

**To: Ezra Zubrow, Chair of the Faculty Senate**  
**From: Andrew Stott, Dean of Undergraduate Education**  
**Date: October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014**

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### **Final Report and Recommendations of the General Education Steering Committee**

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014, the General Education Steering Committee submitted its “Progress Report” for the consideration of the university community. The report represented the summary findings of the more than 140 faculty, staff and students who have worked on the question of General Education revision at UB since the formation of the first General Education Task Force in 2009.

Since its publication in June, the report has been discussed at length in department meetings, at meetings of department chairs and directors of undergraduate studies, with colleagues in the advising community and student affairs, at sub-committees of the Faculty Senate, with graduate students and by a task force charged by the Student Association. The campus has met twice to discuss the proposals of the “Progress Report” in open forums on South Campus (September 16<sup>th</sup>) and North Campus (September 19<sup>th</sup>) with a combined attendance of 175. Online, the report has been viewed more than 1600 times.

Throughout this process, the Steering Committee has solicited the feedback of the campus with a view to revising and improving its proposal prior to submitting a set of final recommendations for the consideration of the Faculty Senate.

This memo represents the final report and recommendations of the General Education Steering Committee. It presents a proposal for a new program of General Education revised in the light of the feedback received. The report is accompanied by a resource report that shows that the program is fully implementable within the resources available.

Respectfully submitted by the General Education Steering Committee:

Andrew Stott (Dean of Undergraduate Education)  
Peter Biehl (Professor and Chair, Anthropology)  
Maria Chavan (Undergraduate Education)  
Elaine Cusker (Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education/Academic Affairs)  
Christian Flaugh (Associate Professor, Romance Languages and Literatures)  
Liesl Folks (Dean, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences)  
Krista Hanypsiak (Administrative Director, University Honors College)  
Dean Hendrix (Assistant Director, University Libraries)  
Jacqui Hollins (Director of Academic Advisement)  
Peter Horvath (Associate Professor, Exercise and Nutrition Sciences)  
Kira Love (Director of Transfer Experience)  
Paul Luce (Professor, Psychology; CAS Assistant Dean for General Education)  
Teri Miller (Professor, Law; Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)  
Bruce Pitman (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences)  
Alex Reid (Associate Professor, English; Director of Composition)  
Kara Saunders (University Registrar)  
Claire Schen (Associate Professor, History)  
Gail Willsky (Associate Professor, Biochemistry)  
John Wood (Senior Associate Vice Provost for International Education)

## **Recommended Program of General Education**

Having carefully considered the feedback it has been given, the Steering Committee recommends the following program of study, apportioned thus:

| <b><u>Component</u></b>                             | <b><u>Credit Hours</u></b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| First Year or Transfer Seminar                      | 3 or 1                     |
| Communication Literacy 1                            | 4                          |
| Communication Literacy 2                            | 3                          |
| Quantitative Reasoning                              | 4                          |
| Scientific Literacy and Inquiry                     | 7                          |
| Thematic Integrative Cluster                        | 9                          |
| Global Integrative Cluster (choose one of 3 tracks) | 9                          |
| Global/Diversity track                              |                            |
| <b>OR</b> Foreign Language track                    |                            |
| <b>OR</b> International Experience track            |                            |
| Integrative Capstone                                | 1                          |

Details of program components can be found in the June 2<sup>nd</sup> “Progress Report”: [www.buffalo.edu/gened](http://www.buffalo.edu/gened)

Following extensive conversations with departments and colleagues in Student Advising Services and the Office of the Registrar, we are confident that this program can be completed by every student irrespective of major with no exemptions or waivers.

***This is a universal program of General Education for all UB undergraduates.***

## Resource Report

This report describes the process and recommendations of the General Education Steering Committee in its efforts to align its proposed program of General Education with the financial realities of the university.

### Summary

By redeploying the resources used by the current General Education program, combined with Provost Zukoski's commitment to invest **\$3M** in recurring funds in support of the proposed program, the Steering Committee has identified institutional capacity to resource the new General Education program of **\$14.8M**.

These resources will bring the following benefits:

- Lower the average section size of UB General Education courses.
- Enable the implementation of First Year seminars.
- Expand the Communication Literacy offering.
- Enable implementation of e-portfolios and the Integrative Capstone.
- Deliver more challenging learning outcomes in Quantitative Reasoning and Scientific Literacy and Inquiry.
- Deliver the benefits of integrative learning across the disciplines and foreground the university's commitment to global and diversity learning through the Thematic and Global Integrative clusters.
- Provide a central office for General Education with faculty oversight and administrative and assessment support.

In addition, the resource plan provides:

- A net growth of **45 FTE** to the university's instructional workforce comprised of **9** new ladder faculty, **44** new non-tenure-track faculty and **11** additional TA lines.
- A decrease in the university's reliance on adjunct labor, with FTE growth offsetting a reduction of **20 FTE** from the adjunct faculty workforce.
- Between **65%** and **75%** of the program offered by the College of Arts and Sciences, while also featuring a broad cross-section of course offerings from schools across the university.
- The Provost's commitment to hold academic units harmless from unanticipated credit hour shifts in the first two years of the new program.

The Provost and the deans have agreed to work within the framework of this resource strategy.

### **The Resources Working Group**

In March 2014, the General Education Steering Committee appointed a Resources Working Group to research and report on the financial strategies required to implement the program of General Education outlined in its “Progress Report.” This group was chaired by Peter Biehl, Professor and Chair of the Anthropology Department with membership that included campus-wide faculty leaders and administrators able to provide the perspectives required to advise the Steering Committee in this effort (see Appendix A for full membership).

The work of the Resources Working Group began by articulating key financial planning principles that would provide the framework for the group’s deliberations. These were as follows:

1. That university and unit financial strategies should recognize that General Education is a strategic university priority.
2. That the new General Education program should be implemented in a manner that preserves the university’s capacity to fulfill all other aspects of its mission.
3. That the Provost should invest in a new General Education program only if the following conditions were met:
  - i. That it proposes a distinctive and valuable program of education.
  - ii. That appropriate standards of efficiency are recognized.
  - iii. That all existing investments in General Education would be redeployed for new program implementation.
  - iv. That units make a convincing case that they require new funds.
4. That all classroom space is to be fully utilized to seat all required sections, including General Education courses.

Having asserted these principles, the Resources Working Group proceeded to gather and collate all the institutional data necessary to build a financial model capable of projecting the costs of the new program as well as the number of seats required. Seat calculation was done in two ways. The first was to calculate the number of courses already offered that would meet General Education section and seat needs. The second was to determine the number of seats not required by students who enter the university with incoming AP or transfer credit or high standardized test scores.

The factors used in the initial calculation of total and net costs were as follows:

1. Cohort size served by the General Education program.
2. Cohort retention over time.
3. Old program funds clearly available for redeployment to the new program.
4. Instructional workload standards and new hire costs for each type of instructor teaching in the program.
5. Costing assumptions for each segment of the proposed program – type of instructor, section size, credit hour expectations, when courses are taken in the student’s career, percent of needed seats fulfilled by existing courses or by incoming student credits, etc.

6. Percentage of needed course seats offered by each unit for each program segment.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, Provost Zukoski publicly announced his intention to provide **\$3M** in recurring funds phased in over three years for a distinctive program of General Education. This commitment was made in the full knowledge that university enrollment would remain constant, thus ensuring that any additional investment would go directly into improving the quality of General Education provision at UB and creating a richer General Education experience. The Provost was clear that this would be the full extent of the central commitment for General Education implementation.

By the end of September, the Steering Committee and the Resource Working Group were able to propose a resource strategy capable of funding the program. The total recurring program cost for the proposed new General Education program is projected to be **\$14.8M**. The largest cost is attributed to the theme/global clusters (**\$6.4M**) and the revamped Communication Literacy program (**\$4.2M**). First Year Seminars are projected to cost **\$1.7M** (see Appendix B – Projected Costs by Program Segment).

### **Key Issues in Implementation**

Should the proposal meet with the approval of the Faculty Senate, the Steering Committee is conscious of key issues that will emerge in the implementation process. The Steering Committee recognized early on that it is very difficult to predict student course-taking patterns in the years beyond program implementation. Thus, it is not at all clear what the final distribution of course delivery responsibility for the program will be across the academic units here at UB. Unit leaders (deans and department chairs) will be rightly concerned about the potential for credit hour shifts following implementation. These leaders will also want to understand the process by which their course delivery responsibility and funding strategy will be determined. To this end, the Steering Committee offers two recommendations:

1. The Hold Harmless – The Provost should implement a two-year “hold harmless” arrangement to protect units from unplanned shifts in credit hours associated with General Education implementation. The hold harmless provision should reduce the anxiety around credit hour distribution until there is a more accurate understanding of the credit hour implications of the new program. The Provost has agreed to do this.
2. Establish a Process for Agreeing Unit Involvement in General Education Course Delivery –A team appointed by the Provost consisting of members of the Provost’s staff and staff from the Office of Undergraduate Education should meet with each decanal unit to develop a recommended plan for that unit’s involvement in the new program. Each unit’s final plan would be approved by the Provost and express a shared understanding of the unit’s short and long-term participation in General Education and the funding arrangements that will support this participation. This process would be transparent, well defined, and fair to all.

### **Conclusion**

The Steering Committee has concluded that the proposed program of General Education is fully implementable within the financial realities of the university. The Provost and the deans agree with this assertion. There are no financial impediments to implementation. If the Faculty Senate were to approve the proposal, the resource plan supports the assertion that the university would be in a position to offer a much richer educational experience, add instructional capacity to the university and realize the increased involvement of more academic units in the delivery of a new core curriculum.

# APPENDIX A

## IMPLEMENTING GENERAL EDUCATION

### Resources Working Group Membership

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Peter Biehl (Chair)             | Professor and Chair, Anthropology                             |
| Krissy Costanzo (Staff Support) | Assistant Director for Student Success & Retention            |
| Craig Abbey                     | Associate Vice Provost and Director of Institutional Research |
| Stella Batalama                 | Professor, Electrical Engineering                             |
| Michael Chaskes                 | Assistant Professor, Medicine                                 |
| Millie Chen                     | Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences                  |
| David Castillo                  | Professor, Romance Languages & Literature                     |
| Elaine Cusker                   | Associate Dean, Academic Affairs                              |
| Lynne DePasquale                | Sr. Programmer / Research Analyst, Resource Planning          |
| Graham Hammill                  | Professor and Chair, English                                  |
| Krista Hanypsiak                | Administrative Director, University Honors College            |
| Christina Hernandez             | Sr. Associate Vice Provost, Academic Affairs                  |
| David Hostler                   | Professor and Chair, Exercise & Nutrition Science             |
| Kelly Hayes McAlonie            | Interim Director, Capital Planning Group                      |
| Kara Saunders                   | University Registrar  |
| Karen Senglaup                  | Assistant Director and CFO, University Libraries              |
| Andrew Stott                    | Dean of Undergraduate Education                               |
| Sean Sullivan                   | Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Budget and Evaluation     |
| Ezra Zubrow                     | Chair, Faculty Senate   |

## APPENDIX B

# IMPLEMENTING GENERAL EDUCATION

### Projected Costs by Program Segment by 2020/21 \$ in 000s

| <u>Program Segment</u>            | <u>2020/21</u>  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| First-Year Seminar                | \$1,712         |
| Quantitative Reasoning            | \$1,117         |
| Communication Literacy            | \$4,236         |
| Scientific Literacy               | \$847           |
| Theme/Global Integrative Clusters | \$6,356         |
| E-Portfolio                       | \$351           |
| Undergraduate Education           | \$185           |
| <b>Total Cost</b>                 | <b>\$14,803</b> |

## APPENDIX C

# IMPLEMENTING GENERAL EDUCATION

### Projected Net Instruction FTE Need by 2021

|                               | <u>Gross</u> | <u>Existing Resources</u> | <u>New</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Tenure Track Faculty          | 42           | 34                        | 9          |
| Clinical/Term/Regular Faculty | 100          | 56                        | 44         |
| CL Teaching Fellow            | 33           | 52                        | (20)       |
| TAs                           | 241          | 230                       | 11         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>417</b>   | <b>372</b>                | <b>45</b>  |





# APPENDIX D

## IMPLEMENTING GENERAL EDUCATION

### Projected Net Cost by Segment

Steady State (by 2020/21)

\$ in 000s

<sup>1</sup> Requirements fulfilled by coursework / current resources represents costs associated with the resources that would be required to deliver courses for general education to students who are expected to fulfill those requirements via an alternate method (such as credit for courses taken as part of major program requirements, credit for AP courses, test score exemptions, and transfer credit) and costs and capacity associated with the previous curriculum that will be available to reallocate to other needs in the new curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> Old course phase-out savings represent costs associated with the resources required to deliver specialty courses in the previous general education curriculum. As the students enrolled in the previous curriculum complete their general education requirements, the number of sections required of these courses will decrease, resulting in cost savings that can be used to offset the costs associated with the offerings for the new curriculum. A gradual (two-year) phase-out of the previous curriculum's courses is assumed. The ultimate cost savings are calculated as the costs for the English Composition, World Civilization, and American Pluralism courses estimated in the report titled "2013-14 Costs for Selected General Education Courses (by Personnel Type)", provided by the College of Arts and Sciences on 6/4/14.

### **Addendum: Table of Revisions**

Since the publication of the “Progress Report” on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, until October 2, 2014, the Steering Committee has solicited feedback on its proposal from the university community, encouraging faculty, staff, and students to submit their ideas and concerns via an online portal, email, and at two open forums. 85% of feedback was received during the two-week period following the open forums.

A total of 54 comments were received from 43 individuals and 5 units. Approximately 64% of respondents were faculty, 19% students and 17% staff. An editorial was published on September 26<sup>th</sup> in UB’s student newspaper, *The Spectrum*,<sup>1</sup> and on October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Student Association Assembly voted unanimously to support a resolution urging the university to adopt the new General Education proposal.

The Steering Committee expresses its sincere gratitude for all the valuable feedback it has received. Having digested and discussed this feedback within the context of the planning process, a number of revisions have been made to the program originally proposed.

The following table outlines those revisions along with a rationale for each change. Please compare the revisions tabulated below to the course components originally published in the “Progress Report” (PR).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ubspectrum.com/news/view.php/849578/Kudos-to-UB-for-revamping-gen-ed-but-ple>

| Component                | Revision   | Rationale  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Transfer Seminar         | Lower credit limit of domestic students requiring a 3-credit Transfer Seminar from those with less than 60 credits (PR p.39) to those with less than 45.   | Students with 60 credits are most likely to have declared a major and therefore less in need of the orientation provided by a full 3 credit Transfer seminar. Students transferring in with 45 or more credits are also likely to have declared a major and to be finishing coursework for acceptance to the major. For these students with considerable college coursework, the 1 credit Transfer Seminar is more appropriate. Because of the need to fully integrate them into UB and American higher education culture and expectations, all International students will complete a 3 credit seminar regardless of previously completed coursework. |
| Communication Literacy 1 | <p>Revise Learning Outcomes (PR p.95) as follows:</p> <p>Having completed the Communication Literacy course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate, construct and support arguments.</li> <li>• Analyze the effects of different audiences, purposes, and genres on communication practices across media (rhetorical analysis).</li> <li>• Locate, evaluate, synthesize and manage information (text, visuals, media) effectively and ethically.</li> <li>• Analyze how information is created, disseminated and used in a constantly evolving information environment.</li> <li>• Compose in a variety of academic, professional and civic contexts.</li> <li>• Apply a productive writing process, including revising their work to discover and reconsider ideas and improve their writing.</li> <li>• Compose and deliver effective oral presentations.</li> <li>• Understand, evaluate, and compose effective visual communications.</li> <li>• Understand and use current digital composing methods.</li> <li>• Vary genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone and mechanics appropriately.</li> </ul> | To greater emphasize the skills and expectations required of university-level course in writing and rhetoric.  |

|                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze cultural and human differences when communicating.</li> </ul>  |   |
| Communication Literacy 2        | Departments to rename this course to reflect that it is taught within the disciplines.  | To greater emphasize the “Writing Across the Disciplines” model that requires writing-intensive courses with situated content, audiences and purposes that are discipline-specific. |
| Communication Literacy 2        | Change course from 4 credits (PR p.27) to 3 credits.  | To provide greater symmetry with courses in the major that can be proposed or adapted to meet the “Writing Across the Disciplines” model.   |
| Communication Literacy sequence | <p>Reinforce the principle that both courses in the Communication Literacy sequence will meet the following minimum requirements, currently established in our existing writing curriculum and reflective of national standards and best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of 5000 words of revised, formal writing assignments.</li> <li>A minimum of three formal writing assignments.</li> <li>Regular, weekly informal writing assignments (e.g. online discussion forum posts, journals, blogs, in-class writing, etc.)</li> <li>Formal writing assignments will comprise a minimum of 50% of the final grade.</li> <li>At least one assignment with a research component.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the first course in the sequence will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one assignment with a visual/digital component.</li> <li>At least one oral presentation.</li> <li>A final portfolio of substantively revised work from the course.</li> </ul> <p>As the second course will be taught by a range of departments, we are recommending, as indicated in the “Progress Report,” that faculty in those departments define for themselves the specific goals for written, oral,</p> | To clarify the scope and nature of improvements to writing instruction within the Communication Literacy sequence.  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>visual, and digital communication with the goal of preparing students for the writing and communication tasks of their disciplines.</p> <p>Furthermore, the steering committee recognizes that the university’s goal of graduating students who “exhibit excellent communication, information and digital literacy skills” cannot be achieved through the general education curriculum alone. We recommend that departments establish specific writing and communication outcomes for their majors and offer at least one additional writing intensive course with a minimum of 4000 words of revised, formal writing assignments.</p>    |   |
| Scientific Literacy and Inquiry            | Raise credit hours from 4 (PR p.32) to 7.  | To provide greater depth and substance to scientific education, and provide for a more meaningful integration of the micro, human, and macro elements of scientific inquiry with the historical, philosophical, ethical and social dimensions of science study. This course will retain its interdisciplinary model (PR p.32) but be taught over two semesters. |
| Global Integrative Cluster: Language Track | <p>Incorporate the following language when describing the Language Track (PR p.37):</p> <p>“The study of foreign language and culture cultivates multiple literacies (linguistic, literary, social/interpersonal, and cultural) to rise to the challenges of a globally competitive environment and equips students to communicate with and collaborate in diverse groups both internationally and within their own communities. Through sustained contact with the other, students learn to read and respond productively to unfamiliar surroundings, tolerate ambiguity and difference, and navigate and engage a global environment.”</p> | Moves beyond the issue of requirements and competencies to better reflect the nature of the field and provide greater emphasis on the breadth of cultural literacy afforded by language study.  |

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|---|---|---|
| <p>Global Integrative Cluster:<br/>International Experience Track</p> | <p>Raise credit hours from 6 (PR p.37) to 9. Revise the language that describes the International Experience track as follows:</p> <p>“Students looking to fulfill the International Experience track must complete a study abroad program from a list of programs approved by the UB Study Abroad Advisory Committee. Students who take a 3 credit winter session study abroad program will, in the semester immediately before or after travel, and with the approval of the Office of General Education, supplement these credits with at least 6 credits of coursework from either the Global/Diversity or Language tracks. This work must be integrated in a clearly identifiable manner with the work from the study abroad program and satisfy the learning outcomes of the Global Integrative Cluster.”</p> | <p>Establishes clear parity between all three tracks of the Global Integrative cluster (Global/Diversity, Language, International Experience) to ensure consistent academic rigor. Shapes future policy regarding the administration of this track.</p> |
| <p>Overall Program</p>  | <p>Revise descriptive language so that the identity of all liberal arts disciplines – specifically arts, languages, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, math and writing – is asserted in order that students do not lose sight of these essential disciplines behind the structure of integrative learning.</p>   | <p>To greater assert the importance of the liberal arts to General Education and avoid the unintentional elision of foundational disciplines.</p>   |