

Metropolitan State College of Denver General Studies/CORE Curriculum Revision Proposal

Rationale

The regular review and revision of curricula and programs is an important activity for all educational institutions. The following concerns factored into the General Studies Committee's decision to undertake a major review of the program:

- The General Studies Program at Metro State became effective in the academic year of 1988-89 and remains the same without revision since then.
- The reaccreditation report of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools mentioned the state of the General Studies Program as a concern (see below), and the previous reaccreditation visit also had concerns.
- The reaccreditation report of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools suggested Metro State needed improvement in assessment.
- A revision was done and presented to the Faculty Senate in May, 2004, but the proposal was rejected.
- The Board of Trustees has also expressed concern about the program and requested a program review.

Reaccreditation Visit

In March 2007, a site team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visited Metro State for a comprehensive evaluation related to reaccreditation. The visit was deemed a success, with no follow-up visits required. The HLC currently does not see a need to send another team for 10 years. Two monitoring reports are due in two years' time:

- * A progress report on the revision of general studies program that is due April 1, 2009
- * A progress report on distance education that is due by June 30, 2008.

A special concern was developing measurable student learning outcomes that can be directly assessed. Their report concerning general studies follows:

D. Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

- a. The College has taken concrete steps to begin to address concerns expressed by the previous comprehensive visit team regarding the General Studies program.
- a. Because the College is in the beginning stages of its examination and revision of the General Studies program, any changes still await discussion, modification, adoption, and implementation, as well as an effective plan for the assessment of general education learning outcomes. This is an ongoing concern related to a concern identified by the 1997 comprehensive visit team. (Core Component 4b.)

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; Commission follow-up recommended. Monitoring report on General Studies 4/1/09.

Monitoring Report on General Studies:

While examination of College documents and discussions with key groups and individuals confirm that the Metropolitan State College of Denver recognizes and is taking steps to address previous Commission concerns regarding the General Studies program, the planning process for a revised General Studies program is still in progress.

The team recommends that the College submit a monitoring report on its adoption of a revised General Studies program to the Commission by April 1, 2009. The report must document a program that includes measurable learning outcomes that:

- demonstrate students' preparation for continued learning,
- are consistent with the College's stated mission and goals and with Colorado's state-guaranteed general education program,
- and are incorporated within the College's overall assessment plan for continuous improvement of student learning.

If the monitoring report does not document such progress in its General Studies program by this date, the Commission may require further follow-up activities, including additional reports or a focused visit.

HLC Recommendations on Assessment

- Identify a full-time person to provide strong leadership in assessment of student learning.
- Increase the focus on direct, performance-based measures of student learning.
- Establish a system at the department and program level for using assessment data for the improvement of student learning.
- Establish a clear process linking assessment results with planning and budgeting at the department level and beyond.

General Studies Committee Research

In the academic year 2006-07, the General Studies Committee conducted research on national trends and best practices in general education. We surveyed 51 institutions including possible peer institutions, the final CUPA list, and the Association of American Colleges & University's promising models list. We also identified the colleges and universities that have HSI status. See www.mscd.edu/~gsc for more information.

Elements we considered include:

Types of General Education Models Used

Distribution Model	
Small selection of courses	29.5 %
Wide selection of courses	29.5 %
Integrated Studies Model	6 %
Comprehensive Model	35 %

Themes	33 %
Seminars	16 %
Interdisciplinary approaches	25 %
Learning communities:	25 %
Writing intensive requirement:	31 %
Global literacy requirement:	37 %
First-Year Programs:	24 %
U.S. History required	20 %
Computer literacy	22 %
World Language Requirement	8 %
Use Peer Mentors	20 %
Home for General Studies	25 %

The General Studies Committee also brought two consultants to learn more about best practices in general education and assessment in the spring of 2007. We surveyed faculty about their perceptions of our program; asked students for their suggestions; and held workshops, made presentations, and sent out emails to involve faculty.

Proposal

The following proposal is organized by program objectives, areas, area goals, student learning outcomes, course content (where applicable) and support, and assessment. The committee has proposed to change the name from General Studies Program to CORE Curriculum. It also has proposed more support for Metro State's CORE Curriculum in the form of a Director of CORE Curriculum, an Assistant Director (see the end of the document for a description of these positions), and CORE Department Coordinators (see assessment section for a description of these positions).

General Studies Committee

Current Members

Dr. Theresa Crater, Department of English, LAS, Committee Chair
 Dr. Andrew Muldoon, Department of History, LAS
 Dr. Alexandre Padilla, Department of Economics, Business
 Dr. Douglas Petcoff, Department of Biology, LAS
 Dr. Elizabeth Friot, Teacher Education, SPS
 Dr. Dorothy Snozek, Teacher Education, SPS
 Dr. Mark Segall, Computer Information Systems, Business
 Dr. Susan Cook, Technical Communication and Media Production, SPS

Ad-Hoc Members

Dr. Rich Wagner, Interim Associate VP of Curriculum and Programs
 Dr. Hal Nees, Faculty Senate President
 Dr. Linda Curran, Interim Provost

Former Members

Ms. Jennifer Weddig, Health Professions, SPS
 Dr. Cynthia Sutton, Department of Management, Business
 Dr. Larry Bettermann, Teacher Education, SPS