

Central Connecticut State University
UNIVERSITY SENATE ACTION

Senate Motion Number FS 11.12.033B

TO: President Jack Miller

FROM: President of the University Senate

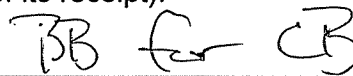
1. The attached motion of the University Senate, dealing with: **Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education with AMENMENTS** is presented to you for your consideration.
2. This motion was adopted by the University Senate on **4/23/2012**.
3. After considering this motion, please indicate your action on this form, and return it together with the original copy to the President of the University Senate.
4. Under the By-Laws of the University Senate, Section 3.8, the following schedule of action is to be observed.

a) By **5/7/2012**, Senate action reported to the President of the University. (Within five school days of the session in which they are adopted).

b) By **5/15/2012**, the President of the University to return the motion to the President of the Senate. (Within ten school days of its receipt).

4/30/2012

Date



Candace Barrington, President, University Senate

ENDORSEMENT:

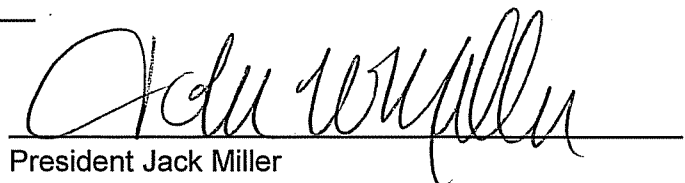
TO: President of the University Senate

FROM: President Jack Miller

1. Motion Approved : ✓
2. Motion Disapproved: _____ (Explanatory statement must be appended).
3. Action "is deferred": _____
4. Resolution Noted: _____
5. Other: _____

5/22/12

Date


President Jack Miller

**Report of the CCSU Faculty Senate
Ad Hoc Committee for General Education**

WITH ATTACHED AMENDMENTS

March 5, 2012

Committee Members:

Thomas Burkholder (Chemistry & Biochemistry)
Mary Anne Nunn (English)
Olga Petkova (Management Information Systems)
Timothy Reagan (Teacher Education)
Paul Resetarits (Manufacturing and Construction Management)
Robert Wolff, Ad Hoc Committee Chair (History)

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Preface

In October 2010 the Faculty Senate charged this ad hoc committee with the task of investigating the state of General Education and, if it seemed appropriate, proposing a design for a revised General Education program. This report represents the culmination of that effort. It consists of three proposals: 1) a design for General Education; 2) a timetable for its implementation; and, 3) a recommendation for a standing committee for oversight of General Education.

In devising its proposals for the revision of General Education, the Committee worked from the following assumptions:

- General Education must reflect the shared goals of the faculty. Its design should support the educational objectives of the faculty but carefully consider objectives supported by students and staff.
- Discussion about the appropriate content in General Education should be based upon academic merit, not upon perceived departmental or programmatic prerogatives. All requirements should have the broad support of the campus community. (The Ad Hoc Committee started from scratch, taking no current requirement for granted.)
- The process of revising General Education should be as transparent as possible. To this end, the Committee held open meetings for gathering information, conducted campus-wide electronic surveys, and maintained a blog (<http://you.ccsu.edu/gened/>) open to contributions from all members of the campus community. Members of the Committee have met with numerous programs and departments as they refined this proposal.

Based upon all the information gathered by the Committee, the faculty – as well as students and staff – favor a General Education program that is more flexible than the current one.

I. A Design for a Revised General Education at CCSU

Whereas in October 2010 the Faculty Senate created an Ad Hoc Committee for General Education to investigate “whether there is a need and/or desire to redesign the General Education program,” and,

Whereas in February 2011 the Ad Hoc Committee reported to the Senate that there is both a need and a desire to redesign General Education,” and,

Whereas the Faculty Senate then charged the Ad Hoc Committee with “designing a General Education program that takes into account the needs of our students, as well as our faculty resources,” and,

Whereas the Ad Hoc Committee has conducted surveys, held open meetings, established a blog forum, and met upon request with departments and programs,

The Ad Hoc Committee presents the following design for a revised General Education Program at CCSU. This design will not take effect until confirmed by a committee charged with its implementation by the Faculty Senate, approved through regular Curriculum Committee procedures, and finally ratified by the Faculty Senate.

The design:

- A. General Education shall consist of the minimum number of credits required by the State of Connecticut.
- B. General Education course requirements include:
 - 1. Foundations (6-7 credits)
 - a. ENG 110 Freshman Composition (3 or 4 cr.)
 - b. Critical Inquiry Seminar [CIS] (4 cr.)
 - 2. Areas of General Education (minimum 24 cr.) as follows:
 - a. Artistic and Intellectual Expression (6 cr. minimum), including but not limited to courses in the arts and humanities
 - b. Self, Community and Society (6 cr. minimum), including but not limited to courses in the social and behavioral sciences
 - c. Scientific Inquiry (6 cr. minimum), including but not limited to courses in the natural and physical sciences, technology, and engineering
 - d. Mathematical Reasoning (6 cr. minimum), including but not limited to courses in mathematics and statistics
 - 3. Elective credits as needed to reach the minimum number required, drawn either from the Areas above or from courses approved solely as General Education electives
- C. General Education proficiency requirements include:

1. Foreign Language, demonstrated by one of the following [no change from current requirement]:
 - a. Three sequential years of one foreign language at the high school level, to be assessed at least once for the purpose of establishing its validity by requiring all incoming first-year students (or an adequate sample thereof) to complete a proficiency examination approved by the Department of Modern Languages.
 - b. Elementary proficiency as demonstrated by successfully completing a second semester-level CCSU foreign language course (112), or the equivalent at another institution. Students with no previous background in a language must take the first and second semesters (111 and 112, or 118); students who place out of 111 due to previous background in the language may satisfy the requirement by taking 112 only.
 - c. Passing a standardized examination that demonstrates knowledge of a foreign language equivalent to completion of a second semester course or higher.
 - d. Demonstration of native proficiency in a language other than English (requires evaluation of skill level by an appropriate faculty member and/or official documentation, and approval by the chair of the Department of Modern Languages).
 2. Writing Across the Curriculum, with foundations established in ENG 110 and CIS, reinforced by mid- and upper-level courses identified by each major.
 3. Information Literacy, as a component in CIS to be developed through collaboration with Library faculty and staff.
- D. Further guidelines include:
1. No course may appear in more than one of the four General Education areas above.
 2. No course designator may appear in more than two of the four General Education areas.
 3. Students may not count toward General Education more than 12 credits in any one of the four areas above.
 4. Up to 12 credits in General Education may be applied toward the major and minor (e.g., 12 cr. toward the major; 6 cr. toward the major and 6 cr. toward the minor).
 5. Areas approved by the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate may serve as the basis for tagged courses. Any course at CCSU is eligible for a tag but not all tagged courses will appear in General Education. Tagged courses approved for General Education can be used to satisfy the four areas above or counted as electives. Possibilities include CE (Community Engagement), DIV (Diversity), FW (Fitness/Wellness), PR (Personal Responsibility) and INTL (International).

Additional Comments and Discussion:

In developing its proposal for a revised General Education Program, the Ad Hoc Committee relied upon information gathered from a campus-wide survey, open meetings, blog entries, and innumerable conversations with individual colleagues and groups. This plan reflects our best effort to identify the features of a General Education program that members of the campus community share. More than anything else, it reflects the constant refrain that General Education should be less complex. Greater flexibility, however, must not come at the expense of intellectual rigor. All current courses proposed for inclusion in the new program should be reviewed by their sponsoring departments and the Curriculum Committee. It is important to add that, if approved, departments and programs can further refine General Education requirements by encumbering specific courses (as is often the case with accredited programs in teacher education, engineering, etc.) or requiring the inclusion of certain tagged areas.

State Department of Higher Education [DHE] regulations define the minimum size of General Education. The Ad Hoc Committee has assumed these regulations to require that one-third of all credits in a degree be allocated to General Education. Basing its figure upon the 130 credits required in CCSU's larger baccalaureate degrees, the Committee initially proposed a 44-credit General Education program. It has been suggested, however, that DHE requires only that General Education comprise one-third of the minimum number of credits required for an undergraduate degree, rather than one-third of the credits required in any degree. If so, the State requires only 40 credits in General Education. The Ad Hoc Committee believes this issue should be explored further. If this interpretation proves correct, CCSU should only require 40 credits, adjusting this proposal to reduce the number of elective credits.¹

General Education Course Requirements:

All students will complete **ENG 110** (Freshman Composition) as a foundational course in writing and as the beginning of a Writing Across the Curriculum sequence. Concurrently, if possible, entering first-year students will complete a Critical Inquiry Seminar. Transfer students will take a Critical Inquiry Seminar in their first semester in residence. Some sections will be designated each term for transfer students, and designed to help smooth their transition to CCSU.

The **Critical Inquiry Seminar** will be the hallmark of a revised General Education Program. Designed to emphasize critical thinking with strong guidance in writing and information literacy, Critical Inquiry Seminars should be taught by faculty from

¹ For more information, see Section 10a-34-15 and Section 10a-34-17 of the Regulations for Licensure and Accreditation of Institutions and Programs of Higher Learning at <http://www.ctdhe.org/regs/RegsAcad.htm>.

a wide variety of disciplines with representation from all four schools of the university. Faculty members may emphasize their own disciplinary expertise but are encouraged to consider interdisciplinary subjects as well as their own particular intellectual interests that may fall outside their discipline. Faculty should take the students through the process of critical inquiry— close observation, discernment of patterns, finding and evaluating sources, marshalling evidence, formulating conclusions, presenting those conclusions both orally and in writing, setting one's own conclusions into the context of others' thoughts on the subject.

Critical Inquiry Seminars will better prepare students for collegiate work, foster a sense of community among students, and aid in the institutional goal of retention. Although the format of these seminars differs from that of many First Year Experience [FYE] courses, it is essential that CIS incorporate the learning objectives of the current FYE program insofar as is possible.² Indeed, the Ad Hoc Committee envisions a gradual transition from FYE to CIS, one that is as responsive as possible to departmental and program concerns. The Ad Hoc Committee also proposes that the University sponsor a Critical Inquiry conference each semester at which students can showcase their work and learn about further opportunities for research and inquiry in areas of interest. Critical Inquiry conferences might also be scheduled alongside Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD) activities.

The revised General Education Program should consist of **four core areas**, in each of which students must complete at least six credits. This configuration will require students to acquire some degree of both breadth and depth yet provide flexibility for departments and programs that want to tailor requirements to their own needs. This design should also facilitate the transfer of credits from Connecticut's community colleges to CCSU. The Ad Hoc Committee encourages colleagues to re-think the existing categories and suggests the following core areas for further discussion.

Artistic and Intellectual Expression, because they explore human imagination and belief. Including but not limited to courses in the arts & humanities.

Self, Community and Society, to examine the relationship between individuals, their communities, and the wider societies in which they live. Including but not limited to courses in the social and behavioral sciences.

Scientific Inquiry, because science is essential for understanding the world around us. Including but not limited to courses in the natural and physical sciences.

Mathematical Reasoning, because the ability to interpret, construct and apply mathematical models allows individuals to reach quantitative conclusions. Including but not limited to courses in mathematics and statistics.

² See <http://web.ccsu.edu/fye/learningoutcomes.htm>.

After students have completed both the foundational and area requirements above, they will fill the remainder of their General Education program with **Electives**. These courses may be drawn from the areas above with the proviso that students may not count more than 12 credits in any one of the four areas toward the credits required in General Education. General Education electives may also be drawn from courses approved for General Education credit but not included in the core areas.

General Education Proficiency Requirements:

CCSU's **Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement** proved especially troubling for the Ad Hoc Committee. Some members of the faculty advocate for an expanded requirement that mandates completion of an intermediate language course or demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English. Others wish to see this requirement eliminated entirely. Many seem content with CCSU's current standard, which most entering first-year students meet through completion of three consecutive years of a second language in high school.

It is anomalous that students are permitted to satisfy a university General Education requirement through high school seat-time, yet there does not seem to be an alternative that will readily meet with the approval of the faculty. With this in mind, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends retention of the current requirement, while requiring all incoming first-year students – or a representative sample thereof -- to take a placement test in a second language (if they completed at least one year of a second language in high school). This test will gather data to inform a future discussion of foreign language requirements at CCSU. The proposed General Education Oversight Committee (or, if the Faculty Senate does not approve its creation, the University Curriculum Committee,) should review data from these tests.

The Ad Hoc Committee also recommends that CCSU adopt a **Writing Across the Curriculum** program following the broad outlines proposed by the Senate's Ad Hoc Committee on that subject. First-year students should receive foundational support in writing from ENG 110 and the Critical Inquiry Seminar, while completing mid- and upper-level courses in their major that reinforce skills and develop writing appropriate to their major disciplines.

The Critical Inquiry Seminars should also provide a basic foundation in **Information Literacy**, drawing in part upon the expertise available in the Burritt Library. Additional training with the goal of information fluency should be provided within the major.

The creation of **tagged courses** will support General Education revision by allowing groups designated by the Faculty Senate to propose to the Curriculum Committee course areas that meet specific goals and objectives beyond those outlined for General Education. Those tags might include areas currently included in General

Education but not required in the proposed revision, such as Fitness/Wellness and International, or areas of growing interest, such as Diversity and Community Engagement. One proposal received by the Ad Hoc Committee would require all students to complete at least one tagged course within General Education. After some discussion, the Committee determined that such requirements should be left to the discretion of the undergraduate schools, as well as individual departments and programs.

Learning Goals and Objectives

The Ad Hoc Committee recognizes the importance of developing goals and learning objectives for General Education. The following are *suggested* goals and objectives, offered solely for the purpose of starting discussion.

Students will know, understand, and be able to apply major concepts drawn from the four areas of General Education:

- Artistic and Intellectual Expression
- Self, Community and Society
- Scientific Inquiry
- Mathematical Reasoning

Students shall develop the following skills:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Written and Oral Communication
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy

The Faculty Senate ad hoc committee charged with the implementation of this design should determine learning objectives *before* soliciting courses for inclusion in the revised General Education program.³

Section II. Timetable for General Education Revision

Whereas the Faculty Senate has approved a design for revision of General Education at CCSU, the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education recommends adoption of the following timetable for its implementation.

Spring 2012: Creation of a new Ad Hoc Committee for General Education Implementation. Committee reviews the proposed design of General Education and begins to identify general learning objectives for its various requirements.

³ These goals and objectives draw in part upon Liberal Education & America's Promise [LEAP], an initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). For more information, see <http://www.aacu.org/leap/>.

Fall 2012: No later than October 1, 2012, the Ad Hoc Committee will submit to the Curriculum Committee a plan for implementation of the revised General Education program, amending the design approved in Spring 2012 if deemed essential. By this date, the Ad Hoc Committee must distribute the proposed plan to all academic departments and seek review by the Deans of the four undergraduate schools. The Ad Hoc Committee will include in its plan recommended learning objectives for each General Education requirement, as well as a timetable for departments to submit courses for inclusion within the new program. Following this schedule the plan for implementation should be approved by the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate in December 2012.

Spring 2013 and Fall 2013: No later than September 30, 2013, departments will submit courses for inclusion in the new General Education program, subject to regular Curriculum Committee procedures.

Spring 2014: Courses approved for General Education available for fall course registration.

Fall 2014: Revised General Education program takes effect.

Knowing that both the Connecticut General Assembly and the Board of Regents are considering plans to develop a common General Education program for all community colleges and four-year schools, it is reasonable to ask if this timetable can be accelerated. After nearly eighteen months of discussion, however, it would be unfortunate if the Faculty Senate felt compelled to rush the implementation of a revised General Education program. Haste rarely allows for transparent deliberation.

What would it take to have a revised General Education program in place for entering students in Fall 2013? Simply put, the Faculty Senate would have to devise a process that would collapse the distinction it made between “design” and “implementation” in its charge to the Ad Hoc Committee for Revision of General Education in October 2010. Departments and programs would have to propose courses for inclusion in the new program early in Fall 2012, so that they could be approved by the end of the term. Only that, it seems to this Committee, would make it possible for courses to appear during registration for the Fall 2013 semester.

III. A Proposal for a Standing Committee for General Education Oversight

Whereas the Ad Hoc Committee for General Education finds that oversight of General Education goals, objectives, and design, should be the responsibility of a standing committee appointed for that purpose; and,

Whereas the Curriculum Committee shall retain final authority over the content of General Education,

The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate create a standing Committee for General Education Oversight, charged with the following responsibilities:

- To solicit and review suggestions for revisions to General Education;
- To analyze data collected regarding General Education outcomes, in conjunction with the University Assessment Committee;
- To propose revisions to the General Education program through the curricular process established by the University Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate.

The Committee shall be composed of seven members as follows:

- Ammon School of Arts & Sciences (3)
- School of Business (1)
- School of Education and Professional Studies (1)
- School of Engineering and Technology (1)
- Chair of University Curriculum Committee or designee chosen from the membership of the Curriculum Committee (1)

Amendments to General Education Proposal approved by the senate on 4/23

The following 4 amendments were approved. 10 amendments were defeated.

1

Allow variable credit (3 or 4) for the Critical Inquiry Seminars, which includes the possibility of allowing the requirement to be filled by one 3-credit course, two 2-credit courses, or one 4-credit course.

2

400-level courses in General Education cannot be taken for graduate credit, and 400-level courses bearing graduate credit cannot be taken for General Education credit.

3

Students may take no more than nine credits in any single course designator (e.g. ENG, HIST...) in any one of the four Areas of General Education.

8

Add to the current proposal a requirement for foreign language proficiency equivalent to two semesters of study. In other words, the current requirement, except it can't be satisfied with high school seat time alone: entering students would take a proficiency test, and if they didn't meet the proficiency requirement, they would have to take the appropriate classes.