



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

General Education Core
Curriculum Review Committee

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 11, 2003

TO: University Faculty, Staff and Administrators

FROM: General Education Core Curriculum Review Committee (GECCR-C)
Doretha Foushee (Biology), Jacqueline Blackmore (History), Nita Dewberry (Foreign Languages), Abede Kebede (Physics), Sandra Alexander (English), Shea Burns (Mathematics), Cynthia Gillespie-Johnson (Technology), Clifford Watkins (Music), Tova Rubin (Education), Linda McIntosh (Nursing), Scott Simkins (Business and Economics), Perry Howard (Agriculture and Environmental Sciences), John Kelly (Engineering), Robert Davis (Sociology), Sanjiv Sarin (Engineering)

General Education Core Curriculum Review Executive Committee (GECCR-EC)
Janice Brewington, Robert Davis, Scott Simkins, Sanjiv Sarin, Charles Williams

RE: General Education Review Plan for 2003-05

We are writing to seek your help and guidance as we begin a two-year long journey to review and revise our general education core curriculum.

In February 2002, Provost Meyers appointed Drs. Robert Davis (Sociology) and Sanjiv Sarin (Engineering) to lead a comprehensive review of the general education core curriculum. Drs. Davis and Sarin invited 13 faculty members from various disciplines to help create the General Education Core Curriculum Review Committee (GECCR-C). Provost Meyers' charge to the committee included three assignments:

1. Assess effectiveness and relevance of present General Education Core Curriculum
2. Examine best-in-field programs
3. Recommend strategies consistent with FUTURES, SACS, and 21st century trends

The GECCR-C carried out a survey of A&T faculty, a transcript analysis, focus group sessions with students and a review of general education at peer institutions. The GECCR-C's report includes a draft statement of general education objectives and recommendations on managing the program. This report and several related documents will be posted by the end of this week at <http://www.ncat.edu/futures>. A copy of the draft statement of objectives is attached here.

During the last academic year, a team of consultants (Dr. James Anderson, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs at NC State University; Dr. Marilee Bresciani, Director for Assessment at NC State University; and Dr. David Taylor, Dean, General College, University of Minnesota) conducted an independent study of the general education program at A&T. They met with representatives of various

schools and colleges, faculty senate, center for student success, and FUTURES goals team chairs. Their report consisting of ten recommendations focused on the administration of the general education program at A&T. The GECCR-C reviewed the report and essentially agreed with all their recommendations.

In July 2003, the Provost also appointed a General Education Core Curriculum Review Executive Committee (GECCR-EC) to carry out the administrative duties necessary to support the general education review process. During last summer, the GECCR-EC proposed a two-year plan to engage the faculty in a university-wide dialogue aimed at improving our general education curriculum and to implement a refined curriculum. The plan aims to submit the objectives and general curriculum structure of a new general education curriculum to the faculty senate by May 2004 and to offer pilot courses in fall 2004. Full implementation of the revised curriculum is targeted for fall 2005. An outline of the plan is also attached for your reference.

As outlined in the attached plan, the work to be done includes the following activities:

1. Determine constraints arising from accreditation requirements, UNC-Community College articulation agreements, and other requirements specific to individual degree programs. The result of this exercise should be a range of credit hours that can be devoted to general education without affecting the unique needs of the academic majors.
2. Arrange workshops on general education related topics
3. Conduct a university-wide discussion on general education objectives and arrive at an agreement on the final statement of the objectives. Ensure consistency and alignment with the FUTURES vision.
4. Agree on a strategy for assessing the effectiveness of general education – at the course level and at an aggregate level
5. Establish a revised curriculum – credit hours, course sequencing, how courses relate to majors, etc.
6. Establish a process for admitting a course into the general education program. Clearly, any course that addresses the learning objectives of general education should qualify.
7. Establish a governance structure for general education
8. Continue to develop and refine courses that support general education

All the activities listed above will be carried out through small groups as well as large town hall meetings. Curricular and policy changes will be submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval. The meeting schedule will be distributed to the schools/colleges and will also be posted by the end of this week on the FUTURES website (<http://www.ncat.edu/futures>). In addition to the town hall meetings, you are welcome to join the GECCR-C. If you are interested, please send a message to davisbob@ncat.edu, simkinss@ncat.edu or sarin@ncat.edu.

Once again, we request you to participate in this very important project. We encourage you to take time to review current thinking on general education and general education practices at other universities. A reading list is also attached for your information.

Enclosures:

1. General Education Review Plan
2. First draft of General Education Objectives (to be revised in Fall 2003)
3. General Education Reading List

General Education Core Curriculum Review Plan
Faculty Staff Institute, August 11, 2003

August 2003: Faculty Staff Institute

- Share plan for general education review, general education objectives for further discussion and revision as needed, and a reading list on general education topics.

Fall 2003

- Accreditation and other constraints on each degree program
- Departments prioritize Gen Ed objectives
- Status report and plan for 2003-04 year to Faculty Senate
- Relation to community college/UNC articulation agreements
- Meetings with academic programs representatives to agree on Gen Ed objectives
- Wide distribution and comment on Gen Ed Objectives including college/school meetings
- Workshops by experts in general education area
- Preliminary curriculum aligned with Gen Ed objectives.

Spring 2004

- Preliminary general education curriculum distributed widely to university faculty
- School/college-based “town hall” meetings to solicit responses on proposed Gen Ed curriculum
- Revised preliminary curriculum based on school/college responses
- Preliminary assessment strategy for general education program
- Policies for inclusion of courses in general education curriculum
- General structure of general education curriculum (e.g. clusters, credit hours, goals and objectives) approved in individual colleges/schools
- General structure of general education curriculum submitted to Faculty Senate for approval
- Initial development of pilot courses for implementation in fall, 2004

Summer 2004

- Governance/oversight structure of general education curriculum finalized
- Development of pilot courses for general education curriculum

Fall 2004

- Initial pilot courses offered
- School/college and senate approval of general education courses for general education curriculum

Spring 2005

- Post-course assessment of pilot courses from fall, 2004
- Revision of policies and procedures
- Second round of pilot courses offered
- Approval of general education courses for general education curriculum

Fall 2005

- Implementation of new general education curriculum

General Education Program Objectives
DRAFT STATEMENT

The General Education Program at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University provides a broad learner-centered experience to all undergraduate students. It promotes learning through an interdisciplinary approach. The General Education Program is designed to ensure that all graduates of the University possess abilities and talents that are necessary in a fast changing global society. These include communication skills; mathematical and scientific competence; ability to think critically; awareness of world cultures and especially, African and African American culture; and an ability to examine personal and social values and how these values are shaped by the global society.

Specific objectives of the General Education Program are stated below. Each objective is followed by a set of outcomes to measure achievement.

Objective 1

Effectively develop a written report or oral presentation that accommodates audience needs and shows a mastery of basic communications skills.

Outcomes

Written

- Produce documents based on an understanding of the needs and expectations of both a lay audience and their specific professional audience
- Construct and develop a clear argument, exposition, or analysis
- Demonstrate competence in the fundamentals of effective writing, including clear prose, effective organization, varied syntax, clear logic and standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Oral

- Deliver presentations, both collaboratively and individually, that demonstrate a competence in the core presentation skills, including focus, organization, and delivery
- Summarize the main points of an oral presentation, judge the appropriateness of the presentation for the given audience, and judge the validity of the argument and supplemental material

Objective 2

Proficient in basic mathematical skills, be able to formulate problems mathematically, be able to use mathematical methods to solve original problems, and demonstrate an understanding of the nature of mathematical reasoning.

Outcomes

- Use the elements of basic mathematics to formulate and solve problems
- Critically analyze quantitative information (interpreting, making judgments, and drawing conclusions from quantitative material)

Objective 3

Demonstrate an understanding and application of scientific methodology, laboratory techniques, quantitative problem solving, modeling skills, and experimental design to formulate and evaluate hypotheses.

Outcomes

- Formulate hypotheses to explain natural and social phenomena
- Design experiments to evaluate hypotheses
- Execute experiments designed to validate hypotheses
- Apply mathematical concepts to evaluate experimental results

Objective 4

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures in a global world.

Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values and traditions, including the contributions of diverse groups, which shape American society and institutions
- Demonstrate knowledge of the diverse values and cultures shaping societies and institutions in other countries including the contributions of diverse groups
- Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary, historical, social and political issues
- Interpret and evaluate issues from distinctive and differing points of view

Objective 5

Develop an understanding and awareness of African/African American culture:

Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of African/African American history and culture
- Develop a frame of reference which makes it possible to identify and interpret critical social and political issues impacting African/African Americans
- Identify and describe the political, economic, and social challenges transforming modern continental Africa.

Objective 6

Demonstrate an appreciation of music, literature, and the fine arts.

Outcomes

- Develop an understanding of the interrelationships of literature, music, and the fine arts
- Identify, analyze, and appreciate diverse modes of aesthetic and artistic expression
- Develop an understanding of some of the basic ideas or concepts underlying world culture in literature, music and the fine arts
- Demonstrate dimensions of creativity beyond analytic thought, including imagination, intuition, and metaphor.

Objective 7

Examine issues involving values, ethics, and social responsibility in disciplined and critical ways.

Outcomes

- Identify, comprehend, analyze, and articulate ethical issues
- Appropriately use concepts and theories of human and social behavior in the construction of arguments
- Identify and describe the formal and informal social forces, structures and processes that contribute to the functioning of markets, governments, and other social systems.

Objective 8

Understand the psychological and physiological bases of a healthy mental and physical lifestyle.

Outcomes

- Explain the elements necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Describe the impact of diet, activity, and genetics on health

**Annotated Reading List on General Education
General Education Curriculum Review Committee
North Carolina A&T State University
August, 2003**

1. The Idea of a University Education: Cardinal Newman, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. Du Bois

Newman, John Henry. *The Idea of a University*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907.

Online: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/index.html> [August, 2003].

See especially Part I, Sections 5, 6, and 7

Price, Gregory N., *The Idea of a Black University*, Department of Economics Working Paper, September, 1999.

Online: <http://www.ncat.edu/~econdept/wp/ideabu.pdf>

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co.; [Cambridge]: University Press John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1903; Bartleby.com, 1999. www.bartleby.com/114/. [August, 2003].

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960*. [Herbert Aptheker, editor] New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1901; Bartleby.com, 2000. www.bartleby.com/1004/. [August, 2003].

2. Recent Research/Discussion on General and Liberal Studies

Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Online: <http://www.aacu-edu.org/>

AAC&U is at the center of a number of ongoing initiatives focused on general education reform. Their website provides access to a wealth of information on general education resources.

AACU Publications on General and Liberal Studies

Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College. National Panel Report, Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002.

Online: <http://www.greaterexpectations.org/>

An analysis of the challenges facing higher education, successes and failures in meeting them, and recommendations to rethink what we should expect from, and how we should provide, college education in the twenty-first century (also see the related *Briefing Papers* at the greaterexpectations.org website).

Schneider, Carol Geary and Robert Shoenberg. *Contemporary Understandings of Liberal Education*. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1998.

Online excerpts:

<http://www.aacu.org/publications/ContemporaryUnderstandings.cfm>

The first publication in a series exploring *The Academy in Transition*, this discussion paper maps national trends in educational reform and examines their implications for the content and organization of higher learning.

Strong Foundations: Twelve Principles for Effective General Education Programs. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1994.

Recommends strategies and procedures for sustaining vitality and strength in general education.

Gaff, Jerry G. *General Education: The Changing Agenda*. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1999.

The third publication in the series exploring *The Academy in Transition*, this discussion paper analyzes changes in general education over the last two decades.

General Education in an Age of Student Mobility: An Invitation to Discuss Systemic Curricular Planning. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2001.

The fifth publication in the series exploring *The Academy in Transition*, this discussion paper includes a collection of essays examining curricular coherence.

Ratcliff, James L., D. Kent Johnson, Steven M. La Nasa, and Jerry G. Gaff. *The Status of General Education in the Year 2000: Summary of a National Survey*. Washington: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2001

This report summarizes the results of an extensive survey of undergraduate general education in a national sample of AAC&U-member colleges and universities and provides a snapshot of general education practice at the turn-

of-the-century, information about significant changes in the past decade, and insight about the challenges of the future.

Additional Publications on General and Liberal Studies

Re-inventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities. The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1998.

Online: <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/>

This report summarizes the current nature of undergraduate education in research universities and provides recommendations for educational reform.

Reinvention: Why now? Why us? A Symposium on the Boyer Commission Report: A Second Anniversary Retrospective. State University of New York at Stony Brook. Remarks by Provost Nancy Cantor, University of Michigan April 28, 2000.

Online: <http://www.umich.edu/~provost/speeches/boyer.html>

A follow-up symposium to the 1998 Boyer Report.

Astin, Alexander W. *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Research on student development during college years and how universities and colleges affect that development.

Light, Richard, *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds,* Harvard University Press, 2001.

Online overviews of Light's work:

<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/LIGMAK.html>

<http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2001/03.08/01-light.html>

http://www.harvard-magazine.com/archive/01jf/jf01_feat_richardlight.html

Light summarizes interviews with 1600 Harvard students over ten years, providing advice on how students can maximize their education and what teachers and university leaders can do to improve students' college experiences.

3. Additional Online Reading - Links from UNC-CH's General Education Curriculum Review web site

Edward Kidder Graham's Speeches on the Purpose of Undergraduate Education: *The College and Human Need*, 1915 and *The Spirit of the University*, 1916.

Online:

<http://www.unc.edu/curriculumrevision/documents/grahamspeeches1915.html>

Expected Outcomes for first-year Composition Classes from the Writing Program Administrators (from *College English*, January 2001).

Online: <http://www.unc.edu/curriculumrevision/documents/wpa.htm>

A Case Statement on Quantitative Literacy. Prepared for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

Online: <http://www.stolaf.edu/other/ql/case.html>

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