

## **PROSPECTUS**

**OVERVIEW:** GE contributes significantly to an institution's identity. This GE framework defines William Paterson University as an institution dedicated to academic excellence and student success for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This GE curriculum is premised on foundational knowledge and skills while emphasizing civic engagement, diversity education and global awareness.

**GOALS:** The Alternative General Education Framework sub-committee bases this proposal on the following recommendations drawn from the Middle States Review follow-up report, the University Mission Statement, and the AACU /LEAP General Education recommendations:

- Reduce the overall number of credits in GE
- Distribute GE through four-year curriculum
- Maintain commitment to the Liberal Arts
- Develop specific area requirements in global awareness and civic engagement/citizenship
- Maintain commitment to diversity education
- Integrate writing, information technology and information literacy/academic research across the GE program
- Balance common courses/areas required of all students with greater choice
- Generate a more flexible academic experience for student

**WHAT'S NEW?:** The Alternative General Education curriculum emphasizes foundational knowledge in the liberal arts, science and math for all students, while encouraging increased student choice within specific content areas. This model also offers significant innovations to the university's current GE Program:

- A significant reduction in overall GE courses permitting students greater freedom with overall credit use (31-46)
- Flexible and coherent options for double counting (100-400 level)
- Extension of GE across all four years of undergraduate education with coherent sequencing of foundations with upper level GE requirements
- Options for the development of new GE offerings to enhance student choice. Under each foundational level subject area, there must be at least three different courses from which students can choose (except writing course)
- A "student learning outcomes" approach which seeks to reduce the overall number of GE courses by establishing the integration of critically needed skills and approaches ( e.g. information literacy/research or ethics) within GE courses.

- Greater integration of GE within academic majors
- Sequenced writing options across all four years
- Curricular commitment to student civic engagement, community awareness, and diversity education
- Increased emphasis on global awareness and global issues through:
  - an upper level global awareness requirement
  - foreign language proficiency
  - the incorporation of international themes and non-western subject matter into existing GE courses
  - the creation of new GE courses that are more global/comparative in their approach

## **DEFINING ELEMENTS:**

This GE model is defined by its commitment to foundational skills and knowledge with an emphasis on equipping graduates with the particular literacies needed for success in an increasingly diverse ,unequal and interdependent global age.

### **Themes:**

- This GE Model highlights civic engagement, global awareness, and diversity education . Wherever possible the foundational GE courses will incorporate the broad themes of civic engagement, global awareness and diversity education. (See Student Learning Outcomes.)
- The three upper level GE area courses will then build on this foundation, giving students a culminating GE experience in which they explore in greater depth issues related to community and civic life, race, class and gender, and a culturally diverse , unequal and interdependent world.
- Additionally, this GE Model is committed to the idea that critical skills ( e.g. college writing, oral communication and technological proficiency) are most effectively taught in the context of disciplinary knowledge and can be achieved without increasing the overall number of GE course requirements.

### **Across the Curriculum:**

**Writing:** Students must take at least four GE courses designated “writing intensive”, with at least one at the 300 level or above.

....students will be able to

- Identify and employ the writing processes of drafting, revising and editing
- Develop, research and write a documented essay
- Accurately credit a source with appropriate citation

**Technology:** Student must take at least two GE courses designated “technology intensive.”

....students will be able to

- demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations
- use a variety of technologies to access, evaluate, collect, and manage data, information and datasets.

- understand the impact of technology on themselves, their culture, their environment and their society
- practice legal and ethical behaviors in the context of technology

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

### GE Program SLO's & Assessment

- 1) Communicate effectively through speaking and writing skills.
- 2) Use quantitative analytical skills to evaluate and process numerical data.
- 3) Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in addressing social, philosophical and historical issues.
- 4) Demonstrate understanding of scientific principles and methods.
- 5) Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information.
- 6) Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures, including global and historical perspectives.
- 7) Engage in activities that fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities.
- 8) Use computer and emerging digital technologies effectively.
- 9) Demonstrate an appreciation for aesthetics and creative activity.

Assessment, direct or indirect, can occur at any number of levels within a GE Program: at the level of the course, the program broadly and at the institutional level. GE can also be assessed "...over the entire student experience, whether before or after graduation." (see *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources*, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2007, p. 30). Ideally, an institution's GE assessment plan will include a variety of instruments, employed at different points in the student GE experience. After meeting with Jane Zeff (director, Institutional Research and Assessment) it is our recommendation that we adopt three different strategies for assessing the GE Program SLO's.

- 1) Rubric Approach : A rubric assessment can be developed by the GE Council for a number of Program SLO's. This approach entails randomly selecting a group of papers from identified GE courses in the effort to establish a base line scale or "rubric". The rubric would then be applied periodically by a designated assessment committee. To provide an example, effective writing skills would be gauged by collecting a random sample of papers from Writing Intensive GE courses. The previously established rubric would be used to assess student learning periodically. Rubrics are currently being utilized by the Learning and Literacy Council. The following GE Program SLO's might very well be assessed with the rubrics approach: # 1, 3, 4, 5, 8.
- 2) "Roll-up" from Course Assessment: Sometimes, GE course SLO's are easily matched directly to Program SLO's. In such cases, course assessment can be "rolled-up" to provide assessment data at the level of the program. For example, the Math Department requires that all GE courses contain the same three questions on finals. Outcomes on these questions can then serve as the baseline for student learning and be rolled-up. The following Program SLO's might very well be assessed using this approach: #2, 4, 8.
- 3) Student Survey: In addition to the above approaches, student self-assessment is a useful assessment strategy. (Middle States recommends that assessment include some provision for student voice.) Student surveys are intended to measure the degree to which students believe they have acquired the skills and knowledge contained in the GE SLO's. For example, a survey

might pose the question as to whether students believe that having completed GE they are more able to fulfill civic responsibilities. The entire GE program might be assessed in this manner, but some SLO's especially lend themselves to self-assessment: #6,7,8,9.

Each GE course proposal shall include a specific assessment plan that satisfies relevant Area SLOs . Area SLOs, we suggest, can then be matched to Program SLOs and where appropriate , an Assessment Plan be decided.

NOTE: Currently, William Paterson is participating in a voluntary- assessment program (College Portrait). As part of this undertaking, institutional exams are currently being considered to measure the "value-added" by a university education. If such instruments are adopted, assessment strategies outlined above might be modified.

## AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

All GE courses will include the following student learning outcomes:

....students will be able to

1. effectively express themselves in written and oral form.
2. think critically.
3. locate and use information, and employ correct forms of citation.
4. integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner.
5. work effectively with others.

In addition, each Area requirement and sub-area will have distinctive learning outcomes, as listed below:

### AREA ONE – PERSONAL WELL-BEING

*One foundational course in Health, Fitness or Financial Well-Being*

This area provides students with the core skills and knowledge for managing their personal well-being.

....students will be able to

- Explain how knowledge from various disciplines is essential to personal well-being.
- Describe how individuals develop and need support to achieve physical, emotional, ethical, social, and financial well-being.
- Discuss issues that may threaten physical, emotional, social, and financial well-being.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate progress towards achieving physical, emotional, ethical academic, and financial goals.
- Explain how an individual's wellbeing is connected to the physical, social and economic environment.

### AREA TWO- EXPRESSION:

This area requirement involves students in various modes of expression including written, oral, visual and performative. Additionally, students will gain the necessary skills for effective communication.

### **Arts & Communication**

*One foundational course*

...students will be able to

- Identify and evaluate historical and current forms of expression.
- Explain how expression may vary across cultures and regions.
- Effectively express themselves in expository or creative modes.
- Express their own creativity through collaborative exercises and projects.

**Writing***One foundational course*

...students will be able to

- Understand fundamental standards of college writing.
- Develop expository essays exhibiting a coherent structure.
- Discuss, revise, and edit multiple drafts of an essay.
- Utilize feedback from instructors and classmates to develop their writing and their writing process.

**Literature***One foundational course*

...students will be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between literary form and meaning.
- Make meaningful thematic connections between contemporary issues and literature from various historical, geographic or ethnic origins.
- Identify specific literary elements and techniques in sample passages.
- Identify a variety of processes of reading and interpretation.

AREA THREE- WAYS of KNOWING: Disciplinary Approaches

This area provides students with the core skills and knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences necessary for undergraduate study and lifelong learning.

**Philosophical Perspectives***One foundational course*

...students will be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge of the histories of philosophy and their contributions to world cultures.
- Identify ethical dimension of various philosophical approaches.
- Demonstrate knowledge of important philosophical problems.
- Present critically, yet sympathetically, philosophical views that differ from their own.

## **Historical Perspectives:**

*One foundational course*

....students will be able to

- Identify major issues and events in world history.
- Ask meaningful questions about historical developments and events; e.g. causation, significance, continuity versus change, etc.
- Understand and analyze primary sources and evaluate authorship, bias, context, and accuracy.

## **Social & Behavioral Sciences:**

*Two foundational courses*

....students will be able to

- Identify the major intellectual approaches and methodologies defining the social sciences.
- Identify ethical dimension of various social scientific approaches.
- Ask meaningful questions regarding human behavior and social problems.
- Develop cogent arguments regarding complex social problems across diverse cultures and regions.

## **Scientific Perspectives:**

*One foundational course (lab)*

....students will be able to

- Demonstrate competence in understanding the development, fundamental principles, and application of at least one area of science.
- Develop the skills used by science to investigate the objective universe.
- Develop the skills necessary to collect, organize, and evaluate scientific information.
- Demonstrate the ability to use mathematics in solving scientific problems.

## **Quantitative Thinking:**

*One foundational course*

....students will be able to

- Interpret and evaluate quantitative or symbolic models such as graphs, tables, units of measurement, and distributions.
- Perform algebraic computations and obtain solutions using equations and formulas.
- Acquire the ability to use multiple approaches - numerical, graphical, symbolic, geometric and statistical - to solve problems.
- Develop mathematical thinking and communication skills, including knowledge of a broad range of explanations and examples, good logical and quantitative reasoning skills, and facility in separating and reconnecting the component parts of concepts and methods.

**AREA FOUR : DIVERSITY & JUSTICE**

This area builds upon core skills and knowledge to prepare students to participate more effectively in a diverse society.

*One course at 200 level (in major where possible)*

....students will be able to

- Distinguish diversity (recognition of difference) from inequality as means of creating a fair, just, and healthy society.
- Identify historical and contemporary dynamics of group inclusion/exclusion as they relate to discrimination across diverse cultures and regions.
- Employ concepts such as justice, oppression, tolerance, inequality, and difference.
- Identify current systems of oppression at local, national, regional and global levels.
- Identify remedies and problem-solving strategies in the area of diversity and justice.

**AREA FIVE: COMMUNITY & CIVIC KNOWLEDGE**

This area builds upon core skills and knowledge to enable students to participate more effectively in civic and community life.

*One course at 200 level or above (in major where possible)*

....students will be able to

- Engage in community problem-solving.
- Identify key arenas (local/national/global) of engagement and decision-making.
- Identify relationship between major discipline and civic engagement.
- Effectively participate in community and civic life.

**AREA SIX-: GLOBAL AWARENESS**

This area builds upon core skills and knowledge to prepare students to participate more effectively in an increasingly interdependent and unequal world, its systems, cultures and processes. Global awareness is not limited to but must include societies and cultures other than the United States and Europe.

*One course at 200 level or above (in major where possible)*

....students will be able to

- Identify global issues, processes, trends and systems.
- Analyze other cultures (values, ethics, perspectives, practices and institutions) without stereotyping.
- Employ diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to expand critical thinking and problem solving.
- Identify cultural difference, cultural ambiguity, and inter-cultural challenges.
- Use foreign language skills and /or knowledge of other cultures to extend access to information, experience and understanding.

**NOTES:**