill it out in Word by marking your responses with an X and then returning the document to Dr. Nobo electronically. If you prefer the latter, your response will be printed and then your original email deleted to protect your anonymity.

1. How satisfied are you with the current General Education Program taken as a whole?
 1. Very satisfied
 2. Satisfied
 3. Dissatisfied
 4. Very dissatisfied

2. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward keeping or changing the current General Education Program?
 1. Keep it without any changes
 2. Keep it with minor changes
 3. Keep it with major changes
 4. Replace it with a significantly new program

The current General Education Program requires that each General Education course target at least three of nine General Education skills. There is no requirement that each student develop all nine skills. It may be desirable to eliminate some of the nine skills or to subsume some of them under a smaller number of more broadly conceived General Education skills (e.g. reading intelligently, writing effectively, and reasoning soundly). The following set of questions addresses this aspect of the current Program.

3. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward keeping or changing this aspect of the current General Education Program?

1. Keep it without any changes
2. Keep it, but reduce the number of skills by subsuming some under others
3. Replace it with a significantly new set of skills

Questions 4-12: For each of the General Education skills listed below, please indicate whether the skill should be kept as a separate General Education skill.

4. *reading intelligently*

Yes Maybe No

5. *writing effectively*

Yes Maybe No

6. *listening sensitively*

Yes Maybe No

7. *speaking clearly*

Yes Maybe No

8. *thinking creatively*

Yes Maybe No

9. *reasoning mathematically and understanding numerical data*

Yes Maybe No

10. *processing information in terms both of synthesis and analysis*

Yes Maybe No

11. *interpreting and assessing human values*

Yes Maybe No

12. *solving problems using methods of analysis considering evidence, relevance and validity*

Yes Maybe No

13. Should (a) *thinking creatively*, (b) *processing information in terms of both synthesis and analysis*, and (c) *solving problems using the methods of analysis considering evidence, relevance and validity* be subsumed under a more general skill, such as *reasoning soundly*.

Yes Maybe No

14. Should (a) *writing effectively*, (b) *speaking clearly*, and (c) *listening sensitively* be subsumed under a more general skill, such as *communicating clearly, sensitively and effectively*?

Yes Maybe No

15. In general, is a shorter list of broadly defined General Education skills desirable?

Yes Maybe No

The current General Education Program requires that the primary content of a General Education course be some significant area, aspect, or dimension of either the world of nature or the world of human ideas, aspirations, values and institutions. It also requires that each General Education course taught by an approved department, discipline, or interdisciplinary area be approved by the General Education Committee. It may be desirable to change how the areas of knowledge are defined or how courses qualify for the General Education Program. The following set of questions addresses this aspect of the current program.

16. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward keeping or changing this aspect of the current General Education Program?

1. Keep it without any changes
2. Keep it with minor changes
3. Keep it with major changes
4. Replace it with a significantly new conception of content appropriate to General Education courses.

17. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward keeping or changing the current emphasis, under *the world of human ideas, etc.*, on understanding how ideas have been developed and expressed in history, the arts, literature, philosophy, religion and the social sciences (this includes understanding how human beings have existed at other times and in other cultures)?

1. Keep it without any changes
2. Keep it with minor changes
3. Keep it with major changes
4. Replace it with a significantly new conception of content appropriate to General Education courses

18. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward keeping or changing the current emphasis, under *the world of nature*, on understanding the scientific method and the physical world, knowing something about the earth, the nature of human beings as a biological species, and comprehending the implications of science and technology in our society?

1. Keep it without any changes
2. Keep it with minor changes
3. Keep it with major changes
4. Replace it with a significantly new conception of content appropriate to General Education courses.

19. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward a recommendation that only lower division courses should count as General Education courses?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree.

20. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward a recommendation that only courses taught by approved departments, disciplines, or interdisciplinary areas should count as General Education courses?

1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. disagree
4. strongly disagree

21. Which of the following best describes your attitude toward a recommendation that students should complete at least twelve of the required General Education hours in each of their first three academic years?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Dr. Wasserstein's Discussion Paper (attached) on General Education ("Creating a "Signature" General Education Program at Washburn University") includes five specific proposals. Each of the following questions attempts to determine your current attitude toward a specific proposal.

22. Keep the total number of hours in and the make up of the distribution requirements for each baccalaureate degree as is.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

23. Require a 12-credit-hour core (not necessarily any of those suggested by the VPAA).

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

24. Allow the core courses to count toward distribution requirements, with stipulations depending upon the nature of the core courses chosen.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

25. Eliminate the “course specific approach” to general education, and return to allowing all courses taught in a given discipline to count toward the appropriate distribution. (This thereby eliminates many transfer problems.)

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

26. Require students who transfer in 60 hours or more to take only two of the four required core courses. Students who transfer in 30–59 hours would be required to take three of the four core courses.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

27. In which academic unit are you a faculty member?

1. College of Arts and Sciences
2. School of Applied Studies
3. School of Business
4. School of Nursing

28. If you are a College of Arts and Sciences faculty member, do you regularly teach a general education course?

1. yes
2. no

General Education 2006 Questionnaire

2. It is tough for transfer students.
3. Keep it, but reduce the number of skills by subsuming some under others or replace it with similar smaller set.
3. Preferred: get rid of the skills requirement- unworkable.
3. Add Technology.
4. No – they ought to be able to do this on arrival.
6. Define it.
6. How do you answer this?
6. What does sensitivity mean?
6. What does this even mean?
7. Especially
7. No – although questions 4-7 are essential, they primarily communication skills. So why not combine these individual skills under one skill set...i.e communication skills.
8. Maybe – seems advanced, not basic building block.
8. No – this was originally proposed as, and should have been “thinking critically”!
8. No – asking to much.
8. Difficult to answer.
9. Yes – I would simply refer to this as quantitative skills.
10. Maybe – seems advanced, not a building block.
10. Maybe – should be worded differently.
11. Whose values.
11. Yes – but how would we measure this?
12. Yes – emphasize that we are trying to impact qualitative analysis.
13. No – this is repetitive.
13. Maybe – “soundly” not sure what that is.
13. No – Who would you answer that?
13. No – a and b are more specific than “reasoning soundly”, c can be got rid of altogether.

13. No – Thinking creatively and processing information on terms of synthesis and analysis, with using evidence, are not the same. Two of the three requires you to learn how to effectively read, interpret, and apply evidence. You could combine b and c, but leave as its own skill.
14. Yes – So long as writing effectively is stressed.
14. No – writing must continue to be its own clearly defined skill. Combining it with others makes it possible for faculty, through their courses, to expect less from the students ‘ writing abilities, which does a disservice to students as life long learners.
14. Yes – but emphasize writing.
14. Yes – might work.
14. No – this is repetitive.
14. Maybe – I’d at least keep writing separate, many people speak clearly but can’t write or the converse.
14. No – I teach seniors who cannot write a coherent sentence....do not drop effective writing
14. I like a, b and c since they have specific forms of communication. Keeping “communicating” is its generic form allows for different interpretations.

15. Yes – I still see this is something that should happen naturally when a sound Gen ed distribution of courses is taught well. No need to specify.
15. Yes – but the list should not be so broad that it can’t be assessed – statements of intent are not good enough – except for those who can’t read, listen, or think!
15. Maybe – but they have to remain specific.
16. Keep it with major changes – or replace with similar.
16. Keep it without any changes – seems to me to work ok as is.
16. Replace it with a significantly new conception of content appropriate to Gen Ed courses – but VPAA Wasserstein would probably have to reverse the edict of VPAA Sheley and pull the franchise of the Gen Ed Committee to do this!
19. Strongly Disagree – we should try to stop being a junior college.
19. Disagree – With appropriate prerequisites and NO pass/fail option.
19. But they should be the bulk of Gen ed courses.
19. Agree – but shouldn’t prerequisites take care of this?
20. Strongly Disagree – once the learning goals and educational objectives have been defined, departments that are competent should be allowed to offer the courses.
20. As approve to what?
20. Strongly Disagree – college of arts and science only.

- 21. Strongly Disagree – we are not their parents. Restrictive and controlling rules protect some but limit the free choice of others to design an educational plan that best meets their own need. Better training of advisors would solve this problem without creating more stifling bureaucracy.
- 21. Strongly Agree – I think all Gen Ed's should be completed before the senior year.
- 21. Disagree – this should be program by program; in some programs perhaps students need to save Gen Ed Courses to fill in at the end.
- 21. Unsure (there should be a number for this response).
- 21. Agree – given that Gen ed courses are lower level, this makes perfect sense.
- 21. Strongly Agree – first two years.
- 22. Agree – probably, but small changes might be in order.
- 23. Strongly Agree – 12 hour core including PE 198 and freshman experience course which includes how to find and evaluate academic resources (i.e library research)
- 24. Agree – only IF the core passes muster- which I don't really approve of
- 24. Don't agree with core.
- 24. No opinion.
- 25. Strongly Agree – very strongly agree, remove lower division only requirement as well
- 25. Disagree - this is only an administrative problem; we can identify.
- 25. Strongly Agree – there should be an organized, effective, assessable and accountable way to do skills- done right not all 42 hours would need to be part of this.
- 25. Strongly Disagree – this would not be general education.
- 25. Agree – I would have really checked “maybe”. I am really not sure about this one.
- 25. Maybe – in addition to the core.
- 26. Agree – again this is only IF the core passes muster.
- 26. Don't agree with core.
- 26. Agree – with rules for acceptance and passed with “C” or higher.
- 27. Mabee Library
- 28. Yes - university requirement

Additional Comments

*If we want students to achieve nine (or however many) skills then they need to take courses teaching/covering all nine. A matrix is needed listing all Gen Ed courses and what skills they cover. Students would have to select not only among distribution areas, but so as to have been instructed on all nine skills.

*The items marked NO are not exclusive to Gen at all. The maybes are not only included in Gen but in other curriculum as well.

*I feel most strongly about my reply to question 25 – Strongly Agree (YES)

*Second most strongly about my reply to question 23 – Strongly Agree

*The issue here is what we mean by Gen Ed. In most departments, lower level courses are also foundational courses, surveys, broad in their range. Upper-level courses are usually not. To be specific, in History the surveys (the only courses that count as Gen Ed) offer deliberately broad coverage, establishing basic knowledge of the contours of the past; upper-level are often, in contrast, narrow in temporal or geographic focus, and specific in the range of issues treated. Counting only the former as “general education” makes perfect sense, because such an understanding presume a broad liberal education as a goal, consistent with all such practice from the Renaissance humanist forward. If, as the “Discussion Paper” suggests, we abandon all this in favor of allowing any course in discipline to counts as “general education,” I must insist that we change the title of the whole program to be consistent with what we would then really be offering: “general, or sometimes very specific, education.” #19

*This would not, of course, disallow changes in which departments or discipline could offer such courses, given that the mechanism for such changes is already in place. I am not entirely opposed to considering possibilities for expanding the list of approved disciplines. It just makes no sense, however, to suggest abandoning that it only be approved units who can do this (do we really want “unapproved” units to do so?) # 20

*My problem with this proposal is two-fold. First, I have trouble trying to conceptualize what such core courses would really look like in practice. All the examples in the “Discussion Paper” sounds reasonable enough in the abstract, but when I try to think through the details that lead toward practice difficulties of all sorts arise, from how (and which) different departments figure into the equation to how a syllabus for something like, say, “The Life of the Mind” might be designed. My conclusion is that most of these courses look good only in the abstract; since this document has been under construction for some time, there is no reason to think other courses would do any better. Second, I am not entirely comfortable with calling a few courses “core”. I would rather see us experiment with (and probably experiment with for awhile) these sort of alternative courses, and just make them one of the Gen ed options, not treating them as core requirements different from other Gen ed offerings. #23

*8,10,12 Constitute one skill set having to do with logic, observation, analysis, synthesis and insight-call it intellectual consciousness

*A list of separable skills has always struck me as ludicrous in connection with what should be integrative liberal arts

*More team teaching, more interdisciplinary options for Gen ed

*4-12 should be in all courses

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY GENERAL EDUCATION QUESTIONS TO ACADEMIC UNITS FALL, 2006

College of Arts and Sciences

RESPONSES TO GENERAL EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Source: Soc. Sci. Division, CAS Curriculum Committee, and individual faculty.

1. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS GENERAL EDUCATION SHOULD SERVE THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN YOUR ACADEMIC UNIT?

- expose students to a broad based liberal education experience
- create a basic set skill set of reading, writing and information processing
- foster a "global awareness" among students-promote creativity
- train students to access knowledge (training in research skills)
- promote education as citizenship/leadership
- remediate the deficiencies of secondary education

Also: to promote a university graduate who can speak intelligently about a wide range of topics; how to see the world from the perspective of different academic "world view",; i.e., physical and social sciences, humanities, arts, etc.; career exploration

2. HOW WELL DO YOU THINK OUR CURRENT GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MEETS THE NEEDS YOU IDENTIFIED IN RESPONDING TO QUESTION ONE?

ON USING A 5 POINT SCALE WHERE 1 = VERY WELL, 2= WELL, 3 = FUNCTION, 4 = POOR, AND 5 = VERY POOR, FACULTY RESPONSES CLUSTERED AROUND THE CENTER (mode was a 3.) The majority believes that the general education program needs to be retooled to meet criteria in # 1

Also: to a limited degree, it does strive to get students to see the world from different perspectives and it tries to enable a student to speak to a wide variety of topics. Gen. Ed. is probably not rigorous enough. It needs to provide the broad foundation prior to entry into a major rather than something the student is forced to take before s/he can take the "fun stuff."

3. WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, DO YOU PERCEIVE AS BEING NECESSARY TO IMPROVE THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT WASHBURN UNIVERSITY?

- maintain commitment to strong liberal education focus
- engage in proactive advising
- support foreign language requirement for ALL students
- reduce adjuncts (hire more full time faculty)
- restrict spectrum of gen. ed courses ("reduced buffet")
- require gen. ed to be met within the first 65 hours
- require a "freshman experience" course
- require a writing intensive course and/or a writing component in all courses
- require a global "awareness" component
- expand and improve library services

ALSO: de-emphasize early declaration of majors; establish performance criteria within Gen.Ed for acceptance into a major; more rigorous grading standards; needs to become a steppingstone to a field of study; it should allow students and faculty to answer the following question about the student: "Do you have the requisite combination of intellect, organization, perseverance, and dedication necessary to become a candidate for a college degree?" And, consider basic skills sets like reading comprehension, writing composition, mathematical and scientific reasoning as PRE-REQUISITES for admission rather than being the core of General Education..

ALSO: Get rid of the General Education Committee, get rid of skills, and return to old system in which any course in an approved discipline would count for General Education.

4. HOW WELL, IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE CURRENT PROGRAM MEET THOSE EXPECTATIONS? HOW MIGHT IT BETTER SERVE THEM?

Majority of the faculty was somewhere between functional and poor with mode being poor - See # 3 for ways to better serve students.

After the Social Science Division met, Bill Roach circulated an article from the Chronicle regarding Harvard's proposed General Education program which would move away from academic disciplines and broaden the subject matter with such courses as "Reason and Faith," "The Ethical Life," "Cultural Traditions and Cultural Change," Life Science, and Physical Science. A number of people seem interested in something similar for a core here.

One set of such courses could look like this:

1. GLOBALIZATION - trade issues, multinationals, cultural issues (cultural imperialism), governance, employment, etc.

2. SCIENCE, ETHICS, AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP -investigate the major conflicts among these: the A-bomb, evolution, stem cell research, cloning, etc.

3. THE EDUCATED PERSON - we talk about this among ourselves but our students know nothing about this. What are the origins of our educational structure, what is a liberal education? What does education require? The impact of the democratization of education. The tension between vocation and education?

4. THE FUTURE - What will the future look like for our students?

5. CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYTICAL REASONING - we all say that we teach these things but do we really? These are difficult concepts and need to be taught in a step-by-step manner if we wish to guarantee that students actually develop and use these skills.

POST SCRIPT: The biggest obstacle of ANY General Education program is that faculty essentially write such programs for themselves, not for students. Most of our students do not agree with 95% of what has been written above. They have learned to be passive receptors of whatever faculty dispense in class rather than active learners. To be sure, some overcome this, but most do not. So ANY Gen. Ed. program has to ask how it can convert students into learners without the use of cattle prods.

School of Applied Studies

Report from the SAS Curriculum and Policy Committee

October 19th, 2006

Report to the AAVP on General Education SAS Curriculum and Policy Committee

There are two sections to this document. The first section shows responses to the questions posed by Dr. Wasserstein to the various school/college curriculum committees. The second section responds to issue of accreditation and their relationship to general education.

Section A. SAS responses to the AAVP's Questions

There were numerous responses to each of these questions from each department. The comments below are representative of the various viewpoints. In some cases where comments were similar or duplicative they were combined or omitted. The following is therefore a listing of types of comments rather than an inclusive listing of all comments.

Summary Statement:

A few things appear to be broadly supported within the SAS. No one seems to support a course specific general education program. While a few specific courses might be required (e.g., freshman composition course, college level mathematics course), the preference appears to be towards areas of knowledge (i.e., values, technology, art, natural science, etc.) and skill development (i.e., writing, communication, reasoning/critical thinking). Many faculty commented on the need to look at diversity and global issues in an ever changing technological world.

1. What are the most important ways General Education should serve the needs of students in your academic unit?

- * General education should provide students core areas of knowledge related to: art, literature, performance; civilizations; natural sciences; social sciences; and quantitative studies. General education should also provide competence in modes of inquiry which should include: ethical inquiry, cross cultural inquiry, communication via a foreign language, analysis/synthesis skills, and writing.
- * General education should provide students both knowledge and skills related to understanding self and others within the realms of the personal, the community, and the world.
- * Should provide a liberal foundation; serve as a backdrop against which students can think about their more specific area of interest.
- * It should focus on critical thinking skills, reasoning, logic, provide an introduction to research, social justice issues with which all educated members of society should be familiar.
- * I believe the following are the most important ways General Education should serve the needs of students. General Education should help develop our students into well-rounded, well-educated individuals who are able to communicate logically and precisely through the written word and through speaking. Along with this, General Education should endeavor to help our students become critical thinkers and problem solvers. They need to be able to think and problem solve outside the box. Also, our students need to know how to use technology. They need to know how to find and investigate knowledge sources and they need to know how to make professional presentations using that knowledge.
- * Social work education requires a knowledge base in the liberal arts (see attached Accreditation Standards).
- * General education is an integral part of the development of the professional radiographer. The content of general education needs to be designed to assist in the development of communication, awareness of human diversity, scientific inquiry, critical thinking and judgment skills. Knowledge gained from general education serves to enhance the content and application of the radiography curriculum.
- * General education is needed to provide students with opportunities to explore broad areas of commonly held knowledge and to prepare them to contribute to society through personal, social and professional interactions with others.

General education should provide intellectual flexibility and knowledge to support lifelong learning that will prepare students for success in a rapidly changing world (excepted from ASRT, 2002)

- * Tailor the nature of the communication to maximize understanding in the intended audience, including those with different levels of education and different cultural backgrounds.

2. How well do you think our current General Education program meets the needs you identified in responding to question one?

- * It looks a little confusing and a little overwhelming, not well-defined. This program, in combination with the TE, seems like a bit much.

- * Beyond learning certain skill sets, it is not known if critical thinking and problem solving are being addressed. Students need to be provided with a knowledge base; however, they also need to know how to analyze and use the information to solve practical problems.

- * The current General Education curriculum does not meet the needs of the students.

- * Writing is not sufficiently addressed in most general education courses.

- * More attention should be given to critical thinking and communication skills.

- * General Education courses are typically 100 level introductory courses which do not allow students to acquire critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and other skills necessary to prepare students for a role in society. While some students select general education courses that in fact provide a strong basis to well meet the above competencies, others do not. General education courses are limited to only a few “course specific” areas, (where other courses excluded from the current general education program would better prepare students for the above standards). Only a few of the “course specific courses actually meet the educational needs of social work students in liberal education. Many others do not, but are taken by students simply because they have limited choices. Adding to the limitations of courses is the

problem of access to courses regarding the total number of sections offered, the times they are offered, and limited format for these courses. Few are offered on-line, or during the evening/week-end hours.

3. What changes, if any, do you perceive as being necessary to improve the General Education program at Washburn University?

- * Integrate the TE with the general education program to produce something that is thematically integrated.
- * Promote the development and provision of cross discipline general education courses.
- * Many general education programs and some accreditation standards focus on the clarification and understanding of values. Our general education program should include values clarification as an essential core outcome.
- * General education courses should be offered at both the lower and upper division level allowing students to choose courses which build on previously acquired skills and knowledge.
- * Add a component that focuses on the knowledge and understanding of how other cultures, global issues, and religions are affecting our society and this small world we live in.
- * I think developing and identifying certain courses specifically to accomplish the General Education objectives as outlined in the catalog would work better (some places call these Core Courses). I think that a First-Year Experience Program would also be helpful to build community among new students.
- * Possibly use and focus upon the five learning outcomes identified by the Higher Learning Commission.
- * Move away from course specific general education distribution requirements and focus more on conceptual areas and skill competencies.
- * If we are selling "Transformational Experience" to prospective students, then changes in the General Education curriculum should support this WU vision.

* The current general education program contains inherent barriers for students. First, general education specific courses are limited, and students are forced to select among only those courses that “count” at the exclusion of liberal studies courses that may actually better prepare them for the profession of social work that are also regularly offered at Washburn University but not “specific” to the current general education program. Second, and very significantly, students with prior coursework from other universities or community college programs often find that valid liberal arts courses previously taken at other universities are not counted within our current general education program. Thus, they must take additional (sometimes duplicative) coursework at additional expense in order to earn their degree at Washburn. Third, it is felt that there are insufficient courses offered in the physical sciences and mathematics tailored for non-science majors.

* There are insufficient supportive/remedial/tutorial services connected with some of the general education courses to help students develop the skills desired as learning outcomes that are presumed to be intact as basic academic preparation of social work major courses. This is especially apparent in skills in quantitative reasoning and written/ verbal expression fundamentally necessary for critical thinking. Other areas notably deficient in the general education preparation for social work majors concerning knowledge, values and skill preparation to live in a “global, diverse, technological society” are addressed in the next question.

* A few very preliminary suggestions were offered by the SW faculty: make foreign language training, particularly Spanish, a requirement; develop courses relevant to understanding of current social problems and global dynamics, offer basic “how to use technology” courses as general education, and provide opportunities for students to have a greater exposure to diverse cultures and lifestyles within the United States and on a global basis.

* Create a General Education program that insures that students can analyze a problem by identifying and evaluating alternative solutions, logically formulate and evaluate solutions to problems and arguments in support of specific positions, and read with comprehension.

* Eliminate the course specific general education provision. Allow a greater range of courses and topics to address the competencies.

* Use the four Transformational Experiences as a framework for the general education distribution. Students would take three courses in each of the four Transformational Experiences for their general education distribution. The courses could come from any department and any school in the university. Courses which are generally offered at most colleges could be utilized by transfer students.

4. We are expected to ensure that our General Education program contains assessable learning objectives. In particular, we need to demonstrate that our program prepares students to live in “a global, diverse, technological society” (Higher Learning Commission [North Central] criterion). How well, in your opinion, does the current program meet these expectations? How might it better meet them?

* It would be difficult to derive assessable learning objectives from those 9 skills in the catalog, especially across courses.

* It is not clear that all nine skills are addressed for each or even most students. The current program is broke and woefully inadequate to achieving the HLC objectives.

* The current general education program does not meet these criteria as set forth by the HLC and currently does not appear to allow an adequate measurement of student outcomes.

* To meet these objectives, diversity courses and courses that provide an understanding of culture and technology should be required.

* The current General Education program is tough to assess because no relationship has been established between the General Education curriculum and preparing students to live in “a global, diverse, technological society”.

* The consensus among SW faculty in our discussion of this was “very poorly”. It was noted that the current general education curriculum offers very little or no exposure to understanding global issues. It was observed that students had very little understanding of basic geography of the United States, much less the world! Knowledge about particular socio-economic-cultural domains is inadequate as a basis to begin to comprehend global dynamics and issues

basic to social problems. [It was noted that there are many wonderful opportunities for student exposure through a variety of campus and community programs that expand education in this arena, but this is certainly not a part of our current general education program and sadly not utilized by most students.]

* Regarding diversity, it is the Social Work department's observation that the current general education program does not foster exposure and learning that could lead to a greater appreciation and respect of diverse cultures, lifestyles, values, beliefs, religions and various populations within the City of Topeka, the State of Kansas, regions within the United States, urban vs. rural diversity United States, much less in the world. It is a sad fact that most of our students do not bother to read newspapers, view newscasts, or indicate an awareness of current events! The majority of our students are not registered voters and do not bother to vote in national elections.

* Regarding technological education, there are no general education courses now available to educate students to understand and use the rapidly changing technological environment in which we now live. This is a glaring deficiency! Many students are well acquainted with how to do instant text messaging, MP3 and cell phone video programming the TIVO, etc., but are unaware about how to search documents through vast library resources. At best they have a surface understanding of technology, largely the entertainment gimmicks, but lack basic knowledge about how to access academic information or participate fully in on-line courses.

5. (Added) Should academic units outside of the College of Arts & Sciences be allowed to submit courses for consideration as possible additions to the General Education requirements of Washburn University, and should they be given equal opportunity for inclusion (i.e., being evaluated for their content, not location)?

* Location should not be the determinant factor in what constitutes an appropriate course for general education. Each course should stand on its own merit and be reviewed in relation to the standards/criteria established for general education.

* Absolutely! I am surprised that CAS would think it has a monopoly on liberal education! As an example, CJ, SW, HS, TA and LG courses often blend social issues, humanitarian issues, legal aspects, cultural considerations, technology, morality, ethics, political science, sociology, psychology, diversity, history, and biology.

- * I am not sure why Criminal Justice is not included as a Social Science General Education selection option. It is a social science. It is built on the two pillars of logic and empirical evidence to form its body of knowledge. Students should be given the option to select Criminal Justice courses as part of the Social Sciences General Education requirements. Our courses are as rigorous as the other social sciences and I feel the College of Arts & Sciences should not have the sole monopoly on this category.
- * Yes, especially if General Education reverts back to non-specific courses. Many of the WU Schools currently offer courses that are closely related to General Education courses offered by College of Arts & Sciences.
- * General education must be compatible with external accreditation standards. If it is not, then general education should be determined by individual school.
- * Technology Administration focuses heavily on the myriad ways in which technology and culture influence each and direct the development of each. While technology has always been with us, knowledge of the impact of technology and its evolution in today's global society is approaching the essential equivalent nature of being able to read in order to function in society. Certainly, the HLC and the Washburn President's recent graduation address on a global, technologically driven world merit the consideration of several TA courses as inclusion in general education.

Section B. This section of the report from the SAS focuses on accreditation standards.

Summary Statement.

The various accrediting bodies, of which there are eight (8) in the School of Applied Studies, all acknowledge the generally held view that general education provides both knowledge and skills essential to professional education. In many cases the language refers to a diversified educational experience. It also should be noted that while the cognate areas and skill competencies are required, the responsibility for insuring the requirements are met in some professional programs can fall to the department if the general education curricula is inadequate. Some accrediting bodies require the presence of correlated general education courses to meet overall graduation requirements without specifying specific coursework. Still, it is important to state that without preparation and a foundation in the areas listed below, that a department/major or even the School may find that full participation in some general education programs problematic.

In most cases the knowledge content areas can be summarized as:

- Mathematics and Logic,
- Communication,
- Arts and Humanities,
- Information Systems,
- Social and Behavioral Sciences,
- Natural Sciences;

while the skills areas are often described as:

- Communication skills (read, write, speak and listen critically),
- Application of critical thinking, problem solving or modeling strategies,
- Use technology to retrieve, evaluate, and apply evidenced based information,
- Demonstration of applied ethics to personal and professional situations,
- Recognition and critical examination of values and attitudes,
- Demonstration of awareness and respect for diverse populations and cultures, and
- Demonstration of the ability to gather, organize and present information derived from diverse sources.

In the allied health programs it should be noted that inclusion of anatomy and physiology in a general education structure would be helpful in meeting accreditation requirements. Many of these programs do not have electives and the accreditation standards for many of these programs require anatomy and physiology. A similar argument can be made for competency in basic technology involving computers, legal terminology and law concepts, as well as human disease.

The American Bar Association which accredits the Legal Studies degree has a list of courses that are NOT accepted as general education. This list is attached in the Accreditation Standards appendix. What should be noted is that this list identifies some courses that are currently offered for general education here at Washburn. If the university moves towards course specific general education, then there is a potential for a serious problem.

General Education Survey for curriculum committees

Summary responses from the SOBU from faculty meeting October 17, 2006

1. What are the most important ways general education should serve the needs of students in your academic unit? (emphasis added)

General education needs to provide educational support in areas that are important to our accrediting body for the School of Business.

General Education should teach skills:

Reading with comprehension

Writing with clarity and grammatical correctness and correct spelling.

Problem solving in less defined problems

The expectation for being a college student instead of a high school student

Studying expectations at a college level.

General Education should also teach course content:

To create an educated person that has some understanding of the historic and current world within which they live politically, socially, culturally and scientifically

***2. How well do you think our current general education program meets the needs you identified in responding to question one?**

Not well at all. (With the exception of Math.)

3. What changes, if any, do you perceive as being necessary to improve the general education program at Washburn University?

A. Both skills and content, must be assessed in a meaningful way in order to be achievable.

B. General Education can no longer be a competition between diverse general education courses fighting for survival by attempting to be more attractive to more students. This tends to foster a serious lack of rigor.

We are expected to ensure that our General Education program contains assessable learning objectives. In particular, we

need to demonstrate that our program prepares students: To live in a global diverse technological society. (HLC criterion)

4. How well, in your opinion, does the current program meet those expectations?

A. The menu of courses is so broad that one would need to examine the transcript of each student to ascertain whether these goals are being accomplished by any one student.

For example, a WU student can graduate without taking a single history or geography or foreign language course. If this is true, then how can the student know much about the diverse world within which they live.

5. How can we better meet them?*

The school of Business is considering creating a limited menu of general education courses that must be completed to earn a BBA. We have had some success with negotiating course content in the past.

[See addendum with flip chart results of meeting]

Note set #1

1. What are the most important ways general education should serve the needs of students in **your academic unit? (emphasis added)

- Preparation for other courses
- General knowledge – requisite for well-educated individual
- Question posed: How to narrow, define these?
 - social science
 - art/literature
 - natural science/mathematics (Harvard)
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Unique offerings, not duplicated at community colleges
- Align with core competencies already defined

- Broader courses offer perspective, serving both SOBU and students
- Courses that develop logic skills
- Need to adopt consumer-centric perspective
- Need to address two streams, knowledge and competency
- Study learning skills, discipline, basics of attending to course, note-taking
- **Current portrayal of college expectations lacks rigor**
- Attempts to institute higher, more rigorous expectations may be limited by inability to achieve consensus view across faculty (shared expectations)
- Shouldn't be able to leave gen ed (pass) without achieving an understanding of these expectations, students' responsibilities
- There is room and flexibility in current gen ed program to accommodate these (prior) ideas
- Freshman orientation could capture skills (studying, note-taking, expectations)

2. How well do you think our current general education program meets the needs you identified in responding to question one?

- Current standards are low and pass rate is high
- Too much variability in scoring (cf, English exam)
- Processual issue exacerbated by lack of uniformity and blind review
- Need more measurable objectives
- Outliers (low performers) do slip through system

Question posed: Do we need to redo the current system or provide remedial services?

- Perceived to be a systematic, enduring problem that will take concerted effort to fix
- Faculty have a collective responsibility to reinforce gen ed skills within our courses
- Individual faculty should take responsibility for reinforcing specific skills (e.g., writing)
- Concerns: grade inflation, poor presentation of Washburn students to employers reflects negatively on Washburn
- Requires cooperation across faculty to track student progress; introduce accountability
- Faculty shares joint responsibility for creation of "product" – within SOBU and across campus
- Some business faculty feel, notwithstanding the above, that they don't have the time/expertise/or necessarily the responsibility to teach gen ed skills
- BUT . . . skills need reinforcement through assignments, use of rubrics
- Other option: increased use of references to the Writing Center

- (Some faculty express concern that the products that come out of [writing] labs are too good to reflect the student's work)

3. What changes, if any, do you perceive as being necessary to improve the general education program at Washburn University?

- Concern: transfer students pose unique challenges; assessment of their capabilities
- Specific changes proposed:
- Teach core skills
- Adopt Harvard approach
- Define measurable objectives
- Increase accountability
- Take serious outcome assessment (question: unit or university level?)
- Meet obligations under North Central re global, diverse, technological
- Requires central leadership

4. We are expected to ensure that our General Education program contains assessable learning objectives. In particular, we need to demonstrate that our program prepares students to live in a global diverse technological society. (HLC > criterion) How well, in your opinion, does the current program meet those expectations?

- Question if the above are reasonable and meaningful.
- Faculty don't know.
- Kansas schools perceived as not diverse.
- Changing demographic drives increased need for cultural competency

5. How can we better meet them?*

- Map 9 Washburn areas to HLC criterion
- Washburn is skill-driven; HLC is content-driven
- Unable to address final question without consensus and specification of goals
- Don't know what gen ed program is doing to meet HCL criterion; perhaps requires survey
- There is space in social science and humanities to accomplish these goals.
- Create critical core and allow students to chose courses surrounding these (providing freedom to explore areas of interest)

- Prior experience by business faculty suggests positive collegial outcomes from forming cross-disciplinary alliances to develop areas of SOBU interests

Note Set 2

1. Ways in which general education serve needs:

- Preparing students for later courses;
- Providing knowledge that any student should have – e.g.:
 - Harvard core courses, including social science, arts, literature,
 - courses that provide/cover more than one discipline (i.e., multidisciplinary course),
 - courses designed for non-majors (e.g., History of Technology, other broad courses that help students get a perspective);
- Giving a voice to consumers – i.e., classes that students want to take;
- Assess students' grasp of fundamentals (e.g., writing) when they start college studies;
- Students need some facilitation on how to behave/approach/do in an university course (e.g., tests, assignments);
- Help students understand what a college class is and encourage the control of the classroom;
- Class discipline – e.g., allowing students to come late in class, leave during the class time;
- Short-supply of students' note-taking skills – something we can help students to improve upon;
- General education should introduce students to what are the expectations for them during their program:
 - Clearly-stated expectations → (Met or unmet) requirements → Grade;
- Designated courses for building specific skills;
- Initial assessment of writing skills and their influence on subsequent skill development – How do we measure writing skills (e.g., English 100 or English 300?);
- Assessment of students' ability to convey their thoughts;
- Note-taking skills;
- Study skills;
- Creative skills;

2. How well does the general education program meet the needs previously identified?

- Some students cannot write well (more than one half of a class, in an assessment);
- Need to reinforce general education skill requirements at every level:
 - set clear in-class expectations,
 - indicate precisely what each assignment needs to accomplish;

- Importance of professional skills:
 - articulate positions effectively,
 - express ideas;
- Send back students who don't have basic skills (e.g., reading, writing) in order to allow them to learn these skills better – accountability concerns;
- Need to share responsibility with English 101 (and the like) faculty:
 - give feedback to students on their writing assignments,
 - clearly state requirements/expectations for the students' work;
- **“Teach-them-English” or “Send-them-back” debate**
 - Are there other options (e.g., shared responsibility)?
- What do we want them to know, other than writing?

3. Changes that (we perceive that) should be made in order to improve general education:

- Accountability;
- Outcome assessment:
 - How to do it?
 - Where to do it – centrally or at each unit's level?
- Leadership should come from the center. Alternatively, units should assume more responsibility.

4. How well the current general education program meets these expectations?

5. How can we meet them better?

Core Gen(eral) Ed(ucation) + Elective Gen Ed (i.e., including courses “around” the core).

Washburn University
School of Nursing
Response to questions regarding General Education at Washburn University

The questions were discussed in the SON Curriculum meetings held September 15 and October 25, 2006. Members of the committee are Ellen Carson, Annie Collins, Brenda Patzel, Sue Unruh, Marilyn Masterson and Lori Edwards. All members were present for the October meeting. Responses are provided following the questions.

1. What are the most important ways general education should serve the needs of students in your academic unit?

General Education courses should provide a foundation for courses in the upper division. Essential skills needed by nursing students are writing and math skills. These two basic skills have been notably weak in the last several years. General education courses should incorporate skill sets and abilities to meet the expectations of a professional program.

2. How well do you think our current general education program meets the needs you identified in responding to question one?

Students have not been adequately prepared to meet the expectations for math and writing. Nursing students must have algebraic skills to calculate medication doses. We are currently testing the students to document competency in this skill. Students get three opportunities to pass the exam at 100% and often several students must utilize all three testing situations to provide evidence of competence. The skills are basic ratio and proportion, division and multiplication skills and conversion (ounces to milliliters, etc.).

Students also have great difficulty in writing an original paper. Poor grammar and sentence structure is common. Students are unclear about what plagiarism is and copy large amounts of information into their papers. Technical writing skills are needed, according to a specific set of writing guidelines, such as APA or MLA. Typical assignments in courses include a review of literature over a specific topic, the students have great difficulty (and faculty require numerous red ink pens) in preparing a synthesis-type paper. Students are not prepared for scholarly writing in a professional program.

3. What changes, if any, do you perceive as being necessary to improve the general education program at Washburn University?

Changes that would benefit students include incorporation of a basic computer class or a mechanism to demonstrate basic skills sets such as the use of the Internet, word processing, email with attachments. We are experiencing a wide variety of skills in students and many believe they have skills when actually, they do not have the skills.

Emphasizing writing skills would also be beneficial to students, as stated earlier.

4. We are expected to ensure that our General Education program contains assessable learning objectives. In particular, we need to demonstrate that our program prepares students to live in “a global, diverse, technological society” (Higher Learning Commission (North Central) criterion). How well, in your opinion, does the current program meet those expectations? How might it better meet them?

Currently, it is believed that students have little appreciation for diversity. Students are ethnocentric and lack knowledge of thoughts and beliefs different from their own. Students must adopt a more global view to function in the workplace and social networks that are becoming common in America and the world. One member questioned why history courses were not part of general education, because she believes that “history teaches the consequences of being intolerant of other cultures.”

As a committee, we really liked the statements from “Our Students’ Best Work: Five Keys to Accountability for Outcomes That Really Matter.” The university might adopt similar outcomes for general education. General education course outcomes could then be linked to these. We could see that specific general education courses might emphasize aspects of the university outcomes. For example, Lifetime Wellness might include a unit on complementary/alternative health practices of diverse cultures. English or literature courses would include reading and writing assignments linked to social issues on a global perspective. More general education classes would require assignments submitted via email, Internet searches, and original writing. Further, we believed that these five keys tie very strongly to the Washburn University Transformational Experience.