

**Discussion Draft 3**  
**Revised GER Subcommittee Motions Before the Faculty Senate**  
**21 October 2003**

Dear Senators,

Please find below the based upon the recommendations of the GER Subcommittees and Working Groups from AY 2000-2002. These recommendations provide a starting point for further discussion and allow the GER subcommittee to continue its work in light of institutional needs and accreditation mandates. We ask your support for the following motions, which represent the foundation of what is necessary for the GER revision process to continue.

<b>Motions</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>Motion 1</i> UAB reaffirms that GER overview is to remain under the current faculty governance structure and the membership of the GER oversight subcommittee is to include: (1) a core from UAB; and if not otherwise represented, representation from (2) each college, (3) the community campuses, (4) the GER categories, and (5) student representation.	The revised GER subcommittee is not a new administrative office but will have administrative functions like assessment and curriculum review and must therefore remain within the purview of the faculty. The expanded GER subcommittee requires representation from across UAA and must remain under the current governance structure.
<i>Motion 2</i> That baccalaureate students be required to complete 12 hours of Basic Skills (Oral, Written, Quantitative requirements) before completing 60 total degree-applicable hours.	Completion of the Basic Skills requirement is foundational to further study and must be completed early in a student's academic career.
<i>Motion 3</i> That GER courses be redistributed in the menu so that they meet the category definitions of only one GER category.	This facilitates GER coherence, assessability, and clearly defined instructional goals and student outcomes for GER curriculum revision.
<i>Motion 4a</i> That an upper-division integrative component of not less than 3 credits, consisting of courses approved by the GER oversight committee, be incorporated into the revised GER.	This allows UAA students to synthesize across different domains of knowledge and to address the NASC accreditation requirements for a curricular integration of GER content. See attachment 3.
<i>Motion 4b</i> That the UAA GER be at least 37 credits. The integrative component requirement may be satisfied through degree major requirements that meet the GER integrative component criteria.	This increase is necessary to meet UAA students' pedagogical needs and the NASC accreditation requirements. Please see the attached draft GER preamble and attachments 1-5.
<i>Motion 5</i> That an oral, written, and quantitative/computational skills component be required for all UAA degree programs as per NASC requirements.	This revision is necessary to meet NASC accreditation standard 2.1 (General Education and Related Instruction). See attachment 1.

The Spring 2002 Report and 2002 Summer Working Group represent the history of the discussion, a compilation of the recommendations, and plans for implementation. The full reports are available at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/govn/uab/ger/ger.htm>. The detailed recommendations for implementing for each motion are the subject of the AY 2002-2003 GER Working Groups. The implementation schedules may change according to the demands of internal discussion and curriculum review. In addition, the GER subcommittee's recommendations have drawn from materials attached below.

Sincerely,

Dan Kline, Chair  
GER Subcommittee of UAB

## **Discussion Draft // Revised UAA GER Model // Discussion Draft**

This model is for submission to the Working Group on Integrative Studies of the General Education Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Academic Board of UAA on Oct. 18, 2002. It includes some previous work on the revision of the GER Preamble.

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### **Preamble**

The General Education Program is a common requirement which the UAA Faculty prescribes as a broadening educational experience for every degree-seeking student. It is designed to guarantee an elevation of the student's level in basic skills (Phase 1), a breadth of exposure to traditional academic disciplines (Phase 2), and experience in applying his/her education in understanding and responding to the evolving state of knowledge and the world in the 21st Century (Phase 3).

### **Phase 1**

There are three areas of courses for basic skills enhancement. Skills courses in Written Communication and Oral Communication develop the critical reading, thinking, and communication faculties (writing, speaking, and listening) necessary for personal and professional success. Courses in Quantitative Skills foster the analytical and mathematical abilities necessary for success in undergraduate study and professional life. Students may select approved courses in these categories which may also be appropriate to their intended major fields. Faculty in English, Communication, and Mathematics provide placement criteria (which may involve the completion of preparatory coursework) to ensure the outcome of skills elevation.

### **Phase 2**

There are four required areas categorized by course content and academic discipline. These are Fine Arts, General Humanities, Natural Science, and Social Science. Courses in the Fine Arts examine the historical, aesthetic, critical, and creative aspects of art. General Humanities courses consider the cultural, historical, literary, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual traditions shaping the contemporary world. Courses in Natural Science present theoretical and descriptive approaches to understanding the natural and physical worlds. Courses in the Social Sciences explore insights about individuals, groups, and cultures derived from empirical methodologies.

### **Phase 3**

There is a capstone area including courses involving interrelationships and synergy of these disciplines and skills. In a productive life characterized by personal growth, it is necessary to combine and integrate lessons learned from diverse experiences. As a capstone of the General Education Program, courses have been provided by the faculties of UAA's Schools and Colleges which allow the student to synthesize academic achievement in the Program. Courses in this category may focus as needed to practice, study, and critical evaluation, but are assumed to include in their goals an emphasis on evolving realities of the 21st Century (e.g. globalization, diversity, scientific or social progress), and the responses of the educated person to these forces.

### **Operational Assumptions**

Each of the eight areas has a list of courses. No course appears on more than one list, and only courses from a list may be used to satisfy an area requirement. Courses used to satisfy area requirements in General Education may also be used to satisfy School/College requirements and/or Degree Program requirements. All courses on area lists are graded on the A-F basis.

Phase 3 courses may only be taken after the student has completed all Phase 1 requirements. Phase 2 courses (except those which are the second in a two-semester sequence) are assumed to have no more than one 100-level prerequisite. There are additional restrictions on a student's Phase 2 selections designed to guarantee a breadth of academic experience. To facilitate the ongoing review of the efficacy of the General Education Program, listed courses may REQUIRE the student to participate in measurements relating to the goals of the Program in apposition to the goals of the course. Such measurements should on no account occupy more than one class meeting. General Education courses are thus assumed to contribute to the fulfillment of one or more of the goals listed below in the Outcomes section.

### **"Outcomes"**

After completing the General Education Requirement, UAA students shall be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats
2. Reason mathematically, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data competently to reach sound conclusions.
3. Relate knowledge to the historical context in which it developed and the human problems it addresses.
4. Interpret different systems of aesthetic representation and understand their historical and cultural contexts.
5. Investigate the complexity of human institutions and behavior to better understand interpersonal, group, and cultural dynamics.
6. Identify ways in which science has advanced the understanding of important natural processes.
7. Locate and use relevant information to make appropriate personal and professional decisions.
8. Adopt appropriate perspectives for understanding the forces of globalization and diversity.

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[Leonard Smiley](#)

## Attachment 1

### Accreditation eligibility requirements, standards and policies related to general education requirements—new specifications

Excerpted from <http://www.cocnasc.org/>

#### GENERAL EDUCATION AND RELATED INSTRUCTION (Revised 2000)

The institution's baccalaureate degree programs and/or academic or transfer associate degree programs require a substantial and coherent component of general education as a prerequisite to or an essential element of the programs offered. All other associate degree programs (e.g., applied, specialized, or technical) and programs of study of either 30 semester or 45 quarter credits or more for which certificates are granted, require at least six semester or nine quarter credits of related instruction or the equivalent. Bachelor and graduate degree programs also require a planned program of major specialization or concentration. (Standard Two - Educational Program and Its Effectiveness; Commission Policy 2.1 - *General Education/Related Instruction Requirements*, page 36.)

#### Standard 2.C - Undergraduate Program (excerpts)

...

Baccalaureate and academic or transfer associate degree programs include a substantial core of general education instruction with identifiable outcomes and require competence in (a) written and oral communication, (b) quantitative reasoning, (c) critical analysis and logical thinking, and (d) literacy in the discourse or technology appropriate to the program of study.

...

Programs of study for which applied or specialized associate degrees are granted, or programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted, contain a recognizable body of instruction in three program-related areas: (1) communication, (2) computation, and (3) human relations described in Policy 2.1 - *General Education/Related Instruction Requirements*, page 36.

2.C.1 The institution requires of all its degree and pre-baccalaureate programs a component of general education and/or related instruction that is published in its general catalog in clear and complete terms.

2.C.2 The general education component of the institution's degree programs is based on a rationale that is clearly articulated and is published in clear and complete terms in the catalog. It provides the criteria by which the relevance of each course to the general education component is evaluated.

2.C.3 The general education program offerings include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, mathematics, and the social sciences. The program may also include courses that focus on the interrelationships between these major fields of study.

## Attachment 2

### 2.1 Policy on General Education/Related Instruction Requirements (NASC)

The Commission endorses the concept of general education and, as described below, requires of all undergraduate programs a substantial and coherent program of general education or a program of related instruction. By design, the policy is intended to be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. No formula for specific application or particular pattern of general education is endorsed. However, every institution is expected to publish in its general catalog a clear and complete statement of its requirements for general education and/or related instruction, as appropriate.

A substantial core of general education instruction is regarded as an essential component of all baccalaureate degree programs and of all academic or transfer associate degree programs. **Similarly, a core of related instruction is regarded as a necessary integral part of all applied or specialized associate degree programs and of all certificate programs of an academic year or more in length. General education in degree programs shall be of collegiate level.** The contents of general education, and of related instruction in applied or specialized degree and certificate programs, should be comparable, though not necessarily identical, to traditional academic offerings and should be taught by faculty who are clearly appropriately qualified. In some cases, institutions may provide for general education through admission or graduation requirements. Institutions are encouraged to include broad general education instruction as part of non-degree specialized programs in addition to directly utilitarian-related instruction.

**General Education.** General education introduces students to the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge - the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, mathematics, and the social sciences - and helps them develop the mental skills that will make them more effective learners. General education may, of course, be taught in different ways, and an institution must judge whether its students are better served by curricula or requirements that approach the disciplines through content and methodology, or that approach the disciplines by concentrating on outcomes. The rationale and plan for the general education requirements should be cooperatively developed by the faculty, administrative staff, and trustees, and the expected outcomes should be stated in relation to the institution's mission and goals.

**Related Instruction.** Programs of study for which applied or specialized associate degrees are granted, or programs of an academic year or more in length for which certificates are granted, must contain a recognizable body of instruction in program-related areas of 1) communication, 2) computation, and 3) human relations. Additional topics which should be covered as appropriate include safety, industrial safety, and environmental awareness. Instruction in the related instructional areas may be either embedded within the program curriculum or taught in blocks of specialized instruction. Each approach, however, must have clearly identified content that is pertinent to the general program of study.

Adopted 1988

### Attachment 3

#### Relevant Excerpts from the October 2000 NASC Commission on Colleges Evaluation Committee Report:

##### **Policy 2.1. General Education/Related Instruction**

The campus has identified in its own self-study a need to review and update the UAA general education program. This provides an opportunity to have a campus discussion about the philosophy, design, and delivery of the program. In its present configuration, the general education program includes offerings in the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences mathematics, and the social sciences; however, it is not clear if the program also includes courses that focus on the interrelationships among these major fields of study. A new general education requirements (GER) preamble was approved by the Faculty Senate in spring 2000. Consistently, the committee found faculty saying, "It's time for review."

At present, general education seems to be vested in "islands" with little interconnectedness. It is not clear how courses beyond the basic skills classes reinforce communication skills, technological literacy, library skills, and critical thinking. Also unclear is whether students understand and have communicated to them the purposes of the general education program and whether or not they see connections between and among classes. While some double counting of classes for general education and major requirements is allowed, it is prohibited for social sciences, humanities, and nursing majors. The College of Arts and Sciences has separate general education requirements, and these, too, should be reviewed, clarifying their rationale and logic. Responsibility for the design, approval, and implementation of the curriculum is vested in the Undergraduate Academic Board (UAB) with general education specifically overseen by a sub-committee. To begin a review of general education, the sub-committee responsible should receive a charge to do so.

Assessment of general education has begun with the development of outcomes objectives and development of mission/purpose statements. A working group in fine arts, for instance, has developed a guide, *Fostering a Deeper Understanding of the Arts*, that can be shared with anyone teaching a Fine Arts GER class. The value in establishing assessment and program review processes lies not only in determining whether goals of a course or curriculum have been met but in the bringing together of faculty to discuss common goals, share pedagogical approaches, and deepen their understanding of their own teaching.

Once a thorough review has been undertaken, regular and continuous assessment of general education will help UAA meet the standard on assessment. Designating a particular director or administrator to be responsible for this oversight could be helpful.

##### *Recommendation*

1. The committee recommends that the Faculty Senate formalize a review of general education requirements that addresses their rationale and plan. Input should be sought from the faculty, administrative staff, and other stakeholders. It is expected that the work on articulating and communicating general education's mission, goals, and objectives will continue. (Standard 2, Policy 2.1)

##### *General Recommendations*

5. The Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate formalize a review of general education requirements that addresses their rationale and plan. Input should be sought from the faculty, administrative staff, and other stakeholders throughout UAA. It is expected that the work on articulating and communicating general education's mission, goals, and objectives of general education will continue. (Standard 2, Policy 2.1)