Proposal for Changes to the General Education Curriculum

Approved by General Education Council on 14 February 2011

From a number of discussions with the UIS community, the General Education Council proposes four changes to General Education and ECCE curricula:

- The substitution of a Freshman Seminar for one Comparative Societies requirement; and
- The reduction of credit hours in ENG 101 and ENG 102 from 4 to 3; and
- The elimination of the ECCE Elective; and
- The reduction of ECCE hours from 13 to 10. ECCE hours must cover 2 of the following 3 categories for at least 9 credit hours: US Communities, Global Awareness, and Engagement Experience. One hour of Speakers Series is still required.

During 2009-2011, the General Education Council has sought feedback from the UIS community regarding the possible changes to the general education and ECCE curricula. Suggestions for changes came from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. By October of 2010, we had elicited email feedback and proceeded to hold several open forums for further discussion. We can continue to consider other changes to the curriculum, but these emerged as the most salient and pressing, and elicited substantial consensus.

Freshman Seminar and Comparative Societies

For the past several years, the Council has had extensive discussions about the need for a freshman seminar that will contribute to retaining first year students by teaching college skills and helping them to more fully join and contribute to the UIS community. After consultation with the Comparative Societies faculty, the Council recommends that instead of two Comparative Societies courses, students take one freshman seminar and one Comparative Societies course.

Reduction of Hours in ENG101 and ENG102

The original reason for four-hour composition coursework at UIS was to teach both critical writing skills and more general skills traditionally taught in freshman seminars. With the introduction of freshman seminars, the English Department initiated a proposal to reduce the number of hours in composition from four to three. This change is consistent with practice at other public universities and community colleges in Illinois.

ECCE Curriculum

In initial discussions, the GEC reviewed the category of ECCE Elective for possible elimination without other changes to the curriculum. However, we found broad consensus emerged on campus for allowing students flexibility within the ECCE curriculum and for maintaining a clear mechanism for students to complete a 6-hour internship within ECCE. GEC has also been cognizant of the fact that the Elective is a category without its own content, with the exception of Ongoing Controversies, since it is a repeat of all the other categories. Thus, GEC has opted to clarify the ECCE curriculum by eliminating the ECCE Elective but allowing students to use the Engagement Experience for 6 hours. Students may elect, however, to complete the ECCE requirements using only U.S. Communities and Global Awareness. This proposal lowers the total number of ECCE hours required in the curriculum, while preserving the distinctive focus of ECCE and allowing students more flexibility. We have received feedback that reducing the number of ECCE hours could assist in recruiting and retaining those students who need to complete higher-hour majors or double majors.