



General Education @ PSU

Academic Leadership Forum

February 3, 2017



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Office for
General Education

Context and History

1930's

The idea of a core curriculum/general education to encourage well-roundedness is introduced at Columbia, Chicago, and Dartmouth.

1954

The first Gen Ed committee at PSU secured the adoption of a 37-credit program to develop “a man’s knowledge and capacities” as opposed to “training for an occupation.”

1985

Baccalaureate Degree Requirements (BDRs) approved in a 46-credit cafeteria that included skills courses and knowledge domains. (*Depth and Breadth* distinctions were abandoned in 1994.)



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Context and History

1990

Diversity added as a required part of the curriculum

3 credits of Diversity Focused (DF) or 12 credits of Diversity Enhanced (DE)

(DE bookkeeping deemed too complex; eliminated in 1994.)

1997

Senate adopted 10 recommendations proposed by the Special Committee on General Education (charged in Feb. 1996)



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10 Recommendations

Develop First-Year Seminars

- small
- discussion-based
- purpose and content defined by college

55% credit hours taught in classes with > 100 students
65% of Gen Ed credit hours taught by full-time faculty



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From Special Committee on
General Education

2-3

4

10 Recommendations

Introduce diagnostic/adaptive placement

Identify outcomes for mastery of discipline-specific proficiencies to enhance relevancy

Integrate key competencies and active learning into domain courses

- The Gen Ed curriculum lacked connections to competencies crucial to life and professional career success, so . . .
- Incorporate writing/speaking, quantitative reasoning, teamwork, critical thinking/problem solving,, information gathering, scholarly conduct



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**From Special Committee on
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5

6-7

10 Recommendations

Stimulate collaborative/integrative approaches across disciplinary boundaries

Restructure Health Science & Physical Education requirement (4 cr. -> 3 cr.)

Recast Diversity requirement as Intercultural/International Competence emphasizing student engagement (DF->GI)



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8

9

10

10 Recommendations

Allow substitution of 3rd level second-language study

Initiate systematic, formative assessment;
faculty owned

Provide oversight for implementation

- costing report called for \$2M - \$4.5M
mostly for FYS (#1) and integration of competencies
and active learning (#4)



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Further refinements

2003

Intercultural/International
competence replaced by
U.S. cultures (U.S.) and
International Cultures (IL)

2008

FYS replaced by
First-year Experience



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The Students' Perspective

Opportunity for exploration/intellectual curiosity

Complementary to the major

Relief from rigor or subject matter of the major

Access to small classes

Anonymity of a large classes

From the Report of the SCGE

General education is idiosyncratic, tailored to particular institutions and their needs.

Good general education is associated with a culture that values high expectations, recognizes diverse talents and learning styles and emphasizes early engagement.

Good general education promotes coherence and wholeness, interdisciplinary and continuity, integration and synthesis (of instruction, practice, and experience). It encourages active learning and collaboration and a commitment to inquiry beyond the curriculum.

Finally, good general education builds dynamic assessment and improvement into curricular processes.



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1997

Timeline

2012: A University-wide conversation about Gen Ed began

2013-2015: Gen Ed Task Force deliberates models and makes recommendations

2015-2016: Faculty Senate implementation reports from faculty senate

2016-2017: Formation of Office for General Education and innovative course development announced

Summer/Fall 2018: New requirements start for students



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The foremost goal of the Gen Ed revision was to foster opportunities for student learning.



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What needs to be done now?



**IMPLEMENTATION OF
NEW REQUIREMENTS**



ASSESSMENT



**RECERTIFICATION OF
COURSES BY
CURRICULAR AFFAIRS**



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GenEd Learning Objectives

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

KEY LITERACIES e.g. quantitative, health, intercultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic, scientific

CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING

INTEGRATIVE THINKING

CREATIVE THINKING

GLOBAL LEARNING

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING



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Foundation Courses

(15 credits and **C or better**)

Quantification (GQ)

Writing and Speaking (GWS)

Domain Courses

(30 credits **includes 6 Integrative Studies credits**)

Arts (GA) – 6 credits

Humanities (GH) – 6 credits

Health and **Wellness (GHW)** – 3 credits

Natural Sciences (GN) – 9 credits

Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS) – 6 credits



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Criteria for each foundation and domain area was reviewed, updated, and to some degree made parallel.

Integrative Studies Requirement

6 credits

Inter-domain Courses

- 3 credits, students must take 2
- 2 domains represented in each course
- creates 6 credits of exploration in General Education because may count toward both domains

Linked Courses

- 2 courses that link in some substantial way
- each course used by a student is designated in a different domain
- may be used toward integrative studies requirement or regular domain course requirement if link is not taken



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Everyone has a role



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Gen Ed Faculty Fellows

16 FELLOWS TOTAL

**7 FROM UNIVERSITY PARK – ONE PER DOMAIN AND
FOUNDATION**

5 FROM CAMPUS COLLEGES

**4 FROM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE REPRESENTING
GEOGRAPHIC GROUPS**

PARTIAL SUMMER SUPPORT FOR EFFORT



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**SOLID
FOUNDATION**



**TRANSFORMATIVE
EXPLORATION**



**INTEGRATIVE
LEARNING**



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