Comments on University Learning Requirement Proposal

OVERALL/GENERAL COMMENTS:

*Pros:*

- Proposal is a vast improvement over current requirements.
- Learning goal approach is long overdue – it provides a basis for developing ULR courses, insures students develop appropriate conceptual abilities and allows for assessment of learning outcomes.
- Impressed by the “ways of knowing” component – emphasis on ways of thinking – not content.
- The proposals are of very high quality and practicality.
- New requirements offer more flexibility than the current GE requirements.
- Proposal captures the learning goals for the university and exposes students to a broad range of new perspectives.
- Learning goal approach is critical, faculty are accountable to demonstrate achieving these goals.
- Proposal allows substantial flexibility for faculty to build courses around their particular pedagogy.
- Proposal offers students options to specialize in another area or taking even more courses in their major.
- The current proposal is far superior to anything proposed so far.
- Overall good proposal – especially the addition of the “ways of knowing” component.
- Good idea of removing Tier III courses and the requirements for GenEd 110/111. However, what were the problems with the other GER courses? If most of the difficulties are with GenEd and Tier III, why not focus attention there? The proposed changes appear to be “dumbing down” the overall quality of education at WSU.
- The reduction of the number of credits in the General Studies curriculum will provide students additional flexibility in course selection as they pursue their degrees.
- The open discussion will lead to positive changes for the undergraduate students at WSU.
- No problem with the overlap with the major at the applied and integrative level.
- Approve of the broad base and flexibility that the proposal offers – and the fact that communication and information digestion and presenting is a major focus.
- The simplicity of the program is refreshing.
- In favor of the wide range of choice for students, the opportunities majors have to strengthen themselves, and the freshman seminar.
- The current GE system is broken and we need to start from scratch.
- Creates opportunities for the business program to participate in FYS and QR courses, maybe even a communication course (Ideas: Organizations and Society, Personal Finance and Voice to Values).

*Concerns/Suggestions:*

- Doubts about allowing many or all requirements being met within the major.
- Artists and builders do not generate knowledge-they generate artistic (and other types) of products. Given WSU’s interests in products – patents, etc. – this idea appears nowhere in the ULRs. In the Information
Literacy goal, “information” could mean artistic and other products – perhaps “information and materials” would improve the goal.

- Faculty already have huge course rotations, they must teach every summer, they get no compensation for work and are constantly asked to volunteer for more unpaid work.
- Reduce number of credits in introductory courses – allow students to engage in focused study earlier.
- With so many required credits, students often take more than 4 years to complete their studies. We need to help students in a timely way, conserve our resources and give students more opportunities to complete the requirements in their major focus.
- The “rush to the major” approach is worrisome. What happens to the student who needs time to explore and find his/her interests? Proposal seems designed for a student who enters with a clear goal and does not plan/hope/aspire to deviate from it.
- The term “culturally different other” is ambiguous – and a little disturbing.
- If one motivation underlying this proposal is cost-cutting, this proposal if effected would be a very false economy in multiple respects - at least in the longer-term. How will this proposal advance us toward AAU status at least in terms of undergraduate instruction?
- Inquiries in the Disciplines – great idea but a non-starter at WSU. We do very poorly interdisciplinarily. We do not have the appropriate relational environment on campus to pull this off.
- There is an implicit assumption that faculty will accept this and want to grow and evolve – this is not the case. Much of what is required to implement any of this is Collins Level 3-5 leadership skills, yet there are virtually no leaders on campus above level 2. Much of the problem is structural and cannot be fixed, especially with T & P guidelines the way they are – this is a systematic problem.
- Some of the proposed categories or groupings rely on terms that most faculty or students would not recognize. Many sound jargon-like and are difficult to define (Ways of Knowing, Inquiries in the Disciplines, etc.)
- Most of the problems with the current GER system revolve around requiring GenEd 110/111 and Tier III courses. Remove those requirements and the committee can then determine if new GER categories are needed using the freed credits.
- Allowing single academic units to teach a wide range of GERS is not advisable – it is not realistic to think that a Humanities department can effectively teach a Science or Math GER.
- No data has been presented to support the idea that the current GER system is broken and in need of repair – in fact WSU is rated in the top 25 schools whose graduates were the top-rated by recruiters.
- Need to provide further descriptions to set the boundaries of the ULR areas.
- The new curriculum would make it harder for students who double-major, transfer students and students switching majors.
- Change the GE program to accommodate professor’s degrees.
- In the new curriculum, departments will develop their own courses and require their students to take them – therefore not able to move from major to major.
- If the new curriculum is implemented in Fall 2012, both systems are being ran concurrently. Wouldn’t this be a resource problem? Put on hold until the budget is known.
- The GERs should stay at 40 – not 34.
- We will be frozen in this program so we shouldn’t hurry. Need to review more frequently and phase in slowly.
- The proposed GE requirements do not reflect the needs of a modern society and set a trend that WSU does not want to be a part of, namely dumbing down education.
- It feels like the proposal is reducing the “breadth” of ULRs.
There seem to be too many electives – students just want their degree and already balk at doing the existing 12-20 elective credits under the current set of requirements.

There seems to be a lot of duplication/overlapping between the ULR’s and major requirements.

Pedagogically, the new structure reflects more toward benchmarking students, without concern for preparedness, something that may cause long-term damage to the university and students.

Concern about ambitious units addressing all goals in the ULRs and creating a situation where students will not get out of their major and will not experience the breadth of knowledge.

The acronym of the new requirements: too close to URL – could be confusing.

The new requirements will become a nightmare for the Registrar’s Office.

Safeguards should be built into the system, to limit how many courses with ULR status can be required within the majors. Possibly require completely free electives within each major.

An expanded rationale for the need for ULRs should be added. ULRs should only be able to be in the major at the upper-division, only 3 ULRs should be allowed in the major.

Liberal Arts Education is not present with the proposed structure.

It seems that the intent is not to integrate students but to desegregate them by major.

The proposal seems skewed toward the desires of students in professional programs.

Recommendation: forbid departments, or limit them from stipulating which freshman seminars, competencies and ways of knowing courses their students would have to take - let them have some freedom of choice.

Limit on how many courses/credits in the major area a student can take at the foundational/inquiry levels.

Whatever the outcome of GE reform at WSU – a critical element will be the curriculum approval process and assuring it taws very closely to the intent and spirit of the changes. Otherwise it will be possible to unravel things in fairly short order – we’ve seen this with the diversity requirement.

Keep ULR courses outside the major – in the proposal it seems specialization in a major trumps a broad liberal education.

Accomplish vertical integration through requiring upper division courses – this can be accomplished through requiring more 300-400 level ULR courses outside the major – this would free up space in the first two years for a student to take courses in a major if they are ready to concentrate in a field.

Facilitate student-determined major selection – If ULR courses can be in a major, a person will be less likely to explore outside the major and may feel stuck.

Proposal affirms that WSU has an interest in creating workers and consumers, not thinkers and learners. No longer can it speak of lifelong learning, the primacy of education or the importance of critical thinking, but must refer to skill sets and vocational tracks.

It underscores that corporate interests rather than people and their needs matter - it fits perfectly with fast capitalism and its demands for ease, comfort, flexibility over against the discomfort of reflection, the complications of difference, and the hard facts of structural inequality.

It undermines the institution’s capacity to embrace its future: namely the browning of Washington state and the need to attract and educate a diverse student body and to prepare current students to engage it in an informal fashion.

It foreshadows the elimination of liberal arts.

It turns WSU away from its quest for AAU status and sets it on the path to being a vocational school with good parties for those who can afford it.

Ethics should be a foundational competency.

The learning goals are too removed from content – especially with so little science.
• The coherence of ULRs is hard to see – doubtful that students would see it – needs student friendly language.
• Regarding transfer students, we need to waive GE’s not just for those with AA’s but also for those with AST’s. Do not hand over GE responsibility to the community colleges.
• Is writing emphasized enough? Could writing communities be created?
• The proposal needs safeguards that the writing courses would be taught by someone who has qualifications in composition and rhetoric.
• Students in the professional schools who knew what major they wanted when they entered have negative feelings towards GE while those who changed majors to a CLA major have positive feelings.
• Student: GE should expose students to potential careers, fewer credit limits.
• Vancouver students think that WSU graduates should be able to do the following: math, write a paper well, not biology (some rebutted), know society (especially history and political science), communication in general also know media, read a newspaper, American government, critical thinking, logical reasoning, public speaking, culture, personal finance.
• Students would like to double-dip and take ULR credits in major to “kill 2 birds with one stone.”
• Credit reduction results in a semester full of free electives – some feel students will be too lost, some feel that students will take charge of their own education.
• There are too many grandfather layers based on too many start dates – simplify by letting some of the oldest grandfather clauses expire.
• Back and forth debate amongst two opposing preferences 1. Don’t roll out any of the ULR courses until all ULR courses are available vs. 2. Roll out ULR’s in phases so that more students can opt in.
• DDP advisors emphasize that ULR’s need to say that work experience will not count for any of the ULR’s.
• ULR courses should not occur through buyouts; rather, parts of faculty positions should be transferred to the GE budget.
• Not every course/requirement needs to be 3 credits.
• ULR’s should focus on the important areas that people usually won’t pick up on their own – what great disaster will happen if students don’t know a particular subject or skill? By this criterion – suggest dropping the “Inquiry in the Creative Arts”.
• WSU must change how it manages GE, or the type of program doesn’t matter. For instance, we must have 5-10 components per course spelled out – assess courses to avoid syllabus drift.
• Who will write and develop all of the new courses that will need to be taught? If research faculty have to spend too much of their time developing new courses, how are they going to win all those new grants and contract (one of the Provost’s highest priorities)? This point is not a “controversy” it is a disadvantage.
• Given the current financial/budgetary climate and the fact that we are doing very well by our students with the current GERS, it seems inappropriate to move forward with this proposal – tweaking to facilitate the needs of transfer students makes sense but not a complete overhaul.
• The overall proposal has no requirement where the students study social hierarchies and/or structural inequalities. Without these, our students graduate without the skills to critique structural social problems, and thus without the tools to consider remedies.
• As an advisor, I see more students saying they just want a degree (not an education). They want to come in, get through the required courses as quickly as possible, and get the paper at the end. At least with the GERS, we can introduce them to an array of new things they have never seen before.
• A concern is the number of electives that students will have in some majors – this may be a retention issue. In an example for the BS Psych degree, the student would have 49 credits of electives – the students would rebel. They just want to get the reqs done and get out – they would question why they need to take
a bunch of electives when all the required courses are finished. This problem would be much worse on
the urban campuses because there are not other things (like sports and drama, music and dorms) to keep
them interested as a community.

- The proposal seems the same except for the exclusion of the World Civ and 6 credits of science.
- It will be difficult to get students to care about the learning goals – tried to promote them in Vancouver
  and students don’t care about them or an enhanced and rigorous gen ed curriculum. Academics care
  about learning goals; students still care more about the content of a course (or just checking off
  requirements). Keep the course content paramount and just embed the learning expectations in the
  interesting content.
- Psych: Faculty do not know if losing the GER designation will affect the psychology courses. Enrollment
could decrease because students can no longer take these as GERs, or it could increase as more students
opt to select psychology as a minor or major.
- Psych: Modification of course in Psychology presents a host of problems. For example, according to
feedback the most obvious choices for ULR courses are Psych 311 and Psych 312. With current faculty
resources we are barely able to meet the demand for these classes for our majors and minors. We could
not accommodate increased demand from General education.

Alternate Proposals:

- Reduce First Year Seminar to 2 credits; allow colleges and/or departments to cooperatively design courses
  in order to facilitate a more multidisciplinary approach; change name from first Year Seminar to First
  Year Experience; change student cap level from 35 to 50.
- Add Areas of Understanding in the Arts: 9 semester credit hours;
- Add Areas of Understanding in the Sciences and Technology (STEM) 10 credits
  - Inquiry in the Biological Sciences
  - Inquiry in the Physical Sciences
  - Inquiry in the STEM disciplines
- Create a new requirement category (Interdisc./Global)
- Build in global opportunities in multiple categories.

- Concern #1: Reduction in science requirements in the GER proposal will negatively affect science literacy
  and innovation in Washington.
  - Suggested change: represent science more robustly among the GERS. 1. Addition of a science course
    requirement as part of the “foundational competencies”. A course in scientific reasoning is equally
    essential to quantitative reasoning, communication, and written communication.  2. Addition of a
    science course requirement as part of “integrative and applied learning.” A course in
    scientific/technological engagement is integral for preparation for life in our complex society.
- Concern #2: The proposed freshman seminars will be too costly to implement
  - Suggested change: eliminate the freshman seminars and provide a freshman experience that addresses
    educational goals in a financially responsible matter.
• Concern #3: The proposed changes to the GERs could limit the development of intellectual breadth in our students.
  o Suggested change: allow few of the GER courses to be taken in students’ majors. The few that I suggest are the freshman seminars (if they are offered), capstone courses, and civic engagement courses.

• CEA responses to GEC and COS proposals
  o The lack of scientific literacy is appalling – the committee agrees with COS that science requirements should not be cut from the ULRs. However, it should be more complex than simply requiring one or more science courses – this encourages students to “check off” requirements rather than become engaged. It is necessary to find ways to better engage students in the process of encouraging scientific literacy.
  o Idea of a freshman seminar with small enrollment was well received – can result in better retention of students. Not clear that the course must be 3 credits and class size of 35 students may not be achievable without additional funds.
  o Committee likes the idea of giving departments freedom to host capstone experiences for majors within the department.
  o Committee believes that civic engagement is good for all students in some form. However, meeting the civic engagement requirement should not be restricted to completion of specific courses that have a “civic engagement” designation. There are many ways students can meet the spirit of this requirement and should be interpreted broadly enough to allow alternative experiences (example – student with an internship that involves preparation for a public hearing about a proposed engineering project). Other experiences should be able to qualify by a petition.

Questions:
• How will this proposal integrate with curricula in community colleges? How will vertical integration with majors with offerings in community colleges be achieved? This system will work well for students who enter WSU as first year students but the transition may be much more difficult for transfer students.
• Where is the foreign language component in this curriculum? Does globalization only extend to the English-speaking world? Suggest requiring a 3 credit course in a foreign language at any level.
• Departments will make GERs for their major only and how will this help students to cross to new majors?
• The issue of the lab – how will it fit into the curriculum?
• What will students do with the ten credits that they will no longer be taking in ULRs? Do you envision more students taking random elective courses or are we going to cost-cut by reducing the degree from 120 to 110 credits?
• Implementation in fall 2012 – just for WSU Freshmen? When for transfer students?
• When will the WSU transfer guide be updated to reflect this transition?
• An exercise that might be helpful would be a Gap Analysis that confronts the question – why are we not doing most of these things already?
• What is the honest metacognitive scope of the committee? How well have they found other implementations, and what is their ability to benchmark the contents – let alone their successes?
• What are the benchmarks for the Gap analysis? Where are the references?
- What is your expectation about the development of ULR courses? Will individual departments and colleges do that? What is the time line?
- How will the potential changes impact Psychology specifically? For example, do we know how individual classes will be selected as ones fulfilling the new categorical requirements?
- The proposal mentions the removal of alphabetical designations for GER courses. Without these, how would anyone know if a certain class fulfills a requirement besides memorizing the catalog?
- What is the baccalaureate degree we want to give our students – more liberal art education background?
- Would the math placement exam still be required?
- Have the community colleges been made aware of the new ULR curriculum? They need 2 years notice.
- What is the process for ULR course approval/substitution process?
- Is this set of requirements too open?
- Will the Freshman Focus program with the residence halls be able to continue?
- Is it truly easier to get a minor with the proposed requirements?
- Is there any data regarding students’ reasons for taking courses that currently fulfill GERS? (i.e. do students take Psych 105 because they are interested or because it fulfills a requirement?) Will Psych 105 be considered a course fulfilling the “Ways of Knowing” requirement?
- Will college level additional graduation requirements be eliminated when the new ULR program is fully implemented?
- How has academic advising been integrated into the ULR implementation plan?
- Will it be the tendency for the students to take whatever course sounds the easiest, get the best grade with the least work and never catch the fire that would be needed to go thru the rigors of the sciences?
- If the new courses do not clearly indicate the content (i.e. Psych, History, Econ., etc) will students then have trouble relating their competencies to employers and graduate schools? This has happened in Honors.
- Will the common reading suggestions be listed on the website as they come in?
- How will Vancouver teach Inquiry in the Creative Arts when there are no fine arts faculty on this campus?
- Can we increase coherence without such radical change to current GE?
- ULR proposal is too radical - why do we have to rip out the current GE program by the roots? No need to redesign from scratch – it is too expensive.
- What about the Summer Bridge programs?
- How many existing courses will receive ULR designation vs. new courses that must be created?
- Could ethics count as citizenship?

**FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE**

*First Year Seminar*

- Provides an excellent venue to practice the foundational competencies, ways of knowing and integrative and applied learning topics.
- Provides a context that will stimulate student thinking and guide studies.
- If course is capped at 35 students, how will this be possible with loss of faculty lines and faculty taking on more teaching duties within their own departments?
- How is this addressed by junior year transfer students? Will the FYS course be available prior to the junior year admission to nursing? Would it have to be added to the junior and senior year or be waived?
- This is a good idea but will probably get shut down by the fields that have active research interests.
How will the First Year Seminars be determined? Proposal says they would be developed by individual faculty. Are these new courses or modified versions of existing courses? Would proposals be submitted to GEC for review and approval?

Good idea but many professors will teach one of their preexisting courses under a new name. Most others will teach their rather narrow research focus, which is the polar opposite of large-scale synthesis and enlightenment concerning the world around us.

Given the proposed nature of these seminars, what student learning outcomes would be expected from listening to three seminars per week for 15 weeks? Is it reasonable to develop so many sections of so many courses focused solely on faculty giving seminars? Freshmen have little understanding for such areas of science, etc. – these seminars may not be understood.

Freshman seminar would increase faculty FTE during the increased budget climate
The seminar applies to some but not for everyone
There is an absence of content in the Freshman Seminar.
Who would supervise, provide oversight and monitor quality control?
Agree with the idea that students immediately encounter faculty in their individual majors through the first year seminar.
Like the idea of capping the size to 35 students.
The reduction of the freshman experience from two courses to one will help reduce the general studies credit requirements.
Serious concerns about the ability of our university to implement this proposed change given the declining number of faculty due to loss of positions. They are already doing more with less.
This change will impact library faculty and Career Services. Do these units have the resources to meet these new demands?
The resources needed for this supervision should be identified and their long-term stability ensured before implementing this proposal.
One of the rationales is that seminar courses offered by the majors can serve as recruiting tools to draw students into various majors – double edged sword. Will programs with high freshman interest be required to offer more sections of the freshman seminar to meet student demand or will it be first-come, first served?
In selective majors, do we offer enough seminar classes for all students to attend and then the dissatisfaction comes a year later when those students are not admitted to their “chosen” major? The proposed structure could lead to students falling through the cracks and leaving the university with a bad taste which will negatively impact the university’s image.
SMB proposes that the Freshman Year Seminar should be taught at the college or university level, perhaps through the new University College. If faculty expertise from the different departments at WSU was sought to enhance these courses, many faculty would volunteer to teach “modules” throughout the semester. These modules could be designed in collaboration with the course instructors, and they could be tailored to serve as recruiting for the various majors on campus. This structure would take the burden off individual departments, ensure a degree of quality and alleviate some concerns about courses with narrow focus.
Do not support unless it is with the understanding that all faculty that will teach classes work together to have a common framework and then enough flexibility for “subject matter enthusiasm.”
Good concept yet current freshmen class sizes in CAHNRS have 100+ students. Will there be additional resources provided in order to offer classes with 35 seats?
Does WSU have sufficient space to offer the 35-seat courses?
Perhaps the Freshman Seminar should not be in the major.

Is the Freshman Seminar sufficiently rigorous? Could it be offered for fewer credits?

With the university-wide emphasis on acquiring external funding, faculty are often given course releases to fulfill the obligations of their grants. This further limits faculty time for undergraduate education.

How will the Freshman Focus program be integrated into the proposed FYS requirement?

Will a FYS taken in the student’s major be allowed to count as an elective course to complete a major or a minor?

Very small colleges with large numbers of students – it will be impossible to teach additional sections. Students could take in another department but that defeats the intent and spirit of these seminars.

The proposal suggests a course originating in a single department. This implies that the student is already committed to a single degree program. A goal of the first year should be to expose the student to a variety of educational and career paths. Because students often stay in a college, this course could be college specific and carry a college prefix; in addition, an option should also be available that is broader and could carry the UNIV prefix.

How is FYS different from GE 101 in the Vancouver experiment?

**World Civilizations**

**WC as alternative to engagement cluster:**

- We have a good set of world civilization courses - don’t replace them with an ill-defined engagement course that we can only do poorly.

- The university would be making a serious mistake if we dropped the two-semester world civilization requirement. All the engagement in the world won’t make up for a lack of historical background.

- Disappointed to learn that the world civilization courses were turned over to the history department. This narrowed the focus of these courses in a less useful way. It is much easier to remediate this problem than to make engagement courses work.

- Elimination of world civ is a step back – given that the university is boasting a global education.

- World Civ is under “new management.” The program has been reformed quite a bit from its previous incarnation: coordination and assessment have been taken very seriously and action has been taken.

- Suggestion: add “Global Knowledge” to the foundational competencies and add 3 to 6 credits of world civ.

- Suggestion: Add back a choice of Gen Ed 110 or 111 with a smaller class size and with the freshman seminar elements included. Allow faculty beyond the History Department to teach.

- Current incarnation of World Civ: already linked to University’s learning goals, classes are already supervised, students need to learn how to use library resources right away.

- Suggestion: At least one World Civ for freshman, or offer World Civ as an intercultural credit to be taken during freshmen year.

- The need for a critical mass of information on the what/why/how that has transpired in societies over time (a.k.a. history) as a means to make informed decisions on how to simultaneously foster policies that spell broad sense societal success and more important how to avoid societies’ grievous historical mistakes.

- World Civ was originally intended to accomplish what FYS intends to accomplish, and it was not just history. So instead of dropping World Civ, perhaps it could go back to its original purpose.

- A tremendous amount of resources and effort went into reorganizing GenEd 110-111. Why is it being abandoned and what will it cost to develop the Freshman Seminar? Budget efficiencies are being given as a justification but seems to be increased effort, inefficiency and cost.
WC per se:

- The essence of the proposed change is part of a 20 year cycle with respect to GenEd 110 & 111 - in 15-20 years, people will say to put all requirements all into one or two classes.
- A year-long course (GenEd 110 & 111) in the history of civilization - teaching many of the topics an educated person should know, is a good idea and should not be discontinued.
- Terminating GenEd 110 & 111 is also to the intellectual detriment of the faculty, for most professors, unless they have taught these courses, really are not that well informed on these topics themselves.
- There is historical illiteracy in this country.

FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES

- Music and other sound media (spoken language) are forms of communication and are omitted from foundational competencies.
- A video component should be required. Students know how to do this and we should exploit their expertise in a shared video lab.

Written Communication

- Writing at WSU is good, and one might look at the Writing Program for implementing cross-disciplinary programs.

Quantitative Reasoning

- Students may not be able to understand quantitative methods sufficiently after one semester of study. Need to ensure that students can do basic calculations and read graphs.
- Good idea but it will depend on the implementation. Most faculty do not have a profound understanding of their inquiry processes.
- Getting consensus on what should be in this course will be amazingly difficult, because you’re asking science faculty to be rational and understand their fields in a deeper way than most of them do.
- To fulfill the intent of the course description, the focus of the GER math courses must shift to something like the development of quantitative models for real-world processes.
- These higher-level skills are best exercised within the major, perhaps in courses parallel to the writing in the major courses. Most writing in the major courses would serve nicely if a quantitative reasoning component were instituted. A general math course could not possibly prepare students adequately.
- Another major issue is the math skills of our incoming freshmen. Most of them need more grounding in Mathematics before they can handle quantitative models – unless all our models are linear.
- Not agreeable to quantitative base if one reduces the sciences down from 10 to 4 and math from 3 to 0 – Quantitative reasoning is not in math.
- At WSU we are witnessing increasing numbers of students who do not have the knowledge to enroll in a college algebra class and need remedial education before they enter into a university-level math class.
- Is the proposed requirement for quantitative reasoning designed to allow students to avoid remedial math courses? Can students achieve quantitative reasoning but not be able to pass a high school level math exam? Will this allow students to avoid actual math courses? Students will take the path of least resistance toward education and we will witness WSU graduates who have even lower math proficiency
than students from other universities unless they are required to pass, at a minimum, a college-level algebra course.

- Caution against a scenario where individual units could select, on their own, what courses might satisfy this requirement. In such a scenario, quantitative reasoning courses that are similar in content would proliferate in various department/programs and lead to gross inefficiencies in the usage of both funds and personnel resources.

- Courses that satisfy this requirement should be taught under the guidance of Math and Statistics faculty with appropriate expertise and requisite insights for a thorough interpretation and critiquing of the results of an analysis.

- What quantitative skills should WSU students have after finishing their education? There are two main skill sets that we can teach – 1. Inferential Statistics – all US citizens should have at least a rudimentary ability to process a set of observations and make and interpret basic inferences made with such a set. 2. With lives on the line, US citizens should be able to understand the concepts of Clinical Studies, and why control populations are needed, instead of clamoring to receive untested, potentially fatal drugs, or spending untold billions on “dietary supplements” with suspect efficacy.

- In the quantitative reasoning requirement, it says that we want to “move beyond numerical calculations and memorization of equations and formulas” and expect graduates to “know how to interpret, evaluate, and critique the results of such analysis, etc.” – how will all of this happen in one 3 credit class?

**Communication**

- Second paragraph add: “The other three-credit communication courses can focus on written or non-written mediums, such as public speaking, organizational communication, conversational foreign language . . .” This allows for students to take courses that teach important life skills such as organizational behavior, selling and negotiating and having them count as GE requirements.

- Great idea which builds on strengths the university already has.

- Foreign language competency is totally absent from the gen ed curriculum. This should be a key feature of the communications objective.

**WAYS OF KNOWING**

- Humanities and Inquiry in Creative Arts should be merged into one inquiry requirement – this suggestion along with the capstone course not being part of the learning requirement would reduce the Learning Requirements to 22.

**Natural and Physical Sciences with Lab**

- ½ of the reduction of credits comes at the expense of science.

- Courses are beneficial to students entering the humanities or social science. However, students entering the sciences and engineering are delayed in building their content expertise. We should encourage undergraduate students to enter their content domain rather than prolong the time required to complete introductory courses.

- With a push for increased enrollment/interest in STEM courses with the aim of training both more and better scientists, and more informed citizens, the reductions in the required science GERs and hands-on labs are counter-productive.

- The proposed changes can only harm and undermine the important goals in terms of the science literacy of our students and our state/country as well as the interests and expertise of some of our instructors.
By cutting parts of the science component of our Gen Ed program, we move further toward becoming a pre-professional/vocational school which is not appropriate for a land-grant institution in our global and interdisciplinary age.

Since the majority of science courses are 3 or 4 credits, this proposal means that most non-science majors will end up taking 1 laboratory course. Thus it will be less flexible for students compared to the current requirement of one [P] and [B] course and one lab. Scientific literacy is key to an informed electorate – reduction is a regressive move that will not help our graduates become more marketable.

Concern that the drastic reduction in Science GERs (from 10 credits to 4 for most students) is exactly the wrong direction for WSU. Our students, and indeed our society, need to be more literate in science, not less.

If the GURs change from 10 science credits to 4, does the WSU fundraising campaign of Big Ideas supporting Health, Food and Sustainability then change?

At a time when U.S. undergraduates struggle with math and science, is it a good idea to reduce these requirements?

The 21st Century is dominated by scientific and technological issues in the workplace and the polling place. It is imperative that WSU students maintain or even increase scientific education and literacy among its students. Reducing the science credits is an extremely bad idea and elimination of the current 10 credits is irresponsible.

Science literacy is a concern. High schools are not providing this to their students, therefore they need to get it at the university.

Taking science courses away takes funds out of the departments thereby TA’s from the introductory classes will lose their jobs/assistantships.

According to the WASL, data indicated students were 72% competent in Arts and English but incompetent in Science.

If implemented, this change sends the message that WSU, a world-renowned research-intensive university with strengths in engineering, agriculture and vet med does not believe that students need a fundamental grounding in science and engineering in order to be well-informed global citizens.

For students to gain “broad exposure to, and comfort with critical and creative thought processes” in the sciences they must understand some very fundamental science concepts. Citizens cannot engage in an intelligent discussion of evolution, global warming, the genetic engineering of food sources, etc if they do not have a fundamental understanding of key concepts in science.

If there is only one science course taught, who, or what committee, is responsible for deciding what key concepts will be taught?

Since the single science course is expected to provide “foundational competency,” what will we use to measure that foundational competency has been achieved?

SMB proposes that the revised curriculum should require students to complete four foundational competencies: Communication, Written Communication, Mathematics and Natural Science.

This category is confusing. It is difficult for faculty to teach both natural and physical science combined.

7 credits in science is needed – perhaps like in the Honors College, science majors could take only one science ULR but non-science majors would take two – the lab is not essential.

In no way should we encourage non-science faculty to teach required basic science courses that satisfy GERs. We must demand that the science faculty teach science courses, that humanities faculty teach required humanities and liberal arts courses, and so on.

All the departments in COS need to look at their responsibilities to the non-science and non-engineering students and hopefully find ways to contribute in the form of new, exciting courses. So in addition to
preserving requirements, there has to be significant efforts made to offer excellent courses. Resources will always be an issue but we need to compare what we are doing with the best schools in the country.

- The GEVC report that noted the list of potential science learning outcomes as “daunting to even science majors” does not offer a compelling rationale for why these outcomes are not important, even vital to the properly educated populace; it rather focuses on the difficulty of the list and reframes many elements as “desired” rather than “essential”. It seems that the distance we are from our objective and the difficulty in getting there does not permit us to reframe what is essential as “desired” simply because it is hard to do.

**Social Sciences**

**Humanities**

**Creative Arts (including design)**

- Who decides what campus/transfer courses might fit in to creative arts (ICA)? This is essential for pre-program advising by nursing and by community colleges.
- The “Inquiry in the Creative Arts” should allow students to obtain credit for creating art (i.e. performance pieces done outside the classroom).

**INTEGRATIVE AND APPLIED LEARNING**

- More satisfactory definitions are needed – especially in the civic engagement and intercultural engagement categories.
- Moving in the wrong direction – given how difficult it was to get the [D] requirement into the curriculum.
- Learning goals read more like a job description than educational outcomes. This may influence the way civic and intercultural engagement credits are taught, not focusing on the content.
- Concerned that the ULR descriptions for Intercultural and Civic Engagement can allow interpretation so the courses and student learning stay on the surface. Focus less on the skills and more on the content or knowledge base. Without this knowledge base, students would be “engaging” but possibly not understanding the need.
- Foreign language competency is lacking in the intercultural and civic engagement objective. This objective currently focuses on political correctness but does little to encourage our students to obtain the most obvious competency needed to address intercultural issues.
- Fine arts are absent as a component – visual arts and music should be included as an option in this category.
- Question if either of these acknowledges structural inequalities. Suggestion: under Civic Engagement add something like “understand structural inequalities and the systems that produce them” and under Intercultural Engagement add “understand social hierarchies and inequalities between and within cultures”.
- This is an opportunity for the University to outline its commitment to Diversity in its GE curriculum. Have a student body that is exposed to diversity as a fundamental aspect of a university’s curriculum is going to be a necessary component to the future success of WSU graduates.

**Intercultural Engagement**

- Good citizenship cannot be explicitly taught in a course.
Acceptance of cultural diversity cannot be taught in a course. Individuals become more resistant to citizenship and respect for diversity when courses are required and advocate a particular perspective. Suggest that two of the courses in “Integrative and Applied Learning” be removed from the required courses.

- Great idea but WSU does not have the faculty resources to implement.
- Doubtful that WSU can implement an intercultural engagement requirement in a useful fashion – especially with our freshmen.
- Combine the intercultural engagement with the civic engagement courses – or allow students to select 6 of the 9 credits at the upper-division – then add back 3 science credits.
- Excited to see intercultural engagement included as a ULR. Need to describe what kind of courses would meet this requirement.
- Don’t overlook the fact that another advantage would be: promotion of opportunities with other cultures through studying abroad.
- What classes/aspects of diversity will the intercultural engagement credits consist of?

**Civic Engagement**

- It’s necessary for this type of course to be grounded in a discipline or around the issues of civic participation. It needs to have rigorous theoretical content and not be 3 credits for volunteer work. Could this be a 400-level course within the major or is it expected to be a stand-alone course?
- May be inappropriate to tokenize service learning by inserting it into a mandatory requirement. We will see meaningless service learning opportunities tacked on to classes so that they can meet the requirement. Students will desperately try to “get their hours in” for some class at WSU. At certain times of the year, social service agencies are overwhelmed by students trying to get their “ticket punched” by doing some hours of service. It will also greatly increase faculty workloads.
- Who decides what (campus/transfer courses) might fit in to civic engagement (ICE)? This is essential for pre-program advising by nursing and by community colleges.
- Another great idea that is a non-starter. Our faculty are largely not involved with anything except their own interests. We do not have the relational structure on campus to pull this off and have it be meaningful.
- The University is fundamentally out of touch with many of the economic and civic realities of American life, and the simplest implementation of a civic engagement requirement would make this painfully obvious to most of our students and alumni. A lot of what passes for civic engagement in a university does not work in the real world.
- If a civic engagement requirement is implemented, we must make absolutely sure to provide options acceptable to the more conservative and practical students. If we fail to provide such options, we will alienate a large fraction of our alumni base. A narrowly focused requirement would do more harm than good.
- Good idea but who will oversee and track it – a lot of work to coordinate.
- The concept is a meaningless euphemism diluting what was already a diluted concept – diversity.
- It appears that the proposal is asking those who manage non-profits to do the teaching, training, observing and evaluation in return for student help – this does not substitute for classroom lectures or lab experiences.
- What constitutes successful completion of volunteer work – hopefully not two hours here and there sorting out clothing.
- Limited scale in Pullman for volunteer opportunities.
• Civic engagement should be encouraged in many ways, and in many courses. It is hoped that civic engagement then becomes a more integrated part of what we do at WSU rather than a one-time activity in a class that fulfills a requirement.
• How will the new courses be identified in the catalog? It seems difficult to avoid a letter or numbering system like the one currently in place.
• Why is ICE upper division? Isn’t this a foundational skill? If it is upper division, then why is it not required of transfer students? This appears as an internal contradiction in the ULR proposal that needs to be addressed.
• ICE is not cultural enough.
• Will national service overseas count as ICE?
• Have civic engagement incorporated into a learning community.

400-level Integrative Capstone

• Provides an excellent venue to practice the foundational competencies, ways of knowing and integrative and applied learning topics.
• Critical to reinforce the competencies developed throughout the ULR process.
• Programs should be encouraged to develop capstone classes within the program focus – these courses should not be part of the required Learning Requirements.
• Tier III courses provide the last time that students get exposure to an area outside their major. Eliminating Tier III is not an advantage and there should be no new requirement for departments to have a capstone course for their majors. ULR should not delve into how different majors should fulfill their goals. Each major, in their own way should determine how their graduates are given coherence, integration and application of their major, whether it is a single course, or series of courses required by their majors.
• Approve of the allowance of offering capstone classes in the major or in related fields, and still holding the option open for students to take a capstone class in a different field.
• As core courses, our capstone courses are faculty taught; they are also writing in the major courses, thus capped at 35 students. USC would prefer that faculty time and expertise be focused at the capstone, rather than the freshman level.
• Student likes choice of taking the capstone inside or outside of the major. If one takes too many credits outside one’s major, then one doesn’t know enough about one’s major.
• If capstones in majors have prereqs, are there enough cross-college capstones for students that don’t want to take one in their major?
• For Psych, this is viewed quite negatively. In Pullman, we cannot see how we could possibly meet the needs of all of our majors with these courses due to limited number of faculty. If we were to do so, it would fundamentally change the nature of the experience (i.e. no more one-on-one or small group interaction in a working lab or practicum site. Leaves Psych with two options 1. Develop some other course as a capstone or 2. Be satisfied with the reality that many of our majors will have to complete their capstone outside of Psychology. – neither is an attractive option.