



State University of New York

Memorandum to Presidents

Date: September 21, 1999 Vol. 99 No. 3

From: Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: Procedures for the Review of State University General Education Programs

To: Presidents, State-Operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges

The State University of New York Board of Trustees, in December 1998, adopted Resolution 98-241 establishing a 30 credit hour General Education Requirement for all baccalaureate degree candidates at the University's state-operated campuses, to begin with the freshman class entering in fall 2000. 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 to develop guidelines for the campuses to follow in adapting their General Education programs to Resolution 98-241. Chaired by Provost Salins and President Muriel A. Howard of the State University College at Buffalo, the Task Force was designed specifically to provide broad system representation; its membership was drawn from all sectors of the system and included campus presidents, chief academic officers, faculty and students.

The Task Force released its report to the State University on August 3, 1999. This report proposes, among other things, a process by which campuses would submit their General Education programs for review and approval by a system-wide Advisory Council. The purpose of this memorandum is to issue guidelines that formalize this process.

Questions or comments regarding the implementation of the General Education Requirement should be directed to Dr. Joseph G. DeFilippo, Assistant Provost for Academic Planning and Evaluation (518-443-5505, defilijo@sysadm.suny.edu), or to Mrs. Ginette F. Chambers, Executive Assistant to the Provost (518-443-5154, chambegf@sysadm.suny.edu).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter D. Salins", written over a horizontal line.

Peter D. Salins
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Copies for information only to:
President, Alfred University
President, Cornell University
Deans, Statutory Colleges

Procedures for the Review of State University General Education Programs

I. Provost's Advisory Council on General Education

The Provost will appoint an Advisory Council to review campus General Education Programs for compliance with Resolution 98-241 as interpreted in the Report of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on General Education. This Advisory Council will commence meeting on or about October 1, 1999, and will meet frequently enough during the 1999-2000 academic year to ensure timely action on all campus submissions. It will be the responsibility of the Advisory Council to recommend to the Provost approval, conditional approval, or disapproval of General Education Program Proposals. In cases of conditional approval or disapproval, campuses will receive written notification of amendments that would lead to approval.

II. Campus General Education Program Proposals

Each state-operated campus shall submit to the Office of the Provost two copies of a General Education Program Proposal consisting of the following elements:

A. Curriculum Summary

1. An outline of the General Education curriculum or curricula being proposed. (This outline should make clear which campus requirement satisfies each of the twelve knowledge and competency areas of the State University General Education Requirement. See the Task Force Report Learning Outcomes, attached as an appendix to this document.)
2. Catalog descriptions and summaries of topics and readings to be covered for courses that satisfy each of the required knowledge and competency areas. (See the Task Force Report Learning Outcomes, attached as an appendix to this document.)
3. Criteria for waiving individual students from particular requirements on the basis of previous academic achievement, such as a specific level of performance on a standardized test or other objective measure.

B. Program Waiver Requests

Requests for program-specific waivers, or for deferment of full implementation of the General Education Requirement, may be submitted when warranted by special mission or accreditation demands. Typically, program-specific waiver requests will be granted only when implementation of the General Education Requirement would necessitate a lengthening of students' time to graduation beyond four years. Deferment requests must include a proposed date for full implementation.

III. Community Colleges and Transfer Implications

Community colleges operating under the program of the State University of New York may also submit General Education Program Proposals. Since community colleges are not bound by the 30 credit hour requirement of Resolution 98-241, the purpose of such submissions is to enable the Provost's Advisory Council to certify specific courses as satisfying particular General Education learning outcomes. In keeping with the Task Force Report, and Board Resolutions 98-241 and 90-196, any course certified by the Provost's Advisory Council as satisfying a particular General Education learning outcome at any institution in the system will satisfy that learning outcome at all other institutions in the system, without the need for any further articulation agreement.

IV. Implementation Timeline

1	Submission of Campus General Education Program Proposals	October 1- December 31, 1999
2	Review of General Education Program Proposals by the Provost's Advisory Council on General Education	October 1, 1999- April 30, 2000
3	Initiation of implementation of General Education at state-operated campuses.	Fall 2000

V. Resource Implications

In accord with the Task Force's recommendation that the system track fiscal implications of the General Education Requirement prescribed by Resolution 98-241, the Office of the Provost is developing a survey for campuses to complete in reporting the costs and savings associated with its implementation. This survey will be distributed to campuses later during the fall 1999 semester.

Appendix: Task Force Report Learning Outcomes

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.