

## **SENATE RESOLUTION #2371**

**TITLE: ASUW support for University Studies Review Task Force -Stage 2 Final Findings**

**DATE: October 5, 2012**

**AUTHORS: President Defebaugh**

**SPONSORS: Vice-President Kahler; Senators Hasley and Tate**

1. WHEREAS, University Studies Review Task Force stage two (USRTF) was tasked by
2. Provost Allen to review findings from stage one task force and formulate a clear and
3. comprehensive general studies curriculum requirements based on all relevant sources, and;
4. WHEREAS, the USRTF worked through the 2011-2012 academic year and held multiple
5. informational session collecting input and guidance from campus entities, as well as hosting
6. town hall forums across campus including state wide partners, and;
7. WHEREAS, the USRTF has published a final report that outlines the abstract, rational, and
8. brief, in Addendum A, and
9. WHEREAS, the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming's (ASUW) mission is to
10. serve our fellow students in the best manner possible with accurate representation and
11. professional interaction, and;
12. WHEREAS, the ASUW is tasked to represent future students and advocate the voice of the
13. students whom the change in general studies requirements will affect, and;
14. WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate has the ultimate authority for curriculum at the University of
15. Wyoming, and;
16. WHEREAS, the students of the University of Wyoming are in support of general learning
17. outcomes as outlined in the final report listed in Addendum B, and;

18. WHEREAS, students at the University of Wyoming support a general education program
19. that encourages flexibility in achieving 30 credits from Human Culture and STEM
20. disciplines while moving through clear learning objectives, and;
21. WHEREAS, students believe this program will allow students greater opportunity for
22. both breadth and depth in their studies, including the completion of minors and double
23. majors in a variety of disciplines, and;
24. WHEREAS, students also believe this program will provide undergraduates students with
25. greater access to diversified curriculum and the finest, most innovative teaching available
26. at our university.
27. THEREFORE be it resolved that the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
28. (ASUW) be in support of the University Studies Review Task Force Stage two final findings
29. as outlined in Addendum A.

**Referred to:** Academics, Technology & Sustainability Committee and Student Outreach and Policy Committee

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**Date of Passage:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(ASUW Chairperson)

“Being enacted on \_\_\_\_\_, I do hereby sign my name hereto and  
approve this Senate action.” \_\_\_\_\_  
**ASUW President**

Addendum A:

**Recommendations for a Revised General Education Program**

**University Studies Review Task Force -- Stage 2**

**Final Report  
Spring 2012**

Task Force Members: Alyson Hagy, English, Chair; Tammy Aagard, University Registrar; Penne Ainsworth, College of Business; Steve Barrett, College of Engineering & Applied Sciences; Jo Chytka, Center for Advising & Career Services; Joel Defebaugh, ASUW; Jean Garrison, International Studies/Political Science; Cheryl Goldenstein, Libraries; Margaret K. Haydon, Art; Stefan Heinz, Mathematics; John Kambutu, Educational Studies, UW/CC; Erika Prager, Office of Academic Affairs; Tucker Readdy, Kinesiology & Health; Ken Sims, Geology & Geosciences; Lynn Stalnaker, Laramie County Community College – Albany County; Karen Williams, Family & Consumer Sciences/Bachelor of Applied Science

**Abstract:** The 2011 report on general education and learning outcomes drafted by the University Studies Task Force – Stage 1 offered clear recommendations on both the size (no more than 32 credit hours) and the philosophy of a revised general education program (“*simplicity, flexibility, transparency and ease of transition*” for students). In the fall of 2011, Provost Myron Allen established the University Studies Review Task Force – Stage 2 with an explicit charge to review all relevant sources of information and to propose a set of general education requirements. Framing a “core curriculum” in terms of “desired learning outcomes,” we propose a significantly revised, 30 credit hour general education program whose architecture is simpler and which fosters the UW learning outcomes of “*critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, communication, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning.*” **We hope this proposal will be considered by the Faculty Senate in the near future.**

## **Preamble:**

In the fall of 2011 Provost Myron Allen presented the members of the University Studies Review Task Force – Stage 2 with a significant charge. We were asked to review all relevant documents, including Provost Allen’s “Revisiting University Studies Program 2003: Guidelines and Reflections on the Task of Updating the Core Curriculum” and the 2011 report on general education and learning outcomes drafted by the University Studies Review Task Force – Stage 1. Upon completion of that review, we were to identify a set of proposed general education requirements and to provide a brief analysis of any proposed changes. In addition, we were to articulate rules, or features, of a general education program that promote or restrict students’ flexibility with regards to the completion of that program. Finally, we were to review the current role of the University Studies Committee and to host a series of town hall-style meetings to discuss our recommendations.

**During March and April of 2012, we hosted three town hall meetings and gathered a great deal of thoughtful input from colleagues. We revised our report in response to that input. What follows are our final recommendations for a new general education program at UW.**

## **A Revised General Education Program for UW**

In a brisk report sent to Provost Myron Allen in the spring of 2011, the University Studies Review Task Force – Stage 1 was clear in its opinions. The University Studies Program (USP), last revamped in 2003, had become too complex, too inscrutable to students and advisors, and too difficult to complete in a timely manner. The group, led by Indy Burke, Director of Environment & Natural Resources, developed a set of learning outcomes it hoped would guide the next revision of USP. The Stage 1 Task Force also offered clear recommendations on the size of a new USP (no more than 32 credit hours), and it articulated a short set of principles that should influence any reconsideration of general education at UW. Those principles included *simplicity, flexibility, transparency* and *ease of transition* for students.

After significant discussion, our group, the Stage 2 Task Force, agreed to adopt the list of learning outcomes developed by our predecessors with some minor modifications. These outcomes are listed below and are also laid out in *Appendix A*. It takes some time and effort to master the “language” of learning outcomes. So we have developed a simple presentation of UW’s outcomes in a format we hope will be comprehensible to faculty and students alike.

## **University of Wyoming Learning Outcomes**

*Through pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, all UW students will demonstrate:*

### **Knowledge of Human Culture and the Physical and Natural World**

Through study in the arts, humanities, histories, languages, sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and technology, focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, and enhanced by exposure to diversity within the United States and around the world.

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Communication
- Quantitative reasoning
- Information literacy
- Ethical reasoning
- Independent learning
- Team-based learning
- Problem solving

### **Personal and Social Responsibility, Including**

- Community contribution – local and global
- Understanding of diverse perspectives
- Academic responsibility
- Pursuit of excellence in all endeavors
- Cultivation of personal health and wellness

Our Task Force, like the Stage 1 Task Force and Provost Allen, found many elements of the *College Learning for the New Global Century* report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise (LEAP) very persuasive. The UW Learning Outcomes bear close resemblance to the outcomes articulated in the 2007 LEAP report, as we believe they should. As Provost Allen noted in his 2010 white paper on the University Studies Program, "We should frame the purpose [of a core curriculum] in terms of desired learning outcomes" rather than in terms of an abstract rationale. We agree. And we believe the revised general education program laid out below achieves this goal.

## 1. The Architecture of a New General Education Program

The design of the proposed program is simple. Students can complete their general education requirements in 30 hours, or about one quarter of the baccalaureate degree. Coursework will be required in both Human Culture (6 hours minimum) and Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (6 hours minimum). To ensure breadth of study, the 12 hours of Human Culture and STEM coursework may not be part of a student's major. Communication skills – or writing, speaking, and work in digital media – will remain central to the core curriculum and will be completed in three 3-hour courses, one at the first-year level and two at higher levels. The two higher-level Communications courses are the only general education courses that may be *specifically* embedded within degree programs. The reduced number of embeddable elements in this program is essential to its simplicity.

Students will also take one 3-hour course in Quantitative Reasoning, provided they pass the current math placement exam. Students who fail that exam will be required to complete remedial coursework in order to earn entrance into a Quantitative Reasoning course. Students who earn a high score on the math placement exam may pass out of the Quantitative Reasoning requirement just as they can now pass out of the QA/QB requirement. As required by statute, students will complete a 3-hour course in the US/Wyoming Constitution. Finally, students will take a First Year Seminar early in their career at UW. An outline that presents the program in a one-page summary may be found in *Appendix B*. A brief rationale, also crafted for public consumption, is included in *Appendix B* as well.

What is different about this program? It shifts the focus of general education at UW away from a wide array of required 3-credit courses (*e.g.*, CA, SP, G) and toward a small slate of first-year courses that should improve student performance in reading, writing, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning. It allows students the opportunity to choose STEM and Human Culture courses outside of their majors according to their interests. It also asks departments and colleges to reconsider their curricula in response to 15 specific learning outcomes and to take some responsibility for the continued development of students' communication skills and exposure to cultural diversity and global awareness as part of the university commitment to those goals.

Discussions held during the spring semester revealed significant support for our proposal, particularly its focus on the first-year experience at UW and its clear, easy-to-complete design. But there was also some concern about the elimination of specific coursework, particularly in diversity (D), global awareness (G), oral communication (O), science (S, SP, SE, SB), and health/wellness (P). We spent many hours discussing these concerns. Our task force is composed of representatives from six colleges (each with its own mission), student groups, advising professionals, the libraries, the Registrar's office, the community colleges, and Academic Affairs. Every task force member values the full range of academic disciplines that are studied at UW, so these discussions weren't always easy. We considered many options, including reinstating some (though not all) of those requirements. We considered requiring G or D content in the first-year seminars. We also discussed redefining diversity in a way that would take into account social justice-related coursework offered at UW that is not currently part of USP to see if a broader definition of diversity might increase the number of "seats" available to students in their first or second year of study. In the end, however, we decided to endorse a

program that does not link learning outcomes to specific 3-hour courses except at the first-year level and within the Communications courses.

These decisions will not please all of our colleagues. For us, it is essential that a revised general education program be “front-loaded” to improve student skills as soon as possible. It is also essential to us that a general education program be flexible enough to accommodate the varied needs of first-year students, transfer students, the community colleges and the UW faculty. G and D coursework is deeply embedded in many majors at UW. Most of the colleges, especially those with accredited curricula, require coursework in one or both of those areas. Health and wellness coursework is also available in several colleges, and it is a central element of the co-curriculum. Colleges and departments will need to map their curricula against the general education learning outcomes in the future. Failure to articulate connection to *all* learning outcomes, particularly at the college level, will have consequences. An analysis of current course offerings at UW reveals the regular exposure of many students to social justice concerns related to race, class, gender, disability, size, age, nationality, sustainability, financial literacy, etc. UW also has faculty, in many disciplines, doing first-class work related to social justice and global awareness. Study abroad, service learning, co-curricular participation: These are areas of growth at UW. Because we see robust teaching and learning in these areas in UW’s colleges, and because we believe these outcomes are the responsibility, to some degree, of *all* colleges and programs, we opted to remain committed to a flexible, focused general education program that emphasizes 15 significant learning outcomes but which recognizes that not all students will meet those outcomes in an identical way.

## **2. A Stronger Foundation**

Our early discussions with stakeholders helped us define the strengths and weaknesses of the existing USP. The writing professionals on campus are confident about the goals and design of the current College Composition course (English 1010), even though the course is bursting with assignments because achievement in college-level writing is inextricably linked to students’ ability to master college-level reading. Furthermore, the writing professionals – and many program heads – appear to favor the goals of the existing WB and WC courses. WB courses should be instructing students how to write in their major disciplines while WC courses should be training students to write for their chosen professions. Still, there was – and is – dissatisfaction. Everyone agrees the ability to communicate well is a desirable skill for university graduates. We wondered if a revised general education program might feature even *more* writing and speaking and digital communication than the current USP. And we wondered if those communication skills might be more specifically tailored for the disciplines, particularly in upper-division courses.

We were also persuaded by testimony from professionals representing the fields of quantitative reasoning. Those colleagues do not find that the current QA/QB sequence engages students as writers, thinkers and problem solvers. They proposed new quantitative reasoning courses that would be inquiry-based rather than answer-based.

Last, but not least, we heard vigorous, passionate testimony related to the potential development of a first-year seminar. Again, similar themes struck a chord: UW students need to learn to read

at a high level. UW students need to learn to write well and to practice that skill early and often. UW students need to be better speakers before they graduate. Above all, UW students need to be presented with the expectations of a university education – including, most importantly, the ability to think critically – at the earliest possible opportunity. We began to believe many of these goals might be met by a trio of first-year courses linked by learning outcomes rather than fixed content. (Note: A list of stakeholders consulted during our deliberations may be found in *Appendix D*.)

We believe the learning outcomes of *critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and communication* are particularly important to newly-minted college students. We used those outcomes to determine that general education at UW should be built upon a firm 3-course foundation to be completed by all students in their first year.

Those courses are College Composition, a First-Year Seminar, and a single course in Quantitative Reasoning.

Therefore, we recommend one very significant change to general education at UW: the addition of a First-Year Seminar. This class should be a 3-credit class taught by instructors who are free to develop course content as they wish. But the course should be linked to College Composition and courses in Quantitative Reasoning by a shared emphasis on *critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, and communication*. College Composition should remain a reading intensive/writing-intensive course, but we suggest the course develop an awareness of non-writing communication to bolster its link to foundation-level learning outcomes. College Composition should also retain its link to information literacy. Quantitative Reasoning courses, particularly those developed as inquiry-based courses (such as the existing “Fractals” or the proposed “Mathematics and Medicine”) should also articulate their connection to *critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, and communication*.

We hope each of these foundation-level courses, especially the seminars, become fluid teaching and learning laboratories. We hope they attract the finest instructors on our faculty. A seminar could be in an art, a science, a field of engineering, or a language. A seminar could be a service-learning space. A seminar could, and often should, be taught by tenure-line professors who wish to convey their expertise to curious undergraduates. We do not wish to limit faculty innovation or student experience in any way. Yet the UW learning outcomes of *critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, and communication* should provide guidance to instructors, students, and administrators at all times

UW has attempted to integrate a first-year seminar into its general education curriculum in the past. The effort failed, primarily because neither students nor faculty seemed to grasp the seminar’s intent. For this effort to succeed, everyone involved needs to embrace the seminar, and its two sister courses, as vital to the development of university graduates who can read, write, speak, think, and solve complex problems in a sophisticated, nuanced manner. These courses should not echo the simpler, task-based classes our students leave behind when they graduate from high school. They should, instead, become the cornerstone of our undergraduate curriculum, as important to faculty and students as capstone courses in the major fields.



Students who join the Honors Program can fulfill both the College Composition and the First-Year Seminar requirement by completing the two courses that make up the Honors colloquia. The recent change in UW admissions standards will also result in a much-enlarged Synergy cohort. Synergy leaders have told us they welcome a seminar requirement, and we suspect they will develop a range of seminar options appropriate to that cadre of students. Many campus professionals believe that seminars should include not only a basic introduction to information literacy but material that aids in student transition to college. We take that advice very seriously, but we are cognizant of faculty skepticism about any seminar structure that resembles the UWYO 1000 class of yore. The College of Engineering & Applied Sciences offers a seminar, ES-1000: “Orientation to Engineering,” which appears to achieve an enviable balance of intellectual engagement and skills development. Should all seminars attempt to achieve such a balance? Will faculty commit to courses where they do not fully control the content? These are serious questions. Therefore, we recommend that those who develop seminars commit themselves, first and foremost, to the UW learning outcomes. Some departments or units may wish to offer seminars that feature “transition skills,” especially if instruction in such skills is integral to the department’s intellectual mission. We welcome exploration of seminar content and design. We hope those charged with implementing a new general education program will consult closely with faculty experts on the matter. No matter what, all seminars should remain centrally committed to developing the “habits of mind” implied by the learning outcomes listed above.

We hope departments will designate some number of their introductory-level courses as seminars. Commentary during the town hall meetings suggests that a number of interdisciplinary courses and some courses that currently bear the D, G, I, and P designations may migrate into the seminar space. There is only one caveat to such transformations: Departments may allow a particular seminar to meet a requirement within a major, but departments *may not require* that all prospective majors pass through a single seminar. A revised general education program that creates new “bottlenecks” for students is not, in our eyes, an improvement.

### **3. Writing, Speaking, and Digital Communication Throughout the Curriculum**

Just as we leaned heavily upon the recommendations of the Stage 1 Task Force to develop the trio of foundation-level courses, we also followed its lead on the topic of communication skills. The Stage 1 Task Force was firm in its belief that writing assignments and speaking assignments should be infused throughout all degree programs. The English Department cannot, and should not, be wholly responsible for teaching writing at the university. Likewise, the Department of Communications & Journalism cannot be solely responsible for teaching speaking skills. All faculty members are, *de facto*, professional writers and speakers. We do our students a great disservice if we suggest communication skills are somehow learned or practiced in a vacuum.

Therefore, we have three concrete recommendations: 1) A vertical axis similar to the one composed of current WA/WB/WC courses should be created by College Composition and two higher-level courses with course content focused to include written, oral, and digital communication assignments appropriate to the disciplines involved, 2) These courses should be consistently monitored to make sure they address learning outcomes at both the university and

program level, and 3) All UW instructors should make a renewed effort to introduce writing, speaking, and digital communication assignments, both large and small, into all of their courses. We cannot honorably complain about our students' lack of skills if we don't offer them chances to practice those skills. Faculty members concerned about their ability to teach such assignments should avail themselves of those who are experts. Leaders in English, Communications & Journalism, and the Libraries have expressed some willingness to train colleagues in these areas. The staff of the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning might play a role in this effort as well.

We suggest renaming the three-course axis Communications 1, 2, and 3 in order to link those courses, especially Communications 2 and 3, more directly to the "communications" learning outcome. These courses should also maintain the commitment to higher-order information literacy skills that is built into the current WA/WB/WC sequence. The English Department can expect to remain the primary provider of Communications 1 – College Composition. It may be a wise use of resources for English to remain a significant provider of Communications 2, especially for undeclared majors, but new course development by other departments and the maintenance of almost all existing WB courses is also desirable. Many stakeholders are satisfied with the role of College Composition in the curriculum. There is also significant satisfaction with most WC courses. Yet there is evidence that many UW students take their WB and WC courses late in their academic careers. This results in atrophied communications skills. We hope all programs will work to enhance communication practices in all of their courses. We recommend that degree programs work with campus experts, particularly those in Communications & Journalism and English to develop Communications 2 and 3 courses that blend writing, speaking, and digital communications as appropriate for their disciplines. Commentary during the town hall meetings suggests some programs will retain the O requirement that is part of the current USP. We support that development. Other programs will opt to redesign their current WB and WC courses in response to the elimination of the O requirement. It is clear to us that the time is right for a reconsideration of the design and delivery of the current WB and WC courses. We hope a revised general education program will aid in that reconsideration and result in more writing, speaking, and digital composition for our students.

We would like to reiterate that Communications 2 and 3 courses may be embedded within major programs, just as WB and WC courses are now. If students change majors, or somehow find themselves taking more than one course in the Communications 2 or 3 category, the increased exposure to an essential skill set seems a small price to pay.

Some faculty members may wonder why both Task Force 1 and 2 support the integration of speaking and digital communications skills into writing-intensive classes. The answer to that query is simple: The ability to read and synthesize complex material is linked to the ability to write well. The ability to write well is linked to the ability to communicate orally and/or via digital media. These integrated skills need to be presented to students as consistently essential to a 21<sup>st</sup> century university education.

#### **4. Flexibility for Students, Faculty, Departments and Colleges**

The Stage 1 Task Force divided UW's academic fields into two categories – Human Culture (HC) and Science/Technologies/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM). Our group was asked to determine the scope of student coursework in those categories. With the principles of flexibility and student exploration in mind, we recommend a minimum of 6 hours of coursework in both the Human Culture and STEM categories.

Departments will decide which courses go into which category. A course cannot simultaneously fulfill both requirements for a student. And some courses may be most appropriately be designated as “Neither.” We hope departments will declare huge swaths of their curricula as either HC or STEM. We trust they will support the principles of flexibility and discovery, that they will welcome non-majors into their classes whenever possible. We understand there may be some administrative constraints. Yet the general education effort at UW can only succeed if all of us work stringently to maintain a commitment to that effort even while we juggle responsibilities to our undergraduate and graduate programs. The upside to defining only two course categories (there are now more than ten) is obvious: Hundreds of courses should be readily available to thousands of UW students.

The elimination of a specific science requirement at the university level has caused some concern. All colleges except Arts & Sciences currently have a science requirement. Our proposal would allow some students in the arts and humanities to bypass the study of science if they opted to complete a minimum of 9 hours of non-science STEM coursework. We are comfortable with that possibility. Nonetheless, the College of Arts & Sciences may, as it examines its Extended Core requirements, opt to add a science requirement to ensure all of its students complete a science class.

#### **5. Assessment and the University Studies Committee**

The University Studies Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, has long been involved in approving courses for USP. We discussed the possibility of recommending a new role for the committee. In the end, however, we determined that assessment of the general education program is more properly the purview of the University Assessment Coordinators Committee. That group is already busily engaged in developing, implementing, and monitoring assessment of student learning for the university. To avoid a duplication of efforts, it makes sense that general education assessment would become part of that group's portfolio.

Because assessment of general education is a requirement of the Higher Learning Commission, and because UW has a bevy of assessment experts on its faculty, we recommend Academic Affairs establish a fellowship program to ensure the task is done well. We imagine two or three “assessment fellows” who might work on general education assessment in exchange for release time and the opportunity to produce research related to their efforts. These fellows would join

with both the University Assessment Coordinators Committee and assessment professionals in Academic Affairs to collect and interpret data related to the general education program.

The University Studies Committee can expect to remain a significant player in the evolution of the core curriculum at UW. That group should monitor assessment data gathered about the learning outcomes linked to the general education program. It might use that data to make modifications to course criteria or to suggest future revisions of the program to the Faculty Senate. While we hope a simplified general education program will significantly reduce *a priori* course approval, the committee should find itself serving as an advocate for the general education learning outcomes as faculty develop syllabi for First-Year Seminars and the Communications 1, 2 and 3 courses. We suggest the committee establish a simple process to ensure First-Year Seminar, College Composition, and Quantitative Reasoning classes remain linked through the foundation-level learning outcomes. Courses would no longer be rejected by the Committee. Instead, the committee would share advice and “best practices” to ensure the foundation of this program remains strong. Furthermore, the Committee could help faculty maintain awareness of all 15 UW learning outcomes by requesting that all courses nominated for the Human Culture (HC) or Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) categories address a small set of learning outcomes. The point here would not be to burden faculty to deepen both student and faculty awareness of the shared goals of an outcomes-driven general education curriculum.

We recognize the student learning outcomes defined in this report are broadly written at this time. More specific outcomes, and the rubrics necessary to assess those outcomes, are needed before faculty can develop courses for the revised program. We would like to see faculty presented with a list of specific elements (*e.g.*, types of knowledge or skills) for each outcome. Instructors could then choose a subset of those elements for emphasis in their courses. Because the development of these specific lists is crucial to the redesign of a general education program, we recommend that assessment fellows be indentified in the not-too-distant future. They could begin working with the University Assessment Coordinators and other interested parties to fully define student learning outcomes and to devise appropriate assessment processes. A chart that links each element of the proposed general education program to specific learning outcomes may be found in *Appendix C*.

## **6. Resources**

A general education program centered on a First-Year Seminar presupposes a shift in resources. Depending upon enrollment, and developments in concurrent enrollment (high school students taking classes at community colleges), UW may need to offer more than 60 seminars in an academic year even if the Honors Program attracts 200+ students into its colloquia. Some programs may offer more robust versions of their current I courses as seminars. Some departments are likely to offer sections of their “gateway” courses as seminars in an effort to introduce freshmen to a discipline. If the Humanities initiative gains momentum, it is possible a certain number of seminars might be tied to the activities of a Humanities Institute in some years. Still, the administrative challenge will be significant.

We recommend that Academic Affairs consider a new administrative structure for general education. Right now, the Deans (particularly the Dean of Arts & Sciences), the Director of Writing Programs, the Director of LeaRN and others maintain general education. These stakeholders, and more, will need to work together to develop a First-Year Seminar Program that is both innovative and sustainable. Coordination of excellence and achievement in the general education curriculum is vital to its success. Therefore, someone of stature will need to be put in charge of general education and the maintenance of a seminar program. If the seminar falters, the entire enterprise – particularly the development of student “habits of mind” – will falter.

At the department level, a simpler general education program should result in fewer demands on faculty. Nonetheless, commentary during the town hall meetings revealed that some departments will find it very difficult to offer annual seminars taught by a professors or lecturers. We urge each college to commit itself to a quality general education program by guaranteeing the availability of a certain number of innovative seminars each semester, some of which meet the needs of distance students.

The addition of a First-Year Seminar will not result in great change at Wyoming’s Community Colleges. In fact, our proposed program will make the transition to UW from other institutions (Wyoming community colleges included) much easier. We recommend that students who transfer to UW with fewer than 31 post-high school college credits be required to take a First-Year Seminar. Transfer students who have earned an Associate’s degree or who have completed more than 30 post-high school college credits will not be required to take a seminar. The town hall meetings brought to light significant interest in the development of a “transfer seminar” for students who arrive at UW without an Associate’s degree. We like the idea. We hope it can become a pilot project in the near future. But we do not think it is feasible to require a seminar for all transfer students at this time.

## **7. The Next Steps**

Our proposal for a revised general education program is a genuine effort to address the size and complexity of the current USP. University-wide discussion has brought forth ideas that have improved our recommendations. As the Faculty Senate examines this proposal, we ask only that our colleagues keep the principles of *simplicity*, *flexibility*, *transparency* and *ease of transition* in mind. The current USP suffers from a proliferation of embeddable elements, a shortage of classes in key areas, and a narrow definition of course categories. It also reduces the student-advisor relationship to a kind of carnival game where grasping the brass ring of a double-dip or triple-dip class becomes more important than discussion about intellectual interest or engagement. Our students crave quality advising. A simplified general education program is one way to satisfy that craving.

We also recognize that any new general education program will take time to put into place. If our proposal is attractive to the faculty, an intelligent and organized implementation process – one that involves a number of stakeholders – will have to be developed.

Curriculum revision is the most complex, and most intensely debated, form of self-examination a faculty can undertake. We trust our colleagues will remember that rigor – the intellectual quality of courses within a program – is one element faculty will always be able to control, course by

course, instructor by instructor. We also hope our colleagues will ultimately join us in endorsing a general education program that is simple to understand, flexible for all parties, and focused on developing students who will be educated citizens of our nation and the world.

## **Appendix A**

### **University of Wyoming Learning Outcomes**

*Through pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, all UW students will demonstrate:*

#### **Knowledge of Human Culture and the Physical and Natural World**

Through study in the arts, humanities, histories, languages, sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and technology, focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, and enhanced by exposure to diversity within the United States and around the world.

#### **Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Communication
- Quantitative reasoning
- Information literacy
- Ethical reasoning
- Independent learning
- Team-based learning
- Problem solving

#### **Personal and Social Responsibility, Including**

- Community contribution – local and global
- Understanding of diverse perspectives
- Academic responsibility
- Pursuit of excellence in all endeavors
- Cultivation of personal health and wellness

## **Appendix B**

### **University of Wyoming Revised General Education Program**

#### *Rationale*

The well-intentioned, comprehensive general education program currently in place at the University of Wyoming (USP 2003) is too large, too complex, and too difficult to complete in a timely manner. Its goals are also difficult for students and advisors to articulate. The revised general education program we propose is both more focused and more flexible. It is closely tied to a set of easily articulated learning outcomes. This revised program features more extensive skill development in communication and critical thinking, particularly with the addition of a first-year seminar. It also features flexibility in both course design (for faculty) and course selection (for students). We believe this program will allow students greater opportunity for both breadth and depth in their studies, including the completion of minors and double majors in a variety of disciplines. We also believe this program will provide undergraduates with greater access to the finest, most innovative teaching available at our university.

**University of Wyoming Revised General Education Program  
An Outline**

**Foundation**

**College Composition** (Communications 1) + **First Year Seminar** + **Quantitative Reasoning** [9 hrs]

- \*Courses to be completed in student's first year.
- \*Departments may count seminar credits toward a major if they wish, but a seminar *may not* be exclusively embedded within a major.

**Communication Skills**

**Communications 2** (intermediate skills) + **Communications 3** (advanced skills) [6 hrs]

- \*Writing/speaking/digital communications combined as appropriate.
- \**These courses may be embedded in majors.*

**Human Culture**

**Coursework in the arts, humanities, languages, social sciences, and histories** [6 hr *minimum*]

- \*Departments will be given the opportunity to designate courses as HC, STEM or neither.
- \*A course cannot fulfill the requirement for both categories.
- \* Courses may not be counted toward the major

**STEM**

**Coursework in science, technology, engineering and mathematics** [6 hr *minimum*]

- \*Departments will be given the opportunity to designate courses as HC, STEM or neither.
- \*A course cannot fulfill the requirement for both categories.
- \*Courses may not be counted toward the major.

**US/WY Constitution** [3 hrs]

- \*Course mandated by statute.

**Total:** 30 hours



## Current University Studies Program (2003)

<b>Core Components</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Embedded Components</b>
Intellectual Community (I)	1-3	Information Literacy (L)
Writing 1 (WA)	3	Writing 2 (WB)
Oral Communications (O)	3	Writing 3 (WC)
Quantitative Reasoning 1 (QA)	3	Global Awareness (G)
Quantitative Reasoning 2 (QB)	3	U.S. Diversity (D)
Science (S, SB, SP, SE)	4-8	
Cultural Context (C, CH, CS, CA)	9	
U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions	3	
Physical Activity and Health (P)	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30-36</b>	

## Appendix C

A revised general education program at UW should be developed and maintained in response to student learning outcomes. The broad student learning outcomes that *must* be addressed by the separate elements of a new general education program are outlined below. More specific descriptions of these outcomes, and the rubrics necessary to assess these outcomes, will have to be developed before faculty can recommend courses for a revised general education program. Courses may address outcomes in addition to those listed below. Instructors and departments may add learning outcomes to courses as appropriate to course content and design.

### **Knowledge in Human Culture and the Physical and Natural World**

Breadth and depth of knowledge through focused engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring. Enhanced by exposure to diversity within the United States and around the world.

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills for *First-Year Composition***

Communication (writing, speaking, and digital communication)  
Critical and creative thinking  
Inquiry and analysis  
Information literacy

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills for *First-Year Seminar***

Communication (writing, speaking, and digital communication)  
Critical and creative thinking  
Inquiry and analysis

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills for *Quantitative Reasoning***

Quantitative reasoning  
Communication (writing, speaking, and digital communication)  
Critical and creative thinking  
Inquiry and analysis

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills for *Communications 2 (intermediate)* and *Communications 3(advanced)***

Communication (writing, speaking, and digital communication)

## **Intellectual and Practical Skills for US/Wyoming Constitution**

Critical and creative thinking

Inquiry and analysis

### **Appendix D**

*The University Studies Review Task Force – 2 and its Chair consulted with a wide array of stakeholders during its four months of deliberations. Those stakeholders include:*

Myron Allen, Provost

Andy Hansen, Associate Provost

Carol Frost, Vice President for Special Projects

Warrie Means, Chair, Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

UW Faculty Senate

ASUW Senate

Duncan Harris, Director, Honors Program

April Heaney, Director of LeaRN & Synergy

Mary P. Sheridan, Director of Writing Programs

Joyce Stewart, Director of Freshman Composition

Caroline McCracken-Flesher, Chair, Department of English

Rebecca Roberts, Communications & Journalism

Beau Bingham, Communications & Journalism

Justin Stewart, Communications & Journalism

Dave Cozzens, Dean of Students

Ollie Walter, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

*Ad Hoc* Committee on the Revision of the A&S Extended Core – Eric Sandeen, Chair

Farhad Jafari, Chair, Mathematics

Ken Gerow, Chair, Statistics

Greg Leung, Mathematics

David Anton, Mathematics

Rudi Michalek, Physics & Astronomy

Audrey Shalinsky, Associate Dean and Assessment Coordinator, College of Arts & Sciences

Mark Byra, Chair, Kinesiology & Health

University Studies Committee – Cheryl Goldenstein, Chair

Note: The Stage 2 Task Force also received substantive written and oral input from the Dean's Council, leadership groups from each college (except the College of Law), the University Assessment Coordinators Committee, the heads of a number of departments and programs, individual faculty members, and individual students. That input has been collected and summarized, and it remains part of the Task Force's official records.

ASUW Addendum B:

**University of Wyoming Learning Outcomes**

*Through pursuit of a baccalaureate degree, all UW students will demonstrate:*

**Knowledge of Human Culture and the Physical and Natural World**

Through study in the arts, humanities, histories, languages, sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and technology, focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, and enhanced by exposure to diversity within the United States and around the world.

**Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**

Inquiry and analysis  
Critical and creative thinking  
Communication  
Quantitative reasoning  
Information literacy  
Ethical reasoning  
Independent learning  
Team-based learning  
Problem solving

**Personal and Social Responsibility, Including**

Community contribution – local and global  
Understanding of diverse perspectives  
Academic responsibility  
Pursuit of excellence in all endeavors  
Cultivation of personal health and wellness