

Provost Hamilton recently announced the six new learning outcomes or competencies that are being implemented in the General Education Component of undergraduate education at LSU. I am writing to present details on (I) implementation of these competencies, (II) formal assessment of the competencies, (III) implementation this semester of a five-year cycle for FSCGE review of General Education courses, and (IV) revised criteria for listing a course as General Education. Please forward this correspondence to all departmental faculty members at your earliest convenience, and remind them that additional information is available at the LSU Faculty Senate Website (<http://www.lsu.edu/senate/>).

Implementation of the Competencies. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the FSCGE evaluated more than 300 departmental proposals for listing a course as General Education. This task proved to be daunting, but, more importantly, informative about qualitative aspects of general education at LSU. By the beginning of Spring Semester 2010, the committee had two sources of motivation for changes in the component—first, information garnered through the evaluation of course proposals, and second, the SACS-COC obligation to assess students’ achievement of General Education competencies during their senior year of study.

When the review process began, a total of 25 learning outcomes were associated with the six areas of General Education: English Composition (5), Arts (4), Natural Sciences (4), Humanities (3), Analytical Reasoning (4), and Social Sciences (5). The process demonstrated that some of the outcomes were being addressed rarely, if at all, across the more than 300 courses. It also suggested that, in many General Education courses, there is little or no intentionality with respect to the inclusion of learning strategies for achieving General Education outcomes. In addition to studying the framework for general education at a number of comparable universities, the committee carefully considered the LEAP initiative (Liberal Education and America’s Promise), which is a collaboration between the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and many of its member campuses with the goal of connecting employers and educational institutions in the determination and implementation of essential learning outcomes or competencies that are highly correlated with students’ success in the current global economy (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>). The FSCGE eventually articulated six competencies to serve as a general education learning paradigm for LSU graduates: *they will communicate effectively through multiple media; will have a basic appreciation of historical, cultural and philosophical complexity; will be aware of the economic, political, cultural, and linguistic factors which inform global interdependence; will identify and solve important problems through research-based inquiry which employs scientific and mathematical methods, and appropriate technology; and will have the requisite abilities and motivation to participate effectively in the civic life of communities.* While the role of General Education courses is central in students’ achievement of these competencies, the competencies are also addressed in upper-division elective courses and in courses in a student’s major field of study. The competencies and their particular associations, including responsibility for assessment, are as follows:

1. LSU graduates will demonstrate effective communication of complex knowledge and ideas through written, oral, visual, and technological media.

All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

2. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity which supports sophisticated discourse.

All Humanities General Education courses

3. LSU graduates will conduct research-based inquiry, including articulation of complex disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems, effective evaluation and analysis of primary and secondary sources, and integration of relevant information into original discourse.

All English Composition General Education courses

All Arts General Education Courses

All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

4. LSU graduates will employ scientific and mathematical methods and technology in the resolution of laboratory and real-world problems.

All Analytical Reasoning General Education Courses

All Natural Science General Education Courses

5. LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

All Social Sciences General Education Courses

6. LSU graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and disposition which attest to a commitment and ability to recognize and to participate in processes which improve the civic life of communities.

All major fields of study (assessed at the degree program level)

The Five-Year Cycle for FSCGE Review of General Education Courses. This spring, a process for an ongoing 5-year formal review of all General Education courses is being implemented. With more than 300 courses currently listed, the committee will review 30-to-40 courses each semester. The review schedule is attached in an Excel file.

Assessment of General Education Learning Competencies. Assessment of General Education competencies occurs at two levels: first, at the general education course level, utilizing the procedures described in the "Proposal to List a Course as General Education" approved by the FSCGE for each course; second, through a general process involving a sample of graduating seniors during their final (Spring) semester. *Regarding course-level assessment, if a course is taught during the academic year, the department must post a learning outcomes report on the LSU Planning and Assessment Matrix by June 15, documenting the results and explaining any changes the faculty are considering or implementing as a result of the assessment.* Regarding assessment at the senior level, the FSCGE will triangulate information generated through the sample group with information provided in each academic department's Learning Outcomes Report on students' achievement of degree program learning outcomes.

As a course comes up for review within the five-year cycle which starts this semester, the department will transition to the *single* learning competency associated with the General Education area in which the course resides. For example, whereas courses in the Social Sciences area previously involved choosing three of the five outcomes formerly associated with the area, under the revised system the

course will be responsible for assessment of the one competency designated for the Social Sciences area (i.e., #5 above). Until the course comes up for review, departments will continue with the assessment plan described in the course approval form that is on record. Should they wish to transition to the single competency before the course comes up for official review, departments can go ahead with the transition by submitting a "Proposal to Revise Assessment Procedure," which can be downloaded from the FSCGE web-page for the pertinent area. Examples of effective assessment measures are available at the General Education link on the LSU Faculty Senate website, under "Five-Year Cycle for Re-Approval as a General Education Course."

Revised Criteria for Listing a Course as General Education. The following criteria for designation as a General Education course will pertain to all proposals as they are reviewed during the five-year cycle. Departments should review these criteria carefully, and if changes are needed to meet the criteria—such as dropping a prerequisite or changing a course number—they should make the necessary changes through the Faculty Senate Courses and Curricula Committee prior to submission of the proposal to renew the course.

- (1) Courses listed as 3000 or 4000 level courses will not be approved for General Education credit.
- (2) General Education courses may have no more than one prerequisite, and that prerequisite must be a General Education course.
- (3) General Education courses cannot limit enrollment to students in a specific major or in a cohort. They must be open to all students.
- (4) Courses that are cross-listed must either file a joint proposal to have General Education courses renewed, or, alternatively, each department must submit a separate proposal for the course. If one of the cross-listing departments does not participate in the process to have the course approved for General Education credit, the cross listing must be deleted, or the course will not be approved for General Education credit.
- (5) Courses can be listed in only one area of General Education. Honors courses offered as seminars are exempted from this criterion, but Honors seminars listed in multiple General Education areas must complete the assessment of the General Education learning competency associated with each of the General Education areas for which credit can be given.
- (6) It is the responsibility of the Honors College to ensure that seminar courses approved for credit in General Education are not identical to courses taught in the home academic department under other course numbers.

Departments with courses up for review this semester must email the Proposal to List a Course as General Education to gened@lsu.edu one week before the following dates on which the proposals will be reviewed by the FSCGE:

March 15: French 1001, 1002, 1202; Astrology 1101, 1102; AGRO 1001; FDSC 1075

March 30: All English courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences areas

April 12: ART 2401, 2470; MEDP 2051; PHSC 1001, 1002; PHYS 2001, 2002; EDCI 2001, 2500

April 27: ARAB 1101, 1102; CHIN 1101, 1102; GERM 1101, 1102; GREK 1001; HEBR 1001, 1002; ITAL 1001, 1002; LATN 1001; SPAN 1050, 1101, 1102, 1152.

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