

**General Education Committee  
Minutes**

December 2, 2019

<b>Present:</b>	Tien Chih Melinda Tilton Matt Queen Emily Arendt Cori Day Brian Gurney Megan Thomas Kathleen Thatcher (ex-officio)	Bernie Quetchenbach Jason Comer Josh Hill Randi O'Brien Will Hobbs Lance Mouser Naomi Norris (student)
<b>Absent:</b>	Leanne Gilbertson*  *excused	Jordan Neff (student)
<b>Guests:</b>	Anne Cole Susan Gilbertz	Tom Nurmi Joe Hoover

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Melinda Tilton called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. in the SUB Missouri Room.

The minutes of November 4 were accepted as presented.

I. ITEMS – FIRST READING

**Item 20.h** Gen Ed Course: GPHY 262 Spatial Sciences Technology and Applications. Submit for category II. B. Physical Sciences.

**Item 20.i** Gen Ed Course: GPHY 263 Spatial Sciences Technology Laboratory. Submit for category II. B. Physical Sciences.

Susan Gilbertz, Environmental Studies, noted that these courses have been in the works for some time. The courses are intended to replace GPHY 111 Intro to Physical Geography & its corresponding lab. GPHY 262 will teach students to answer questions using spatial analysis. Most students take their required Gen Ed lab course with biology, so there will be more sections of 262 than 263. Bozeman has already created this course and it does count in their Gen Ed, which they have recently restructured.

Joe Hoover, Environmental Studies, stated that the course will fit the Physical Sciences category because about one fourth of the course will be physical earth processes and putting those into a timeframe. Students will apply scientific inquiry and the scientific method, to increase their critical thinking skills. Social science topics will also be discussed, in reference to how GIS has been used in politics or other areas.

Dr. Gilbertz noted that the physical science course is often the last science course students take before moving to major-only courses, and they are committed to showing students the value of science. The earth science is primary, but the social science aspects make the course more relevant to students' lives.

- Motion by Will Hobbs, seconded by Jason Comer to **approve these as written.**

A concern was raised as to what happens if, over time, a different instructor includes less and less physical science in the course. It was noted that this situation can happen with any course in Gen Ed.

It was noted that the course description could be amended to make it clear the social science components are not the primary focus.

- Motion failed.

- Motion by Josh Hill, seconded by Brian Gurney to **approve Items 20.h and 20.i with a possible amendment to the course description.**

- Motion carried.

It was suggested that the course description be changed to include the bolded wording:

Introduces students to the sciences and technologies used to investigate spatial questions. Particular attention is given to physical processes such as energy transfer and the transportation of materials. **Though the primary focus is on physical processes,** examples may also be drawn from a variety of other fields, such as biogeography, cultural geography, criminology, marketing, epidemiology and political concerns.

Second reading will be held via an electronic vote.

**Item 31.a** Gen Ed Course: LIT 240 The Bible as Literature. Remove from category V. B. Humanities.

**Item 31.b** Gen Ed Course: LIT 213 Montana Literature. Submit for category V. B. Humanities.

Tom Nurmi, English, Philosophy & Modern Languages, stated that they are substantially changing the English curriculum, and as part of that they want to remove LIT 240 from Gen Ed. It has been dropping in enrollments over the last few semesters, and the instructor of the course will be retiring this year. They propose to add LIT 213 to Gen Ed, which is an existing course.

- Motion by Will Hobbs, seconded by Matt Queen to **approve Items 31.a and 31.b as written.**

- Motion carried.

- Motion by Matt Queen, seconded by Brian Gurney to **waive second reading of Items 31.a and 31.b.**

- Motion carried.

## II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

### **A. Data Presentation: Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment**

Ms. Thatcher stated that the administration has cited the course bloat of Gen Ed to be a problem. She also investigated transferability. She started with a worksheet provided by the State of Montana, which was collected from reports submitted by the units of the Montana University System. This worksheet is intended to show what courses count in Gen Ed at each campus. She also cross-checked with the Common Course Numbering database, and there were a few discrepancies in the data.

Of the 104 courses in MSUB's Gen Ed, 35 of them are only counted by MSUB as Gen Ed courses. That means if a student takes one of those 35, it will not necessarily transfer as a Gen Ed to another unit in the MUS.

There are a number of courses that have not been offered at all over the last four semesters (not counting summer), as well as some courses that were offered and then cancelled due to low enrollment. It was noted that enrollment is not everything, and the GEC doesn't need to remove courses from the Gen Ed listing just because of low enrollment. However, the GEC can reach out to those departments about removing and/or deleting those courses.

It was noted that we do not have data saying we have too many Gen Ed courses. That is an idea put forward by the administration.

Anne Cole, who is on the Strategic Planning subcommittee charged with sub-objective 1.4 (Reimagining Gen Ed), noted that students want transferability to go better, so these 35 courses that don't transfer are a concern. We have options beyond just removing courses from our Gen Ed, like working with other units in the MUS to have them accept our Gen Ed courses.

Ms. Cole noted that a possible reimagining may be more than category names, but rather showing students what they will get out of Gen Ed. The more integrated model is focused on problem solving instead of categories.

The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.

## **MSUB Strategic Action Plan**

**Sub Objective: 1.4 Reimagine general education to enhance student learning.**

**Co-Leads: Anne Cole & Dr. Leanne Gilbertson**

**Desired outcome from Strategic Action Plan:** Revise general education to more clearly meet student needs and to foster respect for diversity, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, and communication skills.

### **Identified issues:**

1. The MSUB Gen Ed Core currently consists of 104 offerings. The number of available courses is considered by many students to be confusing and/or overwhelming.
2. Additionally, 35 of these 104 courses are only counted as General Education credits at MSUB/City College and make transferability difficult for our students.

**Goals of Strategic Planning Initiative 1.4 to revise General Education in order to meet student needs:**

1. Include only courses in the catalog that are actually offered;
2. Improve transferability by reducing the percentage of courses from Gen Ed Core that do not transfer from MSUB to other universities in MUS system;
3. Restate the goals of our curriculum to better reflect the Strategic Plan and goals of our curriculum. According to Strategic Plan: Utilize the new mission, vision, and core objectives set by the General Education Committee to create a framework for a new Gen. Ed. curriculum.

**Suggestions for committee from co-leads for the General Education to consider in order to address goals (1) and (2):**

1. General Education courses NOT offered AND do not transfer  
Recommendation: Consider eliminating from Gen Ed Core and Catalog. Devise systematic, time-sensitive approach to ensure appropriate paperwork is filed for removing courses from Core and Catalog if committee agrees. Work with departments to confirm that course should be eliminated from Core and Catalog.

ANTY 217	Physical Anthropology and Archaeology
BIOB 122	Fund BIO Evln/Ecology/Biodiversity
HSTR 104	Honors Western Civilization II*
MART 260	Computer Presen and Animation
WRIT 221	Intermediate Technical Writing

*\*Courses that do not transfer could be considered special sections of transferable courses and/or could be revised to reflect offerings at other universities.*

2. General Education courses that MSUB does not offer regularly but other Montana institutions offer regularly and that do transfer to multiple other institutions

**Recommendation:** Consider eliminating from Gen Ed Core or re-offering these courses if faculty are available since these courses would transfer to a number of different MUS institutions.

ANTY 220	Culture and Society
GPHY 111	Intro to Physical Geography
GPHY 141	Geography of World Regions
HSTR 103	Honors Western Civilization I
M 161	Survey of Calculus

3. General Education courses that are being considered for removal from Catalog but do transfer to one or more other MUS institution

**Recommendation:** Consider eliminating from Gen Ed Core and Catalog or approaching Departments to ask for reconsideration of the course designation and/or rationale for inclusion.

GPHY 111	Intro to Phys Geography
GPHY 112 lab	Intro to Phys Geography

4. General Education courses that do not transfer but have enrollment

Consider elimination from Gen Ed Core and/or finding similar course elsewhere at MSUB or in MUS system to substitute.

**College of Allied Health**

BIOB 121	Fundamentals in Biology for Allied Health (was offered in 2019/20 but canceled due to low enrollment)
BIOB 123	Nutrition
HTH 270	Global Health Issues
REHA 201	Intro to Diversity in Counseling

**College of Education**

EDU 105	Education and Democracy
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**College of Arts and Sciences**

FILM 160	Intro to World Cinema
HONR 111	Perspectives and Understanding
LIT 240	Bible as Literature (very low enrollment – prof is retiring)
M 143	Finite Mathematics
PHL 111	Philosophies of Life (Consider PHL 101, which transfers)
PHL 254	People and Politics (Consider PHL 101 or 103, which transfer)

PHL 271	Indian Philosophies and Religions (was offered recently but canceled; consider offering PHL 270 Philosophies of Asia)
PHL 272	Chinese Philosophies and Religions (was offered recently but canceled; consider offering PHL 270 Philosophies of Asia)
RLST 170	The Religious Quest
SCIN 101	Integrated Sciences I
SCIN 102	Integrated Sciences I Lab
SCIN 103	Integrated Sciences II
SCIN 104	Integrated Sciences II Lab
SPAN 150	Hispanic Tradition (Consider trading SPAN 101 (Elem. Spanish))
STAT 141	Intro to Statistical Concepts
WGSS 274	Women, Culture & Society (consider Intro to Feminism or discuss with MSU changing course title for transferability)
WRIT 220	Business & Prof Writing (Consider WRIT 221 Tech and Business, which transfers)

### **City College**

COMX 106	Communication in a Dynamic Workplace (appears to transfer to many 2-year institutions but not included in MUS Common Core Numbering)
M 114	Extended Technical Mathematics
WRIT 122	Intro to Business Writing

### **College of Business**

BMIS 150	Computer Literacy
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## **MSUB Strategic Action Plan**

**Sub Objective: 1.4 Reimagine general education to enhance student learning.**

# **Re-Envisioning General Education**

## **I. Global Learning Skills Courses**

### **Global Learning Skills (12 to 13 cr. proposed)**

#### **GLS1. Written Communication**

#### **GLS2. Quantitative Reasoning (formerly Mathematics)**

#### **GLS3. Communication & Information Literacy (consider combining written & oral)**

#### **GLS4. Contemporary Issues in Science**

**Proposed Rationale for Courses in Global Learning Skills (\*we could consider changing this to Core or come up with another category; I've adapted the acronym GLS for ease here. It is open to discussion.)**

Courses within the global learning skills (GLS) category at MSUB are primarily intended for first-year students throughout all curricula to provide a platform for collegiate level discourse. (For committee consideration: should those in this category, or most, be 100-level?) GLS courses are small in size and rely heavily on student-centered learning where course content is delivered by discussion and interaction rather than by lecture and enrollment is capped at 35.

GLS courses provide a venue where students engage in rigorous academic discussion that promotes critical thinking, respect for cultural diversity, communication skills, and problem solving in a supportive and truly collegiate manner. These courses are designed to initiate students as participants in a life-long pursuit of human knowledge and understanding (modeled after MSU Core 2.0 & Gen. Ed. purpose statement).

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Through completion of the GLS students will:

(Student learning outcomes will need to be determined, if agreed upon, by the committee and L could refer to examples from MSU and peer- institutions for models).

### **GLS1. Written Communication (Currently English)—3 cr.**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more than 4 courses offered in category):**

**Proposed Rationale:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Proposed Criteria for Inclusion:**

General Education Committee would determine if they wish to entertain new courses for this category and what criteria would be used to evaluate proposals.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

General Education committee may also wish to consider current MSU Policy and reviewing our own regarding possible exemption from WRIT101; Would those receiving exemption need to make up the credits in other coursework to meet minimum general education credits?

**GLS2. Quantitative Reasoning (Currently Mathematics)—3cr.**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more than 8 courses offered in category):**

**Proposed Rationale:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Criteria for inclusion:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**GLS3. Communication & Information Literacy—3 cr.**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more than 4 courses offered in category):**

**Proposed Rationale:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Criteria for inclusion:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**GLS4. Contemporary Issues in Science (new to GLS)—3 or 4 cr.?**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more than 4-6 courses offered in category):**

**Proposed Rationale:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Criteria for inclusion:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses would provide

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## **II. Critical Inquiry and Research/Creativity Courses**

All courses in this category emphasize the methods used to discover, create, and advance the factual and theoretical knowledge of various academic disciplines.

Critical inquiry courses (indicated with a CI) do this primarily through classroom instruction and require at least one major student-created artifact based on applying the methods of inquiry appropriate to the discipline. These artifacts are added to the student's e-Portfolio.

Given student feedback and discussions, should the Gen. Ed. committee also consider including a high impact first-year experience or seminar course for all students taught by full-time faculty?

Research & Creativity courses (indicated with a CR) require students to have individual experience in the research and creative process and give them experience generating a scholarly product. Lower-division R courses are intended to introduce students to the discipline. Upper-division courses are often intended for majors as a capstone or senior-thesis experience.

All students must take at least one (1) Critical Inquiry or one (1) Research & Creativity course in each of the following areas for a total of 18 cr. As part of this requirement, students must complete at least one Research & Creativity course for a minimum of 3 cr., which could be the capstone or senior-thesis in their major:

- Arts & Humanities (CI, CR)
- Humanities (CI, CR)
- Natural or Physical Sciences (CI, CR)
- Social Sciences & History (CI, CR)
- Cultural Diversity: Committee may wish to consider whether or not this should be considered part of GLS? (CI, CR)

### **Critical Inquiry (CI)**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more 3-4 courses offered from each category; for no more than 24)**

**Proposed Rationale: (open to revision or complete rewriting by committee)**

All courses in this category emphasize the methods used to discover, create, and advance factual and theoretical knowledge of the academic disciplines. (Committee may wish to consider if all or many of the classes in this category should implement High-Impact teaching practices and be limited in terms of class-size?) A scholarly artifact from each of these courses must be submitted to student's e-portfolio for assessment purposes.

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could alter/provide

#### **Criteria for Inclusion:**

- A substantial proportion of the course will be devoted to exploring ways in which the discipline creates and evaluates knowledge.
- The course must include at least one major learning activity based on methods of inquiry appropriate to the discipline. (from MSU . . . open to revision/committee could produce)

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could alter/provide

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Critical Inquiry courses are intended to improve students'

- Understanding of disciplinary methods, including the kinds of questions asked in the discipline and the methods that practitioners use to explore those questions
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills within the field.
- Demonstrate communication skills (copied from MSU for consideration; open to discussion)

All students must take at least one (1) approved Research & Creative Experience course. Students may take an approved Research & Creative Experience course in one of these areas OR they may take a separate Research & Creative Experience course in their major discipline or in the Honors Program.

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could alter/provide

### **Research & Creativity (CR)**

**Proposed courses for this category to be determined by General Education committee (advise no more than 6-12 courses total in category) At least one course from each of the following should be included in this category:**

- Arts & Humanities (CI, CR)
- Natural or Physical Sciences (CI, CR)
- Social Sciences & History (CI, CR)
- Cultural Diversity: Should this be considered part of GLS? (CI, CR)

### **Rationale**

The Research & Creative Experience builds on the foundational academic skills students have developed in the GLS courses. Because research and creative projects vary from one discipline to the next, some general guidelines have been developed to determine what constitutes a Research and Creative Experience. (Drawn from MSU; open to revision or rewriting)

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could alter/provide

### **Criteria for Inclusion:**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could provide in consultation or not with MSU

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

General Education Committee and/or faculty teaching courses could provide in consultation or not with MSU

Consider that completion of these courses should lead to production of scholarly project, research, or substantial creative project