

General Education Task Force Meeting  
September 7, 2006  
MINUTES

Attending: Tom Steen, Anne Kelsch, Joan Hawthorne, Ray Lagasse, Pat O'Neill, Keaton Sondreal, Sally Pyle, Bruce Dearden, Helen Melland, Lori Robison, Evguenii Kozliak, Matt Cavalli, Dan Rice, Lisa Burger, Jay Fisher, Martha Potvin, Pamela Kalbfleisch, Art Jones, Steve Light, Wilbur Stolt.

Meeting Dates for the Semester: Every other Friday, 3-4:30, Montgomery 20

The following is a summary of the sub-committee reports given and the ideas and questions raised. If you have any thoughts you would like to contribute, please email them to the appropriate sub-committee chair.

**Frosh Common Experience Report** – Lisa B.

This sub-committee developed their proposal based on what would be feasible and practical for UND, and what would be a more purposeful experience for frosh students to “meet them where they are”.

Supportive Comments:

Several voiced that they liked the idea of a theme, Comp I is already themed (Lori)  
Could be tied to Faculty Lecture Services, campus-wide intellectual event such as Jane Goodall (Tom)

Questions to Consider:

Not all students take the targeted core courses  
Students would need to be enrolled in several of the courses for it to be “common” (Matt)  
What about sophomores and upperclassmen in course? (Jay)  
Would rely heavily on the Arts & Sciences department (Bruce)  
What gen ed goals would the experience aim to meet? (Martha)  
Would need time for faculty to prepare for theme (Anne K)  
Expand theme to more courses (Art)

**Senior Experience Course** – Joan

This would be a one-credit upper division general education requirement which would fulfill the 37<sup>th</sup> (out of 39) required gen ed credits. Faculty could develop courses around a common theme or individual topics. This course would be outside the major and would require higher level thinking expected of a senior-level student.

Supportive Comments:

Many supported the idea in general.  
Should be a course which ties together all gen ed goals and assesses them (Wilbur)

Questions to Consider:

How would this fit into already tight programs of study such as nursing? (Helen)  
How does this course help students in professional development programs? (Eyguenii)  
Would prefer it in the major (Matt)  
Will students take a 1-credit course seriously? (Keaton)  
Course would have to be marketed to students (Jay)  
What can you teach in a 1-credit course? (Lori)  
Would faculty invest more time in the course than 1 credit? (Art)

**Diversity** – Martha.

The university needs a cohesive diversity statement from which to work from. Need to broaden the definition of culture beyond “ethnic” and “world” in new gen ed diversity goal. Need to also consider both in and out of classroom experiences. Will probably require more than 3 credits. Proposal is in works; will take into account results from gen ed assessment project.

Supportive Comments:

General agreement that current “World Cultures” requirement is weak and “wishy-washy”.

Questions to Consider:

Designated diversity courses need more standardization/structure to insure critical thinking about culture (Keaton).

**Communication** – Dan.

This proposal retains the first two writing courses and adds a speaking requirement. Also would require an advanced communication requirement, preferably in the major or at the university level. Question whether foreign languages really fulfill gen ed communication goal.

Questions to Consider:

Would the advanced communication course have communication as its teaching objective or would it be a content-course which is writing intensive? (Joan)

Does there need to be an entry requirement for Comp I for students not prepared for college-level writing? (Matt).

What skills do students need to write and speak well? (Bruce)

What role does critical thinking play in composition courses? (Tom)

What about faculty outside the English department who do not feel it is their job to teach communication skills? (Sally)

Comments on Composition Courses from Lori Robison:

Lori emphasized to the group that critical thinking is at the heart of good communication, not skills per se. She emphasized that as writing and speaking tasks become more challenging in advanced content courses, students will make more skill errors because their efforts are focused on communicating the more difficult content.

### **Information Literacy**

Matt defined what is meant by information literacy. It goes far beyond library skills to finding sources, critically evaluating them, etc. Information literacy skills are important to any class.

Supportive Comment and Questions: More time needed for discussion

Courses need to be more intentional in *teaching* information literacy skills. (Bruce)