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REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION

Oakland University
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Committee

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REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION

I. Introduction

On June 3, 1982 the University Senate legislated a 36-credit hour minimum general education requirement for all undergraduates of Oakland University. To implement this legislation, in November 1982 the Senate established the Committee on General Education as a Senate standing committee and charged it with the initial task of drawing up a University-wide general education requirement. The Committee was also charged to "define areas via groups of courses, set distributional requirements over these areas and approve and maintain pools of courses that may be used to satisfy the requirements." The Committee has completed its first item of business and has identified eight field categories which would comprise the general education requirement. In addition it has drafted catalog descriptions of the field categories, developed guidelines for the inclusion of courses in each field and made several recommendations for the implementation of the University-wide program of general education.

II. Committee's Approach

The Committee on General Education held its first meeting in January 1983. With a few exceptions, to permit members to carry out specific assignments or draft reports, the Committee met weekly through the Spring semester and resumed that schedule in September. The six members of the Committee attended every meeting during that period.

Committee members began their task by discussing at length their respective views on the goals, components and value of particular schemes of a University-wide program of General Education. Probing one another's convictions, challenging and defending particular proposals on broad organizational matters, the members arrived at a measure of agreement from which to proceed. The Committee then researched the General Education component of twenty-five universities of similar size and structure to Oakland, including all state-supported institutions in Michigan. That investigation demonstrated that a significant majority of those reviewed had a University-wide General Education requirement, that General Education occupied an approximate average of 30% of their curricular space, and that the Oakland Senate's mandate of a University-wide General Education program of 36 credits was consistent with comparable institutions in Michigan and nationwide. Committee members also consulted the available literature on General Education and became fully conversant with the current General Education requirements of Oakland's College and Professional Schools. The Chairman also attended an AAC conference on general education in Baltimore in April 1983.

The initial phase of the Committee's work made clear the wide diversity in both content and credit requirements among the various units of the University and the distance which existed between Oakland and other institutions concerning the commitment to widely-accepted views on

education. A number of the General Education programs extant at other universities were consistent with the Committee members' broad agreement on philosophy and content. However, given the Senate constraints of a 36-credit maximum program in a 4-credit per course system, none were appropriate to Oakland. Those institutions which had 36-credit programs required a minimum of twelve courses distributed in variously combined fields or disciplines. The nine courses provided for the General Education component at Oakland placed the Committee under a unique restraint. Our credit system and the inclusion of the writing competency requirement in General Education required hard decisions of field selection and organization.

After the Committee agreed on a preliminary proposal, members visited all department chairs in the College and met as a group with the Provost and with each Dean in the University. As a result of these sessions, the proposal was revised and put in final form, with field descriptions for the inclusion of specific courses by field. Committee members then met with Deans and Chairs to acquaint them with the General Education proposal to be submitted to the Senate.

III. Recommendations

The Committee on General Education recommends to the University Senate the following legislation:

- A. That all students must complete 32 credits in general education; of these, at least one course must be taken in each of eight field categories.
- B. That the field categories be specified as:
 - 1. Arts
 - 2. Literature
 - 3. Language
 - 4. Western Civilization
 - 5. International Studies
 - 6. Social Science
 - 7. Mathematics, Logic and Computer Science
 - 8. Natural Science and Technology
- C. That each field category contain a limited number of courses, to be approved by the University Committee on General Education.

- D. That the 32-credits of General Education be considered a minimum credit requirement which academic units may increase for their own students.

Commentary

- A. The General Education Committee's proposal takes into account that students now can satisfy the University writing proficiency requirement by a) completing RHT 101 with a grade of 2.0 or better; or b) transferring two college-level English composition courses (at least 6 credits); or c) petitioning the Proficiency Committee of the Department of Rhetoric, Communications and Journalism with samples of proficient writing; or d) demonstrating superior writing skills in a student-initiated proficiency examination administered by the Department of Rhetoric, Communications and Journalism (Undergraduate Catalog 1983-1984, p. 23).

The Committee thus is recommending the continuance of the current Senate policy which separates the writing proficiency requirement from a General Education component based on credits. In accord with the Senate's charge to the Committee, however, completion of RHT 101 should be construed as part of the mandated 36-credit program.

- B. The Committee proposes the following introductory statement on General Education for publication in the Undergraduate Catalog:

The General Education Program is designed to provide a common and coherent educational experience for all Oakland University undergraduates. It is based on the belief that educated persons should possess not only knowledge in a particular field of specialization but also an understanding of the world around them, an appreciation of the legacy of the past and some vision of the future. Exposure to a variety of disciplines will enable students to acquire a breadth of knowledge, to develop analytical skills and to examine fundamental questions of human experience.

- C. The Committee proposes the following catalog descriptions of the field categories:

General Education Field Categories:

1. Arts

Courses in the arts category are designed to provide an understanding of how people express through the arts their experience of the world. The arts are the visual and auditory material of culture. Courses in this field will help students approach, understand and appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of human experience.

2. Literature

The study of literature enables the student to move beyond individual experience by participating in the intellectual, emotional and spiritual experiences of others. The study of the ways literary works fuse form and content cultivates sensitivity to language and enhances awareness of our humanity.

3. Language

Language both reflects and shapes human culture. The systematic study of a foreign language or of language systems will help students become aware that people think, behave and perceive reality in ways related to the languages they speak.

4. Western Civilization

Courses in this category examine significant political, social, economic and intellectual developments of Western cultures from an historical perspective. Students will develop skills of critical inquiry into historical events and will investigate the foundations of Western thought.

5. International Studies

The examination of a culture other than their own will help students understand and value the traditions and experiences of other peoples. It will also provide them with fresh perspectives on their own assumptions and traditions.

6. Social Science

Courses in this category will introduce students to major concepts in a field of social science and to its methods of scientific inquiry. The social sciences examine the influences of social and cultural factors on individual or group behavior and values.

7. Mathematics, Logic and Computer Science

Courses in this category examine systematic ways of approaching, processing and analyzing data and ideas from different disciplines. While divergent in approach, these courses will help the student become more familiar with means of quantification and symbolic systems.

8. Natural Science and Technology

Courses in this category will introduce students to major concepts in a field of natural science or modern technology and to the methods of scientific inquiry. Students will also gain understanding of the impact and implications of natural science and technology in the modern world.

IV. Implementation

If the University Senate approves the legislation proposed in this report early in the Winter term of 1984, the following set of timetables and procedures will be followed:

A. Timetable

1. University-wide general education requirements would pertain to all FTIAC students entering Oakland in Fall 1985.
2. Immediately after Senate approval, the General Education Committee will send a set of guidelines for general education courses to departments, programs, and schools. The units submitting proposals for the inclusion of specific courses should indicate the category it deems appropriate for the course and explain how the content of the course promotes the distinctive understandings of that category. Proposals for courses to be included in the catalog of 1985-86 would be submitted to the Committee by April 15, 1984.
3. The Committee on General Education will evaluate the course proposals and announce its selection by August 15, 1984.
4. After the initial selection has been completed, the General Education Committee will function as a curriculum committee and consider proposals from academic units for additions or substitutions of General Education courses.

B. Transfer Credits

1. The Provost's office should provide community colleges with information about the new requirements of General Education and determine the timetable and manner of implementation for transfer students.
2. The Committee believes that the policy for accepting courses in transfer should be flexible; Oakland should accept a course as satisfying a particular field category as long as it meets the spirit of the catalog description of that particular category.

3. A three-credit course will satisfy a course requirement for a given category. However, the total of 32 credits in General Education must be met as well as the category requirements.

C. Approval of Courses for General Education

1. General Guidelines

All courses designated as part of General Education should provide a breadth of coverage, an introduction to the methodology of the discipline, and a writing component, where possible. In considering whether specific courses should be designated as satisfying a particular category, the Committee on General Education will weigh the appropriateness of the course as the only one an undergraduate might have in that particular field.

2. Guidelines for Specific Field Categories

Courses proposed for a given category should attempt to satisfy as many of the guidelines as possible.

Courses should:

a. Arts

- 1) Center on the criticism, theory or history of the arts of architecture, dance, film, graphic arts, music, painting, sculpture, or theatre.
- 2) Stress the value of works of art as vehicles of knowledge and experience.
- 3) Show how careful thought and systematic analysis can add to the enjoyment of the arts as well as to their understanding.

b. Literature

- 1) Encourage students' response to literary art by introducing the processes of literary analysis.
- 2) Broaden through the study of literature students' understanding of the human experience.
- 3) Provide students with a sense of the cultural, historical and biographical contexts out of which a work has grown.

c. Language

- 1) Help students understand language as an individual's central mode of expression.
- 2) Teach a second language in a way that illuminates relationships between that language and its culture.

d. Western Civilization

- 1) Introduce students to a substantial and coherent body of historical knowledge within Western culture.
- 2) Introduce students to the development of Western thought.
- 3) Introduce students to the nature of historical inquiry.

e. International Studies

- 1) Examine an important and distinctive foreign culture, one different from the common experience of persons who live in Europe and North America.
- 2) Provide students with an appreciation of customs, traditions and values different from their own.
- 3) Develop in students an understanding of how to approach the study of another culture.

f. Social Science

- 1) Introduce the major themes, concepts and findings that are central to that field.
- 2) Examine and evaluate the major methods of data collection and analysis used to investigate scientifically the central problems in that field.
- 3) Introduce the origin and breadth of the field being studied and give students some understanding of the impact of the work in that field.

g. Mathematics, Logic and Computer Science

- 1) Provide students with some understanding of the concepts and spirit of mathematics and with an appreciation of its position as an important part of human culture.
- 2) Introduce students to the abstraction of formal theories and demonstrate the power of such theories to clarify thought.

- 3) Give students some understanding of the powers and limitations of computers and of their impact upon our world.

h. Natural Science and Technology

- 1) Introduce some major concepts of a field of natural science and expose students to the experimental methods of that field.
 - 2) Illustrate relationships which exist among experimentation, models and theories.
 - 3) Give students some understanding of the impact of natural science and technology on the world.
2. On the basis of the above Guidelines, the Committee will approve a limited number of courses in each field category.
 3. Initially, some academic units might wish to present for Committee approval courses which they currently offer for General Education. However, it is hoped that units will review their current offerings and explore the possibility of restructuring them or creating new courses which have a strong General Education emphasis.
 4. The Committee will accept courses at the 300-level, if such courses satisfy the Committee's guidelines.
 5. Courses approved for General Education should be offered during spring and summer terms as well as in the evening.
 6. Students may count General Education courses toward their majors; exclusion from the major of courses in the field categories will be the responsibility of the unit authorizing the major.

GENERAL EDUCATION OF TWENTY-FIVE INSTITUTIONS

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS & PERCENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY

Bowling Green	48 39%	General Education in A&S B.A. - 5 Areas: Communication Foreign Language or Cultural Experience Math & Sciences - 3 Science courses Social Science - 6 courses (min. 3 Depts. and min. 3 in one Dept.) Arts & Humanities - 5 courses (Lit, Fine Arts, 3 others)
Credits to Graduate 122		
Central Michigan 3 Cr. Courses	39 31%	"University Program" of 30 cr. + Compet. in 3 Skills University Program = 4 Groups (Humanities; Natural Science; Social Science; Integrated and Area Studies) Each group divided into 2 subgroups; Take at least 3 Cr. in each subgroup = 24 Rest of 30 Cr. - "Wild Cards" (6 Cr.) Only 1 course from a department in groups 1-3 Competency = Satisfy by course or exam (writing, math, speaking) Departments offer courses in several groups or subgroups
Univ. Gen. Ed.		
Credits to Graduate 124		
Eastern Michigan 3 Cr. Courses	40 32%	Four Groups in "Basic Studies I. Language (8-12 Cr.): Eng. Comp., Speech, Lang. II. Sci/Math (10-12 Cr.): Lab. Sci.; 2nd Lab. OR MTH. No more than 2 courses in a department III. Soc. Sci. (9-12 Cr.): 1 Am. Gov't; 1 HST; 2nd HST OR 2 sem. seq. in Anthro., Econ, Geog., etc. IV. Humanities (11-12 Cr.): 2 courses in Eng. OR intermed. Lang.; 1 Philos/Relig; 1 Arts Each group I-III a mix of specified and elective.
Univ. Gen. Ed.		
Credits to Graduate 124		

UNIVERSITY	GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS & PERCENT	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION
Ferris	V	In Econ/Management: Need 60 Cr.
	V	9 Cr. in English (Specified)
Credits to Graduate		9 Cr. in Humanities
200		18 Cr. in Behavioral Sci. (2 Econ., 1 Psych., and Rest Unspecified)
		9 Cr. in Sci/Math
		4 Cr. in Speech
		11 Cr. From Above Courses ("Wild Cards")
		67 Different Programs - None the Same
Grand Valley	36	Even within A&S, Gen. Ed. Varies - e.g. 36 Cr. as Anthro. Major; 30 Cr. as
	30%	CHM Major.
Credits to Graduate		In Addition to 30-36 Cr. in Gen. Ed. in A&S, Requires Eng. 100 and ENG 102
120		(Both writing courses)
		Thus, Full Req. (Areas Plus Writing = 36 Cr.)
		3 Areas: *Humanities and Arts - 4 Courses;
		Math/Sci. - 2 courses;
		Soc. Sci. - 2 courses
		*(In Humanities - one course from each of 4 areas: HST, ENG., ART/MUS,
		MORAL VALUES: PHL, ENG., THA.)
Illinois -	50	44 Cr. in Gen. Ed. Plus 6 Cr. in Writing - A&S
Chicago Circle	37%	In Engin. - 192 Quarter Cr. to Grad.; 50 in Gen. Ed.
3 Cr. Q System		In Econ/MGT - 184 Quarter Cr. to Grad.; 57 in Gen. Ed.
Univ. Gen. Ed.		In All: "Chinese Menu" - 3 From Col. A OR 1 from A plus 2 from B, OR
		3 from C
		(A=Intro; B=Advanced)
Credits to Graduate		12 Cr. each in: Human; Soc. Sci., and Nat. Sci., Plus writing req.
V		No constraints on which courses count

GENERAL
EDUCATION
CREDITS &
PERCENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY

Massachusetts - Amherst Engineering Core 3 Cr. (Mostly)		5 Areas: Communications - 2 courses (RIT) Humanities - 3 courses Social Sci. - 3 courses Math - 5 courses beyond Trig. Natural Sci. - 16 Cr. min.
Univ. Gen. Ed.		
Massachusetts - Boston 3 Cr. Courses	42 34%	100 Designated Courses (Take 14 courses) 1 Yr. writing + 12 sem. courses within at least 6 of 7 areas. At least 3 Gen. Ed. courses must be at intermediate level. May take up to 3 courses in one area; no more than 2 courses in other areas. Areas: Arts; HST & Cultural St.; Phil. & Hum. St.; Social & Behavioral Sci.; Nat. Sci.; Math & Computer Lang.; For Languages. For Engineering - Complete General Ed. in Boston then transfer to Amhurst
Univ. Gen. Ed.		
Credits to Graduate 124		
North Carolina - Charlotte 3 Cr. Courses	32 26%	A&S (10 courses) In Prof. Schools, Gen. Ed. embedded in Total Program; Thus impossible to assess- but seems very little In A&S: English (6 Cr.); Nat. Sci. (8 Inc. Lab); Soc. Sci. (6 Cr.); Humanities (6 Cr.); Math OR For. Lang. (6-8 Cr.)
Michigan	30, 25% *43%	A&S (10 courses) Engin.: 55 Cr. (*31 in Math/Sci.) or 19% outside Math/Sci. Nursing Econ/MGT
Credits to Graduate 120 A&S 128 Engin.	54, 45%	In A&S (LSA) - 3 Different patterns of Gen. Ed. (complex)

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS & PERCENT	UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION
*45 25%	Michigan State *Quarter Credits	9 Cr. in Am. Thought & Lang. (oral & writing CM) Options in each of 3 areas (courses spec.) A - 3 courses in Seq. (e.g. GRM Lit) B - 1 course in each of 3 emphases (e.g. ART, HST, LANG, PHL) 4 Areas: ATL (9); ARTS & HUM (12); SCI/MTM (12); SOC. SCI. (12)
	Univ. Gen. Ed.	
	Credits to Graduate *180	
*55	Michigan Tech	Econ/MGT. *Optional and Gen. Ed. # of Credits to Grad. varies among majors Gen. Ed. not in index
	Credits to Graduate 143	
32 26%	Northern Michigan	In Addition: 4 Hrs. of Phys. Ed. Four Divisions: Composition; Humanities; Nat. Sci./Math (1 Lab Sci. required); Soc. Sci.
	Univ. Gen. Ed.	
	Credits to Graduate 124	Each Division has several special courses plus designated Dept. courses (undesig. may be substituted with Advisor's OK)
45 37.5%	Southern Illinois 3 Cr. Courses	15 Courses for Gen. Ed. Same Gen. Ed. Cr. (45) in Engin. & Econ/MGT 5 Areas (3 Diff. courses in each)
	Univ. Gen. Ed.	All Gen. Ed. courses are outside of Depts.
	Credits to Graduate 120	5 Areas: Physical Envir. & Biol. Inheritance - 9 Social Inher. & Social Respons. - 9 Insights & Appreciation - 9 Cr. Organiz. & Communication - 11 Cr. Human Health - 4 Cr. Wild Card - 3 Cr. (MTH and RHE for all)

GENERAL
EDUCATION
CREDITS &
PERCENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY

Tennessee - 31
Chattanooga 25%
Univ. Gen. Ed.
Credits to Graduate 128
Engin. Requires 134 Cr. to Grad. (25% G.E.)
One math course for everyone
Must select courses outside the major discipline
6 Categories:
A. Written Communication (6 Cr.)
B. Humanities & Fine Arts (9 Cr.)
C. Behavioral & Soc. Sci. (6 Cr.)
D. Physical & Natural Sci. (4 Cr. - Lab)
E. Math (3 Cr.)
F. Perspectives (3 Cr.)

Wayne State 24, 19%
31, 25%
Credits to Graduate 63, 50%
122 A & S 52, 41%
124 Engin.
126 Nursing
128 Econ/Mgt
AS (unclear) - 14 courses
Engin. - 8 courses
Nursing - 15 courses (9 in Sci.)
Econ/Mgt - ? courses
WSU catalog "A model of obfuscation"

Wright State 42
3 Cr. (mostly) 23%
Univ. Gen. Ed.
Credits to Graduate 183
14 Courses - Most 3 Cr.
Areas: 1. Eng. Comp. - 2 courses
2. Lab. Sci. - 3 course seq.
3. Soc. Sci. & Human. - 9 courses
Gr. 3A - Soc. Sci. - 3 courses min.
3B - Human. - 3 courses min.
3 courses "wildcards from A or B courses in the 3 areas listed"

GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS & PERCENT		UNIVERSITY	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF GENERAL EDUCATION
45 38%	University of Missouri (St. Louis) 3 Cr. Courses Univ. Gen. Ed.		Requires Basic Skills (Writing, Math) Competency in Addition to the 15 Courses in General Education 3 Areas: Humanities - 3 courses Natural Science/Math - 3 courses *Social Science - 3 courses *Must include 1 course in American History
35 29%	Western Michigan 3 Cr. (mostly) Univ. Gen. Ed.		4 Areas in Distribution Program (21 credits) Humanities and Fine Arts - 2 courses Social & Behavioral Science - 2 courses Natural Science & Math - 2 courses Non-Western World - 1 course (Only 1 course per area from any one Department; no more than 2 courses from any one Dept.; 2 courses must be at 300-400 level) Integrated Program - (14 Cr.)

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