

Interim Statement on General Education for Indiana University Bloomington

Bloomington Faculty Council - Educational Policies Committee

Discussion (Formative) Draft - March 31, 2006

Statement

In consideration of

- the new admission criteria that will take effect with the Freshman Class of 2011 and the improvement in the academic quality of Bloomington's undergraduates that promises¹,
- the need to provide a General Education Program for Bloomington's undergraduates that is self-evidently common to all baccalaureate programs²,
- the commitment of the Bloomington faculty to meet their responsibility to do so and their belief that such coherency between the general education requirements of Bloomington's Schools and College does exist³,
- Indiana University Bloomington's historical role as Indiana's public university for the liberal arts, sciences, and professions, with strength in and commitment to the arts, humanities, foreign languages and diverse indigenous and international cultures, and the empirical sciences - including the social sciences, physical and life sciences, managerial sciences, and educational sciences,
- the twenty-first century's demand for citizens with a global perspective in all fields of learning and with the capacity to evaluate the technical, political, social, and ethical implications of scientific knowledge and to distinguish between dogma and empirically tested scientific knowledge,

- the support of the President of the University and the Bloomington Campus and of the Trustees of Indiana University for a Bloomington General Education Program⁴, and
- the "Statement on General Education" of our accrediting organization, the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission⁵,

the Bloomington Faculty Council, through its Educational Policies Committee, and the campus' Schools, through the Campus Curriculum Committee, should work jointly during the 2006-07 academic year to develop an Indiana University Bloomington General Education Program as outlined below, which program, after approval by the Bloomington Faculty Council and the Bloomington faculty, should be incorporated into the degree requirements of every baccalaureate degree offered on the Bloomington campus, as an identified component⁶, to take effect with the Freshman Class of 2011:

Indiana University Bloomington General Education Program

1. **English/writing:** English W131 or an approved alternative writing course or course combination ;⁷
2. **Mathematics:** at least three credit hours of mathematics courses at the 100 level or higher;^{8,9,10}
3. **Arts and Humanities:** two courses in different departments, disciplines, and areas of study;
4. **Social and Historical Studies:** two courses in different departments, disciplines, and areas of study;
5. **Natural Sciences:** either at least five credit hours including a laboratory component or two three-credit hour courses in different departments, disciplines, and areas of study;
6. **World Languages and Cultures:** two world language courses (same language) at the sophomore level or higher, or two cultural diversity courses at least one of which focuses on one or more cultures other than the dominant cultures of the United States and modern Western Europe, or an international experience consisting of approved overseas study for a duration of either at least one semester of an academic year or at least a six-week session of a summer term;¹¹
7. **Professional Engagement:** Internship, Service Learning, Civic Engagement; or Introduction to and Overview of a Profession Outside the Major; or Research/Creative Activity: one course.^{12,13,14}

Technicalities and Supplementary Provisions:

1. For each of the requirements 1-6, in order for a course to appear on the list of courses that satisfy that requirement, and in order for an overseas study program to satisfy requirement 6, the course or overseas study program must be approved

for that purpose either by the College of Arts and Sciences or by a campus General Education Committee whose voting membership consists of the Associate Dean/Director for Undergraduate Education of each undergraduate School and the College together with other tenured faculty selected so that the voting membership as a whole has

- a. proportional representation from the Bloomington Schools that offer baccalaureate degrees, and
- b. a majority consisting of tenured faculty who are not holding administrative appointments,

and which committee has two co-chairs one of whom is the chair of the Dean of Faculties' Campus Curriculum Committee and the other of whom chairs or co-chairs the Bloomington Faculty Council's Educational Policies Committee.^{15,16, 17}

2. A student may use a course to satisfy both the English/writing requirement and Arts and Humanities, Social and Historical Studies, and/or World Languages and Cultures requirements, if the course in question is approved for the relevant requirements.
3. If a student opts for two cultural diversity courses, then it would be permissible for the courses to count also for English/writing, Arts and Humanities, and/or Social and Historical Studies requirements, if the courses in question are approved for the relevant requirements.
4. The courses that a student uses for the Arts and Humanities, Social and Historical, and Natural Science requirements must, except for a lecture-laboratory combination in a Natural Science, all come from different departments, disciplines, and areas of study.
5. The course(s) that a student uses to satisfy the English/writing requirement; the course that a student uses to satisfy the Mathematics requirement; and all or all but one of the courses and the overseas study program (if that option is selected) that a student uses to satisfy the Arts and Humanities requirement, the Social and Historical Studies requirement, the Natural Sciences requirement, and the World Languages and Cultures requirement must have been approved by the College of Arts and Sciences as satisfying those requirements.
6. Because dual-credit (e.g., ACP) courses, credit by examination courses (e.g., special credit and AP credit), and transferred courses are entered on Indiana University transcripts as their Indiana University course equivalences, such courses are automatically accepted for satisfying the requirements of this General Education program.
7. The President, the Provost, and the College and School Deans of Indiana University Bloomington shall take steps to insure that the budgetary adjustments necessary to implement this General Education Program do not adversely impact the research mission of any unit and shall undertake to diminish the budgetary incentives for, and prevent the occurrence of, academic encroachment between academic units.¹⁸

campus req.)								
Purdue (no uniform campus req.)								

Footnotes:

¹ [Admission Policy for Indiana University Bloomington for Fall, 2011](#)

²The campus' Strategic Planning Committee, in its May 12, 2003, report on "General Priorities: Strategic Needs and Opportunities", said:

1.4. There also appears to be a need for more clarity and structure in the curricula across the campus, and for clearer relationships among those curricula and between them and coursework at other IU campuses and other Indiana educational institutions. Attention to these important issues should include:

1.4.1. Articulation of common requirements that all students should have met, or minimum competencies that all students should be able to demonstrate, prior to graduation.

1.4.2. Renewed consideration of general education requirements. At a minimum, the campus should standardize how the main distribution areas are designated and specify what courses count for each in a way that can be used by every school.

1.4.3. A sound, consistent, and predictable basis for accepting course credit from other campuses and Indiana colleges and universities.

³Bloomington Campus Curriculum Committee, "General Education on the Bloomington Campus: Coherence and Distinction", 2004.

⁴At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on January 14, 2006, President Herbert said "... I urge the board [of Trustees] to provide very strong leadership in this area [general education] by directing the administration and the faculty to implement a general education curriculum on each campus by the 2008 fall term that is consistent with standard practices in the academy and that would apply to every student entering IU without an Associates degree from another institution."

Also, Trustee President Steve Ferguson, speaking on behalf of the Board of Trustees, said "... we [The Board of Trustees] charge the faculty to move quickly on measures that will improve the quality of the student body, including raising admission standards and approving the [a] general education curriculum."

(Minutes of the Board of Trustees, January 14, 2006.)

⁵Statement on General Education from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (2003)

Understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, mastering multiple modes of inquiry, effectively analyzing and communicating information, and recognizing the importance of creativity and values to the human

spirit not only allow people to live richer lives but also are a foundation for most careers and for the informed exercise of local, national, and international citizenship. The Commission expects organizations of higher learning to address these important ends, and has embedded this expectation in its Criteria for Accreditation.

Throughout its history, the Commission has believed that quality undergraduate higher education involves breadth as well as depth of study. As understood by the Commission, general education is intended to impart common knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and to develop in them the skills and attitudes that an organization's faculty believe every educated person should possess. From an organization's general education, a student acquires a breadth of knowledge in the areas and proficiency in the skills that the organization identifies as hallmarks of being college educated. Moreover, effective general education helps students gain competence in the exercise of independent intellectual inquiry and also stimulates their examination and understanding of personal, social, and civic values.

Effective general education can be shaped to fit unique organizational contexts. As higher education changes, so too do the ways in which organizations create and provide general education. General education must be valued and owned by the organization whether its courses are created, purchased, or shared; whether faculty are full-time, part-time, or employed by a partner organization; and whether the organization creates general education opportunities primarily through curriculum or relies heavily on experiential and off-campus opportunities to achieve its learning goals for general education.

Regardless of how a higher learning organization frames the general education necessary to fulfill its mission and goals, it clearly and publicly articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of the general education it provides for its students. It also shows its commitment to the centrality of general education by including an appropriate component of general education in all undergraduate programs of substantial length, whether they lead to certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Moreover, the organization's faculty exercises oversight for general education and, working with the administration, regularly assesses its effectiveness against the organization's stated goals for student learning.

⁶Although there are substantial commonalities between the general education portion of the undergraduate degrees on the Bloomington campus, nevertheless there are significant disparities between the descriptions of these general education portions between the College and the undergraduate schools and, in some instances, even between baccalaureate programs within the same school. These disparities make it difficult to advise new undergraduates; in some instances, they may mislead students into false expectations about how courses they take for general education for their initial choice of major may apply to the general education requirements of a later choice. To alleviate these problems, every baccalaureate program needs to set forth clearly, within its own

requirements, this common General Education Program for Indiana University Bloomington.

⁷Presently, all baccalaureate programs except for several in the School of Music require students to take an additional advanced writing course, intensive writing course, or methods of teaching writing course. However, the divergence between these alternatives makes it problematical to require a second writing course as part of this campus-wide general education program.

⁸The mathematics courses used must be classified as 100 level on the Bloomington campus. The reason for this is that some courses, for instance, basic algebra, precalculus and trigonometry, are 000 level courses on the Bloomington campus but 100 level on some other campuses of Indiana University.

⁹The reader should observe that there is no minimum grade (other than passing) attached to this requirement. The requirement of a C– or better grade that appears in the College's Fundamental Skill requirement was introduced by the College's Committee on Undergraduate Education to compensate for the fact that a high school level course M025 - Precalculus was permitted to satisfy a college level requirement. Because M025 will, beginning in 2011, be an admission requirement and will not be acceptable for this General Education requirement, there is no longer a need for the minimum grade requirement. This formulation is consistent with the College's Fundamental Skills requirement in the foreign languages.

¹⁰"The Toolbox Revisited" report recently released by the U.S. Department of Education, a longitudinal study that followed students from eighth grade through age 26, demonstrated that both high school mathematics and college mathematics are gateway curricula, for all majors, which are strongly associated ($p < 0.01$) with students' completing baccalaureate degrees. The report recommends that students should be required to take precalculus, trigonometry, or calculus in high school and that every college and university should require every student, regardless of major, to take at least one college level mathematics course.

Of course, this observed association evidences both cause and effect. On the one hand, absent a mathematics requirement, weaker students will not take mathematics. On the other hand, every student, whether strong or weak, who takes college mathematics does thereby grow intellectually.

In contrast to elementary statistical methodology courses that focus on data manipulation for statistical tests, 100 level mathematics courses focus on foundational mathematical concepts and algorithms that underlie analysis and problem-solving across all quantitative disciplines. Their demands for rigor in abstract quantitative conceptualization, reasoning, and algorithmic computations develop students' deductive reasoning, precision, and sensitivity to subtle nuances of logic, syntax, fact, and number.

Elementary statistical methodology courses can satisfy the research methodology alternative of the Professional Engagement requirement.

¹¹In addition to the courses and experiences mentioned here, the Schools should encourage their faculty to infuse their courses with relevant material on diversity and equity.

¹²A variety of ideas for enriching the education of undergraduates during the latter portion of their studies have been proposed. One often proposed idea is to require of each student an internship, service learning, or civic engagement "course". Another one is to

require of each student a capstone research project or creative activity in the student's major. A third one is for a general requirement that embodies a unique characteristic of an institution's academic character, such as Indiana University Bloomington's array of outstanding professional schools. Although persuasive arguments can be advanced for each of these for a majority of our undergraduates, none of these arguments persuade that any specific one should be required of every student. Neither is it practical to require any specific one of every student: there are not enough faculty to judge a capstone research project or creative activity from every student; given the size of Bloomington and Monroe County in comparison, for instance, to Indianapolis and Marion County, there are not sufficient service learning and civic engagement opportunities to accommodate every undergraduate; for students in the Arts and Sciences who are realistically aiming for graduate school in their major field, requiring an introductory/overview course in a professional school would not be as valuable as requiring a capstone project. But, if the idea of a research project is expanded to include learning research methodologies for the major field, then it becomes both appropriate and feasible to require of each student at least one of these enrichments of undergraduate education.

By setting these admittedly disparate, educational enrichments as alternatives to one another, it is possible to affirm the distinctive value of each alternative without creating a plethora of, at best, marginally feasible and marginally appropriate requirements.

Furthermore, if any one of the three subcategories were omitted, then the remaining alternatives would not be feasible or would be inappropriate for one or more Schools. If the Internship, Service Learning, and Civic Engagement subcategory were omitted, then the requirement would not be feasible for the School of Education. If the Introduction to and Overview of a Profession Outside the Major subcategory were omitted, then the requirement would not be feasible for the School of Business. If the Research/Creative Activity subcategory were omitted, then the requirement would not be feasible for the School of Music and would not be appropriate for the College.

¹³In many instances, this requirement would be fulfilled in the latter part of a student's undergraduate studies. For instance, for students in the School of Education, the student teaching component would fulfill the Internship alternative for this requirement.

Examples of courses that might be appropriate for an introduction to and overview of a profession outside a student's major might be

- Business X100, Introduction to Business Administration, for a non-Business major,
- Education F200, Examining Self as a Teacher, or F205, The Study of Education and the Practice of Teaching, for a non-Education major,
- Social Work S141, Introduction to Social Work, for a non-Social Work major,
- SPEA V263, Public Management, for a non-SPEA major,
- Journalism J110, Foundations of Journalism and Mass Communication, for a non-Journalism major,
- Telecommunications T206, Introduction to Design and Production, or T207, Introduction to Telecommunications Industries and Management, for a non-Telecommunications major, and
- AMID H100, Introduction to Apparel and Textiles, for a non-AMID major.

(Although some readers might feel that it would be an anomaly for a junior or senior to be taking a course like those in the preceding list, such is not the case; in some Schools, e.g., Business, many students take 100 and 200 level courses during their senior year in order to fulfill general education requirements.)

The term "Research" is intended to include both research projects, such as a capstone project or honors thesis, and also research methodology courses, such as a statistics course for a social science major or a computer programming course for a natural science or mathematics major. For students in the School of Music, the zero-credit senior recital would fulfill the creative activity alternative for this requirement. For students in the School of Fine Arts, the senior portfolio of artistic works would fulfill the creative activity alternative.

¹⁴The undergraduate canon of a discipline or major consists of a comprehensive collection of books and texts that sets forth in full the content of the discipline at the undergraduate level. Operationally, this collection could perhaps be defined as the collection of all of the texts and books that have been used during the past decade in the undergraduate courses about the discipline per se. (Of course, almost no undergraduates study the full canon of their undergraduate majors.) One subtlety that requires attention is that some departments teach courses that are not part of their discipline per se; for example, many social science departments teach a statistical methods course even though statistics per se is not part of the subject of the discipline itself. Statistics is not, e.g., psychology even though it is an essential research methodology for psychology. Another example would be a computing methodology course taught in a natural science department.

What is common to the subcategories of internship/service learning/civic engagement, introduction to and overview of a profession outside the major, and research/creative activity is that they constitute professional engagement for students that goes beyond the canon of their major field.

More broadly, general education is that which an undergraduate is required to learn outside the canon of the student's major discipline. That is why this item may be considered to be a part of the general education program for Indiana University Bloomington.

¹⁵Consequently, any course approved for a requirement by the College will appear on the list of courses satisfying that requirement. Accordingly, it is expected that most, but not necessarily all, of the courses that are currently approved by the College for its fundamental skills, distribution, and culture studies requirements will appear on the corresponding lists for this General Education program. However, because one of the primary purposes of this General Education program is to improve the advising of new students, the College may, indeed, should, choose to designate some of its courses as being especially appropriate for these General Education requirements.

¹⁶The North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission requires that the faculty of an institution, in cooperation with the administration, exercise oversight over the general education program of the institution. In accreditation reviews of other Indiana University campuses, the Higher Learning Commission has made clear that the faculty or a faculty committee, in contrast to an administrative committee, must have oversight over the general education program.

¹⁷At the other public Big Ten institutions that have a common, campus-wide general education program (Illinois, Michigan State, Minnesota, Penn State, and Wisconsin), the general education program was established through the campus' Faculty Senate and is administered by a faculty committee that reports to the Faculty Senate. At Wisconsin, the College of Letters and Science was designated to serve as the campus' "trustee" for general education on the behalf of the other schools and colleges, and so the general education committee is actually a committee of that College.

¹⁸At a research university, general education is a matter not only of student learning but also of faculty research and school budgets. The forces that hold back reform of general education are inertia, turf, and budgets. Although the faculty can work to overcome inertia and matters of turf, upper echelon administrators have the duty to resolve wisely matters of turf and budget. As Cardinal John Newman wrote one and a half centuries ago, "In truth, it [the University] professes to assign to each study, which it receives, its own proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations, and to effect the intercommunion of one and all; to keep in check the ambitious and encroaching, and to succor and maintain those which from time to time are succumbing under the more popular or the more fortunately circumstanced; to keep the peace between them all, and to convert their mutual differences and contrarities into the common good. ... Thus to draw many things into one, is its special function; and it learns to do it, not by rules reducible to writing, but by sagacity, wisdom, and forbearance, acting upon a profound insight into the subject-matter of knowledge, and by a vigilant repression of aggression or bigotry in any quarter."

(Cardinal John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 1873 edition.)

¹⁹An example of a 0 credit course is a Music student's senior recital.

²⁰If the courses selected for the World Languages and Cultures requirements were cultural diversity courses and both also counted for Arts and Humanities and/or Social and Historical Studies requirements, the creative activity for the last requirement counted for zero (0) credit hours, and the English/writing course was W131, then the total credit hours needed to satisfy all of the requirements could be as low as twenty-three (23) credit hours. On the other hand, if no course was used for more than one requirement and the last requirement was satisfied with a three credit hour course, then the total credit hours needed to satisfy all of the requirements would be 32-34.
