A Proposal

A New Structure for the General Education Program at Bloomsburg University

Our new general education program is a goal-focused system to develop foundations, knowledge and applications through a variety of learning experiences. Toward this end, we have developed a new, assessable program for general education that captures the true value of courses within the general education learning experience, with the following purpose and goals for student learning outcomes:

General Education Purpose

A general education is the result of the entire university experience. It should assure broad exposure to areas of study beyond the major to foster a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the world, its possibilities, and the individual’s part in it. The General Education program, based on acquiring skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness, will help develop each student’s ability to think critically and communicate clearly.

Goals for General Education Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
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The goals of the new program can be pictured thus:

**APPLICATION**
Demonstrate basic communication skills in a second language.
Analyze the implications of diversity among human groups, their histories, cultures, and the plurality of human experiences.
Evaluate the consequences of health decisions.
Exhibit responsible citizenship.

**KNOWLEDGE**
Demonstrate knowledge of natural sciences principles, concepts, and methods using appropriate vocabulary.
Demonstrate knowledge of social sciences principles, concepts, and methods using appropriate vocabulary.
Analyze and evaluate artistic and literary contributions of diverse cultures across time.

**FOUNDATIONS**
Communicate effectively in writing, oral presentation, and visual argument.
Find, evaluate, and ethically use information using appropriate technology.
Apply critical analysis and problem solving skills.
Major Changes

- The current course categories (Communication, Quantitative..., Values..., Fitness..., Diversity, Group A, Group B and Group C) will no longer exist.
- The satisfaction of general education requirements will not be based on credit hours, except that a student must earn a minimum of 40 credit hours in courses that contribute to general education (PASSHE policy).
- The new program better captures the value of courses within the general education learning experience and recognizes the contribution of co-curricular learning experiences.

Description of the Program

- The General Education Program Requirements will be based on the achievement of the ten goals for general education student learning outcomes approved by BUCC in April 2010.
- Students will meet the requirements of general education program by earning General Education Units (GEUs). These GEUs are aligned with the general education goals.
- GEUs are earned through successful completion of approved coursework and Co-curricular Learning Experiences (CLEs). Any approved course or CLE at the university could contribute its full or partial content toward one or more goals of general education, but it is not necessary that any given course/CLE participate in the general education program.
- Courses and CLEs that contribute to the general education program are those that successfully complete the new general education approval process (which includes the General Education Council and BUCC). GEUs may be distributed appropriately over the general education goals applicable to that course/CLE.
- Courses that carry GEUs will be listed with each applicable general education goal and its respective number of GEUs.
  
  Example: 52.100 Chemistry and the Citizen (3 credits; GEU 2-1, 3-2, 4-6, 9-1,)
- The number of units each student has earned toward each general education goal will be tracked electronically and will be readily available to students and academic advisors.
- The minimum number of General Education Units required for each goal is shown in Table 1. Students may go beyond the minimum GEUs for any goal as necessary or desirable for a program of study.
- Assessment is an integral part of the program.
- Credits transferred as a BU course equivalent get the GEU distribution of the BU course, but other transfer credits (e.g. XX.199 Xxxxxxx Transfer) do not count toward GEUs.
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* Units for Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 must come from at least two disciplines.

**Assigning units in courses**

- **Essential Elements**
  - There is no formula for assigning units, only guidelines.
  - The total number of units assigned should reflect the extent the course as a whole contributes to the overall goals.
  - A typical 3- or 4-credit hour course can provide up to 10 general education units (GEUs) to satisfy the goals for general education outcomes; not all approved courses must provide 10 GEUs.
  - Lower credit hour courses typically will provide a lower number of GEUs.
  - The total number of GEUs that a course provides will be distributed appropriately over one or more goals for general education outcomes. The number of units assigned to a goal should reflect the extent to which the course addresses the goal.
  - GEUs assigned must be assessed, and the assignment of units appropriately supported in the course proposal.
All approved courses must have student learning objectives that link directly to at least one of the ten Goals for General Education Student Learning Outcomes and one of the VALUE rubric elements.¹

All assessment data must be collected and reviewed by the appropriate academic departments. Data must be submitted annually to the Office of Planning and Assessment.

The new General Education Council, a recommending body to the BUCC, will collaborate with the Director of the Office of Planning and Assessment to determine the effectiveness of the General Education program and will make recommendations.

Guidelines for Assigning GEUs – There is no set formula. These factors are to be considered in aggregate to assign GEUs.

- Instructional Components
  - Fraction of class time spent on outcome.
    - For example, if half of the course time is spent on specific knowledge and half is spent on analysis or problem solving using the knowledge, the units should be similarly proportioned.
  - Emphasis placed on the outcome within the course.
    - A qualitative determination.
- Student work (Direct evidence of student performance)
  - Student work appropriate to the goal or goals may include, but are not limited to, student lab work, writing, oral presentations, journals, productions, clinical experiences, field work, exhibitions, performances, examinations, ...
  - Fraction of assignments dealing with outcome.
  - Weighting of goals within evaluations of student work.
    - For example, if your evaluations involve papers and a percentage of the evaluation counts for clarity of writing, etc., an appropriate number of units should be assigned to Goal 1.

Co-Curricular Learning Experiences

Definition: An approved activity/experience that can generate GEUs for a student, but does not generate credit hours toward graduation.

- Campus organizations can propose recurring activities that must go through the approval and assessment processes for GEUs.
- There will be a mechanism for proposing a worthy activity that will generate GEUs for a student, in the model of an internship or independent study.

¹ VALUE is the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities: [www.aacu.org/value/rubrics](http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics).
Task Force Members

- Jonathan Lincoln, Academic Affairs, Co-Chair
- John Riley, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics, Co-Chair
- Mark Bauman, Educational Studies and Secondary Education
- Patricia Beyer, Geography and Geosciences
- Peter Bohling, Economics
- Carl Chimi, Business Education/Business Information Systems
- Michelle Ficca, Nursing
- Robert Gates, Educational Studies and Secondary Education
- Dennis Gehris, College of Business
- Sheila Jones, Planning and Assessment
- Molly Marnella, Early Childhood and Elementary Education
- John Okpara, Management
- Brett Simpson, Student Life
- Pamela Smith, Audiology and Speech Pathology
- Christine Sperling, Art and Art History
- Julie Vandivere, English
- Bruce Wilcox, Chemistry
- Pamela Wynn, Management