

Showcase on Teaching & Learning
January 5, 2011

A Preliminary Report
from the Task Force on General
Education Revision

Presented by:

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Why Revise General Education?

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Reaffirmation 2005 <http://accreditation.missouristate.edu/default.asp?AccreditationID=2>, pp. 15-16
- A Student's Perspective
- Academic Priorities Work Group Perspective

Formation of the Task Force

October 2010

***Etta Madden**, English – Chair
John Catau, Office of the Provost
Richard Garrad, Biomedical Sciences
Doug Gouzie, Geography, Geology and Planning
Cynthia Hail, Faculty Senate
***Kathryn Hope**, Nursing
Danae Hudson, Psychology
John Kent, Marketing

***Tom Lane**, Plaster Student Union
***Justin Mellish**, SGA
Eric Nelson, History
***Cathy Pearman**, Reading, Foundations and Technology
Pam Sailors, Philosophy/College of Humanities and Public Affairs
Katie Shellenberg, SGA

***from Academic Priorities Work Group**

Note--representation by units without general education courses

Charges to Task Force

from Office of the Provost website link:

<http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/GenEdReview/default.htm>

- Recommend goals for a general education program which reflect the character of the University and prepare our students to be successful and effective in their future roles in the 21st Century.
- The task force should organize its work into several phases. Throughout the entire process, the task force should reach out to the university community (faculty and students) to: 1) solicit ideas and views; 2) communicate the committee's process and progress; and 3) build incremental support for the task force's recommendations.

Charges to Task Force

from website: <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/GenEdReview/default.htm>

- **Three phases**
- **From Phase One:**
 - Develop knowledge and understanding of the nature and role of general education by reading appropriate literature, reviewing other exemplary general education programs (i.e. best practices), studying relevant trends and innovations, etc.
 - Develop a general education mission statement and a statement of educational principles that will guide subsequent recommendations.

Charges to Task Force

from website: <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/GenEdReview/default.htm>

- Recommend a comprehensive, appropriate, and measurable set of student learning goals/outcomes including those germane to our public affairs mission.
- Review the status of the current general education program (in light of the above student learning outcomes and assessment results) and communicate the findings to the faculty.

Work Completed to Date

- Website creation
 - Office of the Provost site
<http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/GenEdReview/default.htm>
 - Blackboard site

Work Completed to Date

- Meeting bi-monthly
 - Began in Nov.
 - Will continue, beginning January 13
- Reading about “Potholes” (Gaston & Gaff)
- Considering potential Learning Outcomes
- Watching “Seven Revolutions” video

From *Revising General Education:
Avoiding the Potholes*

- Pothole 3, Expect a holistic change.
 - Comprehensive proposals take so long to develop and can be turned down by faculty in a single meeting.
 - “think comprehensively, but act incrementally”.
- ***Consider the advantages of evolutionary- rather than revolutionary-curricular change.**

- Pothole 5, Capitulate to entrenched interests.
 - Don't merely rearrange distribution requirements in deference to those protecting the status quo.
- ***Focus above all on the needs of students.**

- Pothole 8, Plan for a short-term project.
 - Takes 2-3 years for faculty to agree on student goals and a curriculum
 - Takes an additional 4 years to implement a new program
- ***Understand that genuine curricular reform typically requires more than one year-not several months.**

- Pothole 13, Ignore the role of students.
 - Students should be included in the leadership group if possible
 - At a minimum, they should offer their views of their curricular experience, help study the current curriculum, research innovations at other institutions and help communicate with the student body
- ***Engage students in curricular reform.**

- Pothole 17, Regard general education as only curricular.
 - Enthusiasm for learning, respect for personal relationships, and awareness of one's values may be learned through extracurricular activities
- ***Remember that the co-curriculum makes an important contribution to the students' general education**

- Pothole 18, Assume liberal arts and sciences faculties to be the sole defenders of general education.
 - Gen Ed should be broadly shared by all faculty and professions
 - Provide a culminating experience that offers an opportunity for integration and for substantive creation
- ***Value the contribution all faculty members make-whatever their discipline or level of instruction-to supporting the institution's general education goals.**

- Pothole 21, Seek to continue the process of change by addition.
 - Expansion of Gen Ed is not feasible
- ***Recognize that most change must come about through trade-offs rather than expansion.**

- Pothole 25, Ignore the abundance of research that shows what educational conditions engage students and enhance their learning.
 - Committees must give as much emphasis to pedagogy as to the curriculum itself
 - “No curriculum can be more effective than the means through which it is offered”
- ***Awareness of how students learn can be as critical as determining what students are to learn.**

- Pothole 34, Avoid and isolate opponents.
 - Ignoring the loud critics does not make them go away
 - Certain committee members may be most suited to meeting individually with opponents and responding to their concerns
- ***Seek the counsel of those who oppose the proposal.**

- Pothole 38, Assume that logic will prevail.
 - Many other factors play into whether or not a proposal will be accepted (remember the University is a political entity)
- ***Do not rely solely on the academy's trust in logical argument to produce a positive decision.**

- Pothole 45, Ignore the priority any new program places on faculty development.
 - Strong development programs persuade successful scholars that they offer something worth knowing
- ***Make faculty and course development explicit priorities.**

- Pothole 48, Insist that the entire program be implemented at once.
 - Consider “pilot courses” and “pilot years”
- ***Consider the advantages in the incremental implementation of a new program.**

Considering Potential Learning Outcomes

- Multiple sources:
 - Derek Bok's *Our Underachieving Colleges* (Princeton UP 2006)
 - American Association of Colleges & University (AACU) website
 - Other institutions

Other Institutions

- “Public Affairs”- type institutions (4)
- “Peer” institutions (12)
- Institutions participating in AACU core curriculum revision program (6/32)
- Missouri institutions
- “Seven Revolutions” institutions

(Center for Strategic & International Studies Higher Education Initiative)

An Example: University of Northern Iowa

- <http://www.uni.edu/assessment/SOAExamples.shtml>

A Sampling of Learning Outcomes *(from AACU)*

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

- **Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

- **Personal and Social Responsibility, Including**

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

- **Integrative and Applied Learning, Including**

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

Work to be Completed (Jan/Feb)

- Continue considering Potential Learning Outcomes --Other Institutions
- Gather existing information from faculty & students
 - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
- Create survey for faculty & student input
 - Samples from other institutions
- Schedule meetings with faculty & students

Work to be Completed (March)

- Attend AACU workshop on revising general education
- Complete review of current general education outcomes and assessment
- Begin meetings with faculty & students

Work to be Completed (April-May)

- Continue meetings with faculty & students
- Revise draft of learning outcomes
- Prepare mission statement for general education

Questions?

Feedback

- Please take a few minutes to fill out a follow-up questionnaire regarding the 25th Showcase for Teaching and Learning (see link below).

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/R7HWBG8>

- Your feedback will help improve future Showcase offerings so that we may better serve MSU's instructional community.

THANK YOU!