

# General Education Recommendations

## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM TASK FORCE Fall 1995

### I. INTRODUCTION

During the Fall 1993 semester the Nicholls State University Courses and Curricular Committee came before the University's Faculty Senate to present a list of recommendations, concerning the University General Education Requirements, for approval. After much debate the Faculty Senate voted to NOT approve the recommendations and called for the Vice President of Academic Affairs to charge another faculty group with further studying the current General Education Curriculum and making subsequent recommendations. Thus, on November 15, 1993, Dr. A. Etheridge created the University Core Curriculum Task Force and charged it to "study, identify and develop a core curriculum" (See Appendix A). This report describes the chronological progression of the activities completed by this Task Force from its initial charge, followed by the final recommendations regarding the General Education Requirements.

### II. UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

#### Spring 1994

On January 10, 1994, the Task Force (composed of A. Pizzolatto (Chair), D. Sipiorski, J. Abate, R. Bender, A. Tully, L. Rodrigue, M. Kilgen, L. Voiron and N. Stevens) met with Dr. Jerry Gaff, Vice President of the American Association of

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Colleges, to begin the process. The Task Force spent this Spring 1994 Semester researching the topic of General Education and reviewing other university models and philosophies of general education. We placed literature in the Reserve Reading Room of the Library and encouraged faculty to review this. Our goal for the semester was to develop a Philosophy of General Education Statement. We solicited faculty input as we proceeded with this task. On May 3, 1994, a meeting was held for the faculty and Task Force to openly discuss the draft of the Philosophy of General Education. The faculty was encouraged to voice their opinions and suggestions as we reviewed each component of the Philosophy Statement. A revision was completed on June 21, 1994, and was distributed to the faculty at the 1994 Fall Faculty Institute. The University Faculty ratified these guiding principles as key elements of NSU's philosophy of general education.

### Fall 1994

Our goal for the Fall 1994 semester was to develop a list of desired student outcomes based on our Philosophy Statement. Ed Bonnette took the place of J. Abate on the Task Force. The Task Force began this task by studying the Louisiana State Board of Regents requirements for General Education (See Appendix B) and discussing ideas generated at the Fall Institute Sessions conducted by Dr. Tom Angelo. A list of desired student outcomes (General Education Assessment Criteria) was completed by the end of this Fall Semester. Plans were made to distribute this draft to faculty at the 1995 Spring Faculty Institute.

Also during this Fall 1994 Semester the original Task Force began having difficulty meeting due to the added responsibilities of many of its members. Hence, Dr. Nolan Lecompte appointed

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another group of faculty to proceed with the charge while the original members would continue in an advisory capacity. This new Task Force would conduct the meetings at the Spring Faculty Institute. This new group was divided into four subcommittees led by P. Leslie, M. Minor, E. Melancon and M. Simpson. Dr. Pizzolatto continued as Chair of the Task Force. See Appendix C for a complete list of the new Task Force members.

### Spring 1995

The faculty were addressed by Mr. Gerard Killabrew of the State Board of Regents at a plenary session at the Spring 1995 Faculty Institute. Mr. Killabrew shared his views on General Education with the faculty and answered questions. Faculty then broke into sessions to critique the General Education Assessment Criteria. The faculty ratified this list of Assessment Criteria at a final group session with the understanding that the Task Force would consider some minor revisions. In March of 1995 a student group also examined this list. See Appendix D for these criteria.

Our goal for the Spring 1995 semester was to gather documentation on the current general education courses and begin making recommendations for revision. During the Spring semester, Department Heads were asked to direct those faculty who taught general education classes to assess how well their courses fulfilled the General Education Assessment Criteria and submit documentation supporting their findings to the Task Force Subcommittees (See Appendix E). The entire Spring semester was spent collecting this information and reviewing the documentation.

A Task Force progress report was given by Dr. Pizzolatto at the final Spring Semester Faculty Senate meeting.

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### Fall 1995

The Faculty convened once again at the 1995 Fall Faculty Institute to discuss various general education issues. Specifically, faculty were asked for input regarding the inclusion of core courses as a general education component and for suggestions as to how our present general education requirement could be revised. The discussions were lively and informative and gave the Task Force many ideas to consider as they entered the final stage of the original charge.

The Fall 1995 semester was devoted to reviewing faculty and subcommittee assessments as to how well our current general education curriculum fulfills the stated General Education Assessment Criteria. The Subcommittee chairs and Dr. Pizzolatto met on a weekly basis to discuss these findings and make recommendations. Hence, the following recommendations are finally proposed after a two-year process of gathering information, meeting with faculty, and engaging in many discussions.

### III. GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Philosophy and Goals for General Education at Nicholls State University

##### Philosophy

The University Faculty believes these guiding principles reflect the essence of NSU's Philosophy of Education:

1. General education (the core curriculum) provides students with an integrative, common body of knowledge that Nicholls' Faculty agree is timely, relevant, and responsive to change.
2. The University experience through general education

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provides a foundation for lifelong learning, and guides students to realize their potential as individuals and contributing participants in society.

3. General education provides basic knowledge and skills which prepare students to exercise various processes of thought.

4. General education promotes awareness of the diversity and interdependence of individuals.

5. General education promotes awareness of society's (humankind's) relation with its natural environment.

6. General education deepens students' awareness of issues related to ethical thought and behavior.

These philosophical concepts assume an organized process of on-going dialogue, assessment, and development.

### Goals

The Faculty identified twelve goal areas which the general education curriculum must address. The goals are as follows: (Specific knowledge, competencies, and experiences pertaining to these goals are listed in Appendix D.)

Goal 1. Comprehension: To provide an integrated learning experience which enhances the student's ability to comprehend.

Goal 2. Communication: To provide an integrated learning experience which enhances the student's ability to communicate what has been learned.

Goal 3. Reasoning & Independent Thought: To provide an integrated learning experience, which enhances students' awareness of, and knowledge encompassed by disciplines and programs.

Goal 4. Independent Learning: To provide a learning experience

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which develops student awareness of the need to engage in lifelong learning.

Goal 5. Personal Values, Ethics, & Social Responsibility: To provide an integrated learning experience which develops student awareness and appreciation of the relationships among personal, societal, and global values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Goal 6. Quantitative Reasoning: To provide a learning experience which enhances student ability to think logically, draw conclusions, and make inferences quantitatively.

Goal 7. Scientific Understanding: To provide a learning experience which enhances student familiarity with science and scientific inquiry.

Goal 8. Technology: To provide an integrated learning experience which enhances student familiarity with and ability to use technology.

Goal 9. Humanities: To provide an integrated learning experience with enhances student appreciation of music, literature, and the fine arts.

Goal 10. Political & Economic Systems: To provide an integrated learning experience which enhances student understanding of political and economic systems world-wide.

Goal 11. Personal Wellness: To provide a learning experience which enhances student awareness of the impact of life choices on personal, social, and environmental health.

Goal 12. Cultural Awareness: To provide a learning experience which improves cultural awareness by exposing students to other cultures.

It should be noted that this list of outcomes parallels those general education requirements established by the State Board of

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Regents. Table I summarizes these linkages. The Board of Regents separately lists Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences as major components of general education. The NSU outcomes which parallel these components include Humanities, Political and Economic Systems, and Cultural Awareness. NSU relies on its History, Literature, Social Science, and Fine Arts courses to fulfill the Humanities and Cultural Awareness outcomes, and the History and Social Science courses to fulfill the political and economic systems outcomes. NSU's Humanities component combines the Board of Regents Humanities and Arts components since the goal of our Humanities component is "to provide an integrated learning experience which enhances student appreciation of music, literature, and the fine arts." The recommendation which follow categorize "humanities" into two units: History/Literature and Art/Music.

Table I  
Summary of the Linkage between  
the State Board of Regents Requirements  
and NSU General Education Outcomes

<u>NSU Outcomes</u>	<u>Board of Regents Requirements</u>
Communication & Comprehension	English
Quantitative Reasoning	Mathematics
Scientific Understanding	Natural Science
Technology	Computer Literacy
Humanities	Humanities & Arts
Political & Economic Systems	Social Studies
Cultural Awareness	Social Studies, Humanities & Arts

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Personal Wellness	No equivalent
Reasoning & Independent Thought	These are to be integrated throughout the curriculum.
Independent Learning	
Personal Values, Ethics & Social Responsibility	There are no specific disciplines linked to these outcomes.

We expect this Statement of Philosophy and Goals to accomplish three objectives. First, it defines a philosophy for general education and establishes goals which can be clearly communicated to students and faculty. Second, it establishes criteria for developing and integrating general education and other university courses. Finally, it provides a framework for the assessment of the general education program, its curriculum and student achievement.

The current University Bulletin merely lists the courses in the general education curriculum. There is no statement of its purpose or philosophy. Our discussions with students and faculty suggest that both see the current requirements as obstacles which must be overcome without perceiving the program's educational benefits. Consequently, the general education curriculum is not strongly supported. A general education program linked to an articulated philosophy clarifies the rationale for the program.

The stated philosophy and goals offer clear criteria for developing future course proposals and assessing the role or purpose of current course offerings. The Faculty General Education oversight committee (see Recommendation No. 2 that follows) must review existing and proposed courses and assess their contribution toward the goals of the general education program.

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Finally, given the increased emphasis on assessment and accountability, it is imperative that standards be established for the general education program. The standards for that assessment will be grounded in the philosophy and goals adopted for the general education program.

Our students enter Nicholls State University with a range of abilities, cultural assumptions, and educational backgrounds. Although it is unlikely that each student will equally attain each goal, we do expect students to make demonstrable progress toward these goals as they complete their general education program and progress to their majors. Thus, the General Education Program will have significantly contributed to our graduates' educational experience while enhancing their ability and propensity to engage in life-long learning.

### B. ASSUMPTIONS

The University Core Curriculum Task Force makes the following assumptions regarding the General Education Program at Nicholls State University:

1. **General Education Program** includes the key curricular areas that provide common learning experiences for all Nicholls State University students. It offers students the opportunity to gain the broad-based educational attributes normally expected of those who hold the baccalaureate degree (Board of Regents, 1994).

2. **General Education Curriculum** is defined as the complete list of courses from which a student may select to fulfill his/her general education requirements. This includes Core Curriculum courses and electives from specified disciplines.

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3. **Core Curriculum** includes those specific courses (core courses) which all students must successfully complete in order to graduate from NSU.

4. The recommendations stated in this report are for the general population of NSU students. Exceptions for disabilities may occur at the individual level.

5. These recommendations are made without regard for majors in the disciplines. Degree plans may vary for majors in specific disciplines (for example, the Biology Department is presently developing a biology course for majors and one for non-majors so as to be in compliance with a recent directive from the State Board of Trustees. Either of these may be taken to fulfill the general education requirements)

### C. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NSU'S GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Several analyses were completed throughout this 2-year process. Specifically, a thorough review of NSU's bulletin and the State Board of Regents requirements; a content analysis of general education courses currently required in all degree programs; an analysis of the consistency of general education course syllabi offering multiple sections; a review of documentation submitted by instructors to determine how well current general education courses fulfill the proposed General Education Assessment Criteria. These analyses evidenced an inconsistency and a lack of synergy in the general education program.

Overall, there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the history of the present general education curriculum - how it was

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developed, its rationale, its design . . . (For example, why 12 hours of English when the state requires 6; why 4 hours of H&PE and 3 of Student Development . . .) Currently, general education courses are designed solely by departments (and for some by individual faculty) without consideration for how they should be integrated into the whole program. The present Courses and Curriculum Committee is technically charged with monitoring the general education curriculum. However, given the multitude of responsibilities and the continuous change in membership of this committee, it has been difficult to maintain a focused, in-depth concentration on the general education program. Hence, the following recommendations seek to overcome the inconsistencies and provide for a rational approach for the continuous development, integration, and improvement of NSU's general education program.

1. **RECOMMENDATION: Courses included as part of the General Education Curriculum should be monitored at the University level.** Just as departments continuously evaluate and change their degree programs, so should the University monitor its general education program. It is a privilege to have a course included in the general education curriculum, yet with that privilege comes some unique responsibilities. The General Education Curriculum should increase coherence and improve connections among disciplines. All faculty should be aware of the goals of general education and establish connections between the general education and major degree programs. Hence, the general education curriculum should be understood and scrutinized by all faculty. The University must "own" this curriculum.

2. **RECOMMENDATION: Establish a standing University**

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**General Education Committee (UGEC) to monitor the General Education Program on a continuous basis.** NSU's Philosophy of General Education Statement assumes an organized process of on-going dialogue, assessment, and development in order to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the program. A permanent committee is necessary to insure this. This committee should have a non-rotating director (given appropriate compensation) who would serve as the General Education "expert" and maintain the quality, continuity and consistency of the program and its objectives. The UGEC duties would include:

- a. Develop an organized process for the on-going dialogue, assessment and development of the General Education Program.
- b. Continuously evaluate course syllabi to insure that the general education objectives are addressed.
- c. Continuously evaluate multi-section syllabi to insure that the general education objectives are addressed by all instructors.
- d. Evaluate documentation of proposed general education courses regarding their fulfillment of general education learning outcomes and grant approval or rejection of courses for inclusion in the General Education Curriculum.
- e. Establish a timetable for and implement a periodic evaluation of existing courses for continued approval or cancellation.

3. **RECOMMENDATION: No courses will be added to the general education program unless evaluated and approved by the UGEC.** The courses will be evaluated by the UGEC based on their ability to fulfill specific general education objectives or

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learning outcomes.

4. RECOMMENDATION: **The University Bulletin should specifically define General Education and the objectives of its program. The Bulletin should state NSU's Philosophy of General Education and list the student learning outcomes it is intended to achieve.**

Although one-third of a student's curriculum is mandated through the General Education requirements, there is very little information regarding the rationale for these requirements. Students should understand the importance and significance of these required courses. Thus, the Task Force recommends specific statements concerning the General Education Program, its curriculum and its core courses be included in NSU's Annual Bulletin.

5. RECOMMENDATION: **All faculty should make students aware of how the general education curriculum is integrated with their courses. Faculty should have an understanding of the General Education Program and its objectives and integrate these with their own degree programs.**

### D. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

NSU's Desired Student Outcomes (Appendix D) were developed in conjunction with the State Board of Regents "Requirements in Associate and Baccalaureate Programs". These Outcomes were designed to correspond with the subject areas delineated in these "Requirements". Specifically, the State Board of Regents requires general education goals be met through the following subject and

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disciplinary areas: English, Mathematics, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Arts. Thus, in the recommendations which follow, these subject areas are listed in parentheses following the Outcomes. "Integrated throughout" reflects the recommendation that this outcome be part of every subject area.

The Task Force evaluated courses currently in the general education program to determine how well the established learning outcomes were presently being addressed. The Task Force found that some of these learning outcomes were not specifically addressed in the documentation submitted for examination. No attempt was made to gain additional documentation nor to determine how other courses might satisfy these learning outcomes. The following recommendations are based on this examination (Table II summarizes the current and proposed general education curriculum requirements):

Table II  
Proposed General Education Curriculum Requirements

<u>Student Learning Outcome Fulfilled</u>	<u>Present Requirements</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>
Communication	English - 9 hours (English 101, 102, elective)	*English - 6 hours English 101, 102 *Speech 1-1 - 3 hours These outcomes much also be Integrated throughout the General education curriculum.

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Quantitative Reasoning	Mathematics - 6 hours (Math 101, 102, or 105)	Mathematics - Math 101 & a 3 - hour Math Department course as Specified by each degree program
Scientific Understanding	Natural Sciences - 10 hours	*Natural Sciences - 10 hours Lab & lecture to be completed concurrently
Technology	Computer Literacy - 3 hours Determined by department	Computer Literacy - 3 hours (Computer Science 111, 120 or 201; Office Information Systems 130 or 200)
Humanities	Humanities - 9 hours (History 101, 102, English Literature Elective)	Humanities - 9 hours (History 101, 102, any An English Literature course to be selected from English 251, 252, 255, 256, 257, 258)
	Arts - 3 hours	Music or Art - 3 hours to be Selected from Art 110 or Music 105
Political & Economic Systems	Social Sciences - 6 hours	Social Sciences - 6 hours (From approved General Education Social Sciences Electives)
Cultural Awareness	No specific requirement	Integrated into Humanities, Fine Arts & Social Sciences General Education Electives - no additional hours
Personal Wellness	H&PE - 4 hours	Approved Personal Wellness Elective - 2 hours

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	Student Development - 3 hours	No requirement for general student population
Comprehension, Reasoning & Independent Thought, Independent Learning, Personal Values, Ethics, Social Responsibility	No specific requirement	Integrated throughout the General Education curriculum
TOTAL HOURS	53	48

\*Must be completed prior to junior standing.

### General Education Outcomes Assessment Criteria Revised Fall 1995

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Goal/Strategy</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>	<u>Competency</u>	<u>Experience</u>
		STUDENT WILL HAVE		
	THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM WILL PROVIDE	UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS, OR APPRECIATION OF:	STUDENT WILL HAVE ABILITY TO:	STUDENT WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO:
1. <b>Comprehension</b>	an integrated learning experience which enhances the student's ability to comprehend		--read with understanding: criticize, analyze, and synthesize --listen critically	
2.	an integrated		--express what	

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<b>Communication</b>	learning experience which enhances the student's ability to communicate what has been learned		is intended in several forms of written, oral, and visual communication --communicate effectively both interpersonally and in groups. --listen critically --reason	
<b>3. Reasoning and independent thought</b>	an integrated learning experience which enhances students' awareness of and appreciation for the interconnection among the specialized areas of knowledge encompassed by disciplines and programs		abstractly, think critically, and engage in inquiry --integrate new information with one's present knowledge so as to respond thoughtfully, solve, unstructured problems, and create new ideas	--explore applications of student's chosen field of study
<b>4. Independent Learning</b>	a learning experience which develops students awareness of the need to engage in lifelong learning	--their need to identify areas of academic interest needing further development	--access information independently	
<b>5. Personal Values, Ethic, and social responsibility</b>	an integrated learning experience which develops student awareness of the relationships among personal, societal, and global values, attitudes and beliefs	--the importance of one's value system in making judgments and taking actions necessary to insure the survival of an ethical society.  --ethical dilemmas confronted by		--explore the evolution of human civilization from differing disciplinary and cultural perspectives

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		individuals,	
		groups & communities & the foundations upon which resolution might be possible	
<b>6. Quantitative Reasoning</b>	a learning experience which enhances student ability to think logically, draw conclusions and make inferences quantitatively		--critically evaluate numerical information --evaluate and communicate quantitative concepts
<b>7. Scientific understanding</b>	a learning experience which enhances student familiarity with science	--"scientific method" and its limitation	--apply the scientific method and critically evaluate it
<b>8. Technology</b>	an integrated learning experience which enhances student familiarity with and ability to use technology	--awareness of current technologies which facilitate learning and inquiry	--employ current technologies which facilitate learning and inquiry
<b>9. Humanities</b>	an integrated learning experience which enhances student appreciation of music, literature and the fine arts	--humanities including literature and the fine arts	--explore the aesthetics of artistic expression including literature and the fine arts.
<b>10. Political and Economic Systems</b>	An integrated learning experience which enhances student understanding of political and economic systems world-wide	--the values, foundations, and workings of a democratic society (including the political and economic systems) --the differences among political and economic systems	

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### **11. Personal Wellness**

A learning experience which enhances student awareness of the impact of life choices on personal, social, and environmental health

worldwide  
--different methods for maintaining lifelong physical and mental well-being

### **12. Cultural Awareness**

A learning experience which improves cultural awareness by exposing students to other cultures

--other traditions, customs and world views  
--importance of being knowledgeable about today's world

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1. RECOMMENDATION: COMMUNICATION (English and integrated throughout) **All courses in the general education curriculum should integrate communication as a student learning outcome. Communication objectives must be specifically stated in all General Education Curriculum course syllabi. A course which directly focuses on developing students oral and visual communication skills should replace one of the four 3-hour English course requirements presently in the General Education Curriculum. This course should be completed by students prior to junior standing.**

The Task Force views communication in three dimensions: oral, visual, and written. English 101 and 102 adequately address the written component of the communication dimension; however, the Task Force perceives an inadequate fulfillment of the oral and visual communication components in the present general education curriculum. Therefore we recommend the requirement of a course which directly focuses on developing students' oral and visual communication skills. This could include the addition of Speech 101 or the adaptation of current English courses to more comprehensively meet the oral and visual dimensions. The UGEC would evaluate potential courses and determine which would be added to the general education curriculum (if more than one) or to the core curriculum (if only one is approved for all students). It must be noted that the communication component should be present in all general education courses. The University must not rely on the English Department to adequately meet this outcome.

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### 2. RECOMMENDATION: QUANTITATIVE REASONING (Mathematics)

**No recommendations concerning this area.** The Task Force feels that quantitative reasoning skills are adequately being addressed in the present Math curriculum: Math 101, 102 and 105.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION: SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING (Natural

Sciences) **Students should fulfill science requirements prior to junior standing.** This would insure that students have an understanding of science methods prior to engaging in advanced studies in specific disciplines.

**Syllabi for courses which may satisfy the General Education Science requirements must state the general education objectives.**

Faculty must assure that students achieve an understanding of the scientific method and become familiar with the key technological applications of the basic sciences in all of the science courses offered for general education credit.

**The Task Force recommends the continuation of the laboratory requirement ONLY if: 1) the labs can be consistently updated with modern, state of the art equipment and they are used as a vehicle for enhancing students' understanding of science, scientific inquiry and the scientific method; and 2) the lab is taken concurrently with its respective lecture course.** (The Science departments should explore the possibility of combining the lab and lecture into one four hour course).

### 4. RECOMMENDATION: TECHNOLOGY (Computer Literacy,

Sciences) **The Task Force recommends students be required to complete one course from the following: Computer Science 111, 120 or 201; Office Information Systems 130 or 200.** The Task Force believes the technology component should be fulfilled via the

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natural (i.e., labs) and computer science courses. We believe computer literacy has become a critical component of general education and that all students should have a basic understanding of computers, their history, and the ethical considerations associated with them, as well as how to use them. We recognize the value of computer education being integrated into specific disciplines, however we feel this education should build upon the basic foundation. Hence, the Task Force recommends students be required to complete one computer literacy course which addresses computer basics, its history, and ethical implications. At this time, Computer Science 111, 120, 201 and OIS 130, 200 meet these criteria. Other courses may be approved by the UGEC. Since technology is so dynamic, it is imperative that these courses be continuously updated to meet future student needs. The UGEC must pay close attention to the technology component of general education.

**5. RECOMMENDATION: HUMANITIES (Humanities) The Task Force recommends the present English requirements be reduced by three credit hours, to allow students to select from a number of courses which fulfill the Humanities requirement. History 101 and 102 should continue to be required as core courses. The Task Force further recommends that all current courses listed as "Humanities" (excepting History 101 and 102) and/or their syllabi be revised to reflect this learning outcome. Documentation reflecting the inclusion of this learning outcome must be submitted to the UGEC before approval of this course as a General Education Humanities elective is granted.**

The present general education program requires students to complete History 101 and 102 and three additional hours to be

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selected from Foreign Languages, Philosophy, Speech, English Literature, Humanities, and one Mass Communications course. However, if the English Literature course is selected to fulfill this three hour requirement, it may also double count as partial fulfillment of the present 12 hour English requirement. Students, in essence, really have no choice outside of the English Literature electives.

Although the rationale for the 12 hour English requirement - unique only to NSU as one of the universities under the Board of Trustees - is not specifically known, the Task Force speculates that this requirement has existed due to the unique needs of our student body. Gerard Killabrew indicated that up until the 1950's, French was still spoken in many homes in the area. Hence, students did not come to NSU with a solid background in English, there were no remedial courses offered, and 12 hours of English was appropriate. However, with the implementation of the Remedial English program at Nicholls, the Task Force believes the 12 hour English requirement is excessive. The Task Force recommends that students be allowed to select any course which fulfills the Humanities requirement rather than being led to select an English Literature course. However, it must be noted that the English Literature courses seem to fulfill the humanities component better than other courses listed. Therefore, the Task Force recommends courses (and/or their syllabi) presently listed in the catalogue be revised to better integrate and/or reflect the Humanities learning outcome. Documentation regarding these revisions should be submitted to the UGEC for approval before a course is included in the General Education Curriculum.

History 101 and 102 (Western Civilization) should continue to be required as core courses to fulfill the history requirement (as

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required by the Board of Regents). Western civilization is not required at the secondary level or earlier, thus the majority of NSU students have little knowledge of the basic ideas or the pivotal events which have shaped or continue to shape society. The study of western civilization provides an introduction to universal ideals in politics, ethics, and the inter-relationships of various societies and cultures.

6. RECOMMENDATION: HUMANITIES (Music, Art, Dance, Theatre) **All Fine Arts course syllabi should contain specific statements reflecting the general education humanities component as a learning outcome. A common general education element should be evident in all multiple course sections to guarantee consistent fulfillment of these objectives for all students. The UGEC must monitor course syllabi to guarantee consistency of the fulfillment of general education objectives in all multiple course sections.**

Fine Arts courses offer a unique opportunity for students to gain an integrated learning experience which enhances their awareness of the interconnections among disciplines. These courses also provide a vehicle for exploring diverse cultures. Thus, it is imperative that these courses integrate the Reasoning and Independent Thought Learning Outcome and Cultural Awareness Learning Outcome throughout their content.

7. RECOMMENDATION: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS (Social Sciences - Economics, Geography, Government, Psychology, Sociology) **The Task Force recommends that the current Social Science courses be revised to cover worldwide political and economic systems. Documentation reflecting the inclusion of this learning outcome must be submitted to the UGEC before approval of**

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**a course as a General Education Social Science elective is granted.**

Although the Board of Regents General Education requirements state the social sciences component helps students develop an "understanding of the American political and economic system", NSU's Desired Student Outcomes call for students to understand political and economic systems in America and worldwide. The Task Force finds that this outcome is partially fulfilled in History 101 and Economics 255, yet there are really no current General Education Courses listed as Social Sciences which do a comprehensive job of fulfilling this outcome. The Task Force recommends that the University require departments to resubmit the Social Science courses currently listed in the catalogue for approval as Social Science General Education courses which fulfill the Political and Economic Systems outcome as well as those outcomes that are to be integrated throughout the general education curriculum. The UGEC would evaluate these courses and determine which meet the above-stated student outcomes.

8. RECOMMENDATION: CULTURAL AWARENESS (Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences - Economics, Geography, Government, Psychology, Sociology, History)

**The Task Force recommends that the current social science and humanities courses and/or syllabi be revised to include the Cultural Awareness outcome. The UGEC should monitor syllabi to insure that this component is being addressed in these courses.**

The State Board of Regents requires the social science and humanities disciplines to further students understanding of different societies and cultures. This requirement parallels NSU's Cultural Awareness Outcome. This outcome has received much

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national attention in recent years and we feel the State Board of Regents will continue to place emphasis upon it. Based on documentation received, the Task Force believes that this component is currently being integrated into many of the Humanities courses but that it is not adequately addressed in the Social Sciences. Rather than designing a new course to fulfill this outcome, the Task Force recommends that the current social science and humanities courses and/or syllabi be revised to reflect the Cultural Awareness outcome.

9. RECOMMENDATION: PERSONAL WELLNESS (no Board of Regents Equivalent) **The Task Force recommends that the University require the development and/or adaptation of two hour credit courses to fulfill the Personal Wellness learning outcome. Documentation reflecting the fulfillment of this outcome should be submitted to the UGEC before a course is approved as a General Education Personal Wellness elective.**

The Personal Wellness outcome is an indirect response to philosophies contained in both the University Mission Statement and the Philosophy of General Education. NSU's Philosophy of General Education states that general education provides a "foundation for lifelong learning and guides students to realize their potential as individuals and contributing participants in society." Given the uniqueness of the region NSU serves, and the desire to promote lifelong learning and contributions to society, NSU should provide a learning experience which enhances student awareness of the impact of life choices on personal, social, and environmental health. Courses designed to fulfill the Personal Wellness Outcome should expose students to different methods for maintaining lifelong physical and mental well-being. Only one

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course submitted to the Task Force for evaluation (H&PE 218, Jogging) received an excellent rating for the fulfillment of this outcome. Hence, the Task Force recommends that the University require departments to submit newly developed or adapted courses for approval as courses which fulfill the Personal Wellness learning outcome. The UGEC would evaluate these courses and determine which should be offered for credit.

The Task Force further believes that this component of general education can be adequately fulfilled with two credit hours. Thus we recommend a reduction in the present four hour health and physical education requirement to a two hour personal wellness course requirement.

10. RECOMMENDATION: STUDENT DEVELOPMENT (no Board of Regents Equivalent) **The Task Force recommends that Student Development be dropped as a General Education requirement. The University should develop policies and procedures regarding students' needs for this course and mandate the course for individuals rather than for the student population as a whole.**

The Task Force appreciates the Student Development faculties' efforts in responding to our request for documentation. Given NSU's open admissions policy, we believe the current student development program serves a purpose at Nicholls State University, but its purpose is outside the realm of general education. We believe the previously listed courses adequately fulfill the philosophy and student learning outcomes for the general education program. Thus, the Task Force recommends that Student Development be dropped as a general education requirement. The University should develop policies and procedures for disseminating the contents of this course (for example, students may be exposed to

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the University library and its resources during Freshman orientation). Additional student development requirements should be based on individual student needs rather than requiring a student development course for all NSU students.

11. RECOMMENDATION: The following student learning outcomes should be integrated throughout the general education curriculum: Communication, Comprehension, Reasoning and Independent Thought, Independent Learning and Personal Values, Ethics, Social Responsibility.

All general education course syllabi should include specific objective statements regarding these outcomes.

Future faculty development programs should include training on better ways to incorporate these dimensions into all general education courses. Specific recommendations regarding these outcomes are:

a. COMPREHENSION

The Task Force perceives that the Comprehension component is adequately being addressed in the current general education curriculum, but it must be specifically addressed in all general education course syllabi.

b. REASONING AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

The Task Force perceives that the reasoning and independent thought component can be addressed in the current general education curriculum if faculty make a more deliberate effort to "provide an integrated learning experience which enhances students' awareness of and appreciation for the interconnections among the specialized areas of knowledge encompassed by disciplines and programs" (General Education Outcomes Assessment Criteria). Future faculty development programs should provide

## General Education Recommendations

training on better ways to incorporate these learning experiences into all university courses.

### c. INDEPENDENT LEARNING

The Task Force perceives that the independent learning component is adequately being addressed in the current general education curriculum, but it must be specifically addressed in all general education course syllabi.

### d. PERSONAL VALUES, ETHICS, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Task Force perceives that these components can be adequately addressed in the current general education curriculum if faculty make a deliberate effort to provide students with an integrated learning experience which "develops student awareness of the relationships among personal, societal, and global values, attitudes and beliefs". Future faculty development programs should provide training on better ways to incorporate these learning experiences into general education courses.

## General Education Recommendations

### Summary

The University Core Curriculum Task Force has been guided by many forces in its efforts to develop recommendations for our general education program. We have drawn from current research, model programs, consultants, the State Board of Regents, faculty, and students. These recommendations were further guided by a Philosophy of Education developed by NSU faculty.

Table III offers a visualization of a comprehensive and integrated general education curriculum which would result from the implementation of these recommendations.

Two elements are particularly crucial for the successful implementation of these recommendations. First, it is essential that faculty and students truly understand and appreciate the contribution of general education to a graduate's complete education. Hence, the integration and development of faculty responsible for the general education curriculum is essential. Second, the general education program must be continuously assessed and improved to meet the changing needs of our students.

Hence, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable oversight committee (the UGEC) must be developed and charged with this task.

This two-year process has brought one certainty to light - excellence in education begins with our general education program. These recommendations suggest opportunities to synergize our General Education program and, in turn, enhance NSU's educational excellence.

## General Education Recommendations

Table III. VISUALIZATION OF COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED GENERAL EDUCATION  
PROGRAM  
DESIRED STUDENT OUTCOMES

CORE COURSES	Communication & Comprehension	Reasoning/Independent Thought	Independent Learning	Personal Values Ethics, Social Responsibility	Quantitative Reasoning	Scientific Understanding	Technology	Humanities	Political Economic Systems	Personal Wellness	Cultural Awareness
English 101	XP	X	X	X							
English 102	XP	X	X	X							
Speech 101	oral & visual communicationP	X	X	X							
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	XP						
Natural Science	X	X	X	X		XP					
Physical Science	X	X	X	X		XP					
Science Lab	X	X	X	X		XP	X				
Computer Science	X	X	X	X	XP		XP				
English Lit. Elec.	X	X	X	X				XP			X
Music or Art Elec.	X	X	X	X				X			XP
History 101 & 102	X	X	X	X				XP	X		X
Economic or Govt.	X	X	X	X				X	XP		X
Psychology, Geography, or Sociology	X	X	X	X				X			XP
Personal Wellness	X	X	X	X						XP	

X = Outcome must be a component of this course

P = Primary course for fulfillment of outcome

## General Education Recommendations

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## General Education Recommendations

### Partial List of Core Curriculum Programs Reviewed

Brooklyn College, New York

East Tennessee, Tennessee

Grand Valley State University, Michigan

Loyola, Maryland

Miami Saint Mary, Maryland

Portland State University, Oregon

Southeast Missouri State University, Missouri

University of Chicago, Illinois

University of Hartford, Connecticut

# General Education Recommendations

## Appendix A

### Charge to the Core Curriculum Task Force

## General Education Recommendations

Charge to the Core Curriculum Task Force

Prepared by Dr. Albert L. Etheridge

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

November, 1993

The general charge to this task force is to study, to identify, and to develop a core curriculum. This will involve a deliberate analysis of what a core curriculum is designed to do and what its structure should be. Additionally, it will require a study of Nicholls' current curriculum and a synthesis of a new core. As you know, the Courses and Curricula Committee recently completed a study of the core curriculum/general education. You should not ignore their findings and recommendations. Specifics of the charge are as follows:

1. Define core curriculum/general education and clearly state how the term(s) will be used.
2. Establish a schedule of tasks/activities and a time frame. The task force must be flexible and anticipate revisions.
3. Develop a philosophical statement concerning the core curriculum. This statement should state concisely what the core curriculum is designed to do and what it is not designed to do.
4. Identify the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences students are expected to gain from the core curriculum. This task is to be developed without regard to courses (in fact, course name and number are not to be included). The assembled list/catalogue must stand alone and support the philosophical statement.

## General Education Recommendations

5. Match the agreed up on knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences with specific courses. The knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences are to be matched with each course in which they will be experienced.

If there are desired knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences that cannot be matched with any existing course, you are to recommend new courses. Recommendations for new courses must include an outline of the syllabus and specifics with regard to what the course must be designed to accomplish.

Note: In order to accomplish this task you must request syllabi for each course under consideration (to be included in the core). If it cannot be determined from the syllabus that a skill, etc. is covered, the course must be eliminated from consideration. However, it shall be within the responsibility of the task force to recommend the revision of existing courses in order to meet specific goals of the core curriculum.

The task force must develop rationale for each course recommended to be included in the core and a rationale for each course recommended for deletion that is currently in the core.

It is important that decisions concerning this charge be substantiated with research. It is expected that each of you will become familiar with the literature and writings pertinent to the core curriculum as well as the curricula at other institutions. It would be inappropriate to only compare our curriculum to other Louisiana universities.

## General Education Recommendations

6. Recommend that the Provost and Vice President establish a permanent core curriculum advisory committee responsible for ensuring that goals of the core curriculum are not abridged. This committee is to be charged with oversight of the core curriculum. Departments will no longer be able to revise any course or the approved syllabus within the core without approval from this committee.
7. Develop and recommend strategies for evaluating/assessing the core curriculum.
8. Develop a proposal for campus-wide review.
9. Schedule open hearings.
10. Submit a final proposal to the Courses and Curricula Committee.

You are at liberty to hold hearings, interview faculty, department heads, deans, and others whom you feel can assist in your deliberations. Also, you may ask departments and colleges to develop philosophical statements. Because of the nature of this charge and the importance of the outcomes, you have the authority to exercise latitude in your investigations and deliberations.

In 1992 I wrote a commentary on general education. I ask that you read and discuss my views. I do not ask that you agree with them, but I believe it offers a foundation for you to work. The commentary is attached.

## General Education Recommendations

### Appendix B

#### Actions of the Board of Regents Relative to General Education Requirements in Associate and Baccalaureate Programs

General Education Recommendations

REQUIRED AND SUGGESTED GENERAL EDUCATION COURSEWORK FOR  
BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM\*

ENGLISH	6 hours (Composition)	ENGLISH	6 hours (Composition) 3 hours (Literature)
MATHEMATICS	6 hours	MATHEMATICS	6 hours
COMPUTER LITERACY	(Requirements to be determined by each campus)	COMPUTER LITERACY	(Requirements to be determined by each campus)
NATURAL SCIENCES	9 hours	NATURAL SCIENCES	11 hours (To be met by taking required courses for majors; to include laboratory courses)
ARTS	3 hours	ARTS	3 hours
HUMANITIES **	9 hours (To include at least 3 credit hours at the sophomore level or above)	HUMANITIES**	15 hours (To include at least 3 credit hours at the sophomore level or above; to include at least 6 credit hours of a foreign language above the introductory level)***
SOCIAL STUDIES	<u>6 hours</u> 39 hours	SOCIAL STUDIES	<u>6 hours</u> 50 hours

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\*Students may obtain equivalent credit for required or suggested coursework in accordance with policies and procedures of the college or university, e.g., for advanced placement tests of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

\*\*The Board of Regents recommends (but does not require) that each student take a course in philosophy/ethics to help clarify his/her moral values and choices.

\*\*\*No credit hours earned in introductory foreign language coursework can be used to fulfill requirements for the Regents' Certificate of Excellence. Introductory coursework (or its equivalent) and advanced coursework must be in the same foreign language.

## General Education Recommendations

### Appendix C

#### University Core Curriculum Task Force Members

## General Education Recommendations

### University Core Curriculum Task Force Members

Chair - Laynie Pizzolatto

#### Sub-Committees

Earl Melancon, Biological Sciences, Chair  
Carol Boudreaux, Writing Across the Curriculum  
Steve Giust, Math  
Lisa Kortright, Computer Science  
Nikki Naquin, Freshman Division, Student  
Susan Roark, Education  
Anita Tully, General Studies

Martin Simpson, Government, Chair  
Gwen Barrilleaux, Nursing  
Ed Bonnett, Freshman Division  
Rob Carpenter, Art  
John Dennis, History  
Adele Price, Psychology  
John Weimer, Accounting

Paul Leslie, History, Chair  
Angela Alexander, Freshman Division  
Pat Gabilando, English  
Cleve Hill, Education  
Marilyn Kilgen, Biological Sciences  
Jimmy Ponder, Accounting  
Lavone Rodriguez, Education

Margaret Minor, History, Chair  
Ken Coffey, Developmental Programs  
John Lajaunie, Economics  
Jackie Lindsley, Freshman Division  
Fran Moss, Math  
Charlotte Pipes, Music  
Dennis Sipiorski, Art

## General Education Recommendations

Table III. VISUALIZATION OF COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

### DESIRED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

CORE COURESES	Communication & Comprehension	Reasoning/ Independent Thought	Independent Learning	Personal Values Ethics, Social Responsibility	Quantitative Reasoning	Scientific Understanding	Technology	Humanities	Political Economic Systems	Personal Wellness	Cultural Awareness
English 101	XP	X	X	X							
English 102	XP	X	X	X							
Speech 101	oral & visual communicationP	X	X	X							
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	XP						
Natural Science	X	X	X	X		XP					
Physical Science	X	X	X	X		XP					
Science Lab	X	X	X	X		XP	X				
Computer Science	X	X	X	X	XP		XP				
English Lit. Elec.	X	X	X	X				XP			X
Music or Art Elec.	X	X	X	X				X			XP
History 101 & 102	X	X	X	X				XP	X		X
Economics or Govt.	X	X	X	X				X	XP		X
Psychology, Geography, or Sociology	X	X	X	X				X			XP
Personal Wellness	X	X	X	X						XP	

X = Outcome must be a component of this course  
P = Primary course for fulfillment of outcome