Dear

Enclosed is a short memo recently distributed to the University of Wyoming community, providing an update on proposed revisions to UW’s general education program for the baccalaureate. I hope this information is useful to you and your colleagues. I know many community college leaders and faculty members will have additional questions. I hope this letter successfully anticipates many of them.

As we discussed at this past fall’s articulation meeting in Laramie, the proposed revisions should have no adverse impact on Wyoming community college students who wish to transfer to UW. In fact, the new program will be less complex for all UW undergraduates, and transfer will be a little easier for your students who transfer to UW after completing an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. Here are some specific transfer-related aspects of the new program that the enclosed memo doesn’t discuss:

1. UW will adhere to its existing general education articulation agreement with Wyoming community colleges. Under this agreement, UW accepts graduates of all Wyoming community colleges with Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees as having satisfied UW’s general education requirements.

2. The lone exception in the current agreement — the requirement that AA or AS graduates who haven’t completed a second college-level quantitative reasoning course must do so at UW — will become inoperative. UW’s new general education program will not require a second quantitative reasoning course.

3. The new general education program requires a first-year seminar. Out of respect for other institutions’ first-year programs, UW will not require a first-year seminar of any transfer student who has completed 30 or more transferable credits at an accredited institution of higher education.

4. The new program requires six credits each in human culture (HC) and science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) disciplines. UW’s faculty assign UW courses to these categories. Some courses may fall into neither category. UW’s Registrar will publish the results. For all transferred community college courses that fit into the statewide common course numbering system, UW will assign HC or STEM status consistent with its own classification.

5. For any community college course that does not fit into the common course numbering system, UW’s Registrar will assign a classification as HC, STEM, or neither, to help transfer students maximize the utility of their previous coursework. UW will share the learning outcomes that define these categories, and we invite community college administrators to recommend classifications for their institutions’ courses based on these outcomes.

I hope these observations settle any concerns you may have about the proposed program. More detailed information about the structure of the program is available at the following URL:

www.uwyo.edu/unst/usp-review-revision/index.html
And, if any concerns or questions remain, I and my colleagues in UW’s Office of Academic Affairs will be happy to hear from you.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you for the partnership our institutions have shared in providing first-rate higher education for the people of Wyoming and beyond. It is a source of great pride for all of us at UW.

Sincerely,

Myron B. Allen
Provost

copies: Dr. Carol Frost, Associate Provost
Dr. Sara Axelson, Vice President for Student Affairs
Dr. Tom Buchanan, President
UPDATE ON REVISIONS TO UW’S GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
5 February 2013

On Monday, January 28, the Faculty Senate passed Senate Resolution 316 ¹, supporting the “University Studies Review Task Force Stage 2 Report” and its recommendations for a revised general education program. The resolution, crafted by the Faculty Senate’s Academic Planning Committee chaired by Claudia Thompson, followed a process that began in Fall 2010. Central to the process were two faculty-led task forces, chaired by Professors Indy Burke and Alyson Hagy, respectively. These teams formulated recommendations about the learning outcomes, scope, and course requirements of a revised general education program for the UW baccalaureate. They sought broad input, debated tough questions, developed their recommendations, and modified them in response to feedback from the UW community².

At President Buchanan’s request, I plan to launch stage 3 of the process, which will resolve the practical issues needed to implement the program by Fall 2014.

By now many in the UW community are familiar with the main elements of the revised program:

1. A foundation involving coursework in communication skills, quantitative reasoning, and a first-year seminar
2. Two additional three-credit courses in communication skills; these courses may also satisfy requirements for the major
3. Six credits of human culture (HC) and six credits of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM), all taken outside the major department
5. An assessment system, to gauge the extent to which the program meets its learning objectives and to inform subsequent improvements to the program.

Each element will require the faculty make some decisions. For example:

- It should be possible to implement many of these elements — such as the requirements in communication skills, quantitative reasoning, HC, STEM, and US and Wyoming constitutions — by modifying or building on curricula in the existing University Studies Program and other current UW course offerings. Still, the details of this transition require careful attention.
- The first-year seminars are new. This requirement furnishes opportunities for innovation and iterative improvement on the part of faculty members and academic programs. I hope my office can provide some incentives for the development of these courses.
- The assessment system will require additional design work, to flesh out some of the details of a protocol for reviewing students’ work and improving the curriculum.

¹ Faculty Senate Resolution 316, retrievable at: www.uwyo.edu/facultysenate/legislation/
I have asked Associate Provost Carol Frost to appoint and charge a task force for stage 3. People who are interested in participating in the stage 3 task force should contact her at frost@uwyo.edu.

We all owe many thanks to our colleagues who contributed so much thought, energy, and leadership to stage 1 and stage 2, as well as those in the Faculty Senate who reviewed the work and made valuable suggestions. At any university, there is a wide array of philosophies and interests concerning the structure of the baccalaureate curriculum. UW is fortunate to have so many faculty members who can guide this discussion in such a principled, responsive, and collegial fashion.