The Undergraduate Council (UGC) has received a proposal from the General Education Council (GECO) regarding proposed changes to the General Education curriculum at UIS. The UGC met five times (once a joint meeting with GECO) to discuss the proposed changes and has unanimously approved the changes. All of these are proposed to go into effect in the academic year 2012-13.

This memo is based on discussions in these meetings, the proposal and the supporting documents submitted by GECO. The proposed changes and the UGC’s recommendations are as follows:

1. **The substitution of a Freshman Seminar for one Comparative Societies requirement.**

Since the transition of UIS to a comprehensive four year institution the campus has tried to establish mechanisms to ensure the retention and success of our freshmen. These efforts have taken various forms but have been missing an academically oriented Freshman Seminar course. The UGC recommends the substitution of a Freshman Seminar for one Comparative Societies requirement within the General Education curriculum. There are significant issues that still need to be resolved with this change:

   - **Establish Course Content and Goals:** The primary goal of any Freshman Seminar should be developing critical academic skills that will ensure a smooth transition from high school to college. To accommodate all first-year, non-honors students, UIS will have to offer 10-11 sections per fall and 1-2 sections per spring semester at a course cap of 20 students per section. While the course content will vary based on the expertise of the faculty teaching the sections, a set of common goals needs to be established. There needs to be appropriate oversight to ensure that all sections achieve these goals consistently.

   - **Establish Equitable Contribution by all Units:** The trend on this campus has been that majority of General Education courses have been taught by faculty from CLAS and PAA which has strained the delivery of major-specific courses and electives. The campus needs to ensure that all colleges and academic units contribute equitably in this undertaking.
• Establish Course Approval Criteria and Process: GECO should establish and disseminate to the campus clear course approval criteria and process that will help ensure the availability of enough sections of Freshman Seminar.

• Support for Faculty Teaching Freshman Seminars: Faculty on this campus have commendably met the challenges of the transitions that UIS has gone through without a lot of support. It is critical that UIS supports the development and growth of faculty teaching in these areas by offering workshops and other support.

• Establish an Assessment Process: Any change would be futile without knowing the outcomes affected by it. The effectiveness of these changes need to be assessed carefully as they could have an impact on the long-term sustainability of UIS.

• Ensure Appropriate Advising: All first-year, non-honors students must be advised into Freshman Seminar during their first semester.

• Freshman Seminar as a Prerequisite: Freshman Seminar cannot be used as a prerequisite for a major-specific requirement because these courses are designed to promote freshman skill-building and should be taken early in the college career.

2. The reduction of credit hours in ENG 101 and ENG 102 from 4 to 3.

• The introduction of the Freshman Seminar course will remove the need to teach some of the skills that were being taught in ENG 101 and 102. This will bring UIS in line with other traditional public universities and community colleges in Illinois.

3. The elimination of the ECCE elective.

• The ECCE elective category had served as a catch-all category for courses (including former Public Affairs Colloquias and Liberal Studies Colloquias) that could with some changes be included in other categories of ECCE. The elective was divided into 2 broad areas with Engagement Experiences (such as internships and service-learning) and additional coursework related to U.S. Communities and Global Awareness as their foci.

• One subcategory contained within the elective was the “On-going Controversies” courses. Careful consideration will have to be given to ensure transition of the courses in this subcategory to one of the remaining categories of ECCE.

• The elimination of the ECCE elective will streamline the ECCE curriculum reducing the number of required ECCE hours.

4. 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.

• ECCE coursework has been one of the distinctive aspects of General Education at UIS that has met with an equal share of admiration and disdain. The admiration
stems from the fact that ECCE categories have provided an intellectually enriching experience to our students. The disdain has arisen from a lack of understanding of the categories and from a concern about the quality and value of the coursework.

- This change gives students some latitude to select the categories of ECCE that are most valuable to them, while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum.
- This change preserves the ability of departments to require and students to complete a 6-hour internship through ECCE, which was desirable to departments that currently have these requirements.

This proposal achieves two main accomplishments:

1. Lowering the Total Number of Hours in the General Education Curriculum. This proposal lowers the total number of hours in general education from 55 to 50 for students entering with fewer than 30 hours of college credit, and from 50-52 to 47 for students entering with 30 or more hours of college credit.
2. General Education Reform as a Campus Reflection Process. These changes are part of a maturation process the campus is engaged in to become a full four-year public liberal arts institution. The campus should regularly evaluate the general education needs of its students as higher education and UIS continue to evolve.

It is critical that appropriate data collection is undertaken as these changes are implemented to gauge the effect on admissions, recruitment and retention.

HDB