

COMMUNITY FORUMS ON GENERAL EDUCATION AT ARIZONA'S UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University	February 11, 2003
Northern Arizona University	February 2, 2003
University of Arizona	February 14, 2003

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May 23, 2003

GENERAL EDUCATION FORUMS AT THE UNIVERSITIES
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GENERAL EDUCATION FORUMS AT THE UNIVERSITIES

A Summary Report

Background

General education in this document refers to the foundational graduation requirements for the public universities in Arizona. While these requirements vary among the universities and are identified with unique labels (General Studies, Liberal Studies), they have similar goals and represent about a quarter of the courses in an undergraduate degree. Collaboration between the universities and community colleges has led to transfer agreements by which a student at any of the Arizona community college may follow one set of guidelines to complete the majority of general education requirements for all of the universities.

While the universities invest significantly with their resources to insure quality general education programs, efforts at monitoring and improving them are ongoing. One such effort occurred in conjunction with the Arizona Board of Regents' focus on learner-centered education. Learner-centered education (LCE) is a strategy that places improvement of student learning at the center of decision-making processes and policies throughout an institution; it has been promoted by the Regents for improving student learning in general, and undergraduate learning in particular. Graduating students with adequate knowledge and skills to enter the work force is integral to LCE so the Regents asked the universities to solicit feedback from civic and business leaders regarding the role of general education in preparing students for citizenship and the workforce. As background for such discussions, a "white paper" on general education was prepared, describing an overview of the purposes, objectives and assessments of general education, relation to high school preparation and specific information about each university's program. The "white paper" is included in the appendix.

The Chief Academic Officers of each of the state universities charged a work group to develop a plan for creating a dialogue between the faculty involved in general education at the universities and community and business leaders. The group proposed a campus-based forum at each institution, culminating in a report that could provide guidance for improvements or modification to general education programs. These forums were also intended to better inform the community about the existing general education programs.

Brief Description of the Campus Forums

In February 2003, ASU, UA and NAU each held forums on their campuses focusing on general education with representatives from the institutions, community colleges, K-12, businesses and civic organizations. More than 200 people, half of whom were civic and business representatives, participated in these dialogues. Each university designed a format specific to their needs and circumstances. NAU's program was conducted in conjunction with their participation in a national initiative of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), entitled "Greater Expectations, A Campus-Community Dialogue" the purpose of which was to explore the role of a liberal education in the context of a university degree. ASU's forum asked community members to identify indicators of success for graduates and how they measure whether graduates meet these expectations. UA discussed the efficacy of their general education program and its strengths and weaknesses, resulting in suggestions for improvement. All of the forums addressed expectations of graduates. In spite of the varying structures, the dialogues covered similar and overlapping issues and from them several common themes/issues emerged.

Summary of Common Issues from General Education Forums

The forums were received very favorably at each of the universities based on feedback by the participants, and many expressed the desire for continued opportunities for dialogue. The brief time (2-3 hours) was identified as one limitation and did preclude an in-depth discussion of the curricular elements of general education. Some community participants, however, didn't necessarily feel they could address those. As a result, the discussions and the predominant themes that emerged focused on practical or useable skills and behaviors employers need in the work place. The recommendations and comments were not necessarily guided by how universities define general education, but more by what the public

expects from the graduates of their public universities. These five somewhat overlapping key themes were common across the forums.

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.**

The ability for graduates to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, draw conclusions, provide solutions and develop alternatives was the top skill identified by the participants. Effective problem solving is integral to critical thinking and skills in math and quantitative reasoning support this development. In addition, requiring a capstone course, especially in the major, was another recommendation which should help students develop skills in analysis, integration and problem solving.

- **Communication Skills**

Employers agree that effective speaking, listening, and writing abilities are also required for all graduates. Knowledge of the role of technology and the ability to use it are considered important components of good communication skills. Persuasive skills in presenting an argument, speaking well without notes were also noted. These skills undergird all the others noted here.

- **Social Adaptability and Team Work**

Students need to develop skills for working with others within and across disciplines, among a variety of individuals and groups. To do so requires flexibility, the ability to adapt socially and to understand change in an organization.

- **Ethics and Civic Responsibility**

Community participants were in agreement that universities need to instill ethical and professional behavior and a sense of civic responsibility in their students. Ethics courses or courses in which ethics is a component, service learning, internships or community service projects were listed as examples of how to address these issues. An “involvement transcript” would be useful for prospective employers.

- **Diversity, multicultural and international understanding**

Graduates need the skills for relating across cultures, domestically and internationally, to be successful. The skills were also seen as critical to functioning in teams in today’s work force and a key element of social adaptability. Proficiency in languages, opportunities for global experience and purposefully designed learning activities to foster cross-cultural communication and team interaction were listed as ways to promote and develop these abilities.

Goals and expected outcomes of general education need to be clearly articulated and communicated to faculty and students. Closer ties with the K-12 system should be fostered to insure that students are better prepared to enter the university. There also needs to be a better link between general education courses and professional/major courses. More interdisciplinary courses could address this link and promote increased integration of knowledge.

Future Directions

This summary report will be provided to each university so the benefits of each forum will be available system wide. Each university describes next steps for utilizing the recommendations in the following reports. Examples include:

- Revising ASU’s General Studies guidelines to encourage/allow greater depth and focus in approved courses while retaining the breadth of experience and exploration that the current program provides
- Focused discussions with leadership at NAU on educational goals, and a day long forum addressing the integration of educational goals with practical learning experiences
- Creating a General Education Advisory Committee, including non-university participants from the forum.

OVERVIEW

The Arizona State University General Studies Forum met at the Downtown Center on February 11, 2003 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Forty two individuals representing business and community leaders, faculty, advisors, academic professionals and members of ABOR staff participated in the discussion.

Dr. David Schwalm, vice provost and dean of East College at ASU East, provided introductory comments on the general goals and purposes of general studies in American higher education and shared an overview of ASU's current General Studies program. All participants were then asked to share memories from their own undergraduate education experiences—positive and negative. This served as an icebreaker but also suggested potential areas for exploration in the table discussions that followed.

Participants worked in small groups of 6-8 and addressed two questions:

1. What are your expectations of university graduates?
2. What are the indicators of success? How do you (external constituencies) measure whether graduates meet your expectations?

It was a rich and far ranging discussion session with different groups focusing on different approaches to the questions. The attached materials capture the discussions and key points raised at each table.

These materials will be shared with the appropriate campus committees and senior administrators. They will serve to frame discussions and focus a dialogue for reexamining and improving our current approach to General Studies. For example: One suggestion has been to create alternative templates that would package current General Studies courses in a way to provide greater depth and emphasis in a focused area while retaining the breadth of experience and exploration that the current program provides. The goal of the focused attention on General Studies will be to maintain a fully articulated General Studies program across all ASU campuses and our Community College partners, to provide greater focus and value to the students' General Studies experience and to reduce redundancy or complexity wherever it is found.

ASU General Studies Forum

When: Tuesday, February 11, 2003

Where: ASU Downtown Center

Attendance: 41

Attendees from outside ASU included business and community representatives:

Carol Crockett	Arizona Women's Education & Employment
Carol DenHerder	Identity Marketing
Tonya Drake	ABOR
Bill Guerriero	Chandler-Gilbert Community College
Kate Dillon Hogan	Maricopa Community College District
Stephanie Jacobson	ABOR
Yvonne Merrill	University of Arizona
Elaine Morrison	ASU East Advisory Committee
Caroline Newsom	SELF Employment Loan Fund
Don Richardson	Maricopa Community College District-ASU General Studies Council
Timothy Rowland	Rowland Carmichael Advisors, Inc.
Marie Sullivan	Arizona Women's Education & Employment
Manny Wong	Asian American Times

The remainder was a broad representation of faculty and staff from Main, East and West:

Gaylene Armstrong	ASU West-Administration of Justice
David Burstein	Main Campus General Studies Council
Maria Cardelle-Elawar	ASU West-Education Graduate Studies
Gregory Castle	Chair, Main Campus General Studies Council
Gerry Corey	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Emily Cutrer	ASU West-Arts and Sciences
Fernando Delgado	ASU West-Communication Studies
Kay Faris	Carey School of Business
Zoila Gamero de Tovar	General Studies Council/Academic Articulation
Julie Givans	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Reynaldo Gomez	Main Campus General Studies Council
Marilyn Hart	ASU-College of Engineering & Applied Sciences
Cheryl Herrera	College of Public Programs
Roger Hutt	ASU East-General Studies Council
Carolyn Johnson	ASU West-Library
Ruth Jones	ASU Main Academic Affairs
Kate Lehman	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Ian Moulton	ASU West-American Studies
Mort Munk	Past Academic Senate President
Lakshmi Munukutla	ASU East-College of Technology and Applied Sciences
Jose Nanez	ASU West-Social and Behavioral Sciences
Shelly Potts	Division of Undergraduate Academic Services
Julie Ramsden	ASU West-Academic Affairs
David Schwalm	ASU East-Academic Affairs
Mark Searle	ASU West-Academic Affairs
Casey Self	Division of Undergraduate Academic Services
Colleen Stitt	College of Engineering & Applied Sciences
Sandra Voller	Main Campus General Studies Council

Focus of the afternoon was on:

1. What are the expectations (of employers and community members) of university graduates?
2. How do you measure how successful the University has been in meeting these expectations?

Summary of Responses to the General Questions Raised at the Forum

1. What are the expectations (of employers and community members) of university graduates?

Responses:

1. Critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, application)
2. Respect of others (diversity/global awareness)
3. Teamwork
4. Civic responsibility
5. Professionalism
6. Ethics
7. Meaningful communication skills
8. Technically competent
9. Economic literacy (personal financial management skills)
10. Flexibility

2. How do you measure how successful the University has been in meeting these expectations?

Responses:

- Respect of others (diversity/global awareness)
 - Surveys/peer evaluations
 - Bilingual employees
 - Study abroad
 - Graduating Senior Survey
 - Exams
- Civic responsibility
 - Indicate community service on an “involvement transcript”
- Professionalism/ethics
 - Show up to class on time
 - Keep attendance and persistence records
 - Require capstone projects to include an ethics component
- Meaningful communication skills
 - Require one course with 50% grade based on oral skills
- Economic literacy
 - Projects/capstone
 - Exit polls

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
Forum On General Education

Northern Arizona University held its general education forum entitled Greater Expectations, a Campus-Community Dialogue, on February 2, 2003. This event was held in cooperation with the Arizona Board of Regents and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Approximately 450 people were invited from across the state with over 130 people attending. Attendees included approximately 50 NAU faculty and staff, 35 business representatives and 45 community leaders in the areas of government, K-12 education, community colleges and non-profit organizations. A list of the non-NAU participants is attached.

The afternoon consisted of a keynote speech by Dr. Carol Schneider, president of the AAC&U, followed by round table discussions and panel discussions. Round table topics included

- What are the most important outcomes of a college education in the 21st century?
- What changes are needed in campus practice to address the aims of a liberal education?
- Is the educational system in Arizona adequately preparing our diverse student population for higher education and eventual employment?

The recommendations of the roundtable discussions are summarized in an attachment.

Panelists, which included employers and K-12 and community college educators, addressed the question:

- How can the community partner with higher educational institutions to assure the learning needs of northern Arizona and the state are met?

Some important conclusions from the event include:

1. We are in an era of greater expectations for both what needs to be learned in college and the number of people that need to be educated, yet students' accomplishments in college are too limited to prepare them adequately for personal or professional success.
2. Clear educational goals must be established and student outcomes must be assessed to assure all students receive a high quality education.
3. Students need both a practical and a liberal (e.g. general) education to assure they have the skills, knowledge and personal responsibility to contribute effectively to society.
4. Higher education needs to partner with K-12 and the community to assure students enter college motivated and prepared for college level work.
5. NAU and higher education in general must improve its effectiveness in educating a diverse population.

Outcomes of the Dialogue include:

- A comprehensive report of the Dialogue will be distributed to the campus.
- A team of five faculty and administrators will attend the Greater Expectations Institute in June to develop a strategy for the campus to define explicit and assessable educational goals that transcend the boundaries of general education and the majors using insights from the general education forum and the Greater Expectations report.
- In August, the Service Professionals will sponsor a day-long forum to integrate NAU's educational goals with practical learning experiences students gain in internships and campus employment.
- A member of the Arizona Board of Regents staff (Gretchen Schmidt) will attend the AAC&U in May to discuss state-level general education and "Greater Expectations."
- More focused discussions will be held with the campus leadership (chairs, deans, faculty senate) regarding targeted issues raised at this forum, especially those related to articulating educational goals that transcend general education and the major, and issues related to the preparation and characteristics of our entering freshmen.

**Roundtable Recommendations
AAC&U Campus Community Dialogue
Northern Arizona University**

What are the most important outcomes of a college education in the 21st century?

- Students must develop CRITICAL THINKING skills
 - Ability to identify and describe problems
 - Ability to uncover, in a logical fashion, the root cause of a problem
 - Ability to generate alternative solutions to a problem
 - Ability to identify and describe the consequences of each alternative
 - Ability to effectively argue for a particular alternative
- COMMUNICATION skills: speaking effectively to a group, effective listening, reading, writing, use of technology, numeracy
- BROAD KNOWLEDGE (aesthetics, humanistic inquiry, sciences, social/political structures, foundations of western civilization, identities/histories of other cultures)
- CHARACTER/values (responsibility; civility, ethical behavior)
- Students need to learn how to learn and how to find information. Therefore we need to create a PERPETUAL LEARNER using a variety of active modes of instruction
- The ability to work within a MULTICULTURAL community and the larger global world.
 - Ability to understand multiple cultures
 - Overseas/global experience
- Intellectual and practical SKILLS (communication, quantitative reasoning, evaluate information, work within complex systems and with diverse groups, translate knowledge into judgment into action)
- Students need the ability to work productively in teams
 - Within and across “disciplines”
 - With a variety of individuals (race, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender, age)
 - We must equip students with effective NEGOTIATION SKILLS
- “CHANGE AGENT” skills: Critical thinking + Communication + Anticipation
 - Ability to anticipate potential problems
 - Ability to identify and describe such problems
 - Ability to analyze the problem, develop alternative solutions, and determine the consequences of each alternative
 - Ability to explain the process
 - Ability to Effectively argue for a given alternative
- Develop alternative MODES OF THINKING: *e.g.* scientific, aesthetic, quantitative, etc.

What changes are needed in campus practice (teaching and learning practices, curriculum, organizational structure, and innovations) to address the aims of a liberal education?

- The campus should utilize a critical perspective to examine its current policies and practices (“reexamine what we think we do and how we do it”).
- There needs to be a cultural change on campus involving a shift to a focus on competency-based education.
- Review the structure of faculty expectations; rewards, and workloads need to be reconsidered in light of agreed upon goals for the institution.
- Disciplinary and other curricula should be evaluated with attention to infusion of capability developing experiences and application of knowledge and skills to real world problems of complexity (vs. ideal cases).
- The university should encourage language education and development of proficiency in multiple languages.
- Campus life and academic programs should provide students with opportunities for meaningful interaction with diverse students. This could be achieved, in part, through purposeful design of learning activities.
- Diversity education and experiences should be infused throughout the curriculum to ensure that the curriculum speaks to the experiences of a wide range of social and cultural groups.

- Special note was made of the value of age diversity on campus and how institutional policies create barriers to the enrollment of older students from our local community (e.g., requirement of high school transcripts for admission).
- Strengthen service learning and internship programs. Some advocated that there be a service-learning requirement for all NAU students.
- Remove the artificial split between professional programs and liberal studies education. We should offer more interdisciplinary courses. NAU should develop a full set of learning outcomes embraced by all units on campus.
- Increase assessment of competencies in academic units related to general education learning outcomes.
- Seek resources to support smaller classes that enable personalized feedback and mentoring of students, especially in writing and thinking skill development.

Is the educational system in Arizona adequately preparing our diverse student population for higher education and eventual employment?

- The first focus was on “adequate preparation” for higher education. One participant, a former teacher in secondary education in two different states, argued that the system does NOT prepare students. Kids have changed a lot, especially with respect to their motivation to learn, which is now “less apparent”. This has many implications--More in-class preparation is needed; more practical experience for teachers is needed; the bureaucracy takes teachers away from “teaching-learning”; a lot of teaching to new mandated “tests”, less teaching to excite students about the subjects; tracking has taken many turns and caused confusion. RESULT---students can’t read, write or do math when they graduate, even if they pass the “tests”. Assessment testing only providing info. Re. milestones reached, but no real attempt to correct weaknesses.
- BARRIERS to good education are broad and generally those of economics, politics and culture. Fundamental issues include parental interest (or lack of), motivation, socio-economic systemic structures, lack of emphasis at all levels (political, for example) on providing quality education; and the cultural distractions to quality education including music, video, tv, and most unfortunately, drugs) are enormous.
- Should college education be OPEN TO ALL, given these circumstances? Much diversity of response to this one. All the way from make it tougher to enter to let them enter in order to insure retention rates--- to let them enter with simple passing grades from high school, but don’t let them pass up the line to graduation unless they meet certain tough standards at the college level.

Suggested solutions:

- Clearer communications to High Schools, etc. re. college-level expectations and feedback to specific schools re.the abilities of their graduates who come to NAU.
- Clarify to many levels in the “system” that a degree is a “license to learn” and certification that the holder is “ready to learn” and understands the game.
- Define “successful college education” better, indicating aspects of process that are as important as those of content of that education.
- Add more practical experience to college education (leadership, ethics, team-building, and problem-solving, for example)
- Establish learning communities in elementary schools to address family background problems so as to insure maintenance of pipeline
- Increase pipeline programs linking 9-12 and higher education (summer programs, HS outreach, college preparation programs)
- More mentoring, shadowing and internship opportunities are needed to promote links between a college education and the work place.
- More dialogue between parents, students, business leaders, community leaders, K-16 teachers across all curriculums.

FORUM PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS				COMPANY OR DEPARTMENT
Dr.	Chuck	Anderson	Vice President, Air-to-Air Missiles	Raytheon Company
Dr.	Jim	Apperson	President & CEO	Arizona Chamber of Commerce
Ms.	Liz	Archuleta	Coconino County Board of Supervisors	
Ms.	Patty	Ashbrook	Controller	
Dr.	Paul	Babbitt	Coconino County Board of Supervisors	
Mr.	Art	Babbott		City Council
Ms.	Louise	Benson	Chairperson	Hualapai Tribe
Mr.	Eldon	Bills	President	Raymond Educational Foundation
Dr.	Kerry	Blume	Executive Director	United Way
Mr.	Carmen	Bradley	Chairperson	Kaibab-Paiute Tribe
Ms.	Andrea	Bravo	Director	Hualapai Tribe
Dr.	Tom	Browning	President/Executive Director	Greater Phoenix Leadership
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Dr.	Pat	Carlin		
Dr.	Steve	Carlson	CEO	Flagstaff Medical Center
Ms.	Agnes	Chamberlain	Chairman	Havasupai Tribe
Dr.	David	Chambers	President	Grand Canyon Railway
Dr.	Joe	Coyle		Raytheon
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Mr.	John	Dille		Federated Media
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Mr.	Jim	Dykes		W.L. Gore and Associates, Inc.
Mr.	Robert	Early	Editor	Arizona Highways
Mr.	Terry	Enos	Chairperson	Ak-Chin Indian Community
Mr.	Booker	Evans		Quarles and Brady, Streich, Lang LLP
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Mr.	Joe	Haughey		City Council
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Mr.	Waylon	Honga	Chief Executive Officer	Hualapai Tribe
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Mr.	LaVelle	McCoy		McCoy Motors, Inc.
Mr.	Bill	McGrath		JC Penney
Ms.	Stephanie	McKinney	President/CEO	Greater Flagstaff Economic Council
Mr.	Rick	Meyers		Southern Arizona Leadership Council
Rep.	Tom	O'Halleran		
Mr.	Paul	Olson	Managing Officer	Wells Fargo Bank, Arizona

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS				COMPANY OR DEPARTMENT
Dr.	Doug	Parker	Chairman, President & CEO	America West Airlines
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Dr.	John	Russell	President	Coconino Federal Credit Union
Mr.	Brad	Ryan		Arizona Public Service, Northeastern Division
Mr.	Greg	Sampson		Bank of America
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Dr.	Carol	Geary Schneider	President	AAC & U
Mr.	James	Schroeder		
Mr.	Libby	Silva		City Council
Mr.	Dave	Snyder	Manager	Arizona Central Credit Union
Ms.	Joy	Staveley		Canyoners, Inc.
Dr.	Robert	Sucharski	Director	United States Geological Survey
Agent	Charlene	Thorton	Special Agent in Charge	FBI-Phoenix
Mr.	Christopher	Todd	Principal Systems Engineer	Raytheon Company
Mr.	Gary	Tooker		
Mr.	Robert	Valencia	Chairperson	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Ms.	Ora Lee	Valisto	Director	Fort Yuma -Quechan Tribe
Mr.	Al	White		City Council
Dr.	David	Wilcox	City Manager	
Dr.	Louise	Yellowman	County County Board of Supervisors	
Mr.	Robert	Zierk		
Ms.	Binnie	Zink		

TOTAL = 81

EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPANTS				COMPANY OR DEPARTMENT
Dr.	Ken	Atwater	President	South Mountain Community College
Dr.	Larry	Bramblett	Superintendent	Flagstaff Unified School District
Dr.	Gregory	Castle	General Education Committee	Arizona State University
Dr.	Arthur	DeCabooter	President	Scottsdale Community College
Dr.	Jonathan	Fink		ASU Office of Vice Provost for Research
Mr.	Terry	Forthun	President	Arizona Federation of Teachers
Dr.	Corina	Gardea	President	Phoenix College
Dr.	Eugene	Gilbert	President	GateWay Community College
Dr.	David	Harris	Assistant Executive Director	ABOR
Dr.	Thomas	Horne	State Superintendent of Public Instruction	
Ms.	Carolyn	Hughes	Teacher	Sechrist Elementary School
Ms.	Beverly	Hurley	Principal	Flagstaff High School
Dr.	Ruth	Jones	Vice Provost	Arizona State University
Dr.	Thomas	Jordan	President	Coconino Community College
Ms.	Penny	Kotterman	President	Arizona Education Association
Dr.	Gina	Kranitz	President	Paradise Valley Community College
Dr.	Mark	Luprecht	Faculty Associate, Undergraduate Education	University of Arizona
Dr.	Cassandra	Manuelito-Kerkvliet	President	Dine College
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Dr.	Harold	Porter	President	Arizona School Administrators
Dr.	Dick	Powell		University of Arizona
Dr.	Phil	Randolph	President	Glendale Community College
Dr.	Randy	Richardson	Asst. Vice President for Undergraduate Education	University of Arizona
Mrs.	Ute	Salisbury	Principal	Sinagua High School
Dr.	Pam	Santesteban	Asst. Superintendent for Instruction	Madison School District

TOTAL = 26

I. 21st Century General Education

Attendees from the Business and Civic Community

1. Fred Boice, Regent, Boice Financial Company
2. Susan Butler, Partner, Accenture
3. Sharon Collins, Associate Superintendent, Southern Arizona Office, Department of Education
4. Neal Eckel, Esq., Durrazo and Eckel, P.C.
5. James Haleem, Vice President Retired, Motorola
6. Joseph Honick, President, GMA/International Ltd.
7. Carolyn Kemmeries, TUSD Program Director Retired, Tucson Unified School District
8. Nathan Knutt, Eller College alumni and College of Law student
9. Barbara Levy, Executive Director, Southern Arizona Non-Profits Association
10. Janet Marcotte, Executive Director, YWCA of Tucson
11. Sherri Neasham, Chief Executive Officer, FinanCenter Inc.
12. Christina Palacios, Regent, Southwest Gas Company
13. Jennie Scott, Coordinator of Advising and Counseling, Pima Community College
14. Sally Trattner, Executive Director, Educational Enrichment Foundation
15. Steve Weathers, President and Chief Executive Officer, Greater Tucson Economic Council

II. Organization

The Forum took place on February 14, 2003. Two weeks before the Forum took place, participants were sent an agenda and three short readings: a summary of the UA General Education Program, and two excerpts from publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (“Spanning the Chasm” and “Greater Expectations”). The Forum was held in the Special Collections Conference Room of the UA Main Library from 1:30-5:00 p.m. Randall M. Richardson, UA Vice President of Undergraduate Education, facilitated the meeting. A total of 29 people participated; 14 affiliated with the UA, and 15 from the larger community. The Forum was divided into two sessions. There were five roundtables, each consisting of five to six participants, including a member of the UA General Education Committee.

In the first session, the roundtables considered which skills, values and knowledge a college graduate should have for success in life after college. These responses were written onto flip charts, and then shared with and discussed by the entire group.

During an intermission in the discussions, UA Provost George Davis spoke briefly concerning the need for skills taught in General Education to be allied with specialized knowledge for long-term career success. He expressed the desire of the UA Administration for a review and possible reform of the current General Education structure. There followed a short presentation by the Chair of the University-wide General Education Committee, Hal Larson, who summarized the structure and extent of General Education and its offerings.

The second half of the Forum began with roundtable discussions to consider the efficacy of the current UA General Education Program in helping to train desirable employees and leaders. Members of the UA General Education Committee answered questions concerning the structure and operation of the Program. More specifically, the discussion focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the Program. These responses were once again presented to and discussed by the entire group.

The Forum concluded with a call from Vice President Richardson for volunteers from the business and civic community to serve on a General Education Advisory Committee. Volunteers included Fred Boice, Susan Butler, Sharon Collins, Neal Eckel, James Haleem, Joseph Honick, Carolyn Kemmeries, Janet Marcotte, and Jennie Scott.

III. Summary of Responses

The first question asked of the participants was “*Which skills, values, and knowledge should a college graduate possess for success in life after college?*” The following represents observations that were made repeatedly by roundtables and in plenary discussion.

Skills:

- Ability to think critically: to access, question, and evaluate information, and to solve problems
- Ability to integrate knowledge
- Ability to communicate clearly in writing
- Ability to communicate verbally, without a script
- Ability to understand technology and its role in society
- Ability to understand change and to be flexible
- Ability to process, retain, record, and synthesize information
- Ability to work as part of a team; social adaptability
- Ability to lead; self-direction/motivation

Values:

- Integrity
- Curiosity
- Love of learning
- Professionalism
- Appreciation of various cultures
- Respect for standards (rigor)
- Sense of civic responsibility

Knowledge:

- A sense of history; an understanding of society
- Understanding what is ‘in the box’; shared intellectual heritage
- Experience of the fine arts

The second question asked of the participants was “*How well does the University-wide General Education Program at the UA address the observations and goals suggested by the earlier discussion? How could we do better?*” The following represents observations that were made by roundtables and in plenary discussion.

Weaknesses of the Current Program:

- The name itself is unexciting/unoriginal; what is special about UA General Education?
- Unclear academic goals; lack of specific set of things everyone should know
- Lack of choices for students; students not knowing the possibilities open to them
- Lack of class availability (or at least undocumented availability)
- Lack of classes for employed students (evening, weekend)
- Class size; questions as to whether large classes can be effective

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Practical applications for general education classes (internships/partnerships); link to real-world experience
- K-20 articulation
- Increase mentoring
- Make links between general education and the majors
- Add a first-year experience class (to include institution-wide orientation, introduction to academic resources, etc.)
- Include more student self-assessment
- Improved marketing. Program needs to be more consistent and prominent to stimulate both students and faculty

IV. Conclusion and Evaluation

Participants voiced interest about whether and how their input would be utilized by the UA. Vice President Richardson responded by suggesting that interested parties could continue the dialogue by joining a General Education Advisory Committee to be fully constituted in the near future. Nine of the non-university participants volunteered to join. The Vice President noted that a summary of the Forum's discussions and suggestions would be included in a General Education Review document that was currently being composed by members of the General Education Committee. This publication will act as a backdrop for future discussion and for possible reform of the UA General Education Program.

A questionnaire was mailed to non-university participants shortly after the Forum. Of the fourteen attendees, nine responded. The organization of the meeting was, for the most part, applauded, and *all* respondents saw the Forum as time well spent. There was a mixed response concerning the discussions themselves. There was a sense that Part Two was made difficult by the need to master and assess the General Education Program on rather short notice. Consequently, the most repeated response was that time was too short, and/or that a future forum be held to continue the discussion. There was a shared sense that the questions discussed were significant, and that community input was an important and progressive step.

Appendix A

**GENERAL EDUCATION IN
ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

A white paper prepared by the Chief Academic Officers of
Arizona State University
Northern Arizona University
University of Arizona

Presented to the Learner-Centered Education Team
of the Arizona Board of Regents

September 24, 2001

General Education in Arizona's Public Universities Executive Summary

This white paper promotes continuing dialogue among faculty of Arizona's three public universities concerning the goals and objectives of general education, and invites input from business and civic leaders who will work with the graduates of the 21st century.

Arizona's public universities are working together to ensure that all graduates have the skills and habits needed for success in business and civic life. They have embraced the concept of Learner-Centered Education (sometimes called student-centered education or problem-based learning) because it emphasizes the direct involvement of students in their own education. Students at all three universities develop transferable skills, prepare for lifelong learning, and gain understanding of important life skills:

- *The value of teamwork.*
- *The uses of information technology.*
- *The importance of a critical but receptive response to information.*
- *The variety of learning styles: independent, collaborative, and interactive.*

General Education (also called General Studies or Liberal Studies) helps students to think critically and creatively. It ensures that students will have breadth as well as depth in their university degree program. In a general education program, students develop

- Learning skills that lead to proficiency in language and mathematics.
- Study areas that expose them to the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities.
- Awareness areas that help them deal with diversity in the culture, technology, and the global environment.

Interdisciplinary courses in general education also introduce students to the methods of academic disciplines. Such courses help them to select an appropriate academic major and to identify career options. The skills, areas, and themes learned in general education extend into the major degree program, as do the techniques of learner-centered education.

Assessment provides information on student achievement and enables faculty to improve major degree programs. Assessment activities include

- Placement tests.
- Published learning outcomes.
- Major milestones such as portfolios, capstone courses, and senior profile exams.
- Focus groups and exit interviews of majors.
- Student and alumni surveys.
- The Undergraduate Consolidated Accountability Report (UCAR), compiled annually for the Arizona Board of Regents.

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General Education in Arizona's Public Universities

Throughout this paper, we use the generic term "general education" for the foundational graduation requirements for all three Arizona universities, and we will include institutional labels when discussing aspects of these requirements which are unique. The goal of this paper is then to describe central elements of our general education programs, including efforts to embed the principles of Learner-Centered Education. The paper is intended as an initial effort to join faculty on the three universities in a continuing dialogue on goals and objectives for general education requirements. It is also intended to serve as a framework for discussions with business and civic leaders from whom we welcome input on the relative success our graduation requirements have in producing university graduates equipped to meet Arizona's workforce needs as we begin the 21st century.

What is the purpose of general education?

The three Arizona universities are committed to ensuring that our graduates are fully prepared for success in business, social and civic life. One component of this preparation is in-depth knowledge in a particular academic or professional discipline, as represented by the major and program requirements for graduation. However, the three universities also believe that there is a common core of principles, concepts and ideas which should be represented in any high quality undergraduate degree program. This core is known by different names on the three campuses: General Studies (ASU), Liberal Studies (NAU) and General Education (UA), but the goals and themes for these foundational requirements have much in common. Each begins with the premise that all university graduates should be broadly educated, and that university study should help students to develop intellectual skills that are essential for success in life. General education requirements should provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the breadth of human knowledge through exposure to the arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences. General education requirements should help students to develop intellectual habits and personal attitudes that prepare them to become productive members of society and to excel in their chosen pursuits. General education requirements should help students to think critically and to deal with complexity.

The learner-centered approach

The Arizona Board of Regents developed a useful definition of Learner-Centered Education:

A strategy of education that places improvement of student learning at the center of decision-making processes and policies at all levels of the institution. It is characterized by the use of clear, measurable goals and student outcomes, and the direct involvement of learners in activities that produce deeper understanding of the content through the development of skills that are readily transferable to life and work. An additional central goal is to prepare self-directed learners who can continue learning beyond their formal education.

This definition is entirely consistent with the principles of general education and serves to establish system-wide language for dialogue among the universities and their undergraduate programs. Key items in the vocabulary include:

- Measurable goals and outcomes. All three universities are committed to having learning outcomes and assessment plans published for all programs. The assessment of learning outcomes will be reviewed during each undergraduate degree program's seventh-year Academic Program Review.
- Direct involvement of learners. Students at all three Arizona universities are asked to assume responsibility for their own education. Learner-centered education emphasizes the direct involvement of students in their education, so that they can develop transferable skills and prepare for lifelong learning.

- Transferable skills. Because university graduates are likely to change careers at least once, all three universities recognize the importance of skills that can be transferred from one career to another. In addition to the skill sets listed below, these skills also include the ability to work in teams, to give and use constructive criticism, and to follow projects to completion.
- Preparation for self-directed learning. Learning how to learn is the most transferable of skills that students develop. All three universities provide academic experiences and knowledge in life, language, culture, technology and business which form a basis for life-long learning.

General education courses follow instructional guidelines set by the faculty committees that oversee the programs at the three Arizona universities. These guidelines promote important life skills that will carry over into students' future experiences, including:

- The value of teamwork,
- The use of information technology,
- The importance of a critical but receptive response to information
- The variety of learning styles: independent, collaborative, and interactive.

Two flowcharts are attached as appendices. The first provides a pictorial description of the relationship between high school preparation (entrance requirements) and the universities' general studies requirements and how these two levels flow into major and program requirements. The second flowchart provides a parallel perspective on students who enter as transfer students from the Arizona community college system.

Information technology occupies a unique position among these life skills because its use enhances and accelerates the development of the others. Information technology creates an array of avenues for exploration, collaboration, and learning. Listservs, e-mail and software like WebCT, for example, create alternative environments within which people can work and learn together. "Electronic" meetings are used to supplement face-to-face meetings, increasing the opportunities to collaborate on projects. This important enhancement role for information technology also extends to the learning skills, study areas, and awareness areas discussed later in the paper.

What do students learn in general education?

Learning Skills

Critical learning skills provide the foundation of higher education. They include proficiency in (1) the use of language (critical reading, effective writing and speaking and, in some programs, proficiency in a second language) and (2) in mathematics and quantitative methods (the ability to read quantitative information in everyday life and to present it with understanding). These most basic university courses have significant and clearly defined learning outcomes:

After completing the university requirement in English composition, students should be able to

- read and summarize critical arguments
- organize information coherently
- choose language and format appropriate for different audiences
- revise their writing effectively

After completing the university requirement in a second language, students should be able to

- read and write the language at a basic level of proficiency
- understand and speak it
- recognize the major cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions of the regions where the language is used

After completing the university requirement in mathematics and science, students should be able to

- analyze and synthesize data
- apply data to new and unfamiliar situations
- recognize different interpretations of given principles

Throughout the general education programs, students take a range of courses where they can hone these skills and other important skills such as reading, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning.

Study areas

Intellectual skills developed in the context of general education turn into habits of mind when applied in a series of courses, reflecting the breadth of contemporary knowledge. The study of language develops the skills of verbal reasoning necessary for serious study of the humanities and the social sciences and fine arts. The study of mathematics develops the skills of quantitative understanding and reasoning needed in the study of business, engineering, computer science, and the physical and social sciences. In developing general education curricula, the three universities have recognized the traditional organization of knowledge into disciplines, but they have encouraged interdisciplinary learning.

Areas of study chosen to satisfy general studies requirements have the overall goal of fostering intellectual curiosity, habits of investigation, and the breadth of general knowledge that will admit the learner to full participation in the discussions vital to his or her business and social setting. They also have more specific learning outcomes:

Courses in the Arts and Humanities involve students in the study of the human condition through philosophical inquiry and analysis of the various forms of creative expression. After completing course work in the Arts and Humanities, students will be able to

- identify references and allusions to the periods, ideas, people, artifacts, and events generally felt to have been important in the past
- identify and define their own world view,
- compare and contrast their world view with other world views, and through written and oral communication, and present and defend their world view
- appreciate the art, history, politics, and philosophies of cultures other than their own, including non-western cultures
- analyze how perceptions, values, beliefs, and customs influence individual and societal behavior and to use these analyses before judging

Courses in the Social Sciences engage students in the study of the patterns that characterize the history of human communities, the relationships between the psychological, social, cultural and political components of human communities, and dynamics of human behavior in varied contexts. After completing course work in the Social Sciences, students will be able to

- understand more clearly issues of self-identity, social difference and social status, and the effects of major institutions on individual experiences
- demonstrate knowledge of the formal and informal structures and processes that make social systems, governments, and economies work
- have an informed opinion about socio-cultural problems and issues, which can be expressed orally or in writing, and based on knowledge about social, cultural, political, economic, philosophical, and religious theory
- demonstrate a well developed critical faculty for distinguishing among the various theoretical and ideological interpretations of world events as they are presented in the media

Courses in the Natural Sciences increase students' knowledge about the natural world. After completing course work in the Natural Sciences, students will be able to

- understand the nature and application of physical and /or biological science
- apply ideas and processes beyond the classroom
- recognize the complexity of many scientific issues
- design experiments, generating and analyzing actual data, using abstract reasoning to interpret these, formulating and testing hypotheses with scientific rigor
- speak and write about scientific knowledge
- appreciate the relative scale of objects, rates of change, linear and nonlinear growth
- present data in tables, graphs and charts as well as performing appropriate mathematical calculations and data analysis
- read and understand scientific literature from popular sources such as magazines and newspapers

Awareness areas

Each of the three Arizona universities has awareness areas in their respective general education requirements, best stated in the local language.

Arizona State University:

- Cultural diversity in the United States
- Global awareness
- Historical awareness

Northern Arizona University:

- Understanding the implications of technology
- Valuing the diversity of human experience
- Environmental consciousness

University of Arizona:

- Gender, race, ethnicity, or class
- Non-Western civilization

General education courses may address more than one theme or may combine a theme and a subject area. In conjunction with the subject areas, these awareness areas help to ensure a broad perspective that frees students to appreciate diversity and change and to deal with differences.

How is general education linked to students' subsequent work?

Although designed for the general undergraduate population, general education courses introduce students to the methods of different academic disciplines as well as to interdisciplinary thinking. As a consequence, general education requirements help students to make prudent choices for major and/or minor field of study.

All three universities require approximately 35 credit hours of course work in General Education—approximately 12 courses, equivalent to the work required to earn the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) from an Arizona community college. The exact number of units that a student takes will vary, according to (1) placement scores on entrance exams; (2) credit awarded for Advanced Placement courses or dual-enrollment courses taken in high school, and (3) specific requirements associated with the major. Typically, students devote much of the first four semesters, i.e., the lower-division experience, to work in general education. Their upper-division work is then devoted to the major degree program or programs, sometimes to a minor, and also to elective courses outside the major.

Each Arizona university makes some provision for continued attention to general education beyond the lower division. Arizona State University requires two courses within its general education requirement be at the upper division level and offers additional upper-division courses in selected areas of their General Studies program. Northern Arizona University requires a junior-level writing course as well as a senior capstone course in each major, so that the skills acquired in general education continue through the four-year curriculum. The University of Arizona requires at least one writing-emphasis course in each major, and allows students to take approved courses within the major or minor to meet the thematic requirement in non-western civilization or in gender, race, ethnicity, or class.

How is student learning assessed?

All three Arizona universities have extensive efforts underway to provide for the assessment of academic programs. Indeed assessment is a primary concern with regional accrediting agencies like the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Assessment refers to the evaluation of academic programs through an examination of student learning within those programs.

Furthermore, such assessment is formative in nature, as the results are fed back into programs and used to improve them. A common framework guides the universities' assessment efforts:

1. Specify learning outcomes. This is a collaborative process involving faculty from across the academic disciplines represented in general education and spanning the array of skills, areas and themes. Some of these outcomes are described earlier in this paper.
2. Establish measurement methods. Measurement is tailored to general education skills, areas and themes; meets technical standards of reliability and validity; and is cost effective.
3. Do the assessment. Whenever possible, assessment is designed to be part of the learning and teaching processes, rather than to intrude in disruptive ways upon students and faculty.
4. Use results for program improvement. Feedback mechanisms are created to ensure that assessment results are usefully applied to the course and curriculum development process.
5. Evaluate the assessment process. To continually improve the assessment process itself, assessment practices are regularly evaluated.

Assessment of general education programs is an emerging and difficult process, complicated by the size and scope of the student body at large public universities. The interdisciplinary nature of general education and the large array of learning outcomes for the various skills, areas, and themes also serve to make assessment efforts challenging. The universities have a variety of efforts underway and are committed to further improvements in their assessment of general education.

Placement testing

The three universities assess students for individual placement into courses developing foundational skills in composition, foreign language and mathematics; and for entrance to advanced standing in certain colleges and

departments. *Appropriate placement into skills courses is essential to students' subsequent learning, development, and success.*

Student surveys

Each university has offices that support assessment activities. Surveys of students are conducted at critical junctures, which include entrance to the university, completion of certain courses, completion of lower-division requirements, completion of graduation requirements, and several years after graduation. Student's self-reporting is important to the assessment of learning practices and outcomes; students report on how often they encountered various learning strategies and how much they improved in certain skills as well as how satisfied they are with their university education. Employers are also surveyed regularly to obtain their views of students' abilities.

Student outcomes

All universities have made it a goal that 100 percent of their undergraduate degree programs will have published learning outcomes as well as specific assessment plans. A secondary goal is that all undergraduate degree programs will have their assessment plans reviewed in seven-year cycles coinciding with approved Academic Program Review procedures. Beginning in March 2002, each university will report annually on progress toward these goals. Nearly all undergraduate academic programs require their graduating students to complete capstone courses, which provide ideal culminating settings for the assessment of student learning.

Accountability to the Arizona Board of Regents

The ABOR has established the *Undergraduate Consolidated Accountability Report* to assess the universities' progress toward meeting important goals for undergraduate education, including General Education. This report is part of a wider effort by the Board to stimulate and assess improvements for undergraduates.

Specific university efforts

Meanwhile, there is a vibrant culture of assessment at the three Arizona universities, best illustrated by sample assessment programs:

- Arizona State University uses portfolio assessment in some colleges and departments. It is considering the feasibility of a general studies portfolio for its large undergraduate population.
- Northern Arizona University has instituted a Liberal Studies Portfolio for all undergraduates. This portfolio includes work from major courses as well as from General Education courses. NAU is currently placing portfolios online.
- The University of Arizona has an Upper-Division Writing Proficiency Examination required of students who have completed 40-75 credit hours. It has recently instituted a portfolio placement option for incoming students, and is considering a General Education portfolio and the costs and benefits of putting the portfolio online.

Conclusion

The three Arizona universities are committed to educating students for success in business and civic life. General education is critical to an undergraduate education. We welcome the opportunity to work with the business and civic communities to continuously improve our programs.

Appendix 1
PHILOSOPHIES OF GENERAL EDUCATION
AT ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Each university has articulated its own philosophy in its own words.

Arizona State University informs students:

A baccalaureate education should prepare students for a particular profession or advanced study and for constructive and satisfying personal, social, and civic lives. In addition to depth of knowledge in a particular academic or professional discipline, students should also be broadly educated and develop the general intellectual skills they need to continue learning throughout their lives. Thus, the General Studies requirement complements the undergraduate major by helping students gain mastery of critical learning skills, investigate the traditional branches of knowledge, and develop the broad perspective that frees one to appreciate diversity and change across time, culture, and national boundaries.

[Source: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/catalogs/general/general-studies.html>]

Northern Arizona University informs students visiting the Liberal Studies web site:

The liberal studies program - Preparing Citizens of the 21st Century - refers to the general education requirements for all students pursuing a bachelor's degree at Northern Arizona University. We know that students graduating from NAU will face critical challenges as they move from their undergraduate majors to careers in a wide variety of fields including education, business, industry, public service, and the professions.

We are committed to helping students gain the skills, knowledge, and abilities they will need to move into these careers and to take leadership roles in our society. Based on sustained attention to essential skills - reading, writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, creative thought - this program ensures that students reach levels of achievement that enable them to succeed regardless of their chosen career. Moreover, because the liberal studies program is thematically focused - students are asked to consider the implications of technology, to value the diversity of human experience, and to understand the complexity of environmental issues - students understand how their learning is connected to major issues and problems facing our society.

[Source: http://www2.nau.edu/~libst-p/libstu/LS_req/student/index.cfm]

The University of Arizona gives entering students the following answer to the question "What's the philosophy behind General Education?"

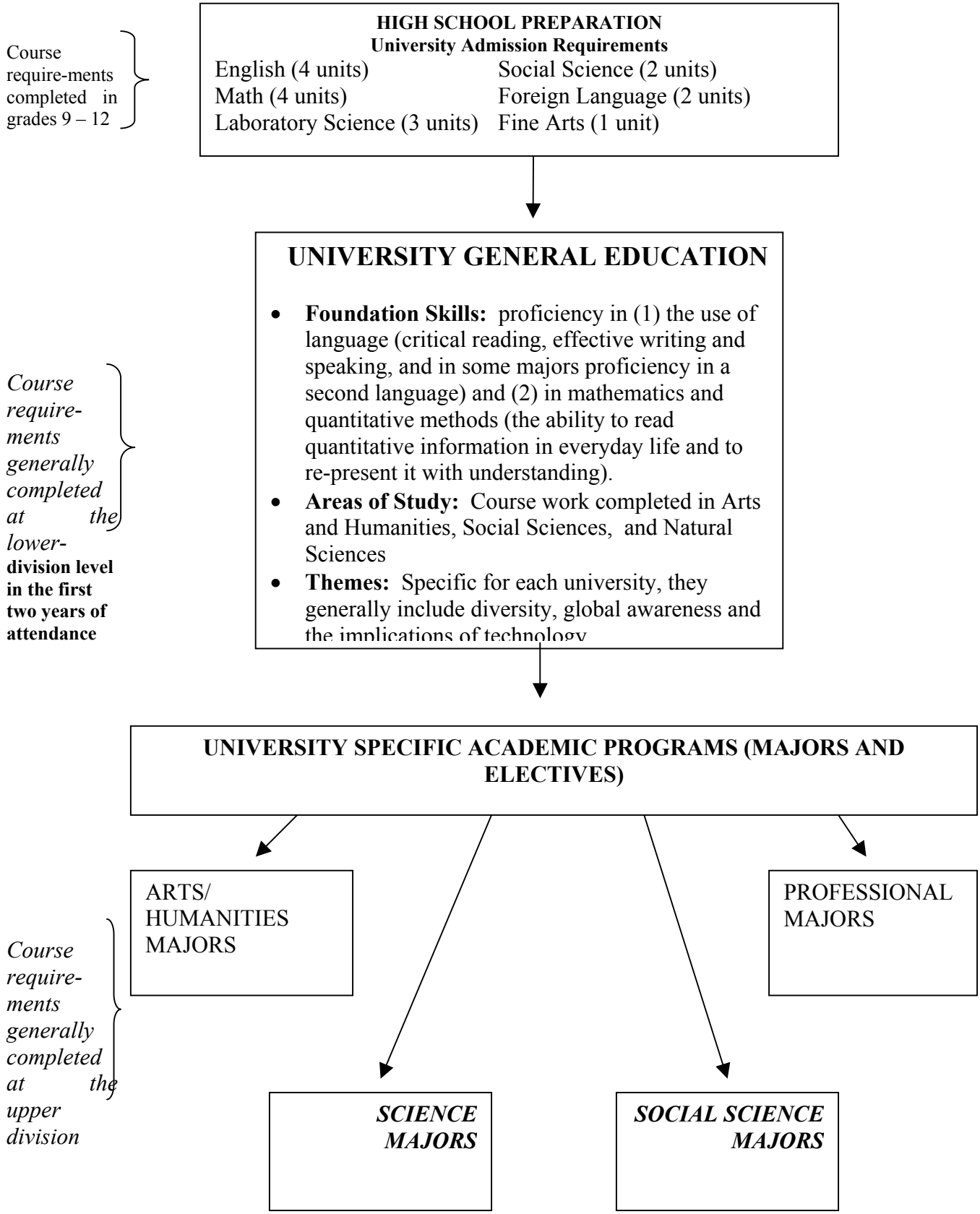
Undergraduates who enter a research university should understand the unique benefits of attending a research institution and the exceptional opportunities they have to enter the exciting world of discovery and inquiry. The U of A is committed to fostering an environment that welcomes students to an invigorating and challenging educational experience, with access to first-class facilities, many options to choose from among fields of study, and varied opportunities in and outside of the classroom to interact with talented faculty and researchers.

The General Education curriculum encourages students to become collaborators and contributors to the educational process rather than simply learning through the transmission of knowledge. General Education was designed to foster independent, creative and interactive learning, inspiring students to think about themselves, others, and social organizations in new and insightful ways.

The courses are interdisciplinary in nature, giving students an opportunity to explore diversity and to appreciate differences. They develop students' skills to write effectively and to speak clearly. They emphasize evaluative and critical thinking, giving students the ability to manage conflict in opinion and thought.

The General Education curriculum intends to instill in students a love of learning, to excite them about the university experience, and to leave them with valuable skills and knowledge applicable to their professional and personal lives.

**Appendix 2
STUDENT LEARNING FLOWCHART
FOR ARIZONA SYSTEM GRADUATES**



Appendix 3
STUDENT LEARNING FLOWCHART
FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS IN THE ARIZONA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Courses requirements completed in grades 9 – 12

HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION
 Coursework completed in accordance with statewide standards

35 credits completed at the lower-division, generally during the student’s first two years of study.

The statewide transfer articulation agreement provides for course by course transfer to apply to university general education programs, as well as a block transfer agreement that allows completion of the AGEC to satisfy all university lower-division general education requirements

ARIZONA GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

A. FRESHMAN COMPOSITION – 6 credits

B. MATHEMATICS¹– 3 credits

C. ARTS AND HUMANITIES – 6 – 9 credits*

D. SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES¹ - 6 – 9 credits*

E. PHYSICAL & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES – 8 credits

F. OPTIONS*

*Courses in this area should be selected to meet Special Requirements or enhance the AGEC and to expand the preparation of students prior to transfer.

¹ The mathematics and science requirements differ for the academic majors and students are advised to enroll for the appropriate courses.

TRANSFER TO UNIVERSITY FOR SPECIFIC MAJOR AND ELECTIVES

APPENDIX B: QUALITY STANDARDS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Each university seeks to monitor and improve the quality of its general education program through systematic review internally and externally. Externally, each university's general education program is scrutinized, at least every 10 years, as part of the regional reaccrediting process. This review, conducted by the Higher Learning Commission (HCL) of the North Central Association (NCA), requires an assessment of appropriate student academic achievement in all academic programs and documenting:

- Proficiency in skills and competencies essential for all college-educated adults;
- Completion of an identifiable and coherent undergraduate level general education component;
- Mastery of the level of knowledge appropriate to the degree granted.
- Control by the institution's faculty of evaluation of student learning and granting of academic credit.

In recent years, HCL guidelines have placed greater emphasis on establishing learning objectives and outcomes, consistent with learner centered education principles. ASU just completed its latest accreditation in March 2003; NAU satisfactorily completed a focused visit in October 2002 and UA's last review occurred in Spring 2000

The Board of Regents has recently expanded the common accountability measures on which all universities must report by adding assessment measures related to learner centered education, several of which are specific to general education. Examples include:

- Percent of seniors who rate their college education as contributing to their ability to write clearly and effectively either "very much" or "quite a bit."
- Percent of seniors who rate their college education as contributing to their ability to analyze quantitative problems either "very much" or "quite a bit."
- Percent of seniors who rate their college education as contributing to their ability to think critically and analytically either "very much" or "quite a bit."
- Percent of seniors who rate their college education as contributing to their ability to use computer and information technology
- Percent of undergraduate degree recipients in research-related or capstone experiences

Achievement goals and timelines for meeting these measures are approved by the Board and the universities report annually on their progress. The universities have just begun to gather survey data on the first four of these; however, universities are reporting between 79-92% of their majors now require a research-related or capstone course. In addition the universities have developed unique, institution-specific measures which ask related questions of students and satisfaction ratings of students by employers.

Internally, general education is monitored regularly through faculty committees. A primary role of each is to insuring that courses approved for general education programs meet objectives of the specific core or thematic requirement. A description of the structure of each university's general education program and its monitoring process is provided in this appendix; the section below highlights key elements of these processes.

- **ASU's General Studies (GS) program** has been in existence since 1985. The General Studies Council, a faculty committee, conducts a three-year mandatory review of all General Studies courses and approves the addition of any new General Studies courses. Courses must address learning objectives specific to that GS category to receive a GS designation. Courses, which fail to maintain the appropriate objectives, lose their GS designation. Between 1999-2002, 112 ASU Main/East courses were removed. During the same period, 286 new proposals were submitted for review, of which nearly one-third was denied GS designation. In the 1998 the General Studies program went through a comprehensive review by the faculty; there was overwhelming support from the faculty to retain the program with some minor structural modification.

Refer to Appendix B.1, pages 30-31.

- **NAU Liberal Studies program** completely revised its general education program in 1998, resulting in a purging of 288 liberal studies courses. New courses were developed and the course bank was reduced from 490 down to 370 as a result of this review process. The focus of the Liberal Studies is essential skills and specific key themes considered necessary for effective citizenship. Courses are reviewed every five years.

Refer to Appendix B.2, pages 32-36.

- **UA University-Wide General Education program**, adopted in 1997, created a university-wide structure around three categories of themes at two levels, the introductory Tier I and advanced Tier II, usually tied to major courses. All of the courses that previously met general education requirements had to be re-submitted and approved for inclusion. Subsequent new courses proposed for inclusion are reviewed through the University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC). The general education course inventory includes 333 courses; an additional 76 have been proposed but rejected.

Refer to Appendix B.3, pages 37-40.

B.1. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
General Studies Program and Review Process

Faculty oversight of the GS requirements is a long-standing practice at ASU. The General Studies Council (GSC) was created in 1985 by the Academic Senate for this purpose. The Main Campus General Studies Council oversees the General Studies courses on the Main and East Campuses. ASU West has its own General Studies Council. Both Councils adhere to the same by-laws and policies and procedures. The Councils maintain the GS Criteria Checklists for the core and awareness areas, and are responsible for maintaining the list of courses approved for GS credit, which is published in the annual ASU *General Catalog* and the *Schedule of Classes* for the fall and spring semesters. The Councils approve or disapprove proposals for courses requesting a GS designation, and review each GS-designated course every five years to assure its continued adherence to approved GS criteria. The GSC utilizes several sources of information to review program requirements and recommend changes to improve the program. These sources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Graduating Senior Report Card,
- Requests to ASU faculty for feedback,
- Recommendations made by the representative of the (local) Maricopa County Community College System to GSC, and
- Recommendations from the ASU Office of Articulation.

The ASU General Studies requirements include five *core* areas and three *awareness* areas. These requirements provide a broad and coherent academic foundation that complements the major requirements by helping students to gain mastery of critical-thinking skills, to investigate the traditional branches of knowledge, and to develop a perspective that appreciates diversity and change across time, culture, and national boundaries. The core areas are: Literacy and critical inquiry (designated by L), Mathematical studies (designated by MA and CS), Humanities and fine arts (designated by HU), Social and behavioral sciences (designated by SB), and Natural sciences (designated by SQ and SG).

The awareness areas promote appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States, develop an international perspective, and foster an understanding of current human events through the study of the past. The awareness areas are: Cultural diversity in the United States (designated by C), Global awareness (designated by G), and Historical awareness (designated by H).

Table 1 lists the number of new course proposals that were approved, revised and resubmitted, or denied during the last three academic years on the Main and East campuses.

Table 1 Recent Actions on New Course Proposals for GS—**Main/East** Campuses

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
New Course Proposals Submitted	123	183	80
Approved	87 (71%)	138 (75%)	55 (69%)
Denied*	36 (29%)	45(25%)	25 (31%)

*The General Studies Council informs units that the courses must be revised and resubmitted. Less than 2% of these are revised and resubmitted.

Table 2 Recent Actions on New Course Proposals for GS—**West** Campus

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
New Course Proposals Submitted	31	31	34
Approved	26 (84%)	30 (97%)	32 (94%)
Denied	5 (16%)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)

A Mandatory Review is required of general studies courses on a five year cycle. Tables 3 and 4 list the number of courses recently reviewed on the Main and East campuses and West (respectively) under this process. The Main Campus General Studies Council began tracking courses in the Mandatory Review process that were required to be revised and resubmitted in spring 2002. Also, the Office of University Evaluation is developing and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the General Studies Program.

Table 3 Recent Actions on General Studies Course Mandatory Review—**Main/East** Campuses

	Spring 2000	Spring 2001	Spring 2002
Courses Reviewed	123	339	101
Revised and Resubmit			18 (18%)

Table 4 Recent Actions on General Studies Course Mandatory Review—**West** Campus

	Spring 2000	Spring 2001	Spring 2002
Courses Reviewed	146	57	84
Approved	142 (97%)	49 (86%)	65 (77%)
Denied	4 (3%)	8 (14%)	19 (23%)

Courses with general studies designations are also deleted or purged in the normal process in which all courses are reviewed. Since the inception of the General Studies program, **112** courses at Main and East have been deleted, purged (course not offered for four years) or lost their designation through the mandatory review process or at the request of the offering department. On the West campus, since fall 1999, the total is **58**.

APPENDIX B.2. NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Liberal Studies Program Course Quality Control

Background

In 1998, Northern Arizona University completed revised its general education program. The resulting **liberal studies program** - Preparing Citizens of the 21st Century - refers to the general education requirements for all students pursuing a bachelor's degree at Northern Arizona University. The liberal studies program is designed to provide students with a coherent program through which they develop the essential skills necessary for citizenship. We mean citizenship here in a broad sense. That is, students graduating from NAU need both the skills and a broad understanding of key issues that will allow them the opportunity to participate fully in public debates about the pressing issues of their times. Thus, at the same time that essential skills comprise one aspect of this program, several key themes serve to tie different parts of students' academic experiences together and provide a focused background from which they can become more aware of the challenging problems they will face as they move into a range of careers following graduation.

To ensure that students meet the goals of this program, we include a strong assessment component, which works in two ways. First, this assessment component allows faculty and administrators across campus to determine the effectiveness of the program as a whole and to make informed decisions about the degree to which we are meeting the goals that we have set for our students. Second, and just as importantly, this assessment component provides students opportunities to reflect on their own progress, and to become better able to determine the areas that need more attention.

Liberal Studies Course Quality Control

With the introduction of the new liberal studies program in 1998, the University required that all courses to be identified as liberal studies courses be reviewed carefully by the Liberal Studies committee. Departments submit a syllabi that must meet the standards summarized below for each course. The syllabus is then reviewed, discussed and voted upon by the 15 faculty on the Liberal Studies Committee. Many syllabi are returned to the departments for one or more modifications prior to being approved for liberal studies credit. The syllabus template is attached.

The liberal studies committee is now beginning the process of re-evaluating courses currently approved for liberal studies. This process occurs if a course has been in the program for over five years, or if program requirements, educational objectives, or assessment measures change and require a revised syllabus. Given the scope of this effort, it is conducted on a rolling basis, reviewing approximately 20% of the courses per year.

Course Inventory

This thorough review of course syllabi resulted in a purging of 288 liberal studies courses. New courses were developed and the course bank decreased from 490 courses in 1997 to 370 today.

Foundation (Math, English Composition, Freshman Seminar)	6	
Aesthetics and Humanistic Inquiry	83	
Cultural Understanding	120	
Social Political Worlds	102	
Science, Applied Science and Lab Science	59	
TOTAL		370

Course standards

The Liberal Studies Committee is responsible for evaluating and approving courses for liberal studies as syllabi are submitted by departments. These approvals and evaluations are based on the commitment of courses to address the following:

Distribution Block	all courses must fit into ONE of the <i>distribution blocks</i> (lab science, science/applied science, aesthetic and humanistic inquiry, cultural understanding, social and political worlds).
Essential Skills	all courses that students will take for liberal studies must address at least two of the <i>essential skills</i> that have been designated as important to student development and progress (critical thinking, creative thinking, critical reading, effective oral communication, effective writing, ethical reasoning, quantitative/spatial analysis, scientific inquiry, use of technology).
Thematic Areas	liberal studies courses must address at least one of three thematic areas-- environmental consciousness, technology and its impact, valuing the diversity of human experience.
Assessment	each course will have to indicate how the development of skills and the awareness of ideas/content related to the thematic areas will be <i>assessed</i> .

Courses that will meet the Junior Level Writing Requirement must meet the following standards:

1. Writing skills will be explicitly addressed and worked on in this class. This means that the syllabus should include, but does not need to be limited to, a statement of how writing is incorporated into this course in relation to student progress and work within the/a discipline.
2. Students should produce 20 pages of revised, multiple draft prose.
3. Students in this course should finish with a writing portfolio one piece of which is a 1-2 page strengths and goals essay in which they evaluate both their strengths and goals for future development. This essay should be added to the student's electronic learning portfolio.
4. These courses must be at the 300 level.
5. Classes that meet the junior level writing expectation should be capped at 25.
6. Syllabi for these courses should follow the approved University Curriculum Committee format.

Courses that meet the capstone designation should be the culminating work in the program. As with the liberal studies courses, these capstone courses will help students refine essential skills and complete their portfolio. The Liberal Studies Committee has developed these guidelines to ensure that the senior capstone experience will demonstrate continuity with the beginning of a student's liberal studies career. The emphasis will be on the essential skills the student has developed during their NAU career rather than on any of the three themes of the liberal studies program.

COURSE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

*This template is based on the current model approved by the University Curriculum Committee and should be used to develop syllabi for liberal studies courses. The areas in **bold** are those which pertain directly to liberal studies. For approval purposes, the Liberal Studies Council will require that syllabi follow this format and are complete in all areas listed below. In addition, a completed Syllabus Cover Sheet must accompany each syllabus. Each department should then bundle their syllabi together and submit them to the Liberal Studies Office along with the Routing Form.*

General Information

Name of college and department
Course prefix, number, and title
Semester in which course will be offered
Clock hours, credit hours
Instructor's name, office address, office hours

Course Prerequisites

Course Description

In addition to specifying subject matter, the syllabus course description for liberal studies courses should address how the course fits in the liberal studies program at three levels:

Thematic Focus (At least one of the following themes will be addressed and assessed: Environmental Consciousness, Technology and Its Impact, Valuing the Diversity of Human Experience. If multiple sections cover different themes, must provide objectives and assessment methods for each.)

Distribution Block (Identify one of the following: Laboratory Science, Science/Applied Science, Social and Political Worlds, Aesthetic and Humanistic Inquiry, Cultural Understanding)

Essential Skills (At least two of the following should be assessed formally in the course: Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Critical Reading, Scientific Inquiry, Effective Writing, Effective Oral Communication, Quantitative Analysis, Use of Technology)

- For example: This course is an ethnographic exploration of humankind and its prospects at the close of the 20th century. In examining contemporary ethnic groups, from hunter/gatherers to post-industrial societies, we will investigate the components of culture, processes of stability and change, and human adaptation to local and global environments. Its thematic focus will be Valuing the Diversity of Human Experience, and it is a liberal studies course in the Social and Political Worlds distribution block. This course will address several of the essential skills (critical reading, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and effective writing), and will pay particular attention through assessment to critical reasoning, ethical reasoning and critical reading. (from ANT 301)

Course Objectives

This part of the syllabus should indicate course objectives in terms of key learning outcomes regarding content, essential skills, and thematic focus. By outcomes, we mean those activities that demonstrate that students have achieved the course objectives. These should be linked to the thematic focus of the course and essential skills to be assessed. For example, what can students identify, define, describe, explain, demonstrate, solve, design, create, criticize, and/or conclude as a result of their work in this course? Here are some examples:

- *Students will be able to read a series of pieces that address environmental issues and write a response in which they identify the scientific principles upon which claims are based. (environmental consciousness, critical reading, effective writing)*

- *Students will be able to analyze critically treatments of race and ethnicity in American literatures. (valuing the diversity of human experience, critical reading, critical thinking)*
- *Students will be able to describe responsible, ethical behavior regarding the way the media portrays environmental issues and issues of sustainability. (environmental consciousness, ethical reasoning)*
- *Students will be able to explain and demonstrate with data the important links between technological development and human social organization. (technology and its impact, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning)*
- *Students will be able to explain through specific examples the impact of industrialization on immigration patterns in the U.S. between 1880-1920. (valuing the diversity of human experience, critical reading, critical thinking)*
- *Students will be able to pose and test a hypothesis via computer analysis of data. (computer literacy, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry).*
- *Students will be able to produce a painting that reflects the effective use of perspective. (creative thinking)*

Course structure/approach

Textbook and required materials

Recommended optional materials/references

Course outline

Evaluation methods and deadlines

Assessment of Outcomes

This section should not deal with grading procedures. Instead, it should address ways through which the learning outcomes identified in the course objectives will be assessed. Assessment can be accomplished with formal assignments that will be evaluated for grading purposes (e.g., examinations, lab exercises, papers, homework, quizzes, presentations, projects) and/or through ungraded activities in which students demonstrate understanding of thematic content or essential skills (e.g., panel discussions, peer review of written responses, group exercises). Here are some examples:

- ***Topographic and geologic maps will be created, interpreted, and analyzed in the field and in laboratory using quantitative, spatial, Earth data.***
- *We will use 3 instrument types to assess your achievement of the learning objectives listed above: three exams (100 points each), a final essay (100 points), and 1 oral presentation (100 points). Exams may include true/false, fill-in-the-blank, mini-essay questions, and oral group discussions with written group answers. The examinations will evaluate your achievement with respect to all the learning objectives listed above. Questions will be structured to evaluate your understanding of the concepts presented in the course.*
- *Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills by giving an oral presentation, which includes an effective introduction, accurate and informative background information, main points and supporting evidence, and an effective conclusion.*

Learning Portfolio

This section of the syllabus will specify how the course may utilize and contribute to students' learning portfolios. It will identify assignments or activities that are linked directly to the portfolio (e.g., reflective essays, self-assessments) and products which students may elect to include in their portfolios.

- You will write a 3 - 5 page review essay, which summarizes and critiques an assigned article. This exercise is intended to test your abilities to read and think critically, and to test your writing skills. This assignment might be a particularly useful one to include in your learning portfolio, since it encompasses at least three of the essential skills.
- *Materials from the course and self-assessments of themes learned and essential skills acquired may be included in each Learning Portfolio at the end of the course. Materials may include examples of writing or temporal or spatial data interpretation and analysis. Self-assessments may include reflective essays, self evaluations, or annotated descriptions of skills learned or acquired.*

Assignments
Examinations
Grading system

Course policy
Retests/makeup tests
Attendance
Statement on plagiarism and cheating

University policies (not necessary to attach for the Liberal Studies Council)

B. 3. UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

University-Wide General Education Course Review

The University of Arizona Faculty in 1997 adopted the current General Education curriculum for all undergraduates. All of the courses that previously met general education requirements had to be proposed and approved for inclusion in the new program.

The University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) was anticipating the start (this AY) of a formal review of current general education courses. In response to Financial Planning Bulletin #22 for Focused Excellence, the committee shifted much of its effort to conducting a program review. A recommendation to conduct a review of all existing general education courses will be included as part of the committee's program recommendations.

University-wide General Education Structure

Tier One Individuals and Societies (INDV)

101 – Mind, Self and Language

102 – Social Interactions and Relationships

103 – Societal and Institutional Relationships

Tier Two Natural Sciences (NATS)

101 – The Earth and Its Environments

102 – Beyond the Earth in Space and Time

104 – Biological Sciences

Tier One Traditions and Cultures (TRAD)

101 – Non-Western Cultures and Civilizations

102 – Western Cultures and Civilizations: Classical to Renaissance

103 – Western Cultures and Civilizations: Renaissance to Present

104 – Topics in Culture and Civilization

There are four strands or study areas with the Tier Two structure: Arts, Individuals and Societies, Natural Sciences, Humanities. Tier Two courses retain departmental prefixes but must be approved for University-wide General Education.

Students are required to take two courses with different numbers in each study area (INDV, NATS, TRAD) to meet the Tier One General Education requirements. Students are required to take three units in Arts, and one course in each study area (Individuals and Societies, Natural Sciences, and Humanities) to meet the Tier Two General Education requirements.

Course Review Process

Every course proposed for the University-Wide General Education Program goes through extensive review by the UWGEC before being approved or denied as either a Tier One or Tier Two offering.

Proposing Faculty are initially referred to the UWGEC website at <http://w3.arizona.edu/~uge/gened/guidlms.htm> to review a set of guidelines entitled "[Complete Guidelines for Tier One and Tier Two Courses](#)" which are provided to assist them in evaluating their course for General Education and in organizing pertinent course information.

A course proposal must include the following before being forwarded to the UWGEC:

- 1) A Course Proposal Cover Sheet that includes:
Course title

Course type being proposed (Tier One/Tier Two/Study Area/GRCE/NW)
Course description as it will read in the General Catalog
Semester(s) to be offered (Fall/Spring/Summer)
Whether the course has been taught previously
Desired Enrollment
Class schedule - hours per week of class meetings per student
Distribution of time – percent lecture/discussion/lab
How course will accommodate Honors students – independent section/discussion section reserved for Honors
Name of proposing faculty member and others instructors available to teach course

2) A summary of the proposed course that includes:
A description of course goals and objectives that incorporate UWGEC guidelines
A description of how the course meets Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity or non-Western guidelines (if submitted for either designation)
A detailed statement of how the required writing will be integrated
An explanation of how interactive learning is to be incorporated
A discussion of how critical thinking skills will be developed
A discussion of assessment activities
An explanation of how Honors students will be accommodated

3) A syllabus that provides:
Text and other readings or materials to be assigned
Topics listed by the week or by class meeting
The quality and amount of work to be required of students (nature of examinations, quizzes, reports, etc.)
An explanation of how students' grades are computed
Percentage of the total grade completed by week eight of the semester

Upon receipt of a complete course proposal, it is forwarded to the Course Preview subcommittee of the UWGEC. The subcommittee chair assigns it to a member of the subcommittee who works one-on-one with the proposing faculty member to negotiate changes to the course to ensure it meets all of the UWGEC guidelines. Virtually every proposal goes through some revision before the Course Preview subcommittee forwards the course to the UWGEC for review and vote.

University-Wide General Education Course Inventory

One hundred and twelve Tier One courses have been approved, including thirty three Individuals and Societies, twenty six Natural Sciences, and fifty three Traditions and Cultures courses. Two hundred and five Tier Two courses complete the General Education inventory.

Courses that have been proposed and not approved (1997 to present) for University-wide General Education

1. AAS 195A – African Aesthetics
2. AAS 301 – Introduction to Research Methods in African American Studies
3. AAS 306 – African American Autobiography: Women and History
4. AAS 342 – Writers, Women and the Gods: The Caribbean Novel
5. AFAS – Wealth and Health – African History
6. AFAS 222 – A History of African American Ideas
7. ABE 250 – Water and Its Uses
8. AED 201 – Leadership Dynamics in Youth Organizations
9. AIS 200 – American Indian Studies
10. AIS 336 – History and Philosophy of Dine People
11. AIS 344 – Native Americans in Film
12. AIS 434 – Tribal Government
13. AIS 450 – American Indian Women
14. AIS 490 – Indian Religion and Spirituality
15. ANTH 303 – Gender and Language
16. ARH 319 – Introduction to American Art
17. CE 100 – Natural Forces, Society and Technology
18. CHEM 101A/102A – Lectures in General Chemistry
19. CHN 250 – New Chinese Cinema
20. CLAS 130 – Ancient Athletics
21. CLAS 140 – Ideology and Selfhood in Ancient Epic and Modern Film
22. CLAS 230 – Literacy and Literature in the Ancient Near East
23. COMM – The Sciences of the Mind
24. COMM - Communication in Contemporary Society
25. COMM - Introduction to Human Communication
26. COMM – Informatics in Society
27. COMM 107 – Intercultural Communication
28. CPH 481 – Introduction to Violence Against Women
29. EAS 110 – Languages of Asia
30. ENGL 470 – Incessant War: A Study of the Meaning of Violence in Western Society
31. EXSS 320 – Psychological Foundations for Exercise and Sport
32. FREN 246 – African Literature in Translation
33. FREN 249 – Images of Africa
34. GEOG 102 A & B– Human Geography
35. GEOG 305 – Economic Geography
36. GEOG 367 – Population Geography
37. GEOG 374 – Geography and Social Justice
38. GEOG 379 – Urban Growth and Development
39. GEOG 474 – Exploring Radical Geography
40. GEOS 102 – Historical Geology
41. GEOS 103 – Introduction to Geosciences Lab
42. GEOS 101 – Introduction to Planet Earth
43. GEOS 104 – History Geology Laboratory
44. HIST 310 – The Black Death
45. JUS 321 – Women In Judaism
46. MAR 102 – Discovering Media
47. MAR 200 – Fundamental of Theory and Aesthetics in Media Arts
48. MAR 203 – Concepts in New Media
49. MAR 336 – History of Japanese Film
50. MAR 210 – Survey of Media History
51. MCB 181/182 – Biology and Genetics of Humans
52. MCB000 – Toxicology: Your Environment and You
53. MSE 479 – Culture and Materials Technology

54. MUS 107 – Understanding Music Through Listening
55. MUS 231 – Music
56. NES 272 – Islamic Civilization: Classical and Modern Middle East
57. NES 310 – Literature of the Middle East
58. NES 333 – Gender Issues and Women’s Literature in the Middle East
59. NES 378B – History of the Middle East
60. NES 379 – The Ottoman Turkish Empire
61. NSC 105 – Earth Science and Society
62. NURS – Family Health and Disabilities
63. NURS 370 – Complementary Healing Practices
64. PA 241 – Criminal Justice Administration
65. POL - Democracy and Its Limits
66. POL – World Politics by Religion
67. POL 460 – Modern Chinese Foreign Relations
68. POL 461 – Feminist and International Relations Theory
69. POL 476 – Women and the Law
70. PSYCH 101 – Introduction to Psychology
71. SOC – School and Society
72. WS 240 – Issues in Women Studies
73. INDV – Europe and the Modern World (not approved for correspondence)
74. TRAD – Ancient Civilizations of the Near East (not approved for correspondence)
75. TRAD – History of Western Civilization (not approved for correspondence)
76. TRAD – Chinese Civilization (not approved for correspondence)