General Education Learning Outcomes
Report to Faculty Senate and OAA

General Education Revision Steering Committee
2/17/2012
General Education Learning Outcomes

The proposed general education requirements for undergraduates are defined in terms of learning outcomes. These outcomes begin at the foundational level and their achievement is documented after specific general education courses or specified experiences are completed. These outcomes will be expanded and built upon during the remainder of the baccalaureate degree work, including the student’s major. A capstone experience of some type for all bachelor’s degrees is a culmination of the educational process.

This proposal is a shift in approach for the university’s undergraduate curriculum. It will ensure students have achieved foundational learning outcomes so that instruction in the major can focus on development of subject-specific and higher-order learning outcomes that are extensions of these foundational competencies.

Criteria for Learning Outcomes:

1. Must reflect the foundational skills and knowledge that the faculty actually want students to achieve.
2. Must be sufficiently broad to be achievable by a variety of means and disciplines.
3. Must be defined in terms that allow observation, evidence collection and eventually measurement.
4. Must reflect a high standard of expectation.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Each of the learning outcomes is demonstrated by means of formal student expression, which may be written, oral, artistic, ASL, or Braille as appropriate. These student products, which should be kept in a centralized university repository, may be used by the instructor as part of a grading scheme and may be sampled by the institution for institutional level assessment.

Assessment refers to the process of using students’ work to verify that learning outcomes desired by the faculty and institution are being achieved and that appropriate action is being taken to assure continuous improvement. All students who have completed their general education requirements will be deemed to have the skills described in the learning outcomes and able to apply those skills to coursework within the major.

Proposed General Learning Outcomes for Baccalaureate Education¹

1) Communication Skills and Information Literacy

Students will demonstrate foundational competency in written communication, oral communication and information literacy.

a) As writer or speaker, students:
   i) Demonstrate an understanding of context, purpose, and audience.
   ii) Develop content using credible sources, as appropriate to the communication task.

¹ These learning outcomes are intended to be applicable to all undergraduate students regardless of their ability/disability status. Statements of these learning outcomes and their assessment are intended to be inclusive of varied forms of communication/expression and perception.
iii) Organize a presentation coherently and logically.
iv) Use appropriate conventions.
   (1) Writing: Use style appropriate to genre and discipline.
   (2) Speaking: Use verbal and nonverbal conventions appropriate to audience and purpose of speech.
v) Use appropriate syntax, grammar, and
   (1) Writing: punctuation and spelling.
   (2) Speaking: pauses, intonation, and pronunciation.
b) As writer, students:
i) Collaborate with others to improve writing through feedback and revision.
ii) Use writing for multiple purposes, such as improving learning, critical thinking, and reflection.
c) As speaker, students:
i) Demonstrate behavioral flexibility in response to unexpected variations in audience or context.
ii) Employ appropriate nonverbal behavior
d) As reader or listener, students:
i) Identify a writer’s or a speaker’s purpose(s) and rhetorical technique(s).
ii) Critically analyze claims, appeals, and evidence in arguments.
e) Students demonstrate information literacy by effectively, ethically, and responsibly using appropriate
   sources and technologies to accomplish an intended purpose.
i) Use appropriate tools and technologies to identify, access, analyze, evaluate, and document
   information.
ii) Use information effectively and appropriately to accomplish an intended purpose.
iii) Access and use information responsibly, ethically, and legally in accordance with disciplinary
   standards.

2) Critical Thinking and Complex Reasoning Skills
   Students will demonstrate foundational competency in creating and evaluating reasoned arguments, and
   employing quantitative, qualitative, and normative information in such arguments.
a) Students create reasoned arguments and evaluate the reasonableness of arguments. They
   i) State the nature of controversies as propositions, including fact (i.e., what is), value (i.e., what
      should be), and policy (i.e., what steps can be taken) propositions;
   ii) Recognize and choose the premises, purposes, audiences, and contexts of propositions;
   iii) Recognize and choose the appropriate logic to support propositions, including symbolic, deductive,
      and inductive logic;
   iv) Recognize and choose the appropriate information to support propositions, including the sources,
      authority, and biases of information;
   v) Recognize and be able to argue both sides of a proposition, and employ logic and information to
      challenge opposing propositions.
b) Students employ the appropriate analysis and application of
   i) Quantitative information, such that they:
      (1) Identify the value and limitations of magnitude (i.e., how large) and multitude (i.e., how many)
         measures;
      (2) Manipulate and express such measures with arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, and statistical
         methods;
(3) Manipulate and express such measures with graphs, charts, and tables;
(4) Manipulate and express such measures to solve practical and multistage problems;

ii) Qualitative information, such that they:
(1) Identify the value and limitations of character (i.e., the nature of a thing) and capacity (i.e., what a thing can do) assessments;
(2) Interpret and express assessments with a contrary structure, such as truth versus falsehood or good versus evil;
(3) Interpret and express assessments with a relational structure, such as the degree of beauty or the level of success;
(4) Interpret and express assessments with a unique structure, such as cultural ethos or historical eras;

iii) Normative information, such that they:
(1) Identify the value and limitations of prescriptive (i.e., how things should be) and proscriptive (i.e., how things shouldn’t be) claims;
(2) Acknowledge and express claims concerning personal behavior, such as honesty and virtue;
(3) Acknowledge and express claims concerning social life, such as pluralism and justice;
(4) Acknowledge and express claims concerning mental life, such as respect for evidence and open-mindedness;
(5) Describe how such claims are used to make ethical decisions

3) **Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities.**

Students will demonstrate foundational competency in knowledge of representative content and methods of inquiry of the natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities.

a) **Knowledge/Content competency**
   i) Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts, findings, and historical perspectives in each disciplinary area
   ii) Find information resources in each disciplinary area and evaluate their reliability.
   iii) Articulate the role of ethics in each disciplinary area.
   iv) Demonstrate an understanding of scientific and technical issues at a functional level and articulate how they impact our society and economy.
   v) Demonstrate a basic knowledge of major cultures/societies of the world including their art, history, and geography

b) **Methods of Inquiry competency**
   i) Articulate the nature of the scientific method (in the natural and social sciences and humanities), apply it through hands-on laboratory experiments, and critically evaluate applications of the scientific method.
   ii) Solve quantitative and qualitative problems in the natural and social sciences
   iii) Use rhetorical skills in the analysis of creative works (arts and humanities) including their social, political, emotional and psychological components.
   iv) Demonstrate effective written and oral communication appropriate to each disciplinary area.
4) Social, Personal and Environmental Responsibility.
Students will demonstrate foundational competency in knowledge and skills that promote social, personal, and environmental responsibility.

a) Awareness of Multiple Dimensions of Diversity (broadly defined to include age, disability, gender, education, ethnicity, nationality, race, sexuality, social class, religion) such that students:
   i) Recognize multiple perspectives on cross-cultural difference, both within the United States and across countries.
   ii) Articulate the ways that diversity impacts the understanding and application of knowledge.
   iii) Work successfully in teams, composed of diverse people, to complete desired projects or reach desired goals.

b) Awareness of Responsible Citizenship such that students:
   i) Articulate the rights and responsibilities of national and global citizenship grounded in basic knowledge of the evolution of democracy, civil rights, and international human rights.
   ii) Demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas important to functioning responsibly in the contemporary world.
      (1) Recognize the importance of and understand the elements of financial literacy.
      (2) Understand the habits that contribute to personal health, and describe ways to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle
      (3) Recognize the importance and complexities of environmental sustainability, and distinguish behaviors and choices that contribute to it.
      (4) Recognize the legal, ethical, and constitutional use of power and authority.