

Plymouth State University

General Education Program

Effective Fall 2005

PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

General Education Program

effective Fall 2005

(adopted by the Faculty, April 2003)

Academic Goals

1. A General Education program should ensure breadth of knowledge and emphasize the relevance and application of methods of inquiry and content to students' lives.
2. A General Education program should help students develop an appreciation of the various ways scholars consider and understand human experience, and of the breadth of human knowledge that is reflected in the curriculum.
3. A General Education program should help students to develop an appreciation of the process by which different approaches to scholarship (e.g., literary analysis and the scientific method) can be brought to bear on the same problem; this is especially important given that scholarship is increasingly interdisciplinary and integrative.
4. In keeping with the principle of integration, lower level General Education courses should be broader in scope than is typically the case with discipline-based courses designed to introduce students to a major and so should be separate from any major.
5. A General Education program should help students develop the skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.
 - Students should take several courses in the first year designed to give them a foundation of academic skills on which to build. These skills should be used and developed further in all additional General Education courses.

Administrative Goals

1. A General Education program should be reasonably easy to understand and to administer and should not present undue obstacles to students who transfer into the college or change their majors.
2. A General Education program should have built into it a mechanism of assessment and change to keep it on track and up to date.
 - All courses and components of the program, and the program as a whole, should be regularly assessed and reconsidered.
3. Participation in the General Education program should be a point of pride for faculty, not a chore that detracts from the activity of educating majors.
4. Faculty teaching in the program must be knowledgeable of and agree to abide by the guidelines presented here.

Program Description

1. There should be basic skills courses in the first year that provide a foundation of skills on which to build.
 - Academic skills are introduced in the **First Year Experience** and then practiced and further developed in other General Education courses.
2. **Directions** courses should be considered for General Education status on a course-by-course basis. They may not “double count” as part of any major. This decision was based on the philosophical position that breadth courses should be somewhat more integrative and more focused on relevance and application to students’ lives than introductory major courses are likely to be. These courses “belong” to departments; that is, they shall be proposed and taught by departments and carry discipline codes.
3. Basic skills and breadth courses should be separate from the major and common to all; however, more advanced skills, approaches to inquiry and appreciation of differences should be integrated into the major. Inspired by Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) model, “**Connections**” courses are designed to integrate skill development into the major.

I. First Year Experience

Composition (EN 1200)	3 credits
First Year Seminar (IS 1111)	3 credits
Mathematics Foundation (MA 1500 or higher)	3 credits

II. Directions

Creative Thought	6 credits
Past and Present	6 credits
Scientific Inquiry	6-8 credits
Self and Society	6 credits

III. Connections

Diversity *	3 credits
Global Awareness *	3 credits
Integration *	3 credits
Wellness *	3 credits

Courses in the Major

Quantitative Reasoning in the Disciplines**	(3 credits)
Technology in the Disciplines**	(3 credits)
Writing in the Disciplines**	(3 credits)

Total 45-47 credits

Total credits including courses within the discipline 54-56 credits

* These Connections may be double counted with a major, minor, or any other general education requirement.

** These Connections are 3-credit experiences taken as part of the major and hence add no credits to those required for the major.

Skills

To live and learn in a multicultural, multimedia, multidimensional world, students need certain skills. These are the competencies expected of an educated person, the skills needed for lifelong learning. In this General Education program, these skills are developed in meaningful contexts. They are introduced in the First Year Experience courses, built upon and strengthened in all subsequent components of the program and in the major.

- 1) **Critical Thinking:** the abilities to compare, contrast, analyze and synthesize; and to challenge underlying assumptions; to take imaginative leaps and intellectual risks; and to solve problems creatively and effectively.
- 2) **Reading:** the achievement of advanced literacy; that is, the ability to comprehend written material within a variety of genres, and to articulate one's response verbally and in writing.
- 3) **Quantitative Reasoning:** the ability to analyze quantitative material, and use quantitative techniques to solve problems.
- 4) **Writing:** development of a writing process that includes the ability to prewrite (brainstorm, outline, take notes, free-write) on a selected topic; to prepare, assess and organize information; and to compose, revise and edit a polished product.
- 5) **Speaking and Listening:** The ability to use both verbal and nonverbal skills to communicate effectively in one or more languages, to listen actively and to take part respectfully in group discussions.
- 6) **Conducting Research:** the ability to locate, comprehend and synthesize information; and to understand what constitutes reliable evidence for decision making.
- 7) **Working with Information Technology:** the ability to perform searches; to use word processing and spread sheets; to work with database management systems and presentation software; to work with software to enhance the creative process; and to make effective use of software to organize information and to communicate with others.
- 8) **Collaborating with Others:** to know, understand and respond to others' feelings and perspectives; to work and learn in teams to enhance interpersonal relationship skills; and to develop an awareness of leadership approaches and the ability to influence others.

Description of the Three Components

I. First Year Experience

The goal of the First Year Experience is to connect students to life in an academic community, where they will acquire and refine the skills listed above. These skills will be introduced and practiced in meaningful contexts. The component consists of the following three courses to be taken during the first year.

Composition

3 credits

The Composition requirement is intended to help students become responsible writers who can take charge of their own writing process. It is satisfied by the course EN1200 Composition or its equivalency.

Students learn how to draft, respond to feedback from peers and instructor, revise and edit successful college prose. By the end of the course, they should be able to write essays that are unified by a central thesis, well-developed in carefully organized paragraphs with vivid details and grammatically competent with effective sentence structure and correct mechanics.

Students also learn to read comprehensively and effectively in order to relate ideas and arguments to their writing and thinking. They are expected to summarize different kinds of texts, paraphrase the ideas of someone else, analyze others' arguments and positions, compare and contrast ideas and generate their own thoughts and ideas following research and observation. Students are required to engage in library research and to write papers based on their research. Thus the General Education Skills being given special emphasis in this course are **writing, reading, conducting research, and collaborating with others.**

First Year Seminar

3 credits

In a small group (20-25), students explore in depth a topic or problem chosen by the instructor to challenge them to think from different perspectives and to practice various skills. The First Year Seminar challenges students to draw connections between fields of knowledge and to consider the importance of considering multiple discipline points of view in resolving problems. Within the context of this challenge, students and instructor will consider the nature of knowledge, general education and the academic community. A significant level of analysis is expected as opposed to simple presentation of facts and theories.

The First Year Seminar is a cornerstone course, through which students begin to build the repertoire of intellectual skills needed for college-level work. The skills are not taught in isolation but rather in the context of the topic or problem of the course. Assignments and activities will introduce all of the skills listed above, but special emphasis will be given to **critical thinking, conducting research, working with information technology, writing, speaking and listening, and collaborating with others.**

See Appendix A.

Mathematics Foundations

3 credits

Through the Mathematics Foundations requirement, students become aware of the importance of mathematics and its application to fields as diverse as art, music and science. It is satisfied by an appropriate score on the placement exam, any mathematics course numbered MA1500 or above, or equivalency.

Mathematics Foundations courses focus on problem solving using the language of mathematics and on developing students' ability to reason quantitatively in diverse contexts. Students learn to reduce complex problems to their fundamentals using algebra and geometry.

The Mathematics Foundations requirement enables students to make connections between mathematics and their own lives and to explore the roles of mathematics in society, culture and politics. General Education skills given special emphasis are **quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and working with information technology.**

II. Directions

The Directions component is intended to introduce students to different ways of considering and understanding human experience which they can apply as they seek meaning in their lives. Directions courses challenge them to see how different perspectives shape the ways in which people interpret ideas and experiences to construct meaning. They emphasize connections between the world of ideas and the "real world."

Some Directions courses might be interdisciplinary, but most are likely to be offered by specific departments and to carry specific discipline codes. These would not, however, be traditional introduction-to-the-discipline courses with heavy emphasis on the methods of the discipline to exclusion of other possibilities and with an attempt to provide an overview of the whole academic field. Rather these courses might focus on a particular issue or problem or topic of interest within the discipline, especially a topic relevant to students' own lives. Ideally and whenever possible alternative perspectives and approaches will be woven into the course.

The four Directions essentially represent four different approaches to learning. They are likely, however, to also vary in content since certain topics or problems may lend themselves more readily to certain approaches. In this respect, the Directions are similar to another system of dividing academic subjects, the traditional four category system: the Humanities, the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, the Creative Arts. While it may be tempting to match the four Directions with those traditional categories, we would argue this can not be done exactly. The traditional system based the categorization on discipline. The Directions categories which are based more directly on a combination of method of inquiry and content, lend themselves more readily to (and are meant to encourage) inclusion of interdisciplinary courses.

Directions courses are intended to further strengthen the academic skills upon which the First Year Experience is based. Different directions emphasize different of these, but among them all skills are included. Because these skills are useful in all academic work, students are encouraged to take Directions courses early. Ideally all should be completed by the end of the second year.

Students must take two courses in each of the Directions categories. Directions courses will be a minimum of three credits. Some, for example, Scientific Inquiry courses involving laboratory work, may be more. No Directions course can be required as part of any major.

Waiver of Direction

Departments and Councils may petition the General Education Committee to waive one Direction component for students in a particular program. Departments or Councils seeking this waiver must complete the appropriate [Petition to Waive Form](#), thus providing a description of how requirements in the major/option program meet each of the learning goals and skills of the Direction. Initially resistant to the concept of the waiver, the General Education Committee proposed its creation when

they realized that there are a certain number of major programs at Plymouth that were unlikely to be made to mesh with the new program without it, and we encouraged departments to only resort to the waiver request when that is so. The General Education Committee always intended that a waiver would only be granted in cases where the **attributes and skills associated with the direction are pervasive throughout the major program**. When a waiver is given, it is granted because it is the belief of the committee that the program as a whole does for its majors what the Direction is supposed to do.

The waiver form includes a general question asking you to speak to how it is that the goals of the Direction are pervasive in the program, and requires that you present evidence from a minimum of four courses as part of the application procedure.

This petition must be accompanied by annotated syllabi and samples of student work that support the claims made in the petition. Waivers granted are good for only four academic years. Departments and Councils may petition to extend the waiver. The second and each subsequent petition must include all of the paperwork and supporting evidence described above, plus significant additional assessment data to establish that students completing the program have, in fact, met the goals and developed the skills associated with the Direction. (accepted by Faculty vote, November 5, 2003)

Creative Thought Direction

6 credits

People need to be creative in order to thrive in our complex and changing world.

People need to understand the creative processes that lead to the generation of ideas and to engage in new interpretations of existing ideas. Creative thought courses encourage students to recognize beauty in its many manifestations and to become aware of formal elements of creative expression.

These courses also encourage students to view themselves as creative beings, to appreciate creativity in others and to regard creativity as an essential component in all areas of human endeavor. In these courses, students develop and value perseverance and a tolerance for ambiguity. Students are challenged to appreciate aesthetic forms, to use their imaginations and to develop the skills and attitudes that allow creativity to flourish: independence and non-conformity, the ability to organize and reorganize information and the confidence to think in new ways.

Creative Thought courses emphasize the skills of **critical thinking, reading, writing, listening and speaking, and working with information technology**.

Past and Present Direction

6 credits

In order to comprehend the present and envision the future, we must understand the past.

Cultures and societies discern time and construct chronologies of significant events to explain the past, comprehend the present, and envision the future. By examining issues and events that are currently impacting students' lives, Past and Present courses explore how people interpret causes and effects within events, and how actions and reactions circumscribe the "origin" of an event.

These courses encourage students to realize that different times shape different views of the world. Any form of knowledge is vital and in flux. For students to realize that all fields of knowledge are subject to change, they need to study the changes that have taken place within those fields. They also need to understand the dialectic movement between the past and present: just as the past shapes the

present, so does the present shape our understanding of the past. There are multiple perspectives and interpretations of the same events and these interpretations are subject to revision.

Past and Present courses emphasize the skills of **reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking and conducting research.**

Scientific Inquiry Direction

6-8 credits
Including significant lab/field work

The methods of science are powerful tools with which we can attain a clearer understanding of the world.

In the modern world, science has real application to all people's lives. Scientific literacy helps people to make sense of the explosion of information they encounter every day. Scientific Inquiry courses use scientific methodologies to examine relationships between events in the natural world and make students aware that science occurs in a social, cultural, political, and ethical context.

Use of scientific methods in laboratory or field settings is an integral part of these courses. As students plan investigations, collect, analyze and interpret data and develop their ability to propose answers, offer explanations and make predictions, they come to see both the power and the limitations of science. Students investigate the distinctions between rational thinking and anecdotal argumentation and develop an understanding that answers are never final, but always subject to revision.

Scientific Inquiry courses emphasize the skills of **critical thinking, writing, conducting research, quantitative reasoning, working with information technology and collaborating with others.**

Self and Society Direction

6 credits

A rich and productive life encompasses an understanding of one's self and one's relationship to the world.

An educated person must grapple with a question that has interested human beings for centuries: the relationship between self and society. To understand one's self, one must understand and acknowledge the impact of society on the development of identity and the formation of beliefs. The needs of the individual sometimes conflict with the needs of society. Cultures differ in the relative value they give to the individual and to the group. Using issues that impact on students' lives, Self and Society courses explore questions of these sorts.

They encourage students to inquire into multiple dimensions of self including the social, physical, emotional and cognitive and to investigate the interactions between individuals and the spatial, temporal, political, economic and technological aspects of the social environment.

Self and Society courses emphasize the skills of **reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, conducting research and collaborating with others.**

III. Connections

Connections Courses--a clarification from the General Education Committee (accepted December 8, 2003)

Connections courses are intended to help students develop skills at a more advanced level than first-year experience courses, or explore methods of inquiry, or develop appreciation for differences or for wellness within the context of study of some content area within the major or outside the major. It is the fact that the development or exploration goes on within the context of study of a particular subject that causes us to call these "Connections" courses.

The Connection's focus must be pervasive and diffuse within the course, rather than for example, being considered only as a subtopic or in one section of the course. It should be evident from both the course description and its syllabus that the course deals with the focus of the Connection. Course assessments must include ones designed to measure the relevant skill, understanding or attitude.

Diversity Connection*

3 credits

Becoming educated involves developing awareness of, sensitivity to and appreciation for viewpoints other than those to which we have been acculturated. Through such development comes increased respect for those different from oneself.

Students take a three-credit Diversity (DICO) course (either within the major or not) designed to broaden and deepen awareness and appreciation of differences and commonalities of sub-cultural groups in the U.S. society defined by differences in race, ethnicity, ability, social class, religion, politics, gender or sexual orientation. Diversity courses do this by exposing students to the life stories and the voices of members of different groups and by exploring issues of equity, opportunity and justice.

See Appendix B.

Global Awareness Connection*

3 credits

Educated people are aware that human beings are interdependent members of a world community, that there are both similarities and differences in the societies and cultures of the world and that the manners in which people live their lives need not be exactly alike.

Students take a three-credit Global Awareness (GACO) course (either within the major or not) designed to expose them to the important societal issues facing the world and to encourage them to develop the ability to appreciate and think about issues from different points of view. Global Awareness courses focus on the forces that have shaped peoples, cultures, nations and regions of the world. They increase students' understanding of each person's position, participation, obligations and responsibilities within the world community.

Integration Connection*

3 credits

We live in a world where scholarship is increasingly interdisciplinary. The educated person recognizes the challenges and rewards of drawing connections between fields of knowledge and of applying alternative methods of inquiry to solve problems.

Students take a three-credit Integration (INCO) course (either within the major or not) which brings content or methods of inquiry from two or more disciplines or perspectives to bear on a problem or question. The integration course is a General Education capstone course, taken in the junior or senior year. As such it should require substantial, although general, background and a high level of proficiency at most or all of the General Education skills.

Wellness Connection***3 credits**

To be fully educated, people need respect for and understanding of how health, physical activity and wellness contribute to mental acuity and emotional well-being. Awareness of and attention to the physical can enhance the cognitive and emotional aspects of life.

Students take a three-credit Wellness (WECO) course (either within the major or not) designed to increase their understanding of the connection between mind and body. These courses expose students to the theory and practice of life-span wellness and fitness activity, and to the knowledge, attitudes, habits and skills needed to live well. Their goal is to help students cultivate life skills which will promote mental, physical and emotional well-being.

See Appendix C.

Quantitative Reasoning in the Disciplines Connection****(3 credits within the major)**

Mathematics finds application in all fields of scholarship. All disciplines make use of quantitative reasoning in some way and to some extent.

Students take a three-credit Quantitative Reasoning (QRCO) course specified as required for their major. This course may be taught within the major discipline or not. It might teach quantitative techniques used as primary or secondary tools within the discipline or might be a course in which students of less quantitative disciplines come to deepen their appreciation of the relevance of quantitative reasoning to us all.

Technology in the Disciplines Connection****(3 credits within the major)**

In the modern world, technology has application to every academic discipline, and educated people must have an understanding of technology that will allow them to adapt to rapid technological change.

Students take a three-credit Technology in the Disciplines (TECO) course specified as required for the major. This course may be taught within the major discipline or not. The course will help students examine the role of technology within their own discipline and within a larger societal and cultural context. The TECO course will provide students with hands-on experience using current technologies; with a broad understanding of the concepts underlying current technology; with an understanding of the potential ethical issues involved with the use of technology; and with an understanding of forces, based in the needs and values of our culture, that drive technological innovation.

Writing in the Disciplines Connection****(3 credits within the major)**

In order to communicate effectively, students need to learn the conventions of their own discipline or profession. They need to learn how to write like an educator, a social worker, a biologist, an historian, or a literary critic, for example.

Students take a three-credit Writing (WRCO) course within their major that contains significant writing experiences appropriate to the discipline. These experiences should be based on Writing Across the Curriculum activities, for example, free-writing, outlining, writing multiple drafts, responding to feedback and creating a finished product. In addition to extending the process of developing writing skills, WRCO courses also emphasize writing to learn in the discipline.

* These Connections may be double counted with a major, minor or any other general education requirement.

** These Connections are three-credit experiences taken as part of the major and hence add no credits to those required for the major.

Administration

Assessment will be an integral and ongoing process within this General Education program. Its results will be used to renew and improve individual courses and the program as a whole. Assessment activities will include the following.

1. Review of Courses

Course Approval. Departments or councils offering a course they wish to be classified as falling into a particular Directions or Connections category will submit the syllabus and a General Education course proposal form. These will be reviewed and approved (or not) by the General Education Committee. Approval will be based on whether the syllabus contains the information noted below and whether the course matches the description of the Direction or Connection in this document.

Syllabi. General Education courses must be developed to meet the description of the general education component provided in this document. Additionally, the skills identified in the description must be assessed and method of assessment readily apparent from the syllabus.

Syllabi of General Education courses must include the written description of the General Education component (from this document) including the list of skills to be developed. Additionally, syllabi of General Education courses must include statements of course objectives and skills to be developed and enough information about assignments to make clear how these goals will be assessed. These statements will be useful as the course is considered for approval, but mostly serve as reminders to instructors and students as to what makes this a General Education course.

Sunset Rule. Approval of a course's General Education status is granted for no more than four years. At that time, the department or council offering the course may apply for renewal of the status by presenting evidence that the course continues to meet the criteria for its Direction or Connection. (Initially, terms of approval will be staggered from one to four years, so that once the program is underway, approximately 25% of courses will be revisited each year.)

2. Student Course Evaluations

End-of-semester student evaluations will be administered in all General Education courses. These must include items designed to measure student perceptions of whether each objective and skill development goal has been met.

The General Education Committee (or an Implementation Task Force) will develop appropriate forms or guidelines for what such forms would be like. Summaries of these evaluations will be presented to the General Education Committee as part of the program review process (as is presently done) and whenever a course is presented for renewal of its General Education status.

See Appendix D.

3. Education of New Instructors

It is important that new instructors (both full-time and part-time) hired to teach a General Education course, be educated about the General Education program and about what qualities the course must have to be classified as fulfilling a particular requirement. New Faculty Orientation should include an overview of the program as a whole. Responsibility for seeing to it that new instructors understand the particular components they are teaching rests with the Department Chairs.

4. Program Assessment

The General Education program as a whole will be regularly assessed by the General Education Committee. Methods to be used will be established by that group (or by an Implementation Task Force), but are likely to include: faculty surveys, student surveys (including exit surveys at graduation) and alumni surveys.

See Appendix D.

5. Implications of Electing a Later Catalog

Students, who entered in 2003-2004 or earlier, but elect to follow the 2005-2006 or subsequent Catalog for their major requirements, must fulfill the General Education requirements of the 2003-2004 Catalog. Students who entered in 2004-2005, but elect to follow the 2005-2006 or subsequent Catalog for their major requirements, must fulfill the General Education requirements of the 2004-2005 Catalog.

To view the original General Education Task Force proposal:

<http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/GenEd/taskforce/TaskForceProposalFinRev.pdf>

Appendices

- A The First Year Seminar: Critical Thinking and the Nature of Inquiry
- B Definitions
- C Clarification of the Wellness Connection
- D Assessment
- E Processes
- F Forms
- G Sample Proposals
- H By-Law Changes

Appendix A

IS 1111 The First Year Seminar Critical Thinking and the Nature of Inquiry

Course description: *This course will introduce students to the concepts of general education and the academic community and to the skills educated people use to generate and address important questions. Using critical thinking skills and basic tools of gathering and evaluating information, students and the instructor will together engage in a meaningful exploration of a specific "Question." The "Question" will vary across sections of the course.*

Core Content of Course

Goal 1: Understanding the Educated Person: General Education, and the Academic Community

What is the "Academic Community?" How is "higher education" different from high school?

What do people expect of the thinking abilities of a college-educated person?

Why "General Education?"

Goal 2: The Nature of Inquiry

Why "critical thinking?" What is it? What good is it? Why are these skills important tools for an educated person?

Our framework/definition for Critical Thinking:

1. **Awareness** of the need to evaluate arguments and ideas.
2. **Ability** to use a set of skills to accomplish that evaluation.
3. **Desire** to use those skills when appropriate.

(Modified from Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking, by M. Neil Browne & Stuart M. Keeley, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004; page 2)

Academic integrity

Working independently and collaborating with others

Goal 3: The "Question"

Specify the "Question" you are investigating

Define terms and identify related issues

Determine individual questions and collaborative group questions

Goal 4: The Tools of Inquiry

Sources of evidence:

- Personal experiences
- Works of others, as found in books, scientific journals, magazines, web sources, interviews, etc.
- Scientific experimentation
- Other possibilities

Using a research library to find evidence

Using online tools to find evidence

Assembling a collection of evidence

Goal 5: Examining the Evidence

A "starter set" of skills to evaluate the evidence:

- What are the Issue and the Conclusion?
- What are the Reasons?
- Are There Any Fallacies in the Reasoning?
- How Good is the Evidence?
- Are There Rival Causes?
- What Significant Information is Omitted?

Evaluation of collections of different types of evidence

[Encouragement to develop further skills to advance evaluation abilities]

Goal 6: Drawing and Presenting Conclusions

Individual written and collaborative oral presentations

Sections of the First Year Seminar should be limited to 20 to 25 students.

Appendix B

Definitions

The General Education Program is not static. Since the implementation of the program in 2005 the General Education Committee has clarified and updated both elemental terms and administrative processes not explicit in the original proposal. The formal actions by the committee, summarized in this appendix, have been essential in helping faculty propose, teach, and sustain General Education courses.

First Year Experience

- Must be a three-credit course
- First Year Experience courses are lower level.
- A major can specify Mathematics Foundations.
- No one course can be MATH and QRCO

Directions

- Must be a three-credit course.
- Directions courses are lower level.
- Directions are generally 1000/2000 level, to be taken the first and second year; “accessible to one and all”; Directions courses have to be accessible to first semester first year students.
- The attributes of the Direction need to be throughout the whole course, mentioned in the course description, specified in syllabus.
- All syllabi have to describe how the course will satisfy the Direction.
- Directions are not to be the same as an introduction-to-the-major course.
- Directions address breadth; NEASC requires breadth.
- Pedagogy in Directions courses is to be student-centered and engaging.
- Directions cannot be team taught.
- A course can be both Direction and Connection but Integration must be upper-level.
- A course cannot be a Direction and QRCO, TECO or WRCO.
- Caps for Directions = 25-40; otherwise, have to defend the cap
- Rule = Directions cap is 25-40. Implementation Team said it was VPAA and AVPUS to make decision; General Education Committee could make a recommendation; in future VPAA/AVPUS could bring exceptions to the General Education Committee
- Remind Chairs that Directions course caps may not be lower than 25 except where the nature of a specific course or the physical space available prevents this, nor higher than 40

Connections

- Must be a three-credit course.
- Connections could be upper or lower level.
- Connections are likely to double count for some majors.
- A course could be more than one Connection.
- A course can be both Direction and Connection but Integration must be upper-level.
- A course cannot be a Direction and QRCO, TECO or WRCO.
- The attributes of the Connection need to be throughout the whole course, mentioned in the course description, specified in syllabus.
- All syllabi have to describe how the course will satisfy the Connection.
- INCO has prerequisite of junior/senior; must be at least 3000 level.

- If a transfer course is equivalent to a PSU course which is INCO or WRCO, transfer also satisfies INCO or WRCO.
- No one course can be MATH and QRCO.
- QRCO, TECO and WRCO must be specified by the major.
- To be a QRCO or TECO, it has to be required by some program
- QRCO and TECO have to be identified but don't have to be in the major; department determines what courses student can take for QRCO or TECO.
- WRCO is in the department.
- Skill, understanding or attitude based = DICO, GACO, INCO, WECO
- skills based = QRCO, TECO, WRCO
- Because major programs may designate certain Connections courses, students should be advised to not take the Connections courses until they are certain about their majors.
- DICO = differences of groups in America; different from GACO

Change the definition of **Diversity Connection** (from “our American” to “the U.S.”): Becoming educated involves developing awareness of, sensitivity to, and appreciation for viewpoints other than those to which we have been acculturated. Through such development comes increased respect for those different from oneself. Students take a three-credit Diversity (D) course (either within the major or not) designed to broaden and deepen awareness and appreciation of differences and commonalities of sub-cultural groups in the U.S. society defined by differences in race, ethnicity, ability, social class, religion, politics, gender, or sexual orientation. Diversity courses do this by exposing students to the life stories and the voices of members of different groups and by exploring issues of equity, opportunity, and justice.

Motion approved 2/12/07 by the General Education Committee. Approved 4/2/2007 by the Faculty.

Waiver of a Direction

- Waiver is done for completing the whole major
- The General Education Committee has in general granted waivers only in situations where both of the following conditions are true: the goals of the Direction are found to be covered throughout the particular major, and including the two courses for the Direction would push the major over 120 or 122 credits or result in no electives within the program
- May Interdisciplinary Studies majors be allowed a waiver of a Direction? All advisors must agree that the waiver is warranted; IS Council must agree that the waiver is warranted; student submits a Student Request to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies to be granted a waiver

Appendix C

Clarification of the Wellness Connection from the General Education Committee *developed and approved March 8, 2004*

What is a Wellness Connection course?

Wellness courses provide opportunities for students to identify connections between life choices, personal wellness and a field of study. These courses help students develop an appreciation for the connection between mind and body, and make a commitment to life skills and life style choices. Wellness courses satisfying the Connections component of the General Education program must include content and assignments from several dimensions of wellness and their interrelationship.

What is Wellness?

Wellness is the dynamic process of becoming aware of, gaining knowledge about and making positive choices to fulfill an integrated, balanced, healthy lifestyle. One potential model that may be used to promote this awareness and practice is the Plymouth State University OSSIPPEE Model.* OSSIPPEE stands for –

Occupational Health – a sense of accomplishment through the preparation of, enrichment, personal satisfaction and passion for a chosen vocation or profession.

Spiritual Health – personal values to create a sense of meaning and fulfillment in one's life which may be expressed through the appreciation of life's purpose, unity with the environment, or a belief in a higher power or religion.

Social Health – meaningful interpersonal relationships through a sense of belonging, support, connectedness, companionship and/or community.

Intellectual Health – an active, curious, open mind with the ability to think critically about issues, pose questions, identify problems and find solutions.

Physical Health – self-care habits to carry out daily tasks with vitality by engaging in regular physical activity, eating nutritiously, avoiding harmful behavior and substances, thereby preventing injury and illness.

Emotional Health – the feeling and expression of the full range of human emotions, giving and receiving love, and developing psychological hardiness.

Environmental Health – human interdependence with the earth and atmosphere.

How many dimensions of Wellness need to be included in the Wellness course?

Each course should explore several Wellness dimensions. A course should use a subject's content as a basis for understanding that particular discipline while incorporating two other Wellness points of view. For example, a course on Personal Financial Wellness might investigate money matters from a personal point of view (intellectual dimension), from a collaborative investment standpoint (social dimension) and from a stockbroker's perspective (occupational dimension).

What should a student know at the conclusion of any Wellness course?

The student should be able to:

1. describe and reflect on the multidimensional nature of a wellness model (e.g., OSSIPPEE).
2. explore the impact that each of the relevant dimensions has on course content.
3. utilize several, specific dimensions to fulfill course competencies.
4. apply the relevant dimensions to personal decision making using course content assignments.

*Those wishing to explore other Wellness models may seek information from the PSU Wellness Center in the HUB.

Appendix D

Assessment

- General Education Committee established an “Assessment Working Group” that would formulate a General Education Assessment Plan. [12/13/2004]
- Evaluation of each section offered as well as the program as a whole will be handled through student surveys. [4/24/2005]
- A paper reminder will be sent to all instructors teaching General Education courses at the beginning of each semester. The reminder will discuss what General Education courses are supposed to look like.
- The actual course evaluations will be done online except in the year before the sunset date for the course, when the evaluations will be done using bubble sheets to ensure higher participation of students.
- The Provost will bring the logistical/technical/resource issues involved in these recommendations to the Academic Strategy Committee to try to resolve these issues. [5/9/2005]
- For this first year of the new General Education program, all student evaluations of the program will be done on paper. This will allow the extra time required to determine the best means to develop online evaluation.
- The Undergraduate Studies Office will assume responsibility for the distribution, collection and scoring of student evaluations for sunseting courses.
- Aggregate data will be reported to the Chairs and the raw data will be returned to the instructors. [9/12/2005]
- February: The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies sends a reminder to Chairs, which courses will reach their sunset date at the end of the following academic year, outlines the procedure that must be followed the following fall in order to renew a course’s General Education status.
- September: General Education reminder
- by December: Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies reminds Department to renew or go to Curriculum Committee [11/28/2005]
- General Education Evaluation Surveys. Paper surveys will be administered for the courses due for renewal. Departments will be expected to address in their Program Review how they contribute to General Education. Evaluation forms are online. [10/22/2007]

Renewals/Sunset

Evidence required: syllabus from each instructor; summary of General Education student evaluations; tell why it should still be a General Education course. New form = renewal form; summarize the evidence

- Letter signed by General Education Committee Chair to Chairs, personalized with list of courses to be reviewed; include explanation of grounds for appeal and what to expect
- If course has not been taught, can appeal to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies to extend sunset date
- Annual event – February warning, these are the materials we need
- If lose General Education status, would have to change course number to make it stand out.
- Waivers have to be renegotiated; examples of student work
- Expect to see student General Education evaluations for each time it was run; need summary from department or Undergraduate Studies
- Look at syllabus again from each instructor who taught it since it was approved
- Evaluation done on paper the year prior to sunset review; other years done online

Revised distribution process for student survey [General Education Evaluation for Directions and Connections]

Academic departments administer General Education course evaluations. The bubble sheets are scored by Dr. Brown, who e-mails the results to Department Chairs. The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies continues to send reminders to Chairs regarding courses that are sunsetting. General Education evaluations are part of the renewal process. [9/22/2008]

Sunset Renewal Deadline

The deadline for submission of Sunset Renewal Proposals will be the first Monday of December each academic year. When extenuating circumstances prevent a department from meeting this deadline, it may appeal to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies for a one year extension of the sunset date, provided this appeal is made prior to the deadline.

Approved 3/9/2009 by the General Education Committee.

Appendix E

Processes

The General Education Program is not static. Since the implementation of the program in 2005 the General Education Committee has clarified and updated both elemental terms and administrative processes not explicit in the original proposal. The formal actions by the committee, summarized in this appendix, have been essential in helping faculty propose, teach, and sustain General Education courses.

Renewals/Sunset

- If the course is not renewed, have to go to Curriculum Committee to change course name and number; if they do not do it, it has to be deleted from the Catalog
- Do renewals electronically
- If course has not been offered, Chair should contact Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies to change the sunset date accordingly
- On the General Education Status Renewal Form (Sunset Form), change instruction #1 under Justification to: After examining one sample copy of the syllabus of this course for each instructor who has taught the course since its last approval, select and attach the one of these which seems to be the most typical of them all. Also attach a brief (one or two paragraphs) statement of what is typical about this syllabus and what is the range within which the others differ from it. Note: the syllabus should include: a) the description of the course's General Education component, b) specific course objectives, c) course outline and d) assessments.
Motion approved 11/13/2006 by the General Education Committee.

Timelines

- Proposals for Connections and Directions courses may go to the General Education Committee and the Curriculum Committee in either order or simultaneously, but sometimes may be approved pending action by the other committee.
Motion approved 2/9/2004 by the General Education Committee.
- Recommend to faculty proposing a new General Education course that approval be sought from the General Education Committee prior to submitting the course for approval by the Curriculum Committee
[9/12/2005]

Process for Approving or Renewing General Education status for a course:

1. Access the appropriate Gen Ed approval form from the Gen Ed web site.
2. Fill out the appropriate form and gather all required documentation described on the form. Bring the proposal to the appropriate department for vote and approval. Note the results of the vote on the form, gain the chair's signature, and submit the proposal to the Chair of the Gen Ed Committee. Proposals may be submitted on paper with the appropriate number of copies made (typically 10, but check to be sure) or electronically via e-mail to the Chair of Gen Ed. In either case, the proposal must reach the Chair no later than 5 p.m. on the appropriate Monday depending on whether you are seeking Early Review or Standard Review (see below).
3. If you are seeking Early Review, you are asking the committee to review the proposal before the agenda for the next meeting is made. If the submission is made electronically, the single signed hard copy of the proposal with department vote noted should be mailed to the Chair. If no member objects or has questions about the proposal, the proposal is listed as pre-approved on the agenda and the department does NOT need to send a department representative to the meeting. If any member does have questions or objections, the department will be asked to send

representation to the meeting. Early Review proposals must be received two weeks prior to the next meeting. The Chair will distribute these proposals to committee members no later than the following day.

4. Standard Review proposals must be received one week prior to the next meeting. The department will be asked to send representation to the meeting.
5. The Chair will publish the agenda and for the next meeting on the Tuesday prior to the meeting and distribute any Standard Review proposals to committee members.

Approved 5/14/2007 by the General Education Committee.

Process for Renewing the Waiver of a Direction for a major.

Majors are allowed a waiver for Directions and the waivers sunset every four years. Every four years departments must review their curriculum to determine that the courses used to exempt students from taking courses in one Direction are still intact. Department chairs or their designee must communicate with the General Education Committee Chair and certify that the courses involved in the exemption are still part of the major. If curricular changes involved the removal or repurposing (a course changes from a requirement to an elective, for example) of one or more courses used in the exemption application, departments must explain what course(s) are being used to expose students to the academic experiences lost by the changed course and provide supporting syllabi and other clarifying information, or lose exemption. The deadline for renewing a waiver is the first Monday in October of the academic year of the major's waiver sunset.

Approved 3/10/2008 by the General Education Committee.

Appendix F

Forms

For a copy of the most up-to-date copy of General Education forms, please go to:

<http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/GenEd/committee/index.html>

<http://facultygovernance.blogs.plymouth.edu/forms-and-documents>

http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/GenEd/committee/assess_forms.html.

FYI - the actual path to access the Gen Ed Eval surveys is:

- 1) log into myPlymouth
- 2) select 'Services' tab
- 3) select 'Governance and Committees'
- 4) select 'General Education Committee'
- 5) select 'Gen Ed Committee Forms and Minutes'
- 6) select '2005+ General Education Program Student Evaluation Forms'
- 7) select link for survey needed... (or go to link directly at...

http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/GenEd/committee/assess_forms.html)

Appendix G

Sample Proposals

To view proposals that have been approved by the General Education Committee, please go to:

<http://www.plymouth.edu/undergrad/GenEd/committee/examples.html>

Appendix H

By-Law Changes

- Faculty Bylaws, Article XI, F. 16. General Education Committee: Composition: The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, two students selected by the Student Senate, one Faculty member from the Curriculum Committee, the Director of Curriculum Support and six Faculty members elected at large. The six elected Faculty members must be from different departments; none may be a Department Chair.
Motion approved 2/23/2004
- Add Dean of Academic Experience as voting member of the General Education Committee
Motion approved 2/14/2005.
- Amend the composition and function of the General Education Committee currently described in Article XI of the Faculty By-laws:

Under composition, remove from the list of members, “one faculty member from the Curriculum Committee,” and replace the sentence that currently reads “Chair: The Chair of the Committee is selected annually by the members.” With the sentence “Chair: The Chair of the Committee, who shall be a faculty member, is selected annually by the members.”

To replace the current list of functions with the following list:

- (1) To work with the faculty to determine criteria for general education courses.
- (2) To evaluate, and approve or reject, course proposals and status renewal requests.
- (3) To encourage and coordinate the whole program; to produce a comprehensive program from diverse elements; to encourage innovation in course design and instruction.
- (4) To evaluate, and approve or reject, departmental petitions for exceptions to prescribed requirements.
- (5) To establish procedures by which general education courses and the program as a whole will be regularly assessed.
- (6) To review regularly assessments of the program and make recommendations for improvement to the faculty.
- (7) To implement the program.

Motion approved 2/26/2007 by the General Education Committee. Approved 4/2/2007 by the Faculty.

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August 18, 2009