

To: Deans and Department Chairs

Re: Proposed Changes in the General Education Program

The Undergraduate Academic Council will be proposing a set of changes in the General Education Program to the University Senate for the Senate's May meeting. Before finalizing the proposal, the Council is soliciting input from the University. Noting that this is a draft, not the final version, please discuss the attached changes with your department and respond with any suggestions before April 20.

Please send your response to John Monfasani, Chair, Undergraduate Academic Council, monf@csc.albany.edu, or Carolyn MacDonald, Chair, General Education Committee, c.macdonald@albany.edu before April 20.

General Education Program

	SUNY mandate	Current Requirement	Changes Proposed by the Undergraduate Academic Council to take effect 6/07
Total Credits	30	30 credits (Can count towards major/minor)	
Arts	3 not Hum	3 not Hum	
Humanities	3 not Arts	3 not Arts	
Natural Sciences	3	6	3
Social Sciences	3	6	3
Mathematics and Statistics:	1 course or Regents 85	one at or above pre-calc, stat, or Regents ≥ 85	
Foreign Language:	1 course or Regents 85	Second semester course or Regents score ≥ 85	1 course or Regents ≥ 85 .
U.S. Historical Perspectives	3 (narrative, or from a longer list for students with Regents score ≥ 85)	3 (narrative, or from a longer list for students with Regents score ≥ 85)	
Europe	3	3	
Regions beyond Europe	3 ("Other World")	3	Revise learning objectives to include comparative
Global and Cross-Cultural Studies	none	3	Some change was considered, but the current proposal to leave these local requirements unchanged
U.S. Diversity & Pluralism	none	3	
Information Literacy	1 course (can be "infused" in curriculum)	1 course	
Oral Discourse	1 course	1 course	
Lower-level Writing		(min. 1 course)	Awaits results of blue ribbon task force
Upper-level Writing		(min. 1 course)	

Background and Rationale

In addition to the particular requirements (see SUNY mandate column above), SUNY regulations stipulate that students who took a course which is listed as satisfying a SUNY requirement while matriculated at another SUNY must be considered as having satisfied that requirement at Albany. This means that transfer students from schools with a requirement of 1 language, 1 natural science, or 1 social science course are not required to take a second course at Albany. Thus more stringent requirements can create an unfair hurdle for our native (enrolled as freshman) students. Further, recent SUNY statements imply that Albany students who take a summer course which satisfies a SUNY requirement at another SUNY college must be accepted as having satisfied the requirement for Albany. This encourages our students to take courses outside of Albany. In addition, SUNY requires that some means must be available to show prior competency in math and foreign language. It specifies that if the Regents exam is used, a score of 85 shall be accepted. This has created an imbalance between the level of competency required by students who satisfy a SUNY requirement at Albany compared to at a high school.

No one denies the value of requiring a breadth of education appropriate for liberal arts education. For any set of educational goals, there will always exist a need to strike a balance with creating significant barriers to timely graduation. The minimum general education requirements **cannot, and are not intended to, provide**

true competency in any of the disciplines. Each of the disciplines can individually and persuasively argue that case. Not every student can be competent in every field.

While it is proposed that the number of individual requirements be reduced, there remains the 30 credit general education course credit minimum. If the number of specific requirements is reduced this may allow students more flexibility to consider courses of interest to them outside their majors.

Prior to the 2000 SUNY mandate, the 24 credit general education program consisted of 6 credits each in science, social science, and "arts and humanities", 3 credits each in "Cultural and Historical Perspectives" and "Human Diversity," and two writing courses. The new general education program added three region-specific history courses (US, Europe, and Beyond Europe), a two semester language requirement, a math requirement, and oral and information literacy requirements while only increasing the total minimum requirement from 24 to 30 credits. It is difficult to satisfy the current specific requirements without exceeding the 30-credit minimum.

NOTES ON SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

Natural Science

Most transfer students have satisfied the current science requirement, but most freshmen have not. Buffalo, Binghamton, and Stony Brook require 2 courses; Geneseo and Binghamton require labs. On one hand, the breadth of available courses at Albany and the need for scientific literacy argued against reducing this requirement. However, in almost all cases, the science departments offer two distinct sets of courses: those intended for science majors, usually associated with a laboratory experience, and those courses intended to satisfy general education requirements, which were generally not taken by science majors. It was noted that requiring laboratory courses of all students would create significant resource issues, and that requiring a second non-majors course might not make the experience any closer to that of science major.

Social Science

The vast majority of both freshman and transfers have already satisfied the social science requirement. However, reducing the requirement allows greater flexibility, e.g. for students in psychology for whom most upper level courses do not count as general education courses. Buffalo and Binghamton require one course, Stony Brook and Geneseo, two.

Foreign Language

Currently, most high school students have only the option of French or Spanish instruction. If they receive an 85 on the Regents, they are not required to take another course. About 2/3 of incoming freshmen, do not require another course. If students receive a Regents 84 or less, they are required to take the second semester course in a language. If they have had 3 years of high school instruction, they are not allowed to take the first semester course. This creates a sort of "Catch 22" and can result in potentially poorly qualified students creating demand for the second semester French and Spanish courses. Ironically, the second semester requirement may discourage students who did poorly in one language from trying another. More than a dozen additional languages are taught at Albany. The other University Centers require 2 or 3 semesters of language.

One proposal which was discussed but not recommended was continuing to accept Regents scores better than 85 as satisfying the requirement, requiring that students who achieved Regents scores from 65-84 to take any one semester of a language course, and requiring students with no or failing Regents scores to take any two semesters (including the first semester of two different languages). However, it was felt that the second semester requirement would then apply largely to out of state students and would still disadvantage native students over transfers. The final recommendation was to reduce the requirement to one course at any level.

Regions beyond Europe

"Regions beyond Europe" is the local name for the SUNY "Other Worlds" category. The SUNY learning objectives for "Other Worlds" is "knowledge of EITHER a BROAD outline of world history, OR the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of ONE non-Western civilization." At Albany, the "Regions beyond Europe" category is distinguished from the Albany "Global" category in that the Regions category requires "knowledge of the distinctive features... of ONE region, " while the Global category requires a more worldwide or comparative (and generally contemporary) viewpoint. There are no classes which currently double count as both "Regions beyond" and "Global." Some courses currently in the Global category are historical in nature and could fit under the rubric of the SUNY "Other Worlds" category. It is proposed to broaden the local definition of the "Regions beyond Europe" category to include the broad world history and comparative classes as allowed by the SUNY definition. This should have the effect of creating more courses in the stressed "Regions" category.

Existing learning objectives for Regions Beyond Europe

1. knowledge of the distinctive features (e.g. history, institutions, economies, societies, cultures) of one region beyond Europe or European North America
2. an understanding of the region from the perspective of its people(s)
3. an ability to analyze and contextualize cultural and historical materials relevant to the region
4. an ability to locate and identify distinctive geographical features of the region

Proposed Learning Objectives for Regions Beyond Europe

1. knowledge of the distinctive features (e.g. geography, history, institutions, economies, societies, cultures) of one region beyond Europe or European North America or a broad outline of world history
2. an understanding of the region(s) from the perspective of its people(s) or an understanding of the impact (e.g. economic, political, historical, cultural) of nations, regions, and cultures upon other nations, regions, and cultures
3. an ability to analyze and contextualize cultural materials

US Diversity and Pluralism

Prior to the SUNY mandated additions, since about 1990, the Albany general education program included a "Human Diversity" course. More than 2/3 of the courses that currently satisfy the current local "US Diversity and Pluralism" category have the same name and number as courses which had satisfied the older "Human Diversity" requirement. (About 10% of the original courses now satisfy the "global" requirement instead.) There was some discussion of whether the local requirement should still be continued, as the modern field of US History includes significant emphasis on diversity and pluralism, and diversity is specifically required as a learning objective. However, combining the US History and US Diversity categories would be difficult because many of the Diversity courses are not historical in perspective, as required by the SUNY mandate. About 1/4 of the US History category courses currently also satisfy the US Diversity category. The majority of the council felt that maintaining specific instruction on diversity remained essential in today's environment. Another proposal, to combine the "US diversity and pluralism" and "Global and cross-cultural" categories, was discussed but the majority felt that that would effectively remove or dilute the diversity requirement.

Learning Objectives for U.S. Pluralism and Diversity

1. knowledge and understanding of the diversity and pluralism of U.S. society with respect to race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as class, sexual orientation, and/or religion.
2. knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural influences that shape the perspectives of various social groups as well as students' own points of view.
3. knowledge and understanding of the contributions of various social groups to U.S. society.

4. knowledge and understanding of the sources and manifestations of controversy or conflict arising from U.S. diversity and pluralism

Courses that satisfy the US Diversity and Pluralism Category

AAAS	142	Afro/Afro-Amer Literature
AAAS	213	History Civil Rights Movement
AAAS	219	Intro Afro/Afro-Amer History
AAAS	220	Black and White in America
AAAS	240	Classism, Racism, & Sexism
AAAS	241	Sci/Technol/Social Justice
AAAS	311	Hist Slavery West Hemisphere
AANT	172	Community And Self
AANT	351	Ethnicity in North America
AARH	264	New American Cinema
ACAS	125	Diversity Voices in Lit & Art
ACAS	131	Diversity & Equity in America
ACAS	141	Concept Race&Cult Modern World
ACAS	240	Images & Issues of Diversity
AEAC	272	Chinese & Chinese World View
AENG	240	Growing Up in America
AFRE	208	Haiti through Film & Literature
AFRE	281	Fr. Canada Through Film & Lit.
AGOG	125	The American City
AGOG	240	Patterns American Immigration
AHIS	225	Hollywood and the Jews
AHIS	275	Antisemitism in Hist Perspect
AJST	155	Judaism:Traditions & Practices
AJST	221	The American Jewish Experience
AJST	260	Jews & Immigrant Experience
AJST	270	Jewish-Christian Relations
AJST	351	Ethnicity in North America
ALCS	201	Hispanic Cultures in U.S.
ALCS	282	Race & Ethnicity
ALCS	302	Los Latinos en Estados Unidos
ALCS	375	Latino Politics in the U.S.
AMUS	209	Black American Music
APHI	328	Philosophy and Race
AREL	155	Judaism:Traditions & Practices
AREL	270	Jewish-Christian Relations
AREL	275	Social Morality & Citizenship Ed
ASOC	262	Sociology of Gender
ASOC	375	U.S. Urban Neighborhood Diversity
ASPN	322	Los Latinos en Estados Unidos
ATHR	228	Voices Diverse Contemp Am Thr
AWSS	101	Introduction to Feminisms
AWSS	106	U.S. Women Who Changed World
AWSS	202	Intro Lesbian and Gay Studies
AWSS	262	Sociology of Gender
AWSS	346	Law, Civil Rights, & Sexual Orientation
EEDU	275	Social Morality & Citizenship Ed
EEDU	375	Social Responses & Citizenship Ed
ESPE	369	Students with Emotional & Behavioral Problems

ESPE	460	Intro to Human Exceptionality
RCRJ	310	Polcs Crime Heterogeneous Socs
RPOS	324	Latino Politics in the U.S.
RPOS	346	Law,Cvl Rights,& Sexual Orien
RSSW	220	Values Issues in Socl Welfare
UUNI	153	Proj Ren 2: Human Id
UUNI	230	An Intro to Disabilty Studies

Global and Cross-Cultural

For several years before the SUNY mandate, UAlbany had a "Cultural and Historical Perspectives" requirement. Courses satisfying that older requirement included language courses, and some courses which now satisfy "Europe," and "Regions beyond Europe." About a dozen of the original courses now satisfy the new local "Global and Cross-Cultural" requirement.

This new local requirement was created at the time that the general education program was also being changed to satisfy SUNY mandates. It specifically requires a comparative or reciprocal analysis. As indicated under the "Regions beyond Europe" discussion, some courses currently in the Global category are historical in nature and could also fit into the broadened "Regions beyond" category. The remainder of the courses in the "Global and Cross-cultural" category are either cultural, such as "Cultural Anthropology" or "World Religions," or globalization, such as "International Relations: Theory." There was some discussion of removing this local requirement, but the majority felt that specific globalization instruction outside of the "Regions beyond Europe" historical treatment was important to retain.

Learning Objectives for Global and Cross-Cultural Studies

1. an understanding of the impact (e.g. economic, political, historical, cultural) of nations, regions, and cultures upon other nations, regions, and cultures
2. an understanding of the impact (e.g. economic, political, historical, cultural) of nations, regions, and cultures upon other nations, regions, and cultures.
3. an understanding of the reciprocal interactions between individuals and global systems.
4. an ability to see cultural groups from their own points of view.
5. an ability to use the analytic tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative analyses of cultures, nations, and regions

Courses satisfying the Global and Cross-Cultural Category

AAAS	150	Life In The Third World
AANT	108, 108Z	Cultural Anthropolgy
ACAS	103	Perspectives on Globalization
ACAS	141	Concept Race&Cult Modern World
ACAS	150	Cult Diversity&Human Condition
ACOM	371	Intercultural Communication
AEAC	150	China Through Western Eyes
AEAS	190Y	Confucianism & Samurai Ethics
AECO	130	Third World Economies
AFRE	218Y	Contemporary France
AFRE	355	Cont. French Society & Culture
AGLO	103	Perspectives on Globalization
AGOG	102, 102Z	Place, Space, and Landscape
AGOG	225	World Cities
AHIS	158, H, Z	The World in the 20th Century
AHIS	255	Holocaust: Lessons & Legacies
AHIS	275	Antisemitism in Hist Perspect

AHIS	291	Messiah & Messianism
AHIS	293	History of Women in Americas
AHIS	296	Peace in the Nuclear Age
AHIS	297, Z	Religion and Society
AJRL	270, X	Info. Strat. Journ. (Workshop)
AJST	150	Survey of Jewish Civilization
AJST	254	The Jews in the Modern World
AJST	255	Holocaust: Lessons & Legacies
AJST	256	World Jewry Since Holoc
AJST	275	Antisemitism in Hist Perspect
AJST	286	Jerusalem: City and the Idea
AJST	291	Messiah & Messianism
AJST	344, Z	Issues Modern Jewish History
ALCS	225, W, Y, Z	Global Mig. & Transnationalism
ALCS	359	Workers & Globlztm in Americas
APHI	214	World Religions
APLN	320Y, Z	International Urban Planning
AREL	214	World Religions
AREL	254	The Jews in the Modern World
AREL	256	World Jewry Since Holoc
AREL	286	Jerusalem: City and the Idea
AREL	291	Messiah & Messianism
AREL	297, Z	Religion and Society
ASOC	225, W, Y, Z	Global Mig. & Transnationalism
ASOC	369	Special Topics in Social Psych
AWSS	308	Global Perspectives on Women
RPOS	102H, Z	Comparative + Intrntl Politics
RPOS	204, Z	Selected Problems in Pol Sci
RPOS	355	Govt&Pol Sub-Saharan Africa
RPOS	361	Comparative Ethnicity
RPOS	370	Internatl Relations: Theory
RPOS	371	Internatl Relations: Practice
RPOS	374	Gov & Politcs S.Asia
RPOS	385	Vietnam: Politics of Intervntn
RPOS	461Z	Comparative Ethnicity
RPOS	473Z	Econ Relatns in Glob Sys
UUNI	301W	Foundations of Great Ideas II

Writing

The Council decided to delay consideration of this part of the general education requirement awaiting a report for the Provost's Blue ribbon Task Force on Writing.