



FACULTY SALARY & BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Figen Mikek, Chair ECS/UAS
FROM: Robert (Bob) Hollister, Chair, FSBC
SUBJECT: Review of General Revision Final Proposal
DATE: January 16, 2012
CC: Lisa Haight, Faculty Senate; Robert Adams, Chair UCC; Roger Gilles, Chair GEC

At its meeting on January 13, 2012 FSBC discussed the proposed revision of the General Education Program. Although FSBC has no formal review responsibility of the proposal, as was the case for the UCC, the committee believed a cursory review was warranted given that FSBC is charged with program budgetary reviews.

FSBC supports the proposed revision of the General Education Program. In general the committee was very supportive of the changes and encouraged to see significant improvements to General Education which should also result in faster graduation rates due to the removal of bottle necks associated with taking 2 courses within a theme. While the proposal does not involve clearly defined budget implications (the same number of courses are required as are currently required), FSBC notes that many of the changes do have potentially significant budgetary implications and it would be helpful to identify these costs to assist with proper cost benefit analysis. We list the issues identified as most relevant to the financial concerns below and encourage the GE Committee and the Administration to consider these as the program progress. Nearly all of our concerns were focused on the change from Themes to Issues.

1. The maximum course size and upper level requirement have clear potential cost implications. While most courses currently offered are less than 40 students and are already upper level, the emphasis on integrative experiences which focus on collaboration have the potential to require more tenure track faculty involvement and result in more cost. This will be particularly true for courses with fewer than 40 students.
2. There will be clear needs for funds to provide professional development and oversight as courses transition from a Theme to an Issue and as new Issue courses are developed. The committee was encouraged that significant forethought has gone into this process, but also points out the significant effort necessary for faculty and staff to make this process happen smoothly. This will involve curriculum changes and student advising.
3. The committee believes that the cost associated with changing the number of required courses should be tracked and used to inform future curriculum changes. We provide below a simplistic estimate of the cost of the Issues course and Capstone requirement for comparison.

GE Issues Course cost and cost comparison—

Assumptions:

- 1) Undergraduate Headcount F2011 20,932 students
- 2) CLAS teaches 95% of GE courses
- 3) Average cost per credit hour CLAS \$152
- 4) Average cost per credit hour GVSU as a whole \$187

① Estimated Cost of an upper level GE Issues Course

20,932 * \$152 = \$3,181,664; per 3 credits = \$9,544,992;

(two courses, \$19,089,984)

② Estimated Cost of the Capstone Course

20,932 * \$187 = \$3,914,284; per 3 credits = \$11,742,852

4. Given that transfer students at GVSU graduate with on average 9 credits more than non-transfer students (median credits: FTIAC -128; Transfer -137) and take on more debt, we encourage the GE Committee to drop the non-transfer requirement for upper level Issue course as soon as appropriate transfers are identified.