Report

of the

Task Force on General Education

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A. Preliminary

At the beginning of the Fall Term in 1995, the Task Force on General Education (TFOGE) was appointed and charged by the University of West Florida's Faculty Senate Change and Improvement Committee (FSCIC) to submit a plan for a 36 semester hour General Studies Core Curriculum that would satisfy the legislative mandate contained in SB 2330. In addition to the specific parameters of that 36 sh General Studies Core Curriculum, this document contains 1) a brief description of the philosophy and methods that guided the TFOGE in its deliberations, and 2) a series of statements and recommendations that might provide a basic framework for both the implementation and the long-term governance of the proposed general education core.

B. Philosophy and Methods

As stated above, the TFOGE was charged by the FSCIC to "submit a plan for a 36 semester hour General Studies Core Curriculum that would satisfy the legislative mandate contained in SB 2330." In its work to accomplish that goal, the TFOGE adopted as its primary guiding principle the desire to design the best general education curriculum possible given the very narrow constraint of a 36 sh limit. Although the extremely short time frame imposed by the legislature on this University (and therefore on the TFOGE) did not allow the leisurely exchange of ideas and wide range of input that was enjoyed by the last faculty group to examine the general education core at UWF, the Task Force on Undergraduate Education (TFUE), the TFOGE tried to follow many of the principles that has previously guided the TFUE in its task. Some of those principles are important enough to be repeated here.

In general, the TFOGE has labored to design a General Studies Core Curriculum that would satisfy 1) the legislative mandate that a general education core will be composed of courses drawn from the five specified areas (Communication, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences) and 2) the over-arching need of a general education core to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in their further studies in the sciences, social sciences, business, education, or the humanities. As first stated in the TFUE Final Report, students who complete the General Studies Core Curriculum at the University of West Florida should be able to attain:

A. Specialized education in their fields;

B. An understanding of the fundamental concepts behind and the historical development of various branches of learning;

C. An appreciation for their own heritage and the heritage of other cultures;

D. Skill in using the tools essential to their livelihood, no matter how their fields evolve or what occupations they may in the end pursue; and

E. An ability to look upon their own field of specialization, the daily newspaper, and the details of their lives in a broader conceptual, cultural, and historical context. (TFUE Final Report, p. 1)

In addition to the overall philosophy delineated above, the TFOGE also tried to keep in mind the following practical matters and the constraints they impose on grand designs:

1. That the General Studies Core Curriculum at UWF should allow students at our primary "feeder" institutions (PJC, OWCC, GCCC, and CJC) to transfer as many courses as possible from their general education experiences into the UWF General Studies Core Curriculum. However, given that there are significant differences in the general education requirements among those four institutions, the TFOGE recognizes that there is no way to design a curriculum in which each and every course taken to satisfy general education requirements at a feeder institution can be absolutely guaranteed to satisfy a UWF general education requirement.
Nevertheless, the TFOGE has striven to devise a curriculum that would maximize the transferability of general education courses from the local community colleges without rendering the overall purpose of our General Studies Curriculum moot. Therefore the TFOGE during its deliberations often consulted both the overall distribution of general education hours over the five specified categories at other institutions as well as the particular placement of specific courses within those distributions (e.g. is a course in Art History classified as a "Social Sciences" course [because of its historical focus] or as a "Humanities" course? Or into what category do the community college courses in "Nutrition" or "Wellness" go?). Although never an overriding factor that drove the composition of the proposed core, the distribution, placement, and transferability of courses at other institutions was a significant factor in the TFOGE's discussions. And a comparison of the general education requirements at the above listed schools with the general education requirements of the proposed core will reveal that students who have completed a substantial number (27+ sh) of the general education requirements at the local community colleges will typically be able to have most, if not all, of those semester hours count toward the fulfillment of the UWF general education requirements.

2. That grand general education curriculum revisions almost always break down when a "Blue Ribbon" faculty group emerges from a "think-tank" experience with a whole slew of brand-new general education courses that the rest of the institution is then supposed to teach. Such a process invariably creates resistance and resentment in the faculty as a whole and particularly in the ranks of those faculty members on whose shoulders the new curricular design is rudely shoved.

Hence the TFOGE has attempted--wherever possible--to stay within the confines of courses that are already being taught at UWF. This did require some guesswork as to what impact the state-wide Course Leveling Committees were likely to have on the level of some of the courses that are included in the proposed core (e.g. would the calculus courses continue to be 3000 level courses, or would they be dropped to the 2000 level?). However, the TFOGE believes that the University community should create some new General Studies courses for the proposed core; the TFOGE also recognizes that there will inevitably be some modification of existing courses as well. The TFOGE hopes that the University community will regard this component of the proposed core as an opportunity to improve the range and diversity of our present course offerings at the 1000 and 2000 level.

In its work, the TFOGE consulted a large number of items, including all documents pertaining to our present General Studies curriculum, the general studies curricula of PJC, OWCC, GCCC, CJC, Miami-Dade CC, Tallahassee CC, USF, UCF, UNF, and UF, and the TFGE Final Report. Additionally, the TFOGE consulted accreditation statements from SACS, NCATE, AACSMA, Mathematics, Electrical Engineering, Nursing, Medical Technology, Music, and Communication Arts.

**C. The Proposed General Studies Core Curriculum**

In order to clarify the objective which lies behind the creation of the categories listed below, the TFOGE has included a statement that broadly defines the purpose of each category. It is the TFOGE's Intention and hope that any course which may subsequently be added to this list would be required to satisfy the stated purpose of the category.

Some of the courses which appear in the following paradigm reflect courses which the TFOGE believes would work well within the proposed General Studies Core Curriculum but which are not presently taught on this campus (the titles of these suggested courses come from courses listed in general education programs at other institutions). These courses are presented in italics.
The General Studies Core Curriculum at UWF

The General Studies Core Curriculum is the basic program of undergraduate studies that provides the student with a broad educational foundation and is an essential requirement for the A.A. degree. All students must complete thirty-six general education credit hours as specified in the distribution listed below.

COMMUNICATION
(6 sh)

I. ENGLISH COMPOSITION
   A traditional two-semester beginning composition sequence. The first course stresses mechanics, rhetorical design, and voice; the second provides practice in larger expository structures, requires library use and documentation, and involves readings in and writing about literary works. Courses in this category should be writing intensive experiences as defined by the Gordon rule.

   ENC 1101   English Composition I
   ENC 1101   English Composition II

MATHEMATICS
(6 sh)

II. MATHEMATICS
   Investigations of and practice in the various facets and methods of mathematics ranging from algebra and geometry to calculus and statistics. Students may complete the General Studies Mathematics requirement by choosing one of the following two options.

   OPTION 1
   Take one of the courses in Group A (3-4 sh) plus one of the courses in Group B (2-4 sh). Students must achieve a total of 6 sh in Mathematics.

   Group A
   MAC 1103C College Algebra plus Lab
   MAC 1104   College Algebra
   MAC 1140   Pre calculus Algebra

   Group B
   MAC 1113   Trigonometry
   MAC 2233   Calculus with Business Applications
   MAC 2311   Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
   MAC 2312   Analytic Geometry and Calculus II
   MAC 2313   Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
   STA 2023   Elements of Statistics

   OPTION 2
   For students with a strong mathematics background. Take 6 sh from the following courses

   MAC 1113   Trigonometry
   MAC 2233   Calculus with Business Applications
   MAC 2311   Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
   MAC 2312   Analytic Geometry and Calculus II
   MAC 2313   Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
   STA 2023   Elements of Statistics
SOCIAL SCIENCES
(9 sh)

III. SOCIAL SCIENCES: HISTORY
Explorations of the geographical, cultural, political, religious, and scientific environments of societies in order to understand the process of their development.

EUH 1000 Western Perspectives I
EUH 1001 Western Perspectives II

IV. SOCIAL SCIENCES: INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS
Investigative surveys of the current knowledge and theory which places human beings at the intersection of their own reasoning and language abilities, biological forces, genetic heritage, and environmental contexts.

ANT 2000 Introduction to Anthropology
PSY 2013 Understanding Human Behavior
DEP xxxv Human Development Across the Life Span

V. SOCIAL SCIENCES: SOCIAL BEHAVIORS
Investigations of modern theories concerning the social and political systems created by human beings and the influence of those systems on human thought and action.

POS 1041 Political Institutions
SYG 2003 Introduction to Sociology
SYG 2010 Current Social Problems

HUMANITIES
(9 sh)

VI. LITERATURE
Investigations of literary texts from various nations and historical periods chosen to reflect either literary genres or literary traditions. Courses in this category should be writing intensive experiences as defined by the Gordon rule.

LIT 1110 Great Books I
LIT 1120 Great Books II
LIT 2010 Introduction to Prose Fiction
LIT 2030 Introduction to Poetry
LIT 2040 World Drama
LIT 2113 Western Literature I
LIT 2114 Western Literature II

VII. FINE ARTS
Explorations of the nature of the fine arts, either through the practice of one of its disciplines or the study of its historical patterns.

ARH 1050 Introduction to Art History
ART 2003C Visual Arts Experience
MUS 2642 Music in Western Civilization
THE 2000 The Theatre Experience
CONTEMPORARY VALUES AND VIEWPOINTS
Investigations of the frameworks, values, viewpoints, and expressions which provide guidance for contemporary living in a heterogeneous and multi-cultural society.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHI 2603</td>
<td>Ethics in Contemporary Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHI 2010</td>
<td>Introduction to Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL 2000</td>
<td>Introduction to Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC 2300</td>
<td>Speaking and Interpersonal Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WST xxxxx</td>
<td>Introduction to Women's Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>WST xxxxx</td>
<td>Gender Issues in Contemporary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX xxxxx</td>
<td>American Pluralism and the Search for Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX xxxxx</td>
<td>World Cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXX xxxxx</td>
<td>Cross-Cultural Perspectives</td>
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NATURAL SCIENCES
(7 sh)
Students must take at least one science course with a lab from the course options listed in blocks VIII and IX.

BIOLOGICAL/LIFE SCIENCES
Investigations into and explorations of nature's organic creations in which systematic methods are used to discover the rules that govern nature. Non-laboratory experiences in the biological/life sciences are acceptable when labs are too dangerous or expensive, or in areas in which a well-developed theoretical foundation exists.

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 1010</td>
<td>General Biology with Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOT 2010</td>
<td>General Botany with Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 2xxx</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOO 1010</td>
<td>General Zoology with Lab</td>
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PHYSICAL SCIENCES
Investigations into and explorations of nature's inorganic creations in which systematic methods are used to discover the rules that govern nature. Non-laboratory experiences in the biological/life sciences are acceptable when labs are too dangerous or expensive, or in areas in which a well-developed theoretical foundation exists.

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHM 1020</td>
<td>Concepts in Chemistry with Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHM 2045</td>
<td>Chemistry I with Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHM 2046</td>
<td>Chemistry II with Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 1200</td>
<td>Physical Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHY 2048</td>
<td>University Physics I with or without Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHY 2049</td>
<td>University Physics II with or without Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHY 2053</td>
<td>General Physics I with or without Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHY 2054</td>
<td>General Physics II with or without Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST 2033</td>
<td>Modern Astronomy</td>
</tr>
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D.

Implementation and Long-term Governance of General Studies

The TFOGE recommends that the responsibility for both the immediate implementation and for long-term governance and oversight of the proposed General Studies Core Curriculum be entrusted to the Council on University General Studies (COUGS). The first item of the Charter for the Council on University General Studies (approved by the Faculty Senate on xxxx) reads "Review and/or initiate recommendation on policies concerning University General Studies curriculum and policies. Review the curriculum and policies periodically to identify areas that need addressing." Charter, Council on University General Studies, p. 1). The TFOGE strongly recommends that the UWF General Studies Core Curriculum be given both the respect and the autonomy afforded any other program of study in this University.

Implementation

As is stipulated in SB 2330, the proposed General Studies Core Curriculum can be implemented in Fall term, 1996. There are two steps to implementation. The first is obvious: University-wide approval of the proposed core. The TFOGE strongly recommends that the University community consider first and foremost in its approval process the overall structure and distribution of the stipulated 36 sh over the ten categories and NOT get bogged down in quibbles and territorial battles as to the position of any particular course in one or another category in the proposal. The TFOGE hopes that the University community will recognize that the proposed General Studies Core Curriculum is a dynamic program and not a list of immutable dicta carved in stone. There will obviously be--as there should be--modifications to the course offerings in each of the categories as individual departments decide how they can offer the best General Studies courses they can within the limits of the overall curriculum design. Hence the TFOGE strongly recommends that the FSCIC and the Faculty Senate confine their deliberations to discussion of the overall curriculum design. Additions to and modifications of the specific courses listed in the categories should be governed, both in the long-run and as quickly as possible (ideally by the beginning of November, 1995), by the elected faculty group whose charter gives it purview over the General Studies Core Curriculum: The Council on University General Studies.

Long-Term Governance

As stated above, the TFOGE believes that the responsibility for the long-term governance of the General Studies Core Curriculum be given as quickly as possible to the Council on University General Studies. The TFOGE recognizes that a wild and undisciplined proliferation of courses posed by departments hungry for a piece of the general education pie poses the greatest threat to any General Studies Core Curriculum. To that end, the TFOGE strongly recommends that all additions and modifications of the courses listed be intensely scrutinized by COUGS to determine if the proposed addition/alteration satisfies the purpose of both the overall General Studies Core Curriculum design and the stated purpose of category into which the additional/ altered course will go. This would, in effect, place COUGS into roughly the same position in the present University governance structure that is presently held by the Professional Education Council in regards to Education policy and curriculum. The TFOGE hopes that the Faculty Senate would see the wisdom of this structure and will treat COUGS recommendations on General Studies policy and curriculum with the same respect given to recommendations from the PEC.

If the proposed General Studies Core Curriculum is accepted, there will obviously be an immediate period of flux during which individual departments devise new courses or revise their present General Studies course offerings for the new core. That is as it should be. The TFOGE expects--and welcomes--input of this type from the faculty. Further, this type of course modification/creation should be the norm for the long-term health of General Studies at UWF. The TFOGE would, however, like to offer three recommendations designed to smooth the transition to the new core. First, in an echo of the statements above, the TFOGE strongly recommends that COUGS be the faculty body given the primary responsibility of ensuring that modifications to existing courses and the creation new courses for the proposed core mesh with the overall design of the General Studies Core Curriculum. Second, the TFOGE recommends that this institution avoid the temptation to balloon each of the categories into a lengthy menu,
and to that end the TFOGE recommends that no individual category in the General Studies Core Curriculum ever list more than eight courses. Third, the TFOGE recommends that this institution begin a program in which the design of the General Studies Core Curriculum is evaluated at least once every 3 or 4 years by COUGS.