

**General Education Implementation  
Committee**

**Report**

**May 4, 2004**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. Committee Membership**
- II. Charge to the Committee**
- III. Committee Procedures**
- IV. General Comments**
- V. Recommendations**

## **I. GENERAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Donald Flickinger, Chair and Academic Head for the Humanities Department

Ashraf Afifi, Professor, College of Business

Laurie Chesley, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs

Richard Goosen, Professor, College of Technology

Kim Hancock, Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy

Andy Karafa, Assistant Professor, College of Arts and Sciences

Susan Morris, Associate Professor and General Education Coordinator, College of Arts and Sciences

Barbara Ross, Assistant Professor, College Allied Health Sciences

Clayton Rye, Associate Professor, College of Education and Human Services

Mary Steeno, Educational Counselor, College of Allied Health Sciences

## **II. CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE**

### “Practical Issue to be Addressed

At the same time that the University is addressing philosophical concerns related to student learning, it also needs to be sure that its current general education system functions effectively and efficiently. The Task Force identified several problems with the implementation of general education at Ferris including the lack of sufficient advising tools, the Social Awareness Foundation and 300-level requirements, and scheduling conflicts between programmatic and general education courses.

**To deal with these practical issues, I will form, in consultation with the Senate, an ad hoc General Education Implementation Committee that will be charged to do the following:**

- 1. review the recommendations of the General Education Task Force and determine what practical problems with general education do exist, and**
- 2. recommend ways that these problems can be solved.”**

This statement is extracted from Dr. Oldfield's memo to the campus community dated 12/02/03 02:19 PM.

### **III. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

For the first phase of the committee work, the committee met six Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:30PM. Committee attendance was excellent and the University should be very appreciative of the dedication to the improvement of general education implementation demonstrated by the committee members. The committee reviewed the General Education Task Force material as well as other related college/program issues brought to the meetings by committee members. Each issue was discussed at length and draft recommendations were developed at each meeting. At the completion of the sixth meeting chairman Don Flickinger presented a compilation of the draft recommendations to date and asked the committee to approve a second and hopefully final phase of the process. The final phase process, if the committee felt that the draft recommendations were nearly complete, would be having Chairman Flickinger email to all the draft recommendations to all committee members. All committee members would be invited to add, delete, "wordsmith" the draft recommendations. To keep the process transparent, committee members were to respond to all committee members with any changes to the draft recommendations. All changes needed to be presented in the document, changes needed to be clearly visible and old language retained for committee review. Chairman Flickinger would, after seeing no changes for at least two days, clean up the copy, remove old language and send the new version to all committee members. This process was approved and completed in approximately four weeks. At the time when there were no further additions, deletions or changes coming from the committee members Chairman Flickinger made a final request for changes. Receiving no additional material from committee members, Chairman Flickinger indicated his thanks to the committee for work well done. This document below (**Section V**) presents the recommendations developed and approved by the committee.

### **IV. GENERAL COMMENTS**

This committee's work focused on students. Dealing with general education implementation as the charge, the committee members stayed on task and placed their concern for student timely successful graduation as the primary outcome. The committee's discussions were impressive. Ferris should be proud to have such dedicated faculty members as a part of the team.

## **V. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The GEIC recognizes the improved facilitation in the general education provided by Assistant Vice President Laurie Chesley and General Education Coordinator Susan Morris. The most recent improvements include the website listing of approved general education courses, lists of approved courses by general education category, and, thanks to the Registrar's office, a weekly snapshot by category of all scheduled general education courses available for the current registration period. This Ferris webpage listing is under Current Students then General Education.

The web address to use is <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/academics/gened/courses.html>

1. Given the importance of general education and the percentage of degree requirements general education represents, the GEIC recommends the VPAA office place a high priority on general education facilitation. This higher priority requires additional staff time be allotted to deal with REG implementation, scheduling conflicts, course and section shortages, and up-to-date articulation and transfer equivalency information. The VPAA's office will consult with departments/schools, program coordinators/directors and counselors on a regular basis prior to the beginning of each registration period to assure general education facilitation success.
2. Since the implementation of the approved REG requirements ("A list") is a major project, the GEIC recommends the implementation of the revised REG ("A list") requirements not be allowed to proceed until a comprehensive implementation plan for this change has been developed by the VPAA. Number of courses available, number of sections available, number of seats available, and transfer equivalency preparations should be included in this implementation plan.
3. The GEIC recommends that FSU students be given easy Ferris web access for locating and selecting general education courses. Consideration should be given to having a direct link placed on the Ferris homepage, clearly identifying the nature of the information on the link. This should include general education courses listed by category with information, including enrollment, updated weekly during early registration.
4. The GEIC recommends that easy access and live updated information about general education by category information is a high priority for early incorporation into the new Banner system.
5. The GEIC recommends the University archive each online academic catalog and make them easily available by academic year to all faculty and staff. General Education requirements for each student would be determined by the catalog in effect when the student is admitted to the University. The GEIC recommends that PDF file copies of general education be available online by academic year.

Changes affecting the next academic year must be completed by March 1 of the previous academic year.

6. The GEIC recommends that transfer students would be able to use the transfer equivalencies and general education guidelines in place at the time of their official documented advising contact with their college's academic personnel regarding equivalencies. There is usually a one to two year window between this contact and the student's enrollment in the University.
7. Since Arts and Sciences Department Heads have reviewed all Michigan Community Colleges courses for transfer equivalency designation, GEIC recommends that all future changes in transfer equivalencies be published by March 1 of the previous academic year. It is suggested that all outdated equivalencies be archived and accessible to faculty and students, so that the last date they are to be considered in effect is clear.
8. The GEIC recommends that the VPAA's office prepare an advisors "general education quick facts handout" to include basic general education information and website addresses for the most current general education information and course/sections being offered. General Education advising should be included in the First Year Faculty Program.
9. The GEIC recommends that the Ferris website general education page, <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/academics/gened/gened.html>, have the (Course) Learning Outcomes Area listed on the left-hand side with the group of four listed items. In the general education outcomes for each general education area link, wording clarification is needed in the course outcomes (remove the word "criteria"), and there should be a clear link to general education area criteria. The faculty staff webpage needs a link collectively for advising and specifically to the general education page as occurs now on the Current Students webpage. A "course proposal process" description should be added to left side of the General Education Homepage directing course proposals to the General Education Coordinator and linked to the area criteria.
10. The GEIC recommends that all program and general education courses with limited section availability maintain consistent scheduling days and times by semester. That is, all Fall semester courses will remain consistent and all Winter semester courses will remain consistent.

Programs/degrees/majors must identify "critical" general education courses and notify appropriate departments and colleges. Programs/degrees/majors/departments will be expected to maintain good communication and notify coordinators/department chairs/heads of anticipated schedule changes.

11. The GEIC recognizes the value of having greater flexibility in student choice of general education electives, and so encourages the consideration of two ideas: We encourage the providers of general education courses to think of ways to make category requirements less complex. We encourage programs/degrees/majors to add more choice to general education categories whenever it is deemed possible and appropriate.
12. The GEIC recommends that the University Curriculum process be expedited for programs/degree/majors that wish to provide greater flexibility in the general education area.
13. Discussion related to the 300-level social awareness and upper level cultural enrichment requirement consumed a major portion of the committee meeting time. This issue was discussed both pragmatically and theoretically. Many suggested recommendations were presented to the committee. There was uncertainty as to whether such a recommendation was within the charge of the GEIC. It was established that upper level requirements in combination with the REG requirement create scheduling difficulty in several colleges/programs. The GEIC recommends (in light of the emerging Arts and Sciences majors and minors and apparent course transfer difficulty and scheduling complexities) the VPAA re-evaluate the upper level general education social awareness and cultural enrichment requirement with the review to include easier implementation for all degrees, majors, and programs. Concerns needing a response include: the number of course sections needed as the REG "list A" is implemented; the necessity of scheduling such courses across the full matrix of times throughout the week; clarity of the categories that social awareness transfer equivalents fulfill; and the mix of general education and program majors in the same course and section.
14. The GEIC recommends that all college counselors, program coordinators and transcript evaluators be reminded that any transfer courses they wish to have evaluated for general education designators must be sent to the appropriate individuals: The GEIC also recommends that contact information for the current individuals responsible for evaluating each general education category be placed on the general education website.
15. The GEIC recommends that serious consideration be given to increasing the number of social awareness and cultural enrichment courses that additionally satisfy either Global or REG.