GENERAL EDUCATION SEGMENT I POLICY

A.S. Policy #S99-64

At its meeting of May 11, 1999, the Academic Senate approved the following General Education Segment I Policy, revising the language in A.S. Policy #F80-64 regarding Course Descriptions/Objectives for GE/Segment I - Basic Subjects. This policy supersedes the language on pp. 10-11 of #F80-64.

An educated person should be able to communicate with clarity and force, to read with discrimination and understanding, and to think with precision and creativity. The curriculum of General Education Segment I develops a disciplined use of language for effective communication, builds disciplined thought processes for sharpened analytical skills, and helps students develop greater ability and confidence to reason and make judgments about mathematically based information. Segment I is made up of four areas: Written Communication, Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning.

Learning Objectives

Written Communication

Students who complete Segment I should attain writing skills suitable for upper division work. Written composition courses should provide students with ample opportunities to practice their writing, and student work should receive thorough and demanding instructor critique. Students will be expected to do significant amounts of writing in order to enhance their composition skills. Drafts and final papers should range in length from 500 to 2,000 words. The total quantity of writing assigned including drafts and final papers, should amount to a total of between 6000 to 7000 words. Courses should require reading as a source of information and as a model of excellent writing. Skills practiced in composition courses should include clear reasoning, organization, accuracy in language use, and the ability to discover, critically evaluate, and report information. By the end of this course, students should be capable of:

1. Understanding discipline-specific texts thoroughly and using them as a basis for their writing assignments.
2. Formulating a thesis based on their readings.
3. Substantiating a thesis through appropriate references to primary and secondary texts, and through personal insights.
4. Distinguishing between adequate and inadequate substantiation of a thesis or topic, both at the essay and the paragraph levels.
5. Writing essays and paragraphs that are well focused and relevant to the subject identified in their theses and topics.
6. Demonstrating knowledge of the principles of coordination and subordination through the ability to develop ideas within a single, complex sentence, rather than in an accretion of simple sentences.
7. Writing compositions which are mainly free of significant errors in usage, writing mechanics, and spelling.

Oral Communication

Courses in oral communication should emphasize the content of speech as well as its form. Students should gain an understanding of how an individual's background, identity or perceptions influence communication. They should also gain knowledge of the social significance of communication, including how it operates in various situations. Courses should take a rhetorical perspective, emphasizing reasoning and advocacy, organization and accuracy as well as the discovery, critical evaluation and reporting of information. Students should also learn to be effective listeners. Courses should require active participation in oral communication. By the end of this course, students should be capable of:
1. Demonstrating awareness of the complexity of communication in terms of its psychological, social, political, cultural, and ethical dimensions.
2. Demonstrating knowledge about verbal and nonverbal communication in various contexts (e.g., interpersonal, small group, public speaking, intercultural).
3. Reducing their own speech anxiety and projecting greater confidence as a speaker.
4. Listening actively and providing constructive feedback.
5. Considering an audience's knowledge, background and attitudes when constructing a message.
6. Recognizing and articulating issues from one's own perspective, while acknowledging the perspectives of others.
7. Locating, evaluating and reporting information in support of a point of view.
8. Assessing claims or arguments as a speaker and listener.
9. Organizing, constructing, and delivering prepared and spontaneous presentations.
10. Demonstrating effective verbal and nonverbal delivery skills.

Critical Thinking

Students in critical thinking courses should acquire basic skills necessary for logical analysis and critical assessment of reasoning. They should be able to reach conclusions based on cogent inferences. In addition, students should be able to identify formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. They should be able to employ these abilities in well-organized critical writing. The course should encourage students to adopt a critical attitude toward themselves and society, and to develop critical and inquiring habits of the mind. The course should promote a healthy sense of the fallibility of currently received doctrines and an openness to perspectives from which questions about received doctrines are frequently raised. Students should be able to recognize, articulate, and question assumptions and presuppositions underlying discourse, including one's own. By the end of this course, students should be capable of:

1. Recognizing and contextualizing an argument (e.g., theoretical, practical, productive, historical, political, interpersonal, etc.).
2. Distinguishing arguments from other forms of discourse, and premises from conclusions.
3. Distinguishing between deductive and non-deductive forms of reasoning with appropriate applications.
4. Understanding formal and informal fallacies in reasoning or in the way language is used.
5. Using language critically and precisely.
6. Choosing appropriate criteria for assessing the cogency of reasoning with some understanding of debates about these criteria.
7. Stating reasons for doubting, believing, or suspending judgment on premises in the context of reasoned dialogue.
8. Specifying research needed for inquiry into the truth or falsity of a premise.
9. Discovering “hidden” or unstated premises and making clear the lines of reasoning in complex or elliptical arguments.
10. Identifying suppressed and overlooked evidence.
11. Formulating alternative arguments for or against a conclusion.
12. Determining whether an argument should be improved, saved, or abandoned in light of criticism.
13. Writing reasoned discourse that provides a detailed critique of a complex argument.

Quantitative Reasoning

Instruction in Quantitative Reasoning should improve student abilities to incorporate mathematical ideas in their thinking and discourse. In particular, courses meeting this requirement should aim to develop (1) skills and confidence in interpreting, creating, and using mathematical expressions; (2) conceptual understanding of mathematical reasoning and its application; (3) an appreciation for the importance of quantitative skills and the relevance of quantitative reasoning to everyday life; and (4) an awareness of issues concerning the appropriate use of quantitative data and procedures. Courses in Quantitative Reasoning may cover a variety of topics. Nevertheless, it is expected that all QR courses will improve student ability to use mathematics. By the end of this course, students should be capable of:

1. Translating between verbal statements and mathematical expressions.
2. Understanding mathematics both as a descriptive language and a set of techniques.
3. Applying quantitative information and procedures to contexts both inside and outside the classroom.
4. Presenting and summarizing information in quantitative form.
5. Interpreting, making judgments about and drawing conclusions from quantitative material.
6. Performing mathematical calculations.
7. Using appropriate technology for mathematical operations.
8. Evaluating critically the uses of quantitative procedures and descriptions, including identifying appropriate applications and deceptive or erroneous reasoning.
9. Constructing mathematical models.
New Course and Course Revision Proposal Process

For approval of a new or revised courses for Segment I, departments must:

1. Submit to the Segment I Committee a course proposal form and a detailed course syllabus for a course already approved by the University Course Review Committee.
2. Provide a statement by the department detailing how the course will achieve the learning objectives specified in the Segment I policy. This statement should refer to the course readings, assignments, evaluation procedures, and mode of instruction, and describe how these are designed to achieve the learning objectives of Segment I.

Courses will be evaluated for inclusion in Segment I on the bases of the extent to which they meet the learning objectives. The Segment I Committee will review the above documents and make its recommendations to GEC with a copy to the Department. GEC will make its recommendation to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and inform the Department. In the case of a negative recommendation by GEC, Departments can appeal to GEC for reconsideration.

Segment I Evaluation

Responsibilities

1. Departments and Programs. Each department or program housing a Segment I course should maintain a file of current syllabi for each Segment I course taught. Faculty teaching Segment I courses should be informed of the learning outcomes and the Segment I Policy. Departments or programs which offer Segment I courses are responsible for developing and executing assessment plans of those courses and for reporting the results of that assessment to the Segment I Committee every two years. Current syllabi should accompany the assessment report to the Segment I Committee.
2. Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies is responsible for providing information to the Segment I Committee regarding access, demand, complete rates, and related support services regarding Segment I courses.
3. Segment I Committee. The Segment I Committee is responsible for reviewing assessment plans, Department and program reports, and data provided by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and for forwarding its recommendations to GEC.
4. General Education Council (GEC). The GEC is responsible for evaluating the extent to which courses approved for Segment I purposes fulfill the learning objectives, for reviewing the recommendations of the Segment I Committee and the adequacy of institutional support, and for making recommendations to the Academic Senate and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Evaluation Process

A. Assessment Plans

1. Departments or programs which offer Segment I courses submit a plan for assessing the extent to which their course(s) meet Segment I learning outcomes.
2. Segment I Committee approves the Department or program assessment plan or asks for revisions until agreement is reached and makes its recommendation to GEC.
3. GEC approves the assessment plan or asks for revisions until an agreed upon plan is approved.

B. Assessment Procedures

1. Departments or programs which offer Segment I courses assess them according to the approved plan.
2. Every two years departments or programs which offer Segment I courses submit a report regarding what they learned from their assessment activities along with current syllabi for the courses to the Segment I Committee. The first of these bi-annual reports is due Spring 2000.
3. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies provides to the Segment I Committee information regarding access, demand, completion rates, and related support services.
4. Segment I Committee reviews the assessment reports, syllabi, and data provided by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and reports its findings along with any recommendations to GEC.
5. GEC reviews the reports and recommendations of the Segment I Committee. GEC may request additional information to assist in its evaluation process. GEC will communicate the results of its review along with
recommendations to the Senate and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. GEC will work with the Segment I Committee to provide feedback to all Departments, acknowledge successful programs, and develop plans to mitigate any identified non-compliance. Continued non-compliance with the evaluation process or recommendations will result in a recommendation of course removal from Segment I.

**Approved by President Corrigan on May 25, 1999**