IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

FOR STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

BACCALAUREATE CANDIDATE GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Spring/Summer 1999

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INTRODUCTION

The State University of New York Board of Trustees, in December 1998, adopted Resolution 98-241 establishing a General Education Requirement for all baccalaureate degree candidates at the University's state-operated campuses. Both in conjunction with the Trustees' action and in response to requests from the Chancellor and senior campus leadership, Provost Peter D. Salins appointed The Provost's Advisory Task Force on General Education. Specifically structured to provide broad system representation, the Task Force includes campus presidents, chief academic officers, faculty and students, and is drawn from all sectors of the system.

The charge of the Task Force focused primarily on four areas. Its responsibility was to:

- consult with the campuses to identify their concerns in the implementation of the Trustees' Resolution;
- interpret both the letter and the spirit of the Trustees' Resolution;
- develop guidelines to assist campuses as they adapt their General Education programs to the Trustees' resolution in ways consistent with campus and program missions; and
- identify resources that will be needed to implement the Trustees’ resolution and suggest ways that these may he developed and allocated.

In carrying out its charge, the Task Force divided into four work groups, each addressing a specific aspect of implementation. These four subcommittees were: the Academic Subject Areas Subcommittee, charged with describing the learning outcomes required by General Education programs; the Instructional Modalities Subcommittee, charged with exploring and recommending methods for producing the desired learning outcomes; the Two-year College/Transfer Issue Subcommittee, charged with analyzing and making recommendations regarding the impact of the General Education policy at two-year institutions; and the Resource Allocation Subcommittee, charged with examining and making recommendations regarding the financial implications of the new General Education policy. The Task Force developed its guidelines within the context of the State University of New York's distinctiveness as a large system of diverse institutions, each with its own mission, goals, and needs. Efforts were made to allow campuses the flexibility to implement the policy in accord with their own, unique characteristics.

In this regard, curricular content is described in terms of learning outcomes, consistent with recommendations of the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges Joint Task Force on General Education and with Provost Peter D. Salins' report on General Education.

In developing these guidelines, the Task Force recognizes tile significance of other factors, such. as assessment and budget allocations, that may have an impact on General Education policy implementation. Consequently, these guidelines would complement rather than supercede the recommendations of the Provost's Task Force on Learning Outcomes, the principles governing the Budget Allocation Process, or individual campuses' Mission Review Memoranda of

Understanding. Consistent with the Board of Trustees' resolution, the Task Force guidelines recognize other extant and unique circumstances that might justify waivers from, or deferment of, specific aspects of implementation.

The Task Force believes that in delineating learning outcomes and in setting a framework for implementation of recommendations, it is being faithful to the intent of the Board of Trustees' resolution and sensitive to campus circumstances. Moreover, this General Education initiative is a work in progress and will require continuous review of both curricular content and assessment methods to ensure that it is ful1y and effectively implemented.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDELINES

The Interpretive Guidelines component of the Task Force's report summarizes, the findings and recommendations of the Academic Subjects and Instructional Modalities Subcommittees. This section delineates the learning outcomes required by the General Education program and presents a set of precepts to guide campuses in implementing their programs.

The State University of New York's General Education Requirement applies to all state-operated institutions offering undergraduate degrees. It requires baccalaureate degree candidates, as a condition of graduation, to complete a General Education program of no fewer than 30 credit hours specifically designed to achieve the student learning outcomes in ten knowledge and skill areas and two competencies, as specified below:

I. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and Skill Areas

1. MATHEMATICS

Students will show competence in the following quantitative reasoning skills:

• arithmetic;

• algebra;

• geometry;

• data analysis; and

• quantitative reasoning;

2. NATURAL SCIENCES

Students will demonstrate:

• understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis; and

• application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

3. SOCIAL SCIENCES

Students will demonstrate:

• understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis; and

• knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

4. AMERICAN HISTORY

Students will demonstrate:

• knowledge of a basic narrative of American history: political, economic, social, and cultural, including knowledge of unity and diversity in American society;

• knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups; and

• understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.

5. WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Students will:

• demonstrate knowledge of the development of the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of Western civilization; and

• relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world.

6. OTHER WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

Students will demonstrate:

• 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.

7. HUMANITIES

Students will demonstrate:

• knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.

8. THE ARTS

Students will demonstrate:

• understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

9. FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Students will demonstrate:

• basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a foreign language; and

• knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying.

10. BASIC COMMUNICATION

Students will:

• produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms;

• demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts;

• research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details;

• develop proficiency in oral discourse; and

• evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria.

Competencies

The following two competencies should be infused throughout the General Education program:

1. CRITICAL THINKING (REASONING)

Students will:

• identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; and

• develop well-reasoned arguments.

2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Students will:

• perform the basic operations of personal computer use;

• understand and use basic research techniques; and

• locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

II. PRECEPTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

As campuses develop or modify their General Education programs for implementation, they should be guided by the following precepts:

• Campuses shall demonstrate commitment to General Education in the following ways:

• encourage the assignment of excellent teaching faculty to General Education courses;

• provide courses specifically designed for and dedicated to General Education where appropriate;

• consider faculty commitment to the teaching, of General Education in the promotion and tenure process; and

• articulate a coherent philosophy and pedagogy for their General Education program(s).

• Campuses, in including assessment as a necessary component of their General Education implementation plans, shall:

• review their entire General Education programs periodically to evaluate and strengthen performance;

• establish assessment programs for the specified student learning outcomes;

• derive evidence from the application of such assessment programs to show that the intended learning outcomes are being achieved; and

• use. the results of assessment programs to improve the quality and effectiveness of General Education programs.

• Campuses may deliver General Education in a variety of formats, as judged appropriate by the campus faculty, and justified on curricular and pedagogical grounds. Campuses may also offer more than one General Education curriculum.

• For purposes of General Education, the campuses shall interpret the knowledge areas according to conventional or common definitions, but may, as appropriate, teach them through a variety of perspectives.

• The formats and methods of delivery for General Education courses shall be appropriate to each knowledge and skill area. Those courses that have been approved by a campus for its General Education program shall be monitored regularly by the campus faculty.

• Campuses are encouraged to conceive of and implement General Education programs that approach the goals of General Education as a four-year experience, thereby providing students with greater options for planning their courses of study, allowing for the needs of transfer students, and allowing faculties to devise curricula appropriate to individual majors and to institutional missions.

• General Education programs shall recognize differences in the levels of student preparation and build curricula both to assess and achieve a level of college competency. Campuses may waive individual requirements for students who can demonstrate college-level proficiency in specific knowledge and skill areas or competencies.

• Waivers will be available for specific programs with specialized mission or accreditation demands that would constrain a student's ability to fulfill the General Education Requirement without extending the time to graduation. Campuses with such programs may also propose alternative curricula designed to incorporate an appropriate portion of the General Education Requirement within their professional curricula, thereby reinforcing and enriching, rather than diverting from their mission and accreditation demands.

• Campuses that have resource constraints preventing them from fulfilling portions of the General Education policy by Fall 2000 may request additional time for implementation of specified portions of the policy.

• In keeping with Trustees' Resolution 87-114 (and prior resolutions relating to Transfer Policy), courses certified as fulfilling particular General Education requirements by any institution in the system will fulfill those requirements at any other institution in the system, without the necessity of individual articulation agreements.

• Students transferring from community colleges may complete as many as 30 credits of the General Education Requirement prior to transfer. Students planning to transfer into baccalaureate programs would be well advised to complete as much of the General Education Requirement as possible within their programs of study.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

The Procedural Guidelines section of this report reflects the findings and recommendations of the Task Force

Subcommittees on Resource Allocation and on Community College/Transfer Issues. It outlines the process for campus preparation of General Education curricula.

Campuses should use the following procedural guidelines when preparing; their General Education program proposals:

• Campuses are charged with devising distinctive and varied ways of achieving the goals of General Education in the spirit of and within the parameters defined by the Trustees' resolution. Each campus will develop one or more General Education curricula. Documents describing these programs will include analyses of resource needs and implementation timetables, and will be for warded to the Provost's Office between September 1 and December 31, 1999. After the initial implementation, campus General Education programs should be reviewed periodically, and within the context of the Mission Review process.

• The resolution regarding General Education carries resource implications. Short-term consequences derive from the necessity of investing in faculty and support resources in order to mount new courses by the fall of the year 2000. Over the long-term, once the General Education policy is in place, campuses may find that course enrollments have shifted toward knowledge and skill areas where the costs of instruction are higher than in courses in which students currently enroll. Circumstances differ from campus to campus, therefore, campuses should carefully identify new instructional needs, and the costs associated with them as follows:

• Each campus should provide an analysis of the costs associated with delivering the full General Education curriculum to its students beginning with the Fall 2000 semester.

• Each. campus should identify any significant start-up costs (i.e., library materials, hiring new faculty, technology, academic advisement, reprinting of catalogues).

• Each campus should look for alternative and collaborative ways to provide instruction, when appropriate and practical.

• Each campus will determine college-level proficiency in order to waive individual students from specific General Education requirements on the basis of prior learning. Such determination shall be made according to the criteria specified in the campus' General Education program proposal.

• Campuses requesting waivers on the basis of mission or accreditation demands should submit written justification. to the Provost's Office no later than December 31, 1999.

• Campuses that have resource constraints preventing them from fulfilling portions of the General Education Requirement by Fall 2000, may request additional time for implementation of specified portions of the policy by including appropriate justification and a timetable for compliance in their General Education program proposals.

• Though not bound by the Board Resolution, Community Colleges will also submit their General Education curricula so that courses can be certified as satisfying specific General Education requirements without the need for any further articulatio n agreement.

CAMPUS GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL FORMAT

This section proposes a format campuses are to follow in submitting their General Education curriculum proposals to the Office of the Provost. The General Education proposals submitted to the Provost’s Office should include:

Curriculum Outline

Campuses shall submit an overall outline of the General Education curriculum or curricula, including catalog descriptions and summaries of topics and readings to be covered for courses that satisfy each of the required knowledge and competency areas. These curriculum submissions shall also state criteria for waiving individual students from particular requirements on the basis of previous academic achievement (e.g., Regents exams, AP tests, campus-based measures).

Program Waiver Requests

Requests for program waivers or deferments of full implementation of the General Education Requirement may be submitted when warranted by special mission and/or accreditation requirements (see second "Resolved" clause of Resolution 98-241. [Appendix A]. Waiver and deferment requests must include justification, and in the case of deferment, proposed dates for full implementation.

Statement of Resource Implications

The proposal should include an analysis of resource requirements for the implementation of General Education, as described in the Procedural Guidelines section of this document.

IMPLEMETATION TIMELINE

1. Submission of Campus General Education Program Proposals (including institutional and program waiver requests, and resource analyses)	September I - December 31, 1999
2. Review of Campus General Education Program Proposals	October 1, 1999 - April 30, 2000
3. Initiate implementation of General Education at state-operated campuses.	Fall 2000

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Farce appreciates fully the impact of this General Education Requirement on the campuses, and to ensure that the proposed implementation model functions smoothly, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

- that the Provost appoint an advisory group to make recommendations regarding General Education program and waiver proposals. It would be appropriate for this Provost's General Education Review Advisory Council to meet frequently during the first year of implementation, and periodically thereafter;
- that campuses be advised orally at once, and by letter within ten working days, as proposals for programs and waivers are approved. Programs and waivers that receive conditional approval, contingent upon changes or additions, should also receive written confirmation within ten working days;
- that sufficient staff in the Provost's Office be assigned to support system-wide implementation of the General Education Requirement;
- that additional designated State resources be made available to support the implementation of General Education at two-year colleges, (e.g., hiring language or history instructors);
- that, within the framework of the Budget Allocation Process, funds be made available to support the implementation of General Education programs;
- that System Administration and the campuses collaborate in exploring ways to minimize costs;
- that funds be made available for pilot demonstration projects and for model programs involving the implementation and assessment of General Education; and
- that – after initial system-wide implementation of the General Education Requirement – the Provost's office should, in the context of the Mission Review process, review both (1) the design of General Education programs and (2) campus assessment programs and evidence that pertinent student learning outcomes are being achieved.

APPENDIX A TRUSTEES' RESOLUTION 98-241:

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Whereas setting the standards of knowledge possessed by the State University's students when they graduate is one of the premier responsibilities of the Board of Trustees: and

Whereas the State Education Commissioner and State Board of Regents have moved to raise academic standards of New York State's secondary schools which higher standards should be reinforced by rigorous academic standards in the State's institutions of higher education: and

Whereas the Joint Task Force on General Education of the State University of New York Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges, has reported the need for enhancing General Education curricula and recommended the adoption of common system-wide learning goals; and

Whereas the Board of Trustees' Committee on Academic Standards, over a two-year period, has conducted public meetings in which General Education standards have been discussed, and representatives of the faculty and noted national experts have taken part; and

Whereas the Board of Trustees' Subcommittee on General Education and Core Curriculum has reviewed and discussed the reports of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges and University Provost concerning General Education, including programs at other leading universities; and

Whereas the State University Board of Trustees possesses *broad* authority over the curriculum of its institutions

under Section 355(2)(h) of the New York State Education Law; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Board of Trustees hereby adopts a General Education Requirement applicable to all state-operated institutions of the State University offering undergraduate degrees which shall require candidates for a bachelors degree, as a condition of graduation, to complete an academically rigorous and comprehensive core General Education curriculum of no fewer than 30 credit hours including, but not limited to, at least three credit hours of course work to instill knowledge and skills in each of the following key academic subjects: mathematics, natural science, social science, American history, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, humanities and the arts, foreign languages, basic communication and reasoning, and information management, and be it further

Resolved that implementation of the General Education Requirement be subject to the following principles:

1. The faculty of each institution will retain the responsibility for establishing the specific course requirements and content of a General Education curriculum reflective of the best practices in American higher education.

2. Individual campuses are encouraged to allow faculty to develop more than one curriculum which meets the General Education Requirement.

3. Each institution's General Education curriculum shall complement and build on students' foundation of secondary school or other prior academic preparation, especially with respect to mathematics, science and foreign language.

4. Each institution shall devote sufficient resources to the General Education program to assure effective instruction and successful learning.

5. Institutions offering Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees shall design their General Education Requirement so as to facilitate the ability of such Associates degree graduates to transfer into State University baccalaureate degree programs consistent with Trustees` Resolution 90-196, dated September 27, 1990.

6. Such General Education curriculum courses shall be broad, high-quality courses that provide students with a set of non-specialized, coherent and focused educational experiences throughout the college years aimed at enabling students to acquire knowledge and skills that are useful and important for all educated persons regardless of their jobs or professions.

7. The Provost of State University may establish additional guidelines and procedures for implementation of these requirements as appropriate and necessary, which guidelines may permit waiver or modifications of portions of these requirements for the Specialized Colleges, Colleges of Technology, programs awarding two-year vocational degrees and for other special circumstances.

8. The requirements shall apply to students entering the State University as freshmen beginning in the fall of 2000

and, be it further

Resolved that in accordance with Section 6306(2) of the State Education Law, the State University Board of Trustees urges the boards of trustees of the community colleges operating under the program of the State University to adopt General Education Requirements and curricula consistent with the aforementioned principles; and, be it further

Resolved that the Provost of the State University will work with the leadership and faculty of the University's campuses to develop a means for assuring that demonstrable learning in specified General Education subjects is taking place, that a campus' implementation of General Education standards set forth in this resolution is considered in the allocation of resources to campuses and to explore ways to recognize and reward faculty who make major commitments to strengthening General Education at their campuses so as to encourage the involvement of outstanding junior and senior faculty; and, be it further

Resolved that the Provost of the State University will work with the leadership and faculty of the State University's campuses to implement this resolution, consistent with the Mission Review process. The Provost will advise the Board of Trustees of any additional steps that may need to be taken to insure the smooth implementation of this resolution in a fashion that enhances access and quality at the State University.

BACKGROUND

This Board, under the leadership of the Academic Standards Committee and the Subcommittee on General Education and Core Curriculum has taken a keen interest in the issue of General Education standards for the campuses of the State University of New York. This interest has been in keeping with a national discussion on the subject and, within the University, is reflected in efforts undertaken by the Joint Task Force on General Education of the State University of New York Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges. That Task Force issued a report in January 1998 which expressed the need for enhancing General Educational curricula and

recommended the adoption of common, system-wide learning goals.

Over a two-year period, the Trustees' Committee on Academic Standards has conducted public meetings in which General Education standards have been discussed and representatives of the faculty and noted national experts have taken part. Additionally, the trustees' Subcommittee on General Education and Core Curriculum has reviewed and discussed the above-mentioned report of the Joint Task Force and a Report prepared by the Provost of the State University dated December l, 1998, which includes descriptions of General Education programs at leading universities around the country. This resolution is the result of these discussions, and will establish for the state-operated institutions of the State University a General Education Requirement which will become a condition of graduation for the class of students entering as freshmen in the Fall semester 2000. The requirement consists of a minimum of 30 credit hours covering a number of specific skill and knowledge areas. The specific courses and content which will comprise the General Education curriculum at each State University campus will remain the responsibility of campus faculty and administrators.

This resolution also urges the boards of trustees of the community colleges operating under the program of the State University of New York to establish General Education curricula and requirements which will facilitate the transfer of their graduates into State University baccalaureate degree programs.

APPENDIX B

Trustees' Resolution 90-196: Transfer and Articulation Policy

Whereas this Board by Resolution 72-302 adopted November 29, 1972, established a transfer policy guaranteeing graduates with Associate in Arts (A.A..) and Associate in Science (A.S.) degrees from two-year State-operated and community colleges within State University of New York (SUNY) an opportunity to continue their education on a full-time basis at State University baccalaureate campuses and by Resolutions 80-53 and 87-114 adopted March 26, 1980 anal June 24, 2987 respectively further extended this policy to provide, among other things, that such students be accorded full junior status and credit transfer for general education courses; and .

Whereas the University's transfer policy has served well SUNY's goal and mission of providing full access to the State's citizens to higher education and in order to renew and strengthen the University's commitment to the goals underlying this policy, it is desirable to reaffirm and extend the policy by making further provisions regarding its implementation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the principles constituting the transfer policy of State University of New York as outlined in Resolutions 72-302, 80- 53, and 87-144 be, and hereby are, reaffirmed as follows:

1. New York State residents who are graduates of a State University two-year college, including the community colleges operating within the program of the University, and who possess an A.A. or A.S. degree, shall be guaranteed an opportunity to continue his or her education on a full-time basis at a baccalaureate campus of the University; and

2. Graduates of two-year colleges within SUNY with an A.A. or A.S. degree, when accepted in parallel programs at baccalaureate campuses of the University, shall be accorded full junior status and be given the opportunity to complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree within four additional semesters of full-time work; and

3. Graduates of two-year colleges within SUNY, when accepted with junior status within parallel programs at baccalaureate campuses of the University, shall be granted full credit for general education courses taken and not be required to repeat successfully-completed courses with similar curricular content; and

4. Only those admissions requirements to institutions or to particular programs applicable to continuing and returning students shall he applied to SUNY A.A. and A.S. transfer students; and

5. These transfer students shall be accorded, as far as possible, opportunities in areas such as housing, advisement and registration comparable try those of returning and continuing students; and be it further

Resolved that, beginning with the fall of 1991, the following additional principles shall pertain in the implementation of the SUNY's transfer policy:

1. New York State residents who are graduates of a City University two-year college and who possess art A.A. or A.S. degree shall be guaranteed the same opportunity to continue his or her education on a full-time basis at a baccalaureate campus of the University as is accorded graduates from SUNY two-year colleges;

2. Baccalaureate campuses of SUNY in their enrollment planning shall give priority to A.A. and A.S. graduates of State University and City University of New York over other transfers;

3. Academic decisions an admissions for such transfer students shall be based solely on their previous collegiate records;

4. Baccalaureate campuses in making these admissions' decisions shall pay particular attention to applications from A.A. or A.S, transfer students from their region who cannot relocate to another part of the

State;

5. Baccalaureate campuses and two-year colleges of SUNY in close geographical proximity shall expand joint articulation agreements and, where appropriate, establish joint admission agreements; and, be it further

Resolved that these policy extensions to address place-bound transfer students do not diminish the expectation that SUNY baccalaureate campuses shall continue to provide access for A.A. and A.S. graduates from two-year colleges throughout the State, and be it further

Resolved that the Board reaffirms its intention that SUNY shall continue to provide access to first-time students at both its baccalaureate campuses and its two-year colleges; and be it further

Resolved that the document entitled "Guidelines for the State University of New York Transfer Policy" dated June 27, 1990 (copy on file in the Office of the Secretary of the University) be, and hereby is, approved and the Chancellor, or designee, be, and hereby is, authorized to amend and supplement said guidelines from time to time, in such manner as shall be determined to be appropriate.