

Report and Recommendations

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IUSB Task Force on General Education

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I. Introduction

Since March 2000, the Task Force on General Education has been working to develop, for the first time, a common general education framework for all IUSB baccalaureate degrees. The principal impetus for this process was a request from President Brand for a review of general education curricula at all the IU campuses, but other factors, both external and internal, motivated the effort, as well. While significant progress has been made at IUSB in the assessment of major areas of study, assessment of general education has been hampered by the lack of uniformity in general education curricula across the academic units and by the absence of clearly stated goals for general education in some units. The need for more progress in the assessment of general education was noted in the report of the NCA accreditation site visit in the 2000-01 academic year. That report also acknowledged the practical necessity of waiting for the completion of the general education review already underway, and urged the timely completion of the review.

Internally, the implementation of direct admission to the academic units, and the corresponding expanded involvement of faculty in the academic advising of students undecided about a major, have broadened awareness of the difficulty of providing good advice to students when their proper course of study really depends on a decision not yet made. Under present circumstances, general education is hardly "general" at all. It is, in fact, strongly dependent on the major course of study.

Initial discussions of the Task Force in the spring of 2000 identified three broad areas into which the goals of general education might be divided: (1) skills, (2) knowledge/content, and (3) values. In the fall of 2000 the Task Force organized a series of three "First Friday" discussions, focused on these three broad areas. Faculty with a strong interest in general education shared their ideas and opinions at these forums, and the resulting discussion helped to shape subsequent deliberations of the Task Force.

In the spring of 2001, two members of the Task Force attended an AAC&U (Association of American Colleges and Universities) conference on general education, and ideas gleaned from this conference also shaped subsequent discussions and decisions of the Task Force.

At the end of the 2000-2001 academic year the Task Force distributed to the campus community for comment three model general education curricula, the Core Curriculum model, the Coherent Clusters model, and the Integrated Areas of Inquiry model. The distinctive component of the Core Curriculum model was the Common Core, a set of four interdisciplinary

courses providing theme-based introductions to four broad groupings of academic disciplines. The Coherent Cluster model was characterized by clusters of courses from different disciplines organized around a common theme. The Integrated Areas of Inquiry model most closely resembled the distributive model currently used by most academic units, but with content categories less strongly tied to departmental groupings.

During the Fall 2001 semester, representatives of the Task Force attended meetings of seventeen different academic units, to answer questions and listen to comments about these sample curricula. Predictably, there was no consensus on which of these curricular structures best fit the needs of our academic community. There were, however, many frank and open discussions of the goals of general education within the University and the practicalities of meeting those goals within our particular university. One sentiment that was expressed often during these meetings was the desire to retain some flexibility in any new general education curriculum, in order to accommodate the widely varying educational missions of the different schools, colleges, and divisions at IUSB. Likewise, it was often pointed out to us that IUSB has a somewhat fluid student population, with many students transferring credits from or to other institutions; and that this, too, should be considered in developing a proposal for a campus-wide general education curriculum.

Finally, during the Spring 2002 semester, the Task Force took the input it received as a result of these meetings with academic units and worked to develop the proposed curriculum presented in this report. It contains the central feature of the Core Curriculum model – the Common Core of four content courses – but with a significant reduction in the number of required courses of other types. At 33 credit hours, the proposed common curriculum allows room for additional requirements deemed important by individual academic units, and so provides the flexibility so often requested. Indeed, it is assumed that most academic units will want to use the proposed common curriculum as a foundation on which to build a more extensive general education curriculum, especially suited to the unit's mission. The issue of transferability is also addressed, in the structure recommended for the courses in the *Common Core*, which carry a common title but not a common syllabus. This structure allows for a departmental designation for the courses, which will facilitate the transfer of these credits to other institutions. This structure will also smooth the transition to the new curriculum from most units' current general education requirements, which depend largely on courses' departmental designations.

II. The Purpose and Goals of General Education at IUSB

While opinions about the best curricular structure for general education vary widely, there is substantial agreement on the overall purpose of this component of higher education. It is to produce broadly educated graduates, with the ability to analyze issues from varied perspectives and to communicate positions clearly and effectively. The manner in which this broad purpose is articulated, and the specific goals that are seen to be implied by it, help to determine the form of the general education curriculum at a particular institution.

We recommend the following as a Statement of Purpose for general education at IUSB.

Statement of Purpose for General Education at IUSB

The purpose of general education at IUSB is to prepare students to be successful in their chosen professions and become valued citizens and leaders within their communities, individually enriched by their studies and stimulated by the spirit of discovery. We will create a learning environment that serves the academic, civic, cultural, and career needs of an educated citizen within the global community. Such a program supports the strategic priorities of our campus to enhance the student-centered focus and to develop and support excellence in programming.

The general education curriculum at IUSB complements the depth and focus of our major programs and ensures that graduates will have the breadth of experience that enables them to think critically, communicate clearly, act professionally and ethically, and appreciate wisdom and beauty. The general education curriculum provides students with knowledge of the basic tenets of a variety of academic disciplines and the skills to function effectively in positions of responsibility and leadership. It instills in students an appreciation of the interconnectedness of disciplines, the diversity of human cultures and experiences, self-awareness conducive to personal growth, and a love of learning.

The implications of this Statement of Purpose are illustrated by the following list of specific, assessable goals of the general education curriculum.

Goals of General Education at IUSB

As outcomes of the general education curriculum, students should...

- be able to write clearly and correctly, and to understand, construct, and analyze persuasive written arguments*
 - be capable of understanding, constructing, and analyzing quantitative arguments*
 - be capable of understanding, constructing, and analyzing arguments presented in verbal and visual form*
 - be able to retrieve, evaluate, and use information effectively*
 - understand the power and purpose of a scientific view of the natural world*
 - be familiar with the philosophical, literary, and political traditions of Western culture*
 - understand factors that shape the behavior of human beings, as individuals and as groups*
 - appreciate artistic achievement and develop aesthetic sensibilities*
 - appreciate the importance of ethical behavior and understand the ethical issues associated with a variety of academic disciplines*
 - understand and appreciate the variety of cultures and experiences that have contributed to American society*
 - gain familiarity with non-Western cultures*
 - value personal growth and learning*
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III. General Characteristics of the Proposed Curriculum

Our examination of current trends in general education and our analysis of the feedback to our model general education curricula led us to aim for a general education structure that gives special consideration to two characteristics – *coherence* and *flexibility*. Before describing in detail the specific components of the curricular structure we propose, we wish to explain how these characteristics are embodied in it.

Coherence is fostered in the proposed curriculum in a number of ways. For example, placing the disciplinary content into a *Common Core*, and requiring some elements of

interdisciplinarity in these courses, encourages students to think of the four categories of disciplinary content as inherently related. Also, the courses in the *Common Core* will include some instruction in the *Fundamental Literacies*, which will serve to make explicit the fact that these skills are, in fact, fundamental to academic pursuits.

In a similar fashion, courses dealing with social issues currently facing our students, as detailed in the *Contemporary Social Issues* component of the curriculum, encourage the application of students' academic work to their lives beyond the university. This, too, makes the point that university study is applicable in other segments of the student's life.

To further promote the integration and coherence of the general education curriculum, mechanisms should be provided to enable and encourage communication among all faculty members teaching courses in the general education curriculum, both before and during the semester.

The integrating experience of a common general education curriculum can be an extremely effective tool for promoting students' persistence toward a degree. At the same time, there are legitimate differences among academic units in the priorities attached to the various goals of general education. It is essential in a modern university to allow the flexibility for individual units to adapt and expand a common general education curriculum to meet their own programmatic goals.

Flexibility is provided in the curriculum proposed here primarily by limiting the range of goals addressed by it. This is a minimal core of general education, and it is assumed that individual units will use it as a foundation for a more extensive general education curriculum.

Another feature of the proposed curriculum that enhances its flexibility is the attachment of a departmental designation to each course in the curriculum – even those in the *Common Core*. This feature will greatly simplify both the transition from current general education requirements and the transferability of courses in the *Common Core* to other institutions.

IV. Components of the Proposed Curriculum

The general education curriculum we recommend consists of four components: *Fundamental Literacies*; *The Common Core*; *Contemporary Social Issues*; and *Extended Learning*.

IV.A. Fundamental Literacies

The development of certain skills is necessary for success in academic pursuits and also for success and fulfillment in life beyond the university. We propose the following as a minimal set of such skills, and encourage academic units to consider adding additional ones, appropriate to their degree programs.

The Fundamental Literacies

Writing

Oral Communication

Critical Thinking

Visual Literacy

Quantitative Reasoning

Information Literacy

Computer Literacy

Some students will begin their university studies competent in one or more of these areas, as a result of prior study or experience. Allowances should be made for the demonstration of such competence through placement exams or other means.

Writing – The ability to write clearly and correctly is arguably the most important academic skill an individual can acquire. University instruction in composition should encompass more than this, though. It should include development of the ability to analyze written texts from a variety of disciplines and to construct clear and convincing written arguments. We propose as part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of competence in written communication, by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- includes practice in the detailed interpretation of complex academic texts from several disciplines
- requires skill in the formulation and defense of an original interpretive thesis
- includes extensive practice in the techniques of argumentative writing
- requires extensive experience with manuscript revision
- includes practice in the fundamental skills of research writing

Oral Communication – Written texts offer a permanence and opportunity for analysis that make them especially valuable. However, most communication takes place orally; and it is important to develop skill both in formal oral presentations and in the ability to recognize conventions of oral communication and the ways in which oral communication can be enhanced and expanded by non-verbal means. We propose as part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of competence in oral communication, either by direct demonstration in a placement examination or by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- provides training in thought processes necessary to organize speech content
- requires students to analyze components of effective delivery and language
- imparts understanding of ways in which oral communication is amplified or inhibited by non-verbal forms of communication
- requires students to demonstrate ability to communicate information and ideas effectively to groups or in one-on-one conversation

Critical Thinking – The ability to analyze an argument and recognize its strengths and weaknesses is a hallmark of an educated person. This ability develops fully through repeated practice in a wide variety of courses throughout a student’s academic career. It is more fully and effectively developed, however, when students receive explicit instruction in critical thinking early in their college experience. We propose as part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of a basic competence in critical thinking, by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- provides instruction in identifying and differentiating questions, problems, and arguments
- teaches students how to evaluate the appropriateness of various methods of reasoning and verification
- teaches students how to identify and assess stated and unstated assumptions, and critically compare different points of view
- introduces techniques for evaluating the quality of evidence and reasoning
- requires students to formulate questions and problems, construct and develop cogent arguments, and articulate reasoned judgments

Visual Literacy – Increasingly, communication in the modern age depends less on speech and the written word and more on visual media. Images can be extremely effective tools for conveying information and mood, and it is important for today’s college graduate to appreciate the power — for good and ill — of visual media. We propose as part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of a basic understanding of the techniques, history, and interpretation of the conventions of visual culture, by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- provides a foundation for a historical understanding of visual conventions, including both western and non-western cultures
- introduces the grammar and expressive potential of visual forms
- applies rigorous methodologies developed by social sciences, sciences, and humanities for the study of perception and interpretation of the visual world.
- requires students to be makers as well as interpreters, i.e. through the fabrication of visual essays and statements using new or traditional media.
- prepares the student to view and understand information presented in modes used in a variety of disciplines and areas.

Quantitative Reasoning – Mathematics has long been a standard component of the university curriculum. Aside from the obvious practical utility of some mathematical topics, the study of mathematics can develop skill in the application of logic and, in some cases, critical thinking skills. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum a demonstration of competence in mathematical reasoning, either by performance on the mathematics Placement Exam that places a student at level IV or higher or by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- includes instruction in mathematical concepts
- requires the application of mathematical concepts to practical problems
- requires students to develop and present quantitative arguments

We note that it may be possible for some courses to satisfy both these criteria and the criteria for the course in Critical Thinking.

Information Literacy – Thanks to the explosive growth of electronic means of communication and data storage, an individual's access to information is now practically unlimited. It is imperative that today's university graduate develop skills in finding and evaluating information, both in print and in electronic form. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum a demonstration of competence in modern information gathering and evaluation, by successful completion of a course that meets the following criteria:

- provides the student with an understanding of the organization of knowledge and information, including terminology and types of resources available
- teaches students how to construct a research question and form a research strategy, including the selection of appropriate research tools
- provides the student with the theory, skills and technique required to be an effective online database searcher
- applies knowledge gained about types of resources, search strategy and the organization of information to the critical evaluation and use of materials

- introduces students to issues regarding the ethical and legal use of information
- encourages students to develop research skills and habits that will contribute to their success as students and future professionals

Computer Literacy – In the 21st century preparation for life beyond the university surely includes learning how to use computers for a variety of tasks. Some students begin their studies at IUSB with extensive experience in the use of computers, while others lack these skills altogether. Opportunities exist, e.g., through “start-up” classes offered by the Office of Information Technologies, as well as through classes offered for credit, for students to acquire these skills. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the demonstration of competence in the use of computers for a variety of purposes, either through satisfactory performance on a proficiency exam or by the successful completion of a course that provides instruction in these skills. Given the rapid evolution of computers and the purposes they serve, the list of competencies to be demonstrated should be reconsidered often. At this time we suggest the following list:

- knowledge of the basic terminology of computer hardware and software
- ability to perform essential file manipulation functions using one or more modern computer operating systems
- ability to utilize basic features of common packaged software programs, including word processors, spreadsheets, databases, web browsers, and presentation software.

IV.B. The Common Core

A well-educated person possesses not only the literacies described in the previous section, but also knowledge of literary and intellectual traditions, scientific descriptions of the world, human behavior and institutions, and artistic conventions. In most degree programs at IUSB this portion of the general education curriculum is provided by a distribution of discipline-specific courses. This approach has merit, and we anticipate that academic units will require a variety of discipline-specific courses beyond what we recommend here. What is often lacking in this distributive approach, though, is coherence – the sense that study in these various disciplines has essentially the same character and goals.

In order to bring more coherence to this portion of the curriculum, we recommend that these distributive curricula be constructed around a *Common Core* of four courses, which introduce students to many of the essential intellectual themes of four broad (and not mutually exclusive) groupings of disciplines. The working titles we suggest for these four courses are:

The Natural World; Human Behavior and Social Institutions; Literary and Intellectual Traditions; and Art, Aesthetics, and Creativity.

We believe the themes common to each of these disciplinary groupings are most effectively taught in the context of their application to a particular topic within one of the disciplines, and we therefore propose that multiple versions of each of these courses be developed, each with its own departmental designation. For example, a *Natural World* course focusing on energy resources and the environment would be taught with a PHYS designation, while a *Natural World* course on the chemistry of food and nutrition would carry a CHEM designation. Obviously, there would not be a common syllabus for these two courses. Each version of the course should, however, have the following characteristics in common.

- The course should include a significant level of instruction in one of the fundamental literacies identified above. This will serve to emphasize the fact that the acquisition and continual development of these skills are essential to academic pursuits, and not obstacles to be overcome and then left behind.
- The course content should be at least modestly interdisciplinary, extending at least to other disciplines within the same broad grouping. For example, a *Natural World* course on energy and the environment might include instruction on the chemistry of fossil fuels, or the physiological effects of pollutants generated by the burning of these fuels. It might also include a treatment of the politics of attempts to limit the harmful effects of energy use.
- The course should include a treatment of one or more ethical issues that arise in connection with the course topic. This treatment should include not just identification of the ethical issue, but instruction in what constitutes ethical and unethical responses to the issue.
- Each version of the course should include in its content certain essential themes that serve to define the nature of inquiry in its broad family of disciplines. For example, each version of *The Natural World* might be required to include an introduction to the role of experimentation and testing of hypotheses in the advancement of scientific understanding. Or, it may be required to include an historical treatment of how current understanding evolved from earlier scientific and pre-scientific thought. The identification of these essential themes by groups of faculty in the appropriate disciplines should be one of the first tasks in the implementation of this curriculum.

Most versions of the *Common Core* courses should be appropriate for students just beginning their university studies, *i.e.* they should carry no prerequisites other than completion of any necessary developmental courses in writing and mathematics and should be designed as 100-level courses. However, an interdisciplinary approach can be especially fruitful when students already have substantial background knowledge and understanding in one of the disciplines used to study a topic. We therefore also recommend the creation of some upper-level versions of the core courses, at the 300 level. These courses could carry prerequisites,

and should in fact include as prerequisites the satisfaction of at least some of the *Fundamental Literacies* requirements.

We feel that any decision concerning the distribution of core courses between 100-level and 300-level versions is a matter best left to the implementation phase of this process, but we would favor a requirement that at least one of the four courses in the *Common Core* be taken in a 300-level version.

The Natural World – The physical world around us and the laws that govern it have been the subject of intellectual inquiry for centuries. The emergence of a scientific approach to this inquiry, marked by experiment and testable hypotheses, has radically changed the relationship between humans and their physical environment. This core course will introduce students to the methods and logic of science and help students understand the importance of science to the development of civilization and to the contemporary world. It will serve to provide a context within which to evaluate the important scientific and technological issues we face in modern society.

Human Behavior and Social Institutions – In order to understand themselves and their relationships with others in society, our students need to develop insight into human nature and the nature of social institutions, and of the major events and social processes that have shaped the world of the twenty-first century. This course will serve to introduce students to the distinctive perspectives of the social sciences in building an understanding of our world. They will also focus on the individual in relation to and as a product of that social world. It will develop in students an appreciation of the processes of social interaction and emphasize the analytic frameworks and techniques social scientists use to explain the causes and patterns of individual and institutional behavior.

Literary and Intellectual Traditions – The humanities represent great traditions of inquiry into the human condition. The topics dealt with in literature, philosophy, history, and related disciplines often overlap, while the aesthetic approaches differ. This characteristic of the humanities makes them especially amenable to interdisciplinary study. The various versions of this course will typically take advantage of this overlap in content, by focusing on a topic that can be addressed from more than one of these disciplinary perspectives, and finding ways in which the principal disciplinary approach can be augmented and enriched by readings from other disciplines.

Art, Aesthetics, and Creativity – This course will explore the human need to experience and comprehend the creative process. It should encourage students to experience culture and cultural artifacts as makers, performers, and audiences. Students will gain familiarity with both the discipline and craft by which artists and performers achieve their characteristic effects, as well as the satisfactions inherent in that process. Versions of this course should explore the role of art, music, theatre or other such performances in the formation and expression of a particular culture and encourage respect for diverse cultures and the artifacts they produce. The course should incorporate a historical perspective, revealing both the processes of change in particular periods and the deeper continuities in social and spiritual values embodied in the impulse to make and participate in cultural performances.

IV.C. Contemporary Social Issues

Every component of the undergraduate curriculum serves, in some way, to prepare students for life beyond the university. An essential part of that preparation is study in depth of some of the pressing social issues that our graduates, as leaders and as involved citizens in their communities, will need to confront, as well as reflection on factors that will help them to construct for themselves rewarding and productive personal lives. The particular issues that deserve such special attention will change over time, of course. At present, we propose explicit attention in the general education curriculum to the subject of *Diversity in American Society*, the study of *Non-Western Cultures*, and the promotion of personal *Health and Wellness*.

Diversity in American Society – The United States is a society of immigrants; and the diversity in ethnic, religious, and national influences that we enjoy as a result is one of our nation's greatest strengths and sources of pride. Nevertheless, it is surprisingly easy in the U.S. to live in virtual isolation from this rich diversity of cultures, and even to be ignorant of the ways in which race, class, gender, and sexual orientation shape an individual's view of American society. It is essential, at the beginning of the 21st century, that a university education address this most pressing of national issues. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of a course that focuses on the issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in American society. In order to satisfy this requirement, a course should meet the following criteria:

- develops an understanding of how factors such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and sexual orientation shape individual lives, how they are embedded in and have shaped our social institutions, and how they produce markedly different outcomes and opportunities for individuals and groups

- develops an awareness of students' own biases regarding diversity, the origins of those biases, and their implications for social, economic, and political interactions
- leads students to an awareness of their own position within a privilege/oppression continuum, and enables them to explore the implications of that position for their lives and for their responsibilities as citizens of a multicultural democracy
- imparts an awareness of how U.S. culture has been, and continues to be, influenced by diverse Asian, African, Middle Eastern and Central- and South-American cultures, both historical and contemporary
- develops an appreciation of the culturally constructed nature of distinctions based on race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and sexual orientation, and of how they have varied historically

Non-Western Cultures – In an international context, the 21st century can be expected to bring substantial changes in the global distribution of population, wealth, and political influence. The era of European dominance is past; and despite its current status as the world's sole superpower, the United States will see the influence of other countries and continents gain in the coming decades. In order to be prepared for this future, an educated American citizen should be familiar with the culture and politics of these emerging regions. We recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of a course that focuses on the history or present culture of one or more countries from the following continents or regions: Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or South America. In order to satisfy this requirement, a course should meet the following criteria:

- acquaints students with the culture, society, and values of a non-Western people, or explores knowledge traditions grounded in non-Western cultural paradigms
- provides a framework for understanding and appreciating ideas and values of cultures different from those that we commonly identify as “Western”
- may focus on a particular dimension of a culture or culture-area (e.g., social institutions, artistic productions, religious beliefs, historical experiences) as an organizing principle, but that dimension must be placed in reference to others that also significantly shape the culture.
- when comparative and cross-cultural in nature, must include in-depth study of at least two non-Western cultures or culture-areas
- may include an examination of the concept and practices of colonialism and its impact on contemporary cultures, including post-colonial and global economic dynamics

Health and Wellness – The goal of university education is to prepare students for life beyond the university. While this preparation rightly focuses primarily on students' intellectual growth and development, it must not neglect their physical and emotional well-being. The importance of physical and mental wellness to success in life, as well as instruction in activities that promote and maintain this wellness, are important components of general education. We

recommend as part of the general education curriculum the successful completion of two credit hours of instruction in courses that contribute to students' understanding of the importance of physical and mental health, and that offer students the opportunity to acquire skills that will help them to achieve and maintain such health. Obvious examples are courses that involve students in athletic pursuits or instruct them on issues related to nutrition; but other examples could also be found. In order to apply to this requirement, a course should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- leads students to a demonstration of skills and knowledge of physical fitness concepts through the performance of activities that will enhance lifelong commitment to personal fitness and wellness
- imparts an understanding of holistic health concepts in a manner that invokes personal responsibility for health and wellness
- encourages and directs students to lifestyle changes geared toward the maintenance of healthy living and the prevention of disease and illness

IV.D. Extended Learning

Classroom instruction is the appropriate format for most of general education. However, the university environment offers a multitude of other opportunities for intellectual and cultural growth — colloquia, film series, theatrical and musical productions — which with proper thought and planning could be used to further enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the general education curriculum. Toward this end, we recommend the identification of a theme — examples might be: The Environment; Revolutions; Science and Society; Africa; Ancient Civilizations — for each academic year, around which many of the year's co-curricular activities, as well as offerings in the *Common Core*, could be planned. This practice would significantly enhance the coherence of the general education curriculum, by providing an explicit and highly publicized example of a topic that can be approached from many disciplines. It could also become a highly visible and innovative signature feature of an IUSB education.

V. Implementation Issues

We offer in this report our recommendations on the essential elements of a campus-wide general education curriculum for IUSB. There are many details that would still need to be decided before these recommendations could be implemented. We believe that these details are more naturally part of an implementation process, to be undertaken if and when our broader

recommendations are adopted. In this section we offer some observations and recommendations relating to the implementation process.

V.A. Implementation Task Force

We feel that the implementation process should be carried out under the direction of a separate committee, although some overlap in membership between the implementation committee and our task force would be desirable. In order to be sustainable, the new general education curriculum must involve the active participation of many faculty members. Placing responsibility for implementation in the hands of the same faculty members who developed the broader form of the curriculum would be detrimental to its prospects for success. Following are a number of tasks that the implementation task force will need to address.

Identification of essential content of Common Core courses – One of the first tasks to be addressed in the implementation process should be the identification of the essential content for the initial offerings of the four courses in the *Common Core*. The Implementation Task Force should empanel for this purpose ad hoc committees of faculty members from those disciplines most closely identified with a particular *Common Core* course.

The Implementation Task Force should also develop a process for reassessing the required content for these courses into the future. We feel strongly, for example, that those faculty members teaching the various offerings of one of the *Common Core* courses during a given semester should meet regularly to compare notes and formulate recommendations for the General Education Committee.

Selection of first Extended Learning themes – It will be necessary to identify an Extended Learning theme at least a year in advance of the beginning of its effective academic year. If the General Education Committee is not convened until the new curriculum goes into effect, it will be necessary for the Implementation Task Force to make this selection for the first year, and perhaps for the first two years.

Development of an assessment plan for general education – The identification of specific goals for general education at IUSB presents an opportunity to finally make real progress in the assessment of this portion of our curriculum. One more important responsibility of the Implementation Task Force will be to develop a plan for assessing the effectiveness of the new curriculum at achieving those goals.

Handling of transfer students – Many of IUSB's students carry credits transferred from other institutions, and it will be necessary to establish clear policies for the application of transfer

credits toward the requirements of this general education curriculum. We see this as part of the implementation process, but we offer the following observations. For students who transfer in with relatively few credits, e.g. fewer than 30, we see no need to modify the requirements spelled out in these recommendations. For students with substantial transfer credits, e.g. more than 60, we recognize that it may be appropriate to waive some components of the general education requirements recommended here. It would probably not be appropriate, for example, to require these students to take all four of the courses in the *Common Core*. A better option may be to require of these students only one or two of the 300-level *Common Core* offerings.

V.B. Director of General Education

We recommend the creation of the position of Director of General Education, to be filled by a faculty member who would receive substantial reassignment from other duties. The coordination of this general education curriculum, specifically the creation of offerings in the *Common Core*, approval of courses as satisfying requirements in the *Fundamental Literacies* or in *Contemporary Social Issues*, coordination of the *Extended Learning* component, and monitoring of the assessment plan, will require substantial time and effort.

We further recommend that the first Director be identified as soon as possible, that he or she be appointed as chair of an implementation task force, and that the reassignment from other duties be effective also during the implementation process.

V.C. General Education Committee

Even after the implementation phase, decisions will need to be made on approvals for specific courses to be identified as satisfying various requirements of the curriculum. We are reluctant to add this to the responsibilities of the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, and we also recognize the utility of including members of the professional staff on such a committee. We therefore recommend, upon implementation of this curriculum, the creation of a General Studies Committee as an advisory committee to the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, with membership to be determined by the Curriculum Committee.

V.D. Target for Implementation

We recommend a target of Fall 2005 for the new curriculum to take effect.