Implementation of General Education Revisions

The General Education Committee recommended that the Senate adopt WI and SI (Writing Intensive and Speaking Intensive) as college-wide requirements, in effect requiring that every major include them in their requirements. In most cases these are already embedded in major courses, but departments could choose to use offerings in other departments. When that is the case there should be consultation between departments as there always is when departments rely on other departments to deliver their majors. Because it will take some time to adjust majors to include WI and SI, students may continue to use all courses designated WI and SI to fulfill this requirement during the 2014-2015 academic year. By May 2015, all departments should designate which courses fulfill the WI and SI for each of their programs.

In order to assure quality in college-wide requirements such as WI and SI, the charge of the General Education Committee should be modified to include coverage of Senate-approved college-wide graduation requirements, perhaps with a new name to acknowledge its broadened charge, such as the College Requirements Committee. This committee would continue to make policy for and oversee General Education as it does now, as well as taking on this new charge. The processes for approval and assessment for college-wide requirements would thus remain the same and be consistent with those for General Education Requirements. The approval of the Liberal Arts designators for courses, now tasked to the Provost’s Academic Program Committee, could also be assigned to this new committee.

The General Education Committee recommended that the Senate discuss whether to make the PE/HW (Physical Education/Health and Wellness) a college-wide requirement. It should also consider whether PE/HW credits can count towards the 120 graduation requirements, as they do at other SUNY schools.

The new General Education requirements would be effective for all freshmen matriculating in fall of 2014. As is always the case, students who matriculated prior to the fall of 2014 could opt to fall under the new General Education, provided they also meet any changes in requirements that have occurred in their major programs that are effective fall 2014.

The General Education Committee will need to adopt criteria for HI (Historical Inquiry). Given that this will take some time and then courses will need to be approved, courses that currently have the AH (American History) or WC (Western Civilization) designators will be allowed to be counted as HI in the 2014-15 academic year. In subsequent years, AH and WC courses will be required to meet the new HI criteria.

Similarly, because the new proposal affects some courses currently designated as FC (Freshman Critical Thinking), in 2014-15 existing courses with FC will continue to meet that requirement. Subsequently, only courses that conform to the new FC criteria will do so, i.e., all FC courses will also carry to one of the other general education designators specified in the program.

Because students must take at least one SB (Biological Science) or SP (Physical Science) with a lab embedded, science courses may need to be adjusted, as well. As with others, in 2014-15 existing LB (Laboratory) designated courses will continue to be offered. The General Education Committee will need to create some way to identify science courses with labs to enforce this requirement in subsequent years.