Gen Ed?

What’s Gen Ed?

Mike Mullen
Associate Provost
Division of Undergraduate Education
Liberal education, with its emphasis on an integral learning experience over the full span of an undergraduate degree, stands in marked contrast with the reality of our current University Studies Program. An external review characterized USP as “disconnected,” “fragmented” and an “unsatisfying experience for both students and professors.” Faculty members surveyed by the GERA Committee were equally critical of USP. Focus groups with students elicited little appreciation for the merits of USP and a disconcerting admission that students hurried through their general education requirements in anticipation of the “real learning” to come in their academic majors.

Provost Subbaswamy, UK-LEAP Report, 12/1/2006
A Brief History

• 2004: Discussions Begin

• March 2008: Design Principles approved

• December 2008: Learning Outcomes and Curricular Framework approved

• May 2009: Course Templates approved

• May 2010: General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) approved

• December 13, 2010: Senate votes unanimously to begin implementation of the new General Education curriculum, effective Fall 2011
Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

• an understanding of and ability to employ the processes of intellectual inquiry.

• competent written, oral, and visual communication skills both as producers and consumers of information.

• an understanding of and ability to employ methods of quantitative reasoning.

• an understanding of the complexities of citizenship and the process for making informed choices as engaged citizens in a diverse, multilingual world.
Characteristics

- 30 hours rather than 40+
- Smaller Lectures
- Break-outs/recitations in large classes
- Emphasis on process of inquiry & active learning
- Integration of modes of communication
Characteristics

• Inferential Reasoning – how do we draw rational conclusions about information and data?
• Integration of General Education into the major
• Recognition of both local and global diversity and citizenship
# The Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Education Area</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Intellectual Inquiry (one course in each area)</td>
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<td>Arts and Creativity</td>
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<td>Humanities</td>
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<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td>Natural/Physical/Mathematical</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Composition and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition and Communication I</td>
<td>CIS or WRD 110</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition and Communication II</td>
<td>CIS or WRD 111</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>III. Quantitative Reasoning (one course in each area)</td>
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<td>Quantitative Foundations</td>
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<td>Statistical Inferential Reasoning</td>
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<td>IV. Citizenship (one course in each area)</td>
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<td>Community, Culture and Citizenship in the USA</td>
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<td>Global Dynamics</td>
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<td><strong>Total General Education Hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>30+</strong></td>
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Innovative Additions

• Composition and Communication I and II

“C&C I and II are designed to engage students... using speech, writing, and visuals in an active learning environment. Students will practice composing, critiquing, and revising ideas for audiences and in developing public speaking and interpersonal communication skills.”

CIS and WRD 110 and 111
Innovative Additions

- **Statistical Inferential Reasoning**

  “Courses focus on the ability to evaluate claims based on statistical constructs and to understand and articulate important risks that these claims often address, both through the formal science of statistical inference and informal activity of human inference.”

  STA 210 is primary course at present.
  Not a replacement for a statistical methods course.
What about Foreign Language?

- This becomes an “admissions” requirement,
- Student must demonstrate PROFICIENCY
- No proficiency means taking language at UK
- Add on to hours to degree
Information Literacy

- General Education is Inquiry-based, requiring Information Literacy – the ability to:
  - identify what information is needed
  - understand how the information is organized
  - Identify, locate and evaluate the best sources of information for a given need,
  - share that information appropriately
Co-Curriculum

- Common Reading
- UK 101, 201 and EXP 396
- Themed Years
- Student Involvement and Organizations
- Living Learning Communities
- Plays, musicals, readings, other events
  - (e.g., Marjorie Guyon’s Nation of Nations, UK Opera and Theater, etc..)
- Let’s get creative!
The 7th Design Principle

- The curriculum will specify learning outcomes and the processes for both the systematic assessment of those learning outcomes and ongoing curricular improvement.

- Requires assessable assignments from all Gen Ed courses.

- Similar to what we are asking of degree programs
Where are we now?

- Pilots have been underway for three semesters
- GEOC has been reviewing courses since summer
- Assessment strategies are put in place
- Colleges are evaluating AP, IB, CLEP credit
- Gen Ed Course brochure being readied for Advising
- State-wide transfer equivalency work is underway
- Naming campaign coming VERY soon
Student Comments

• “Great course and instructor. Very interesting class and material covered was very enlightening about the world we live in.”

• “I really enjoyed this class! I learned a lot of things about art and visual studies that will definitely help me in my future. And the instructor did a good job at getting the material across to the student.”

• “Professor X really helped me understand the political process and made me enjoy learning about coming to public judgment. I felt like I had many opportunities provided through this class.”
“I’m so excited about the progress of the students that I wanted to give you a quick report… These students have learned infinitely more w/ the GenEd approach than my previous students w/o the GenEd approach. I wouldn’t expect results this good if I were teaching an honors seminar at a fancy-pants private school… I’m just honestly astounded that something like this can be pulled off at a large university. I would have bet my year’s salary that it couldn’t happen…and I would have lost every nickel!”

Dr. Clayton Thyne, Political Science