

**General Education Review Committee Final Report
June 5, 2018**

Introduction

Upon receiving the charge from Faculty Senate, the General Education Review Committee (GERC) began in late October 2016 to survey and broadly discuss the purpose and role of Gen Ed at WIU. A major consideration that framed discussions was the total number of hours (43 s.h.) of Gen Ed coursework required of all students. The desire to strengthen Gen Ed by increasing semester hour numbers was weighed against the potential burden upon most students if Gen Ed semester hour requirements were increased. Alternatively, the possibility of slightly reducing that total was considered, in order to reduce the semester hour requirements in students' degree plans. The possible redistribution of required semester hours among categories and the reorganization of categories were other topics of discussion. A few members of the committee claimed that students want more choices from the menu of courses required in Gen Ed, and suggested to increase the flexibility to choose between the Gen Ed categories. Proposals to fundamentally change and reorganize the Gen Ed categories were discussed but ultimately rejected. (These issues continued to inform discussions in 2017-18 as well.)

Subcommittees were formed that corresponded fairly closely to the six categories of WIU's Gen Ed curriculum or to aspects of our charge. Each of these subcommittees met separately, formulated their positions, and eventually shared their ideas and recommendations (proposed revisions, concerns, or support of the status quo) on the language defining Gen Ed, its categories, and procedures.

During its first year, GERC heard from visitors representing Human Well-Being (Financial Health, FIN 101) as well as the University Registrar.

2017-18 included extensive discussions about simplifying or clarifying the Gen Ed curriculum to enhance its intelligibility to students, while also ensuring that students have choice. The issues that came to define most of the committee's discussions and debates concerned the following matters: the status of the Mathematics curriculum in the Gen Ed curriculum, the coherence of the Humanities and Fine Arts category and its credit hour distribution, the relationship of the Multicultural Gen Ed category to the Global Issues graduation requirement, a revision to the Assessment of Student Learning Plan, and the role and importance of writing in the Gen Ed curriculum.

The Charge

The General Education Review Committee (GERC) was charged on October 27, 2016 with a comprehensive review of General Education (Gen Ed) at Western Illinois University (WIU). It included directions to consider six interrelated questions, which are answered and addressed in the following Report:

1. The purpose and necessity of each Gen Ed category, with specific focus on
 - a. Multicultural in relation to Foreign Language/ Global Issues (FLGI)
 - b. Human Well Being and University 100 in light of changes to FYE
2. An examination of the number of hours required within each category
3. An examination of the overall number of hours required for the Gen Ed requirement
4. A review of the structure of General Education assessment
5. An examination into how WIU's Gen Ed identifies itself relevant to peer institutions in the state, to include discussions of
 - a. What peer institutions include in their Gen Ed cores
 - b. How other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal for students
6. Discussion of and examination into any relevant issues that arise from the review process

The Report

Introduction. A revision of the Philosophy and Goals statement, including affirmations of guiding and foundational principles, was composed during the first year of the review. Because GERC continued to affirm these principles in the year following the End of Year Status Report [Addendum 1], they are reiterated here with only minor changes.

The Purpose and Centrality of Gen Ed (2016-2017)

- a. We revised the philosophy and goal statement for Gen Ed.
 - i. We value knowledge for its own sake.
 - ii. Gen Ed develops areas of knowledge and methods of inquiry common to well-educated persons. These areas of knowledge are categorized in our Gen Ed curriculum as Communication Skills, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, Multicultural Studies, and Human Well-Being.
 - iii. The Liberal Arts are the foundation of a university education and of Gen Ed.
 - iv. Gen Ed helps students to cultivate personal responsibility, and understand principles of wellness for a holistically healthy life. It also helps them to understand differences in power.

- v. Gen Ed develops intellectual flexibility and provides students with transferable skills that will be useful in their careers. It also helps them to assume responsibilities as global citizens and lifelong learners.
 - vi. Students will acquire the ability to analyze, think critically, and use logic to reach conclusions; the ability to apply mathematical skills to a variety of areas; the ability to gather, evaluate and organize information from disparate sources; the ability to apply methods of scientific and intellectual inquiry; and the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, orally and in writing.
 - vii. Contemporary students need to develop knowledge, skills and abilities that will allow them to contribute to society and the common good through work and civic engagement.
- b. The current review of the Gen Ed program at WIU leads us to contend that we achieve the above goals.

The Charge addressed point-by-point

1. We discussed the purpose and necessity of each category with particular attention to the relationship between Multiculturalism and the FLGI requirement and the category of Human Well-Being, including UNIV 100 and FIN 100.
 - a. We agreed in principle that each category in the existing Gen Ed program at WIU is valuable to students. This principle was reaffirmed in Spring 2018, when the Committee voted to retain the current Gen Ed categories, the names of the categories, and the distribution of hours within categories.
 - b. GERC affirmed that the Multicultural category of Gen Ed is in tune with the values and goals of WIU, particularly the values of personal growth and social responsibility. The Multicultural category subcommittee devoted considerable attention to these topics. Concerns discussed included the possible overlap and difficulty for transfer students who often do not transfer to WIU with either the Multicultural Gen Ed class or the Global Issues credit hour requirement completed. However, the committee strongly affirmed that in the current national and international climate and in accordance with President Thomas's call for civil discourse and social responsibility, both of these requirements play central roles to foster and extend students' engagement in questions of diversity both within the United States and globally.

- c. In its Interim Report, GERC already noted that Multicultural Gen Ed (and GI) courses make essential contributions toward the fulfillment of the following University values and goals:
- i. Personal growth—Multicultural education broadens students’ horizons, making them better citizens in a diverse and interconnected country and world.
 - ii. Social responsibility—Multicultural education awakens students to the roles they will play in a diverse society and encourages them to engage in their communities in ways that reflect the values of acceptance, inclusion, and social justice.
- d. The FLGI graduation requirement is outside the purview of the Council of General Education (CGE) and GERC. However, having affirmed the value of Multicultural education at WIU, six further observations about the relationship between Multicultural Gen Ed and FLGI, as well as between Gen Ed and Global Issues are provided:
- i. Thirty FLGI classes are also listed as Gen Ed classes. Of those thirty, twenty-three may count as Multicultural, five may count as Social Science, five may count as Humanities, and one may count as Natural Sciences. The remaining sixty-four FLGI courses are discipline specific.
 - ii. The courses designated as Gen Ed and FLGI can serve in either role for a student. However, since the same course cannot count for both FLGI and Gen Ed, students may think that they are required to take an “extra” course. We in GERC maintain that the goals of both Gen Ed and the goals of FLGI are both essential to our students’ academic education and that a separate course on Global Issues is a sound educational demand. Moreover, these two requirements should be touted as a distinctive feature of the university curriculum, particularly in General Education. The design of these two related, but discretely defined, strains of coursework should be linked to the importance WIU places upon its diverse student population as well as its purported efforts to internationalize the campus, and to increase the number of students from other countries.
 - iii. GERC’s research during 2016-2017 indicated that only three of sixteen peer institutions surveyed require students to take one year of foreign

language. Five others require a foreign language for some majors, while three require students to demonstrate proficiency. It was harder to evaluate whether a school required something analogous to our Global Issues requirement. SIU-C has neither a Global Issues requirement nor a foreign language requirement. EIU requires a foreign language only for some majors and while it requires a course in Cultural Diversity, it seems that the course need not have a global perspective. SIU-E is the only peer university in Illinois that requires both language proficiency or one year of language study *and* a Global Issues course in their Gen Ed program.

- iv. During 2017-2018, GERC Chairperson attended two CIE meetings and the Chairperson of CIE attended and presented at one GERC meeting. It became apparent that CIE was operating on a different timetable to complete their review of Global Issues. It also became apparent that CIE's far-reaching proposal in development to enhance international or global education at WIU exceeded in detail and scope ("rejection of a semester hour-driven curriculum in favor of an integrative approach") anything that GERC's Multicultural subcommittee (or the full membership of GERC) was inclined to recommend changing about the Gen Ed curriculum at this time.
- v. Also during GERC's second year, the Council on International Education (CIE) reaffirmed the requirement of a discrete FLGI course as a graduation requirement, and recommended disallowing the graduation requirement from being met with a course that also fulfills a Gen Ed requirement. In Fall and Winter 2017-2018, GERC learned many details of the CIE's developing proposal that calls for a robust, far reaching invigoration of global issues across the curriculum to better prepare WIU graduates to become "engaged and productive global citizens." CIE's aspirations hew to recent updates to the university's strategic plan ("Preamble," Strategic Plan Updates, February 2018). While GERC was in no position to sign on to an incomplete CIE proposal in progress (late Spring 2018), apart from endorsing its aspirations, GERC affirms its support for the efforts under development in CIE that derive from the University's Strategic Plan [Addendum 2, CIE minutes, February 26, 2018]. GERC also recommends no diminishment of current Global Issues

requirements within Gen Ed or in FLGI. GERC further recommends that going forward (post-GERC), that CGE and CIE communicate regularly to clarify the relationship between Global Issues and Multicultural requirements.

- vi. GERC's Multicultural subcommittee further determined that in December 2016, WIU's student population was 32.5% minority, and international students constitute 5.4% of the Macomb and Macomb extension campus. Highlighting the multicultural and global components of General Education will indicate the university's commitment to this type of academic inquiry, and signal to current and prospective students that although WIU is a regional comprehensive university in a rural area, they will receive an education that is not limited by a parochial vision but that acknowledges cultural diversity and the connections between the local and the global. Such commitments can also be highlighted in ongoing efforts to increase international student enrollment. Supporting these populations is important for educational reasons—the mission specifically mentions global perspectives—but is also pragmatic and fiscally responsible.

e. Human Well-Being

- i. GERC believes that the definition of wellness guiding the inclusion of UNIV 100 in Human Well-Being is consistent with the intent of that category to introduce students to healthy lifestyles and practices.
- ii. GERC members representing the Human Well-Being category wish to reaffirm the centrality of “practical knowledge [for]...a healthy and fit life” as expressed in the current catalog definition of Human Well-Being. Wellness is a multifaceted construct, but the inclusion of courses like FIN 101—Financial Health in the category can allow students to complete their Gen Ed requirement without contemplating the knowledge and practices of physical health and fitness. A proposal was made at the last GERC meeting of Spring 2017 to remove FIN 101 (2 cr. hrs.) from Gen Ed and make it a University Requirement. One proposal was to roll FIN 101 into UNIV 100 as a single class that would serve as a single graduation requirement. Revisited in Fall 2017, discussion about the potential removal of FIN 101 from Gen Ed included the Associate

Provost for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies (and an Ex-Officio CGE/GERC member) reminding GERC that there is no (institutional) mechanism for CGE or GERC to remove from Gen Ed any courses previously added to Gen Ed, including FIN 101. This procedural stalemate quelled further efforts by the subcommittee on Human Well-Being to remove FIN 101. The subcommittee on Human Well-Being registered its opposition not only to the continuance of FIN 101—contending it does not fit with the physical or nutritional dimension of the category,—but also argued that both FIN 101 and UNIV 100 are “not truly General Education courses” and that both “are designed to help underprepared students to deal with the demands of college and adult life.”

- f. The Natural Sciences and Mathematics subcommittee introduced three recommendations and raised two concerns centered primarily upon Mathematics. An additional concern was voiced regarding Natural Sciences. The concerns entailed:
 - i. That students may take “lab” courses online, thereby bypassing actual laboratory work, raises the concern that students are losing a key piece of their general education in the sciences, namely, working in the lab. Natural Sciences faculty on the subcommittee are “of the feeling that the policy of allowing resident (Macomb campus) students to enroll in online lab courses rather than face-to-face offerings is not in the best educational interest of the students.”
 - ii. The relationships between MATH 099, MATH 100, MATH 101, and MATH 128, together with the absence of any Mathematics faculty representation on GERC or this subcommittee, raised concerns that prompted GERC to invite the Chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy to a meeting in Fall 2017 to clarify and discuss inconsistencies and issues associated with student enrollment and performance in these courses. Extensive discussions involving GERC and large numbers of the Mathematics faculty over three consecutive GERC meetings led GERC to agree, with very limited dissent, that MATH 099 was a remedial, high school level course that should not be recognized or articulated for university credit at all, nor for university-level Gen Ed.

This has particular resonance in Illinois where the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) actually prohibits awarding credit for such developmental courses that are not considered college-level. GERC heard many compelling accounts about Mathematics faculty efforts to help large numbers of students pass MATH 099 and advance to MATH 100 (many students repeat the class, some more than once). Such efforts include a special summer program offered by the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy to coach incoming students who are unprepared to enroll in MATH 100 to prepare for an Assessment and Placement Exam, known as ALEKS (Assessment in Learning and Knowledge Spaces) and potentially acquire the knowledge and skills to test out of MATH 099. At our request, the University Registrar also looked into the possibility to offer college credit (even partial credit) for MATH 099, but she too confirmed that MATH 099 was not eligible to receive college credit of any kind, adding that no other Illinois public universities award credit for their equivalent of MATH 099.

- iii. The recommendations of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics subcommittee were threefold: 1) make no changes to the number of courses or credit hours required in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics category (10 s.h.); 2) remove from the Gen Ed curriculum MATH 138—Applied Calculus II and MATH 139—Applied Linear Algebra & Finite Mathematics; and 3) (and most controversial) to change the name of the Gen Ed category “Natural Sciences and Mathematics” to “Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning.” Consensus was reached on the first two of these recommendations (among GERC members and representatives of the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy), although the removal of courses (MATH 138 & 139) again led to the recognition that no mechanism exists for CGE or GERC to remove classes from Gen Ed, thereby stalling any actionable recommendation. It was noted that the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy has the authority to remove these two courses, and if they would do so the courses would remain in the “deep freeze” while equivalent courses from other schools would remain available to transfer students seeking Mathematics Gen Ed credit through the Illinois Articulation Initiative

(IAI). No disagreement emerged between the various parties that these two (no longer offered) courses should remain available for transfer students to receive Gen Ed credit as Mathematics courses in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics category.

- iv. The Natural Sciences and Mathematics subcommittee's recommendation to change the title of the Gen Ed category to replace "Mathematics" with "Quantitative Reasoning" was supported by selected studies from the 1990s. This academic literature argued that a self-fulfilling "stereotype threat" disproportionately afflicts women and black students to underperform in "mathematics" courses. This literature together with broader arguments made by two members of the subcommittee to drop "Mathematics" from the title in favor of "Quantitative Reasoning" met a mixed and skeptical reception by the whole of GERC. This literature and particularly the arguments for a displacement of Mathematics with Quantitative Reasoning were met with wholesale rejection—based upon multiple enumerated reasons—by many Mathematics faculty members and their Chairperson. The subcommittee also pointed to a high percentage of our ostensible peer institutions that had made the change from "Mathematics" to "Quantitative Reasoning" only to have the method of selecting the particular list of peer institutions questioned by representatives of the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy. Many GERC members (including GERC's Chair) came to regard that a leading motivation and anticipated outcome of the proposed change of Mathematics to Quantitative Reasoning in the category name was a way to open the door to a host of new Gen Ed classes from disciplines other than Mathematics, thereby significantly displacing enrollments from Mathematics. The highest percentage of such informally proposed new Gen Ed classes would have been forthcoming from Social Sciences or Computer Sciences, both fields well represented on GERC's Natural Sciences and Mathematics subcommittee. (Note: GERC never had a representative from the Mathematics faculty.) The Department of Mathematics and Philosophy registered firm opposition to this proposed change of category title, and supplied GERC with supporting facts, documents, and verbal arguments in our meetings and in written statements [i.e., Addendum 3]. Furthermore,

unsolicited by GERC, the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Council prepared a resolution and submitted it to GERC to register their opposition to changing the category name from “Mathematics & Natural Sciences” [Addendum 5]. The entire issue of a title change to this category, of course, became moot when GERC voted to retain the existing names of all Gen Ed categories together with the distribution of hours within and between the categories (March 22, 2018 meeting).

- g. Early in the review, GERC members from the Social Sciences subcommittee sounded concern that the definition of the category may need to be updated. This recognition had emerged in the face of courses from Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) and Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS) being recently submitted for inclusion in the Social Sciences Gen Ed category. Members of the Social Sciences subcommittee voiced concern that those CSD and EIS courses do not accurately reflect the intent of the category to inculcate the knowledge and methods of the social sciences. Many on GERC concurred with the Social Sciences subcommittee that it is not sufficient for a course merely to have social relevance to be included in the category. The subcommittee’s delayed plan to draft and eventually submit a revision to its category’s definition was eclipsed by the March 22, 2018 vote to maintain the status quo on all Gen Ed category names as well as their credit hour distributions. This preempted the Social Sciences from drafting or sharing any new language with the whole of GERC that might have clarified the nature and requirements of the courses befitting this category. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that courses in the Social Sciences category must inculcate the knowledge and methods of social science disciplines, and not merely have a socially relevant theme.
- h. GERC members from the Humanities and Fine Arts subcommittee gave protracted consideration to the balance of the nine Humanities and Fine Arts semester hours within this category and whether or not to separate these paired disciplinary areas into Gen Ed categories of their own. Outside of this subcommittee, in September 2017, an “Essential Skills/Core Knowledge” proposal recommended separating the Humanities and Fine Arts into two different Gen Ed categories (rather than two distinctive subcategories within the same category), and to increase the Humanities course requirement to 6 s.h., so as to approach the requirements of 9 s.h. in Social Sciences and 10 s.h. in Natural

Science and Mathematics. This recommendation was based in part on a three-year study (2011-2014) by the CAS Essential Academic Skills Committee that found that Humanities courses tend to focus extensively on writing and critical reading skills – skills which many GERC members argued are also a critical part of General Education. The initial proposal recommended returning to the recommendations of the previous GERC that 6 s.h. of Humanities and 3 s.h. of Fine Arts be required. The proposal also suggested that given the apparent emphasis on other types of skills (e.g. visual/aural skills) in some Fine Arts Gen Ed courses, it was likely that Humanities courses were more demanding in their reading and writing requirements than several of the heavily enrolled courses in Fine Arts – though provision was made for recategorizing reading- and writing-intensive Fine Arts course when this was not the case. These claims funded arguments to require (not merely allow) students to complete more Humanities than Fine Arts courses in Gen Ed (e.g.: to require six s.h. of Humanities instead of allowing the choice of either three or six s.h.). Over three semesters, the Humanities and Fine Arts subcommittee met frequently and discussed and crafted language addressing whether the current requirement to have six of the nine hours in either Humanities or Fine Arts (and only three of the nine hours in the other broad discipline) is acceptable or whether it should be changed. The subcommittee's last working proposal was to retain the status quo with two courses (6 s.h.) in Humanities and one course (3 s.h.) in Fine Arts, or two courses (6 s.h.) in Fine Arts and one course (3 s.h.) in Humanities. GERC's review of peer institutions revealed that the decision to require at least one course in the Fine Arts concurs with requirements of our peers. Only three of sixteen universities compared lack at least one Fine Arts course in their Gen Ed requirements.

Extensive debate occurred in early Spring 2018 as GERC listened to objections from departments in COFAC to any potential change to the hours distribution within the category of Humanities and Fine Arts. Many COFAC faculty, administrators, and students attended several meetings after the Dean of COFAC learned in Winter 2018 that the proposal under consideration might make it impossible for some students to enroll in 6 s.h. of Fine Arts Gen Ed. The cohort from COFAC attended three meetings, and advanced a wide range of arguments for the importance of the Fine Arts in Gen Ed undergraduate education.

Additional arguments were advanced by advisors and chairpersons in Music and Art that a change to disallow students from receiving six of their nine hours in Fine Arts would disadvantage majors in the arts, particularly those pursuing Education or Music Therapy degrees with high total credit hour requirements (around 128-134 s.h.). These discussions ended without a vote, but with the majority of members of the Humanities and Fine Arts subcommittee agreeing to leave the distribution of credit hours within the category unchanged. Retaining the status quo on the name of the Humanities and Fine Arts category as well as the current flexible distribution of hours was confirmed when GERC voted to keep all category names and their distribution of hours unchanged at their March 22, 2018 meeting.

- i. From the outset of the review, GERC members on the Communication Skills subcommittee reported no significant concerns. Initially this subcommittee suggested that to reduce the apparent overall number of Gen Ed hours and courses required, the three courses in Communication Skills (9 s.h.) could be converted from Gen Ed to graduation requirements. The necessity and wisdom of such a move was never demonstrated, and the subcommittee eventually dropped the suggestion.

2. Number of hours within each Gen Ed category

The committee concludes that the number of hours required for each General Education category is consistent with the demands of the category. Reducing the needed hours would compromise the values of general education as a foundation for learning and personal growth. Expanding the hours would add an extra burden to students struggling to balance the demands of general education and career or professional education.

Neither contracting nor expanding the number of hours required will “focus” General Education better. Any reduction would come at the expense of at least one category and therefore devalue it in General Education. Perhaps focus would be better served by ensuring that courses listed by departments in the catalogue continue to be taught.

3. The total number of hours required for Gen Ed is consistent with the number of hours required at benchmark institutions. WIU (43 hrs.) actually requires less than schools such as Cal State Chico (48), Central Washington (50) and College of Charleston (51-55). While some schools within Illinois—SIU-C (41), EIU (40), and SIU-E (36-50)—appear to require less, this is because those schools have converted some Gen Ed requirements into graduation requirements. Though WIU could follow suit, such a move

might backfire, as it is a shallow deception that students will see through quickly. Instead of reducing the number of hours in Gen Ed, WIU might better serve its students and its interests by insuring that Gen Ed classes fill the educational and aspirational needs of students.

Four proposals for the entire Gen Ed curriculum were developed and submitted by individual members of GERC. Each was reviewed and discussed at length by the entire committee [Addendum 4a, b, c, d]. Each proposal distributed the hours differently between categories, and each proposed total semester hours of 43, 43, 43, and 44 in Gen Ed. As much as these numerical totals suggest little consideration of reducing the total number of Gen Ed hours, reduction of the total Gen Ed hours was a constant possibility and pressure upon most of GERC's deliberations. Similarly, seldom did GERC entertain the possibility of reducing required hours in one category or shifting hours between categories without encountering counterarguments or staunch opposition from individual members or visitors. As elaborated above, such opposition was most evident when changes were proposed to the category name change of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and to the redistribution of hours within the Humanities and Fine Arts category. However, each of these comprehensive proposals to overhaul the structure of Gen Ed became moot when GERC voted to retain the existing names of all Gen Ed categories together with the distribution of hours within and between the categories. (March 22, 2018).

4. The committee began its review of assessment of Gen Ed in Fall 2017. An Assessment subcommittee that included the Associate Provost for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, the University's Assessment Coordinator (who regularly sat in on our meetings), and three faculty members (from Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Education and Human Services) was formed. Initial discussions centered upon revising language in the still current 2007 Assessment in Student Learning Plan [Addendum 6]. GERC was alerted to the need for this assessment plan to be "streamlined" and made more "meaningful." In addition to our GERC review, we were also apprised of the Higher Learning Commission's upcoming visits to WIU in 2019-2020, for which the new assessment document will serve as the institutional plan, and also provide evidence of the university keeping its plan current. At its outset the subcommittee was cognizant that proposed changes to the 2007 plan were principally to clarify its language and organization, and to ensure the plan accurately reflected the actually existing method and process of assessment of student learning being conducted for Gen Ed courses.

Upon completing the subcommittee's work, the Associate Provost and the University Assessment Coordinator (also an administrative intern to the Associate Provost of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies) explained how since the 2007 plan was introduced CGE did not follow through on providing the departments with results of the collected data, thereby never completing the Feedback Loop (now Impact Report). The responsibility for this, as well as that of every constituency at every stage is now specified with greater clarity in the newly approved Assessment in Student Learning Plan [April 19, 2018, Addendum 7].

Upon completing its work, the subcommittee stressed that the revised Assessment in Student Learning Plan now mirrored how assessment was actually being done at WIU. One key area revised was in the area of "Impact," previously termed the "Feedback Loop." Another change was to assign the responsibility for collecting the Impact Reports from CGE to the Provost's Office. On April 19, 2018, GERC voted to accept the revised Assessment Plan crafted by GERC's Assessment Subcommittee [Addendum 7]. This same, newly revised plan was also presented, discussed, and accepted in an end-of-year meeting of the university-wide Student Learning Assessment Committee (May 8, 2018, SLAC).

5. An examination into how WIU's General Education curriculum identifies itself relative to peer institutions in the state, to include discussions of
 - a. What peer institutions include in their Gen Ed cores:

WIU's categories of Gen Ed generally parallel those of peer institutions, even if some schools, like EIU ("Scientific Awareness"), James Madison and Missouri State ("Natural World" and "Cultural Competence"), and Appalachian State ("Local to Global"), have created unique names for both Natural Sciences and Multiculturalism.
 - b. How other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal for students
We have no evidence that other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal to students. While other schools clearly market themselves as having fewer Gen Ed requirements, through the trick of turning Gen Ed classes into graduation requirements, we cannot assume without evidence that those programs are more appealing. Likewise, though some schools, like Appalachian State (Aesthetics for Fine Arts; Local to Global for Multicultural) rename and/or repackage the categories in different ways, we cannot assume without evidence that repackaging makes the program more appealing. Indeed, the overuse of

trendy names of categories or course titles could lead students to disdain the enterprise rather than embrace it. Finding out what would appeal to students is outside the purview of GERC.

6. Discussion of and examination into any relevant issues that arise from the review process
 - a. The number of classes offered in Gen Ed has slowly increased since the last GERC review twelve years ago. During the same period, enrollment at WIU has decreased. As a result, some GERC members suggested there may be too many offerings in Gen Ed in relation to the number of students enrolled.
 - b. Forty percent of all 100 level courses at WIU are Gen Ed, as are ten percent of 200 level courses and three percent of 300 level courses. A total of 221 courses are listed as Gen Ed. A number of Gen Ed courses have not been offered in more than three semesters, some have not been offered in more than three years. Some offered courses have low enrollments.
 - c. GERC conducted limited discussion of the Honors College's Gen Ed courses' correlation with the university's Gen Ed curriculum. The question of coordination and parity of Honor's Gen Ed with university Gen Ed was raised with the Director of the Centennial Honors College and is a conversation GERC recommends to continue with the Honors College when CGE resumes. Key would be for the Honors College to review its curriculum that has remained unchanged for fifteen-plus years to ask if it is feasible to coordinate its offerings more closely with University Gen Ed that has undergone substantial changes during that period. GERC ended with a request to the Centennial Honors College to report to CGE next semester to address the differences in Honors Gen Ed and University Gen Ed.
 - d. An issue to repeatedly arise (noted above) was GERC and CGE's lack of authority to remove courses either from the catalogue, from Gen Ed, or from one of its categories. GERC was repeatedly reminded that this authority lies within departments or schools. In the future, as CGE receives requests to remove courses from Gen Ed, CGE should make recommendations to departments or schools to have them consider removing such courses from Gen Ed at their discretion. Such requests might be based upon the purported unsuitability of a course to its Gen Ed category, a response to claims that there are too many Gen Ed courses in one category, or an excess of Gen Ed courses offered by one department or school.

- e. Another issue discussed at length in subcommittees and by the whole of GERC was writing in Gen Ed. Operating with overwhelming consensus that writing is an essential component in Gen Ed instruction, GERC conducted discussions that led to enhancement of writing across all of General Education. GERC drafted new guidelines that establish the newly adjusted writing requirements for all Gen Ed courses [Addendum 8]. GERC also endorsed continuing to provide and update supplemental resources to faculty to help them boost writing in their Gen Ed classes.

Conclusion

The review of the General Education program resulted in further notable conclusions. Striking was the recognition that member-representatives do not cede disciplinary ‘territory’ to other departments or (category) areas easily, even when those changes would have been minor. Baccalaureate degree programs are finely tuned instruments, and significant changes to the Gen Ed program could have discordant repercussions on departmental degree programs. At the end of the day, these conditions led to GERC overwhelmingly voting in favor of retaining the current titles of all six Gen Ed categories as well as their exact distribution of hours. When proposed changes to distribution of hours was potentially significant, massive counterarguments were marshaled that opened onto protracted debates between invested parties. While such debates ultimately favored the status quo, the debates recorded in minutes and supporting documents offer valuable insights into the importance of certain courses and areas of study within WIU’s General Education program.

Also standing out was the repeated discounting of benchmarking of ostensible peer institutions as the major determinant for WIU’s Gen Ed program. On more than one occasion lists of ostensible peer institutions were rejected on the basis that they were compiled for different purposes than ours. Forceful and persuasive arguments were marshaled on occasion for the autonomy of our Gen Ed program and the importance of defining our curriculum on intellectual and academic grounds rather than emulation of other institutions. There was as much support for having a distinctive, literally outstanding, Gen Ed curriculum (partly understood as a means to boost recruitment and enrollment) as there was in matching those of peer, often competing, institutions. In general, GERC members gave more weight to our relationships with other Illinois state universities’ curricula and particularly the pragmatic importance of conforming to the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI).

By the end of the review, there was a sense of exhaustion having left few stones unturned, but with few fundamental changes to the curriculum. But even though GERC concludes that the

structure of Gen Ed functions well, readers of this report will recognize areas for ongoing attention and potential improvement. Some of these rest in the content and delivery of courses over which CGE can and should play an encouraging, supportive and educational role, and not that of an enforcer. Through minor but significant changes to the assessment of student learning, CGE is now better positioned to help boost the culture of assessment within the Gen Ed curriculum. Similarly, by clarifying and revising the writing requirements and recommendations for writing in Gen Ed, the centrality and value of learning through writing in all Gen Ed courses has been strengthened.

General Education Review Committee
Final Report
Addenda

June 5, 2018

- 1 End of Year Status Report from the General Education Review Committee (GERC, March and May 2017)
- 2 CIE minutes (Council on International Education), February 26, 2018
- 3 Natural Sciences and Mathematics Subcommittee Report, November 17, 2017 with a Response by the Department of Mathematics & Philosophy, December 17, 2017
- 4 Overarching Gen Ed curriculum proposals (4a, 4b, 4c, 4d)
 - 4a New General Education Category Proposal, Take 2
 - 4b Goal Focused General Education Proposal
 - 4c General Education Proposal (Essential Skills/Core Knowledge revised)
 - 4d General Education Proposal
- 5 CAS Faculty Council Resolution re: GERC recommendation for changing the title of Category II, “Mathematics and Natural Sciences” (undated, received February 14, 2018)
- 6 Assessment in Student Learning Plan, 2007
- 7 Proposed Assessment in Student Learning Plan, 2018
- 8 Writing in General Education [document for website], May 2018

END OF YEAR STATUS REPORT FROM THE GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (GERC)

Drafted by Darcy C. Plymire, Chair CGE/GERC, March 20, 2017
Updated by Keith Holz, new Chair CGE/GERC, from May 4, 2017

Introduction

At the March 23, 2017 GERC meeting the Chairperson, Darcy Plymire announced that she was leaving the university during the summer, and stepping down as Chair of GERC and CGE. At the next meeting, on April 6, Keith Holz (Art) was nominated and elected Chair of GERC. After some procedural clarifications from Associate Provost Parsons and instructions from Faculty Senate Chair, Christopher Pynes, Holz was also reelected as Chair of CGE and GERC at the meeting May 4, 2017, following the installation of new (voting) officers.

An advanced version of the following report was submitted to the committee by Darcy Plymire just before the March 23 meeting and served to organize the agendas and orient the discussions and decision-making in the semester's subsequent meetings. Over Summer 2017, Holz made revisions to the document to reflect the state of discussions, decisions, and planning as of May 4, 2017. The outline of this report follows that of the charge provided to the GERC by Faculty Senate mid-semester Fall 2016.

The General Education Review Committee (GERC) was charged with a comprehensive review of General Education (Gen Ed) at Western Illinois University (WIU). The charge included directions to consider six interrelated questions:

1. The purpose and necessity of each Gen Ed category, with specific focus on
 - a. Multicultural in relation to Foreign Language/ Global Issues (FLGI)
 - b. Human Well Being and University 100 in light of changes to FYE
2. An examination of the number of hours required within each category
3. An examination of the overall number of hours required for the Gen Ed requirement, to include
4. A review of the structure of General Education assessment
5. An examination into how WIU's Gen Ed identifies itself relevant to peer institutions in the state, to include discussions of
 - a. What peer institutions include in their Gen Ed cores
 - b. How other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal for students
6. Discussion of and examination into any relevant issues that arise from the review process

Report:

To date the committee has accomplished the following:

1. The purpose and centrality of Gen Ed
 - a. We revised the philosophy and goal statement for Gen Ed.
 - i. We value knowledge for its own sake.
 - ii. Gen Ed develops areas of knowledge and methods of inquiry common to well-educated persons. These areas of knowledge are categorized in our Gen Ed curriculum as Communication Skills, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, Multicultural Studies, and Human Well-being.
 - iii. The Liberal Arts are the foundation of a university and of Gen Ed.
 - iv. Gen Ed includes understanding the differences in power between and among people, principles of wellness for a holistically healthy life, and cultivating personal responsibility and global citizenship.
 - v. Gen Ed develops intellectual flexibility and transferable skills for students' careers and to assume responsibilities as global citizens and lifelong learners.
 - vi. Students will acquire the ability to analyze, think critically, and use logic to reach conclusions; the ability to gather, evaluate and organize information from disparate sources; the ability to apply methods of scientific and intellectual inquiry; and the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively orally and in writing.
 - vii. Contemporary students need to develop knowledge, skills and abilities that will allow them to contribute to the common good through work and civic engagement.
 - b. The current review of the Gen Ed program at WIU leads us to believe that we achieve the above goals.
2. We discussed the purpose and necessity of each category with particular attention to the relationship between Multiculturalism and the FLGI requirement and the category of Human Well-being, including UNIV 100 and FIN 100.
 - a. We agreed in principle that each category in the existing Gen Ed program at WIU is valuable to students.

- b. The Multicultural category of Gen Ed is entirely congruent with the values and goals of WIU, particularly the values of personal growth and social responsibility.
- i. Personal growth—Multicultural education broadens students’ horizons making them better citizens in a diverse and interconnected world.
 - ii. Social responsibility—Multicultural education awakens students to the roles they will play in a diverse society and encourages them to engage in their communities in ways that reflect the values of acceptance, inclusion, and social justice.
- c. The FLGI graduation requirement is outside the purview of the Council of General Education (CGE) and GERC. However, having affirmed the value of Multicultural education to WIU we make two observations about the relationship between Multicultural and FLGI:
- i. Thirty FLGI classes are also listed as Gen Ed classes. Of those thirty, twenty-three may count as Multicultural, five may count as Social Science, five may count as Humanities, and one may count as Natural Sciences. The remaining sixty-four FLGI courses are discipline specific.
 - ii. The courses designated as Gen Ed and FLGI can serve in either role for a student. However, since the same course cannot count for both FLGI and Gen Ed, students may think that they are required to take an “extra” and therefore unnecessary course. While we in CGE/GERC maintain that the goal of Gen Ed and the goals of FLGI are admirable and that an “extra” course on Global Issues might be a sound educational demand, we suggest that if the goals and intentions of the Global Issues designation can be met with one Gen Ed course, that the CIE be encouraged to reassess the need for the additional FLGI requirement. [That reassessment ought to include the question of which GI courses that do not fit into Gen Ed would continue to be taught by departments if the FLGI requirement was abandoned.]
 - iii. Only three of sixteen peer institutions surveyed require students to take one year of foreign language. Five others require a foreign language for some majors, while three require students to demonstrate proficiency. It was harder to evaluate whether a school required something parallel to our Global Issues requirement. Illinois SIU-C has neither a Global Issues requirement or a foreign language requirement. EIU requires a foreign language only for some majors and while it requires a course in Cultural Diversity it seems that the course need

not have a global perspective. SIU-E is the only peer school in Illinois that requires both language proficiency or one year of language study *and* a Global Issues course in their Gen Ed program.

d. Human Well-Being

- i. CGE/GERC believes that the definition of wellness guiding the inclusion of UNIV 100 in Human Well-Being is consistent with the intent of that category to introduce students to healthy lifestyles and practices.
- ii. However, CGE/GERC members representing the Human Well-Being category would like to reaffirm the centrality of “practical knowledge [for]...a healthy and fit life” as expressed in the current catalog definition of Human Well-Being. Wellness is a multifaceted construct, but the inclusion of courses like FIN 101—Financial Health in the category can allow students to complete their Gen Ed requirement without contemplating the knowledge and practices of physical health and fitness. A proposal was made at the last GERC meeting of the year to remove FIN 101 (2 cr. hrs.) from Gen Ed and make it a University Requirement. This proposal will be revisited in Fall 2017.

e. CGE/GERC members from the Natural Sciences are concerned about two issues

- i. The fact that students may take “lab” courses online and therefore need not actually work in the lab. They are concerned that the students are losing a key piece of their general education in the sciences if they do not work in the lab. Natural Sciences committee members have not yet recommended any change to this.
- ii. The relationship between MATH 099, MATH 100, and MATH 101 raises issues that led the GERC’s decision to invite a professor from Mathematics to a GERC meeting in Fall 2017 semester to clarify and discuss the irregularities and issues associated with student enrollment and performance in these courses.

f. CGE/GERC members from the Social Sciences are concerned that the definition of the category may need to be updated. Recently courses in CSD and EIS have been submitted for inclusion in Social Sciences, but the members of the committee from this category believe that those courses do not accurately reflect the intent of the category to inculcate the knowledge and methods of social science.

We contend it is not enough for a course to have social relevance. The subcommittee is preparing a revision of the category's definition.

- g. CGE/GERC members from the Humanities & Fine Arts have identified concerns regarding the balance of Humanities v. Fine Arts credit hours within this category. The subcommittee continues to consider whether the current requirement to have six of the nine hours in either Humanities or Fine Arts (and only three hours in the other category) is acceptable or whether it should be changed. The main alternative proposal is to require two courses (6 cr. hr.) in Humanities and one in Fine Arts (3 cr. hr.). Our review of peer institutions reveals that the decision to require at least one Humanities/Fine Arts course in the Fine Arts is congruent with our peers. Only three of sixteen schools do not specifically include Fine Arts in their requirements. Thus, questions regarding the balance (distribution) of Fine Arts or Humanities courses within this category linger, but will be resolved during the Fall 2017 semester.
- h. CGE/GERC members from Communication Skills report no significant concerns. However, if we wanted to reduce the apparent number of Gen Ed hours and courses required, we could convert the three courses in Communication Skills from Gen Ed to graduation requirements. The necessity and wisdom of this move, however, has not been demonstrated.

3. Number of hours

- a. The committee concludes that the number of hours required for each General Education category is consistent with the demands of the category. Reducing the needed hours would compromise the values of general education as a foundation for learning and personal growth. Expanding the hours would add an extra burden to students struggling to balance the demands of General Education and career or professional education. Neither contracting nor expanding the number of hours required would better "focus" General Education. The former would reduce focus on any one category of General Education. The latter would just as likely encourage students to add courses from more disciplines as it would encourage them to choose more courses from a single discipline. Focus would be better served perhaps by reducing the number of classes offered in each category from each department/discipline. That would tend to shepherd students into a focused set of classes in each department/discipline rather than to spread them out.

- b. The total number of hours required for Gen Ed is consistent with the number of hours required at benchmark institutions. WIU (43 hrs.) actually requires less than schools like Cal State Chico (48), Central Washington (50) and College of Charleston (51-55). While some schools within Illinois – SIU-C (41), EIU (40), and SIU-E (36-50) – appear to require less, this is because those schools have converted some Gen Ed requirements into graduation requirements. Though WIU could follow suit, such a move might backfire, as it is a shallow deception that students will see through quickly. Instead of reducing the number of hours in Gen Ed, WIU might better serve its students and its interests by insuring that Gen Ed classes fill the educational and aspirational needs of students.
4. The committee has not yet begun a discussion of Gen Ed assessment, and prefers to defer that question until other questions have been answered
5. An examination into how WIU’s General Education curriculum identifies itself relevant to peer institutions in the state, to include discussions of:

 - a. What peer institutions include in their Gen Ed cores

WIU’s categories of Gen Ed generally parallel those of peer institutions, even if some schools, like EIU (“Scientific Awareness”), James Madison and Missouri State (“Natural World” and “Cultural Competence”), and Appalachian State (“Local to Global”), have created unique names for the Natural Sciences and Multiculturalism.
 - b. How other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal for students

We have no evidence that other institutions craft their Gen Ed programs with more appeal to students. While other schools clearly market themselves as having fewer Gen Ed requirements, through the trick of turning Gen Ed classes into graduation requirements, we cannot assume without evidence those programs are more appealing. Likewise, though some schools, like Appalachian State (Aesthetics for Fine Arts; Local to Global for Multicultural) rename and/or repackage the categories in different ways, we cannot assume without evidence that repackaging makes the program more appealing. Indeed, the overuse of trendy names of categories or course titles could lead students to disdain the enterprise rather than embrace it. Finding out what would appeal to students is outside the purview of GERC.
6. Discussion of and examination into any relevant issues that arise from the review process

- a. The number of classes offered in Gen Ed has slowly increased since the last GERC review twelve years ago. During the same period, enrollment at WIU has decreased. As a result, we may have too many offerings in Gen Ed in relation to the number of students enrolled.
- b. Forty percent of all 100 level courses at WIU are Gen Ed as are ten percent of 200 level courses and three percent of 300 level courses. A total of 221 courses are listed as Gen Ed. A number of Gen Ed courses have not been offered in more than three semesters, some have not been offered in more than three years. Some offered courses have low enrollments. Early in the Fall 2017 semester, GERC plans to decide whether all or some of those courses need to remain listed in Gen Ed or if they could be taken out of the Gen Ed curriculum to so that other courses could thrive.

We discussed and proposed the following with this key question in mind: What type of student do we want graduating from WIU?

1. There is an implicit argument that a student would choose not to attend WIU if the FLGI requirement were to be retained or s.h. increased has no substantive or demonstrable support. To make this claim is somewhat specious since a decision to attend any institution is not based solely on a single criteria; other variables such as tuition, fees, housing, and associated costs are stronger determinants.
2. That students are required to take 3 s.h. of 120 s.h (normative) or 132 s.h. (high end), which represents 2.5% or 2.27%, respectively, is an undue burden is another argument that cannot withstand scrutiny. If WIU requires ALL student to be competent or become experts in a global or multicultural environment, *then a more integrative approach to implementing the FLGI requirement is sorely needed*. NO ONE would agree or advance a position that 3 s.h. of any coursework would produce an effective, well-rounded individual based on that one criteria. As publicly advanced by the president of the university as well as in the strategic plan, one of the goals of education at WIU is to equip all students, regardless of major, to function effectively in an interconnected world. The *Preamble* to the February 2018 Strategic Plan updates for 2017-2027 (2018.03.01 at http://www.wiu.edu/university_planning/planningupdates.php) explicitly states:

We advance our traditions of excellence. We empower students to become engaged and productive *global citizens* committed to making a difference *in the diverse communities and professions they represent* (emphases mine). Our graduates are leaders in their fields equipped with knowledge, problem solving skills, and community awareness necessary to address the professional, economic, and social issues of our time.

Moreover, in its *Our Mission* statement, WIU claims:

Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities. We provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service, *grounded in multidisciplinary, regional and global perspectives* (emphasis mine).

Furthermore, as part of its *Social Responsibility* statement, WIU posits:

Western Illinois University is committed to civic and community engagement... We create an environment that fosters and promotes citizenship. We serve as a resource for and stimulus

to educational, cultural, environmental, community and economic development in our region and well beyond it for the public good.

3. ‘Double or triple dipping’ of FLGI courses is rejected. This becomes a moot point in the proposed integrated approach to a liberal arts education at WIU.
4. A tentative rejection of a s.h.-driven curriculum in favour of an *integrative approach*. In other words, ALL departments would be required to ensure that its courses reflect global, intercultural, and/or multicultural learning. Those departments that are ‘challenged’ by such an approach will nonetheless benefit as a whole since the overall educational experience will be reflective in the General Education courses that all students are compelled to complete for their baccalaureate degree. Each individual sub-component of GE will be designed around the integrated approach. Moreover, those disciplines that are driven by practical skills acquisition (LEJA, Engineering, Business, etc.) will undoubtedly benefit from such an approach to preparing their students for a diverse environment.
5. Metric concerns were also address with the proposal that each department and/or professor will submit a justification for FLGI for *each course* offered. CIE will develop/refine a metric that will be utilised in the construction of courses. Rather than delimiting a specific percentage of a course that meets the FLGI requirement, the overall expectations will reflect a knowledge-based approach to diversity. In other words, rather than stipulating a percent of time spent on cultural issues (whether inter-, cross, and/or multi-cultural), the overall material (i.e., substantive) must follow a tendency toward achieving the stipulated goals set out by the university and CIE.

In light of historic changes at WIU in regard to enrollment, curriculum changes, etc. along with proposal to eliminate or reduce the requirement of FLGI (as well as disbanding of CIE), the leadership of this university stands a crossroad: lead or be left behind in the training of our students to be not minimally knowledgeable, but to be culturally competent in a global environment. Anything else would be shortsighted and detrimental.

DB

Natural Sciences and Mathematics Subcommittee Report

November 17, 2017

*A Response by the
Department of
Mathematics &
Philosophy
(In blue text and 'boxed.')*
December 17, 2017

Committee Members:

Kishor Kapale (Physics), Steve Bennett (Geology), Marty Maskarinec (Computer Science),
Kris Kelly (Psychology)

Recommendations

1. **No changes should be made to the number of courses in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics category**

Rationale:

- Our current requirements are very similar to both the IAI requirements and the 16 peer institutions identified in previous General Education reports. The IAI requires 10 hours in the areas of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Hours required at our peer institutions range from a low of 9 to a high of 14. Most of them require three courses to complete the requirement, just as we do.

We support this provided the emphasis remains on "Natural Sciences and Mathematics," as per the IAI requirement. CS 114 and CS 214 do not possess that emphasis.

2. **Math 138 – Applied Calculus II and Math 139 – Applied Linear Algebra and Finite Mathematics should be removed from the General Education Curriculum**

Rationale:

- These courses have not been offered in the past three years. (Note: The subcommittee would not recommend their removal if it were to preclude transfer students from earning General Education credit for courses equivalent to Math 138 and Math 139.)

We do not have any objections.

3. **General education category “Natural Sciences and Mathematics” should be renamed “Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning.”**

We, the entire Department of Mathematics & Philosophy, are emphatically opposed to this. We have presented our reasoned position to the CGE with supporting and documented facts.

Rationale:

- This general education category, as reflected in the courses listed under it in the catalog, is broader than the current label. “Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning” better captures the spirit of this category.

Comparing the present list of the courses to that of two years ago, the only added courses are CS 114 and CS 214, while 28 courses are in Natural Sciences and 17 that are Mathematics or have an explicit Mathematics prerequisite. Computer Science is neither a ‘natural science’ nor is it a vehicle for ‘quantitative reasoning.’ The CS courses listed are programming courses and not about a cohesive body of knowledge. Hence a title change does NOT follow from the offered “rationale.”

- Only 4 out of 14 peer institutions label it “math”

This is not a “rationale” for the “Recommendation.” Our “peer institutions” group was created with the first Higher Values in Higher Education strategic plan, written in 2004. The single purpose listed for the creation of the peer institutions list was for comparison of numerical items such as comparison of salary and comparison of “The University’s performance on the dashboard indicators,” NOT for any comparison of nomenclature. Our peer institutions differ from each other and from us in many ways. Some have four colleges some have five. Some have a certain department in a given college where others don’t. It is arbitrary and irrational to offer the remark, as the Subcommittee has, as a “rationale” for its “Recommendation.”

- There will be no change to the “math competency” label or the means by which math competency is met.

This is illogical. This is not a “rationale” for the “Recommendation.” To offer not recommending a more dramatic assault as a “rationale” for recommending a dramatic assault is absurd.

A Plea

In a year that the Interim Provost launches a review of our General Education, a Subcommittee, who does not include a member from the Mathematics Department and who only asks for a perfunctory meeting with the Chair of that Department and in that meeting does not reveal its "Recommendations" on the role and name of 'mathematics,' that Subcommittee, in iteration after iteration of its formal "Recommendations," proposes a dramatic change as its find, producing illogical after illogical "rationales" for the same.

Unconvincing.

I implore you to reject the proposal to change the Category's name demonstrating your disapproval for an assault on the overt presence of one of the most fundamental subjects of any university education.

Concerns:

These are other points for discussion. While these are not formal recommendations for the General Education Review Committee to consider now, the subcommittee feels these should be listed here and perhaps discussed at a later date.

1. Online lab offerings are becoming increasingly popular. It is the feeling of the subcommittee that the policy of allowing resident students (Macomb Campus) to enroll in online lab courses rather than face-to-face offerings is not in the best educational interest of the students.
2. During consultation with the Department of Mathematics the subcommittee was told that there may be support from their department for awarding college credit for the content currently taught in Math 099. We have since been informed that the Department of Mathematics is split on this issue. The subcommittee supports offering credit for the class that would replace Math 099 if that is an option that the Department of Mathematics wants to pursue. We understand that Faculty Senate and other constituent groups would be asked to weigh in on this before it is approved.

New General Education Category Proposal Take 2

Proposed by Martin Maskarinec

Category 1)	University Exploration		1 hour
Category 2)	Communication	(Unchanged)	9 hours
Category 3)	Natural Science and Mathematics	(Unchanged)	10 hours
Category 4)	Humanities		6 hours
	a) Visual and Performing Arts (3 hours)		
	b) Humanities (3 hours)		
	c) NOTE: 3 Additional Hours in the Humanities are in Category 6a)		
Category 5)	Social Sciences		6 hours
	a) Social Sciences (6 hours)		
	b) NOTE: 3 Additional Hours in the Social Sciences are in Category 6b)		
Category 6)	Multi-Cultural		6 Hours
	a) Multi-Culturalism from a Humanities perspective		
	b) Multi-Culturalism from a Social Science perspective		
Category 7)	Wellness		2 hours
	To include physical, emotional, intellectual, financial well being		
Category 8)	Open General Education Electives		3-4 hours

Students may choose any course in categories 3-7 or any course explicitly approved for General Education Elective Credit.

43 hours total

Observations/Additional Comments:

- Multi-Cultural now is 6 hours with all 6 needing to be cross-listed in the Humanities/Social Sciences. This may result in the removal of some existing courses from this category.
- University 100 is moved into its own category.
- A new “Electives” category has been created. The hour range accounts for transfer students who elect to do our Gen Ed, but do not need University 100.
- FLGI goes away – no “starred” classes that need to be taken in addition to the base category requirements.
- Some leeway would need to be granted for transfer students.

Goal Focused General Education Proposal

About the general education curriculum - Why is General Education required for all students? General Education courses teach transferable skills which are critical to future success in the workplace. These include written and oral communication, critical thinking, problem solving, research and analysis skills, global awareness and appreciation of multiple perspectives on issues.

Philosophy and Goals of General Education

General Education is the component of the undergraduate curriculum devoted to those areas of knowledge, methods of inquiry, and ideas that the University and scholarly community believe are common to well-educated persons. General Education provides a foundation for future learning.

General Education Curriculum

In order to help students be well-educated, successful, and valuable participants in our rapidly changing global community, the university offers more than professional or vocational training. To get the most out of your education, you want to enrich your experience with additional studies from the many courses offered.

The University has minimum requirements in each of these General Education areas which each student must complete. General education curriculum courses • A minimum of 43 semester hours (s.h.) is required. General Education requirements are grouped into six broad areas: communication skills, natural sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities and fine arts, multicultural studies and human well-being. Knowledge of these subjects is the mark of an educated person.

Communication Skills: 9 s.h.

Natural Sciences and Mathematics: 10 s.h.

Social Sciences: 9 s.h.

Humanities and Fine Arts: 9 s.h.

Multicultural Studies: 3 s.h.

Human Well-Being: 3 s.h.

Total Hours 43

The generally well-educated student will demonstrate:

1. broad knowledge and understanding of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities;
2. an ability to analyze, think critically, and form reasoned conclusions;
3. competence in communicating his or her views and ideas clearly and cogently;
4. an understanding of the methods by which people pursue knowledge;
5. an understanding of the differences and relative power among peoples, both in the United States and across the globe; and

6. knowledge of the principle of wellness for living a healthy and fit life, both physically and mentally.

Warner and Koeppel (2017). General Education Requirements: A Comparative Analysis. *The Journal of General Education*, Volume 58, Number 4, 2009, pp. 241-258

According to an article by Warner and Koeppel (2017) analysis of general education requirements should focus on a blending of courses within a distribution schema that all students must pass as a requirement for graduation related to an “anchoring concept”

- Clear programmatic purpose for general education
- Resonance with the institution’s distinctive mission
- Transparent, powerful goals and outcomes of learning

Warner and Koeppel (2017) stated “The general education curriculum, shared by all students, demonstrates the institution’s mission, philosophy, values, and culture.

Warner and Koeppel discussed that overall examinations of general education curriculum were based almost entirely on loose distribution systems. These systems led to a number of problems including

- (1) Curricula lacked a unifying philosophy that students could grasp
- (2) Curricula were fragmented and best described as a “smorgasbord”
- (3) Students generally did not see the utility of studying general education materials and thus lacked motivation or interest in mastering the traditional liberal arts subject matter (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 1994).

Hutchings, Marchese, and Wright (1991) identify seven issues encountered when working on general education and assessment. These are institutional apathy, departmental and faculty politics, difficulty in setting goals, student experience of the curriculum, coherence of the curriculum, learning that matters, and continuous improvement.

Once institutions get past the apathy and the turf wars of general education distribution requirements, the remaining issues raise more serious concerns. Assessment implies that the learning goals are clearly stated and can be linked to the students’ course work.

Warner and Koeppel (2017) discussed that a positive outcome relates to a curriculum that affords students more choice might be viewed as more desirable to students coming from diverse cultures and perspectives, allowing them to find courses that resonate with their backgrounds and interests. For example, fulfilling a literature requirement might seem more attractive to students if they can study the literature of their own cultural or ethnic group rather than that of Western Europe or the United States. This sensitivity to culture might be an important factor when students make their college selections.

Another positive outcome is that providing options for students in meeting general education requirements are providing ready avenues for students to expand their perspectives and understanding of the world. By providing options and encouraging students to take advantage of

them, colleges and universities create opportunities for students to explore topics or perspectives that might otherwise be unavailable.

Proposal – Goal Focused General Education Model

General education identifies and distributes course hours based on identified general education goals of the University. Western Illinois University has identified 6 overall goals related to general education.

Currently, students take courses based on categories or disciplines. Individual courses are assigned a goal that meets the general education requirement.

This proposal is a goal focused model that begins with the goals, then lists identified courses that the student can take to meet the general education goals of the University. Identifying the overall goal as the beginning step allows courses to be added or adjusted to meet the end result. Providing a goal centered focus allows for a clear evaluation of what is currently offered as well as areas that need improvement.

Providing students with the goal focused general education plan allows students to have a better understanding of the purpose and rationale of chosen courses while maintaining a flexibility for the interest of the student. A goal focused general education plan will assist in eliminating department claim of student generated credit hours.

Currently, each student is required to take a total of 43 credit hours of general education. With the six identified goals, the student credit hours can be divided among the goals based on relevance and depth of the goal. As new courses apply to become a general education course, the acceptance could be focused on the goal that the course is meeting as well as other current courses that meet that identified goal.

Courses that are offered at Western Illinois University as general education courses are listed on the following page under their current identified goals. Note that most courses have identified two goals. The first identified goal is listed as regular print whereas the second identified goal has been shaded. The goals have not been prioritized and do not indicate a significance of one over the other.

General Education Proposal (ES/CK revised)

1.	University Exploration		1 hour
2.	Communication	(Unchanged)	9 hours
3.	Natural Science and Mathematics	(Unchanged)	10 hours
4.	Humanities and Fine Arts		9 hours
a.	Fine Arts (3 hours)		
b.	Humanities (3 hours)		
c.	Choice of Fine Arts or Humanities (3 hours)		
d.	NOTE: 3 Additional Hours are in Category 6a)		
5.	Social Sciences		6 hours
.	Social Sciences (6 hours)		
a.	NOTE: 3 Additional Hours in the Social Sciences are in Category 6b)		
6.	Multi-Cultural		6 Hours
.	Multi-Culturalism from a Humanities or Fine Arts perspective		
a.	Multi-Culturalism from a Social Science perspective		
7.	Wellness		2 hours
	To include physical, emotional, intellectual, financial well being		

43

hours total

Notes:

- Same as Marty's proposal (with minor language changes) except for changes to Category 4 and the removal of Category 8
- Potentially increases equity between Social Sciences and Humanities, as Colton and I recommend
- Does not change Fine Arts requirements/options

Other recommendations:

Writing requirements: We should strengthen writing requirements for courses under 50 in Categories 4-6. Currently the requirement is that "students should have at least one written assignment with written or oral feedback from the instructor with an opportunity for revision." Add something like: "In addition, students should be writing on a regular basis, with weekly writing assignments as the norm. These may include many different types of writing, graded or ungraded, such as brief in-class analyses, one-page student reports on material studied outside of class, guided analysis sheets, and essay questions on exams."

Crafting the Gen Ed program: Per our charge to identify how best to craft the program to appeal to students, we should highlight the essential skills and core knowledge covered in these courses as I did in the earlier proposal.

General Education Proposal

Proposed by Colton Markey

Category 1) Communication Skills: 9 credit hours

1. Six of the hours must come from English composition classes.
2. Three of the hours must come from Public Speaking class.

Category 2) Natural Sciences and Mathematics: 10 credit hours

1. Four of the hours must come from laboratory course.
2. Three of the hours must come from a mathematics course.

Category 3) Social Sciences: 6 Credit Hours

Category 4) Humanities: 6 Credit Hours

Category 5) Fine Arts: 6 credit hours

Category 6) Multicultural: 3 Credit Hours

Category 7) Human Well-Being: 3 Credit Hours

Category 8) University Exploration: 1 Credit Hours

Total Credit Hours: 44

Notes:

1. Students with credit loads 121 and over based on degree requirements will be able to choose to lower one of the Categories 3-5 to three credit hours. If a student chooses to lower the Humanities or Social Sciences category, they must take the Multicultural category class from the perspective of which they have lowered. This option will be available for double majors and double minors.
2. If a student were to transfer into Western Illinois University, they would be able to use the IAI General Education requirements when dealing with Categories 3-5.
3. All General Education Courses have a required grade of a C or better in order for the class to count towards General Education credit.
4. Categories 3, 4 and 6 will have a writing page minimum of 10 pages that students must complete.

Changes:

1. A Mathematics course will be required from every student.

2. The Category of Social Sciences will be lowered from nine credit hours to six credit hours.
3. The Category of Humanities and Fine Arts will be separated in to two different categories each requiring six credit hours.
4. A new category has been created called University Exploration.
5. The Human Well-Being Category has been raised to three credit hours.

CAS Faculty Council Resolution re: GERC recommendation for changing the title of Category II, “Mathematics and Natural Sciences”

The Faculty Council of the College of Arts and Sciences wishes to register its opposition to the recommendation to change the title of this category. The Faculty Council sees no compelling reason for this change in the rationale provided by the GERC subcommittee. Specifically, the existing rationale suggests that the name change is motivated by existing courses in the category that do not fit into the current title. Faculty Council sees no benefit to students from this change, and no reason to alter the category that serves any curricular purpose.

**Proposal for the
Assessment of Student Learning in General Education
At Western Illinois University
Approved by the General Education Review Committee
February 15, 2007**

Underlying Assumptions:

1. The assessment of student learning in regard to Western's General Education Goals should take place at the level of the department. This is in contrast to methods of assessment that evaluate every student individually or that are conducted on a university wide level. There are several reasons for this conclusion.
 - a. Assessment results are of the most use to the departments that deliver courses within the General Education Curriculum.
 - b. Western's large student body makes individual student level assessment untenable.
 - c. Conversely, the flexibility offered by a cafeteria style General Education Curriculum makes any university level assessment activities difficult.
2. General Education assessment should be as unobtrusive to faculty and departments as possible, yet should provide useful information regarding student achievement of Western's General Education Goals.
3. Other entities in the university need the information departments will generate by doing General Education assessment. These include the Council on General Education, the Faculty Senate, deans, and the Office of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. As such, a regular mechanism for communicating information regarding General Education assessment is necessary.
4. As the office responsible for cross-college academic activities, the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is ultimately responsible for seeing that General Education assessment is carried out in a timely and effective manner.
5. Consistent with the faculty contract [Article 20.4.c.(1).(c)] , assessment results cannot be used in the evaluation of individual faculty for personnel decisions.

Assessment of Student Learning in General Education

- I. **Preliminary Activities:** Departments are responsible for developing a plan to assess student mastery of the WIU General Education goals in the department's courses that are included in the General Education Curriculum. The office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may serve as a resource to departments in developing appropriate plans for General Education assessment. However, the following activities are required of each department offering courses in the General Education Curriculum.
 - A. Departments offering General Education courses must have an Assessment Committee as one of their regular department committees. Department assessment committees already in existence are sufficient. Another committee may assume these duties.
 - B. For departments offering courses in the General Education Curriculum, the department assessment committee, in conjunction with the faculty teaching General Education courses, will identify at least three of the General Education goals that are appropriate to the discipline(s) represented by that department. The three goals selected may be the same for all General Education courses offered by a department or may vary by course.

- C. The three goals selected by the department assessment committee will be submitted to the Council on General Education.
- D. After reviewing the departments' submissions, the Council on General Education will recommend to departments which goals they will use for their General Education assessment.
- E. The Council on General Education will verify that each of the General Education Goals is being used for assessment by a sufficient number of departments (or courses) to reasonably assure that a student at Western would be exposed to each of the goals.
- F. The Council on General Education will develop a format for departments to use in reporting their General Education assessment results.

II. General Education Assessment Plan: Once the goals for each department offering General Education courses have been identified, departments need to develop a plan of assessing student learning of those goals. These plans may vary by course within a department, or department assessment plans may be consistent across courses. Each plan must include the following.

- A. Learning Outcomes:** While the General Education Goals provide the basic outline for student learning in General Education, departments must develop measurable learning outcomes that are specific to the department's discipline(s). Measurable learning outcomes will be developed for each of the department's General Education goals. Learning outcomes are from a student's point of view: "students will demonstrate..."
 - 1. The measurable learning outcome is a narrower objective relevant to a broader goal. Measurable learning outcomes should be developed in the context of what faculty members teaching General Education courses are currently teaching.
 - 2. Departments may choose to assess student learning in a sample of the General Education courses and sections offered by the department, rather than in every section of every course. Every General Education course must regularly be included in the assessment process. Departments using a sample of sections should rotate the responsibility of assessment among its faculty teaching General Education courses.
- B. Measurement:** Departments will develop forms of measurement that provide clear evidence of student learning relative to the learning objectives. Measures stem directly from the learning outcomes identified for each of the two goals being assessed by a department. Examples of possible measures include standardized tests, imbedded assessment, and portfolios.
- C. Results:** Through their assessment committees, departments are responsible for the following activities.
 - 1. Departments will carry out the measurement in their General Education courses.
 - 2. Departments will compile the results of the measurement.
 - 3. Departments will analyze the findings in relation to the learning outcomes and the department's expectations of student learning.
 - 4. Departments will report General Education assessment activities and results to their deans in annual assessment reports.

- D. Feedback:** The results of General Education Assessment can be used by a variety of actors.
1. Faculty can use assessment results to adjust teaching methods or course content if students are not meeting faculty members' expectations for student learning.
 2. Departments can use assessment results to initiate adjustments in the departmental curriculum. Results can also foster discussion of teaching methods among departmental faculty.
 3. Deans will receive General Education assessment results from the departments in each college that offers General Education courses. These reports will be transmitted to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
 4. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will compile department assessment information for institutional purposes. The Provost's office will provide General Education assessment results annually to the Council on General Education, as they are submitted by departments, unless CGE requests otherwise. The Council on General Education will report on General Education assessment to the Faculty Senate.
 5. The Council on General Education will use assessment results as part of its ongoing review of General Education. Any actions taken as a result of General Education assessment will be reported annually to the Faculty Senate.
 6. The Faculty Senate will be kept informed of assessment activities by the Council on General Education and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additional information may be requested.

The single greatest issue that the Council dealt with during 2011-2012 was that of the assessment of general education courses. In fact, the Council quickly discovered that the issue is a complex phenomenon that remains under consideration and part of conversations for the 2012-2013 academic year. During 2011-2012 the Council heard presentations from Dr. Aimee Shouse and Dr. Lori Baker-Sperry regarding the history of CGE and GERC and how general education assessment has been or is handled administratively. As a result of those presentations and ongoing conversations within the Council, CGE reaffirmed the following: 1) the need to assess all sections of general education courses every semester; 2) the need to ensure that the mechanisms being used to assess general education courses are effective and that they are measuring the assigned goals for their respective courses; 3) the need to encourage a culture of assessment for general education (and of support for the general education curriculum more broadly) at WIU; 4) the need to educate faculty and entire departments that offer general education courses that assessment results should be reviewed in a spirit of continuous improvement of their courses; and 5) that CGE's central role remains those responsibilities as outlined in the Faculty Senate Constitution.

**SENATE AGENDA ITEM III.D.1.
28 August 2012**

**Proposal for the
Assessment of Student Learning in General Education
At Western Illinois University
General Education Review Committee
November 2, 2017**

Underlying Assumptions:

1. Assessment of student learning of Western's General Education Goals will take place at the level of the department/school.
2. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is ultimately responsible for seeing that General Education assessment is carried out in a timely and effective manner.
3. The Council on General Education will oversee the process of assessment of student learning in General Education and will work in conjunction with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies to ensure that The Higher Learning Commission's requirements are met.
4. Assessment processes should be streamlined and meaningful and the University Plan for General Education Assessment will reflect both.
5. Departments/schools will assess all students in each section of all General Education courses every semester.
6. Consistent with the faculty contract [Article 20.4.c.(1).(c)], assessment results cannot be used in the evaluation of individual faculty for personnel decisions.

Assessment of Student Learning in General Education

Preliminary Activities:

1. Departments/schools must have an Assessment Committee as one of their regular committees. The membership of the Assessment Committee for the academic year will be submitted in the General Education Spring/Summer Report due to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies in October.
2. Upon approval of a General Education course, the Department/School Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the faculty teaching the General Education course, will submit to the Council on General Education at least three of the General Education goals that are appropriate to the General Education course in that department/school. The three goals selected may be the same as those approved for all General Education courses offered by a department/school, or may vary by course.
3. After review, the Council on General Education will recommend to departments/schools which two goals they will use to assess the General Education course.

Departmental/School General Education Assessment Plans: Departments/schools must develop a plan to assess student learning of the assigned goals for each course. These plans may vary by course within a department/school, or department/school assessment plans may be consistent across courses. Plans will be submitted to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies. Each plan must include the following:

I. Learning Outcomes:

- A. Based upon each goal assigned, departments/schools must develop measurable learning outcomes that are specific to the content of the General Education course/s.
- B. The measurable learning outcome is a narrower objective relevant to a broader goal. Learning outcomes are written from a student's point of view, for example: "Students will demonstrate..."

II. Measurement:

- A. Departments/schools will develop or identify forms of direct measurement for each learning outcome that provide clear evidence of student learning.
- B. Direct measures will measure learning outcomes identified for each of the two goals being assessed by a department/school. Examples of possible direct measures include: standardized tests, embedded assessments such as tests, assignments, and papers, and portfolios.
- C. One direct measure for each learning outcome will suffice.

III. Results: Through their Assessment Committees, departments/schools are responsible for the following activities. Departments/schools will:

- A. Conduct the planned measurement in all General Education courses.
- B. Compile the results of the measurement.
- C. Analyze the findings.
- D. Report General Education assessment activities and results to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies.

IV. Impact: *The Higher Learning Commission requires that faculty annually use assessment results to improve student learning.* This includes activities based on the data such as: Adjusting teaching methods or course content, determining and implementing curricular changes, departmental/school initiatives, revised plans, etc.

- A. Departments/schools will:
 - 1. Endeavor to develop learning outcomes and select direct measures that will produce data that may be used to improve student learning. If either or both do not produce actionable data, programs will adjust the plan (identify new learning outcomes or adjust direct measures) to identify areas where student learning may be improved through assessment of student learning.
 - 2. Consider using assessment processes to aid in retention of students in the course by identifying areas related to the learning outcomes that are deterrents to student success (tough concepts or processes) and using assessment of student learning to help students improve in these areas.
- B. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies will:
 - 1. Receive General Education assessment results and impact statements from the departments/schools in each college that offer General Education courses.
 - 2. Review and respond to General Education assessment results and Impact Reports and work with departments/schools to meet Higher Learning Commission requirements for Western Illinois University/HLC accreditation.
 - 3. Provide General Education assessment results and impact statements annually to the Council on General Education, compiled by goal, unless CGE requests otherwise.

4. In ex-officio capacity, advise the Council on General Education on current assessment practices and requirements of the Higher Learning Commission.
 5. Report to the Faculty Senate annually on General Education Assessment in the Annual Report of Assessment of Student Learning presented at the end of the Spring semester.
- C. The Council on General Education will:
1. Monitor the process of assigning goals to departments.
 2. Collect and evaluate the submitted plans, in conjunction with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate & Graduate Studies.
 3. Use assessment results as part of its ongoing review of General Education. Verify that each of the General Education goals is being used for assessment by a sufficient number of departments/schools (or courses) to reasonably assure that a student at Western would be exposed to each of the goals.
 4. Report on the Council's participation in General Education assessment annually in the full Council on General Education Report to the Faculty Senate.

Writing in General Education

Writing is one of the most important tools for achieving the goals and benefits of general education. The Council on General Education requires that general education courses include writing as an integral learning tool. Although the type and amount of writing is best determined by the instructor and department, the Council on General Education requires that all courses include substantive, discipline-appropriate writing. The Council will use the following guidelines when considering courses for inclusion in General Education or in reviewing current course syllabi.

In all General Education courses, students should have at least one written assignment with written or oral feedback from the instructor with an opportunity for revision. It is also expected that multiple writing assignments, which can take on different forms, will be given in a class. The length and style of the writing assignments, along with their number, will vary with class size and among disciplines.

"Writing to learn" is a pedagogy that has proved successful for almost two decades now. Useful information for including writing in general education can be found on our faculty resources page. Writing to learn means using writing—usually informal and short assignments—in the class and as homework to help the student:

- learn a difficult concept,
- organize complex materials into a relevant order (causes and effects of poverty in a sociology class, for example),
- demonstrate understanding of a particular topic, and
- even further explore certain ideas brought up in their texts or lecture sessions.

It is strongly recommended that faculty use these kinds of writing exercises in the class on a daily or weekly basis to facilitate student learning of course material while providing students with essential writing practice to maintain and further develop their writing skills during their Gen Ed coursework. The writing to learn concept was one of the three components of the "writing culture" WIU wanted to establish on the campus (the Writing Program and the WID courses are the other two).

Certainly a formal paper with response and revision is important and should be included, but student writing improves more by writing more often and on a more regular basis; and these short, informal writing to learn exercises do not need to be graded in the formal sense. Teachers can simply read through them, check off full or partial credit and return them to the students (a paper that is on time, fulfills the length requirement and is on topic gets full credit). Those of us who have used such writing exercises estimate that forty such short pieces can be read and checked off in about thirty minutes.

What kind of specific writing exercises are we talking about? Here are just a few examples:

the opening focused free write—five to eight minutes—in which students respond to the day's reading assignment by focusing on an idea or question they want to bring up in class.

a closing question—a student writes out a question about something from the day's lecture/discussion that they did not understand and want further explained. Students exchange questions and their homework assignment is to answer, as best they can, their peer's question in writing. The next class can open with some of those questions.

The closing summary—leave five or ten minutes at the end of class for students to write out the main ideas from the day's lecture or discussion. Take them up and go over them to discover what they did and did not understand in the day's material.

Brief one-page individual student reports on course material written out of class as homework and presented both as a written and an oral report to their fellow classmates. This gives you and every member of the class a publication at the end of the semester to which every student has contributed one page (larger classes could do the report in pairs or groups).

Written descriptions of certain problems or experiments and the processes employed dealing with them—for example, proofs in a math or one-paragraph lab reports in a science class.

Passage summaries—as homework, have students pick a difficult passage from their assigned reading and write about it for the next class. Their piece should include a brief one or two sentences summarizing that passage as best they can, the reason they picked that passage, and what they want further explained or discussed about it.

Journal entries on class issues, concepts, debates, readings, etc.

One-page analysis of particular products, themes, issues, under discussion in the course materials.

Minute papers—or two- or three-minute papers in which the students write on x class topic for the specified length of time.

Design your own test questions (for essay exams).

Guided discussion sheets that they fill out in writing at home.

A individual project proposal.

Brief reviews of articles and essays assigned as class reading.

CGE encourages all faculty to take advantage of the university resources and training available to them in order to better incorporate "writing to learn" pedagogies into their classes. For more information visit our [Faculty Resources page](#).