General Education Committee resolution concerning the approval process for courses seeking to be given a general education designation.

In order for a course to be considered for a General Education designation the submitting department must provide a copy of the *Intent to include a course in the General Education Curriculum* and they must make clear the components of the course that make it a general education course and not just a course from a given content area. In particular courses should specifically address the ways in which the course addresses the established general education goals/objectives for the designation requested. If no goals/objectives exist for the given designation or if the course does not satisfy the existing goals/objectives then clear justification for the designation will be expected. (Note that per our bylaws this would apply to all course proposals seeking Gen Ed designation including FDS, SIS, and Guided Readings.)

Objectives have been developed for the following areas:

1. Communications
2. Computer Science, Math, and Natural Sciences
3. History
4. Humanistic Studies (In Paper Form)
5. Literature
6. World Languages and Literature

These objectives were generally arrived at so that they would be in line with the *General Education Statement of Principles* put out by the CT Department of Higher Education and the WCSU General Education Task Force definition of an *Educated Person*. (The quoted documents and objectives are contained in the following pages.)
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Higher Education

GENERAL EDUCATION STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

General Education programs in Connecticut should provide a foundation for undergraduate work and life-long learning. Their purpose is to provide informational substance while developing critical perspective and synthesis; to affirm human and intellectual values while liberating the imagination; and to encourage the critical examination of ideas and provide diverse perspectives necessary to such examination, for these are the processes that form the foundation for responsible citizenship and an enlightened culture and society.

General education fulfills these goals by acquainting students with basic knowledge of (a) the past and present diversity of human achievements and perspectives at the levels of individuals, groups, and cultures; (b) how scientific and mathematical inquiry understand nature and enable technological development, and thus shape people's lives by affecting the economic and material frameworks of society; (c) how the arts and humanities foster insights about the human condition and encourage aspirations for the future, and (d) how the social sciences inform us of past efforts and guide future efforts at living together in political, economic, and cultural communities.

Furthermore, general education programs help students develop the cognitive flexibility and the skills necessary to face the changes and challenges of the future, particularly the abilities (a) to express themselves clearly and fully in both speech and writing, and to work collaboratively with others, (b) to reason independently, analytically, and quantitatively, and (c) to utilize informational technology to facilitate research and learning.

These expectations provide institutions great flexibility in their approach to and design of a general education program. Institutions may serve the goals of general education through different sets of requirements and structures specific to their character and mission. Nevertheless, an institution must coherently define how its system of general education articulates these expected skills, knowledge, and abilities and how it will integrate them with one another and within the overall mission and educational philosophy of the institution. General education programs should constitute at least one-third of the undergraduate curriculum, balanced throughout the curriculum via distribution requirements or restricted electives. Institutions must assure their general education programs independently, to assure that they meet these goals separately from the purposes of the major and other elements of the undergraduate degree program.
Western Connecticut State University
General Education Task Force

The Educated Person

An educated person is many things and although there may be disagreement over the relative importance of any particular aspect, there is a great deal of agreement over what combinations of traits of mind make up such a person. Therefore, the categories below are not rankable, but the educated person can be characterized as exhibiting some degree of accomplishment in as many of these aspects as possible.

The educated person is connected to society and the world. Knowledge and appreciation of the history and accomplishments of one’s culture is important in becoming an active contributor to that culture. Awareness and understanding of other cultures gives insight into emerging global associations and relations. The educated person is one who has joined “the great conversation” in philosophy, has engaged the ideas of great philosophers, and others, and is equipped to consider what virtue is, what the good life is, and other questions which may transcend cultures and time. The educated person develops ethical values with a sense of responsibility toward society (such as honesty, integrity, a work ethic) and an ethical responsibility toward the self (such as tenacity, perseverance).

The educated person is a life long learner, and active, creative problem solver. The use of the past tense is misleading in the expression educated person, since one of the aspects of being such a person is a commitment to continued intellectual development, knowledge, and skills. Such a person is characterized by intellectual curiosity and imagination and maintains a questioning attitude and inquiring mind. Habits of life long learning enable the educated person to learn quickly and efficiently, developing the skills of incorporating and integrating new knowledge and experience.

The educated person is a critical thinker. This person has the ability to understand and use analytic reasoning, logical thinking, can synthesize ideas, and is not easily misled by logical fallacies. The educated person is a critical listener and reader, able to find information, comprehend and integrate information, and critically evaluate the credibility of information and information sources. This person is able to understand and expound general scientific concepts, able to understand the social sciences and interpret and make decisions in context/everyday life and has the ability to understand how conclusions derive from evidence, make deductive analyses and inductive syntheses.

The educated person is skilled in expression, communication and social interaction. It is especially important that this person can organize ideas for presentation and deliver them effectively and convincingly in writing and speech. Powerful, clear, and rhetorically sound writing and presentation skills provide the vehicle for the educated person’s ideas to travel to the rest of the world. Without these skills, no matter how otherwise well educated, a person is alone. Skills in expression allow the educated person to engage successfully in illuminating and satisfying civil discourse, gratifying social relations, and rewarding professional endeavors.

The educated person has well developed core functional skills. These include an understanding of mathematical reasoning, including the ability to evaluate simple mathematical/statistical information; technological literacy, including competence as a computer user; scientific literacy, able to evaluate scientific claims and evidence. The educated person understands general research processes (e.g., library searches) and understands the need evaluate the integrity and credibility of the results of these searches.

The educated person appreciates the arts. Such a person understands the processes of creation in the fine and performing arts, has had some experience in creating art, and has some appreciation of methods of evaluating the arts.

The educated person has flexibility of mind. This person has the ability and willingness to question his or her own information, beliefs and values. The educated person is willing and open to a change of mind, and changes in society.

The educated person has an understanding and appreciation of the physical world. Such a person appreciates that good physical health improves quality of life, enhances intellectual ability, and understands what lifestyle choices maximize physical and mental well-being, and knows how to implement those choices. Beyond the self, the educated person has an awareness of environmental sustainability, with a consciousness about our relationship to the planet that supports life.

Passed Committee on General Education 5/2011
Communication & Media Arts
General Education Objectives

The study of Communication and Media Arts contributes to students’ understanding of the humanities in the following ways: 1) the humanities encompass the study of and participation in personal and cultural relationships and creativity. 2) The study of the Humanities helps students interpret, critically evaluate, and participate in the creative process and products of human expression. 3) Students learn a certain way of asking questions about and understanding the world. Because students may not take any or only one or two classes in these areas, it would be unreasonable to expect a high or even intermediate level of proficiency.

The Communication Department serves its majors by guiding them in exploring the depth and breadth of the field of communication (public address, relational communication, media studies, media production) while serving other members of the university community as they seek to understand these areas and improve their own communication skills. This is the “knowledge base” of subject matter, methodologies, and individual and social responsibility as well as the communication skills discussed in the Connecticut state guidelines and WCSU’s “The Educated Person” document.

In Communication Skills courses, we work to achieve the goals expressed in “The Educated Person”: “The educated person is skilled in expression, communication and social interaction. It is especially important that this person can organize ideas for presentation and deliver them effectively and convincingly in writing and speech. [including powerful, clear, and rhetorically sound writing and presentation skills,” and the State document which states general education classes, “help students develop the cognitive flexibility and the skills necessary to face the changes and challenges of the future, particularly the abilities (a) to express themselves clearly and fully in both speech and writing, and to work collaboratively with others, (b) to reason independently, analytically, and quantitatively, and (c) to utilize informational technology to facilitate research and learning.”

The Communication Department recognizes that there is a distinction between competence (an idealized capacity or knowledge base—understanding the basic principles involved in communication) and performance (the ability to execute that understanding in situ).

In Communication Skills classes, students learn how to use and apply core communication skills and concepts (performance), in the Humanities/Communication classes the focus is more on understanding the theory and research that suggests these practices (competence). Because most students take only one Communication Skills class, there is not enough time to develop a high level of performative skill. Based on a five level competency scheme (Awareness, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Expert) and given that our students start at a variety of levels, we would expect students to at least become more aware of the variety of issues involved in face-to-face interaction, and to develop a basic ability to employ communication skills. We expect
WCSU Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science General Education Objectives

Objectives:

Possible objectives for the “Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science” general education requirement:
- The student will develop critical/analytic thinking skills such as an ability to objectively analyze data, evaluate claims based on research or polls, or critique logical reasoning that leads to particular conclusions.
- The student will develop proficiency with quantitative and algebraic skills.
- The student will develop the ability to understand and execute algorithmic processes.
- The student will be able to work comfortably with computers or other technologies to model and solve problems.
- The student will learn to use technology appropriately, including an understanding of what technology to use, how to use it correctly, and when to use it at all.
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method and how it is applied to solve problems and draw conclusions.

Rationale:

Currently WCSU requires students to take 10 credits of course work in the natural sciences, mathematics, and computer science. On the General Education Committee's intent to include cover sheet, which should be submitted with new courses seeking to satisfy general education requirements, it says the following for this category:

Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science:
- Lab Science: This is a course in a physical or natural science which includes a laboratory experience.
- Mathematics: This course contributes to the understanding of mathematics at the college level.
- Computer Science: This course involves computer concepts, computer principles and algorithmic processes; their design and use in problem-solving; their application; and their impact on society.

In order to streamline the process of approving and assessing courses for this piece of the general education curriculum we propose the above set of objectives that courses in this category should, at least in part, satisfy. These objectives were arrived at through careful consideration of the ideas that where highlighted in the documents “State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles” and “Western Connecticut State University General Education Task Force: The Educated Person,” both of which can be found on the General Education Committee's website. In particular:

From the “State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles” students should know how
- “scientific and mathematical inquiry understand nature and enable technological development, and thus shape people's lives by affecting the economic and material frameworks of society.”
- “to reason independently, analytically, and quantitatively”
- “to utilize informational technology to facilitate research and learning.”

From the “Western Connecticut State University General Education Task Force: The Educated Person” an educated person should have
- “an understanding of mathematical reasoning”
- “an ability to evaluate simple mathematical/statistical information”
- “technological literacy, including competence as a computer user”
- “scientific literacy, able to evaluate scientific claims and evidence”

Please comment constructively on these objectives. Include possible changes, additions, or deletions to this list including your reasons for your suggestions.

Passed Committee on General Education 5/2011
HISTORY DEPARTMENT GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

Students taking general education courses in the history department will:

1. Develop a familiarity with basic historical content in key periods in history across the world with the goal of establishing a foundation in each major field of history.
2. Develop a basic understanding of historical methods of analyzing primary source materials.
3. Develop an understanding of the critical reasoning and study skills necessary to analyze themes in history.

Rationale:

These objectives are consistent with the statements of the “State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles” that students should learn about:
- “the past and present diversity of human achievements and perspectives at the levels of individuals, groups, and cultures”
- how the arts and humanities foster insights about the human condition and encourage aspirations for the future
- how to reason independently, analytically, and quantitatively.

These objectives are also consistent with the “Western Connecticut State University General Education Task Force’s” emphasis on:
- “The ability to understand and use analytic reasoning”
- “awareness and understanding of other cultures”
- students becoming “skilled in expression, communication and social interaction”
WCSU Literature General Education Course Objectives

Objectives:
Objectives for the “Literature” general education requirement include:

- Instruction that helps students engage, appreciate, and understand the diversity of human experience through the interpretation of literature which must be the central focus of each course.
- Courses that foster understanding of and regard for historical, cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual aspects of major literary works through critical analysis, teaching students to make effective arguments about literature using evidence from the text and research appropriate to the subject and level of study.
- Teaching that identifies the major elements of literature such as theme, narrative, audience, perspective, and the relationship between structure and ideas, and guides students to discuss these aspects of literature in order to improve oral fluency and written expression.
- Courses that use technology to enhance students’ experience of literature (CD-ROM to multimedia presentation assignments) and to allow them opportunities to work with it.

Rationale:
Currently, “Literature” courses may be used to fulfill the Humanities requirement for humanistic studies and literature courses. The objectives above are based upon thoughtful consideration of the State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles and the WCSU Task Force’s document, The Educated Person.

According to the State of Connecticut’s document:

- The purpose of general education courses is “to provide informational substance while developing critical perspective and synthesis, to affirm human and intellectual values while liberating the imagination; and to encourage the critical examination of ideas and provide diverse perspectives necessary to such examination…” (italics mine)
- General education courses teach students “how the arts and humanities foster insights about the human condition…”
- In general education courses students learn “to express themselves clearly and fully in both speech and writing…. to reason independently, analytically…to utilize informational technology to facilitate research and learning.”

According to WCSU Task Force’s The Educated Person:

- General education courses create a student who is “a critical thinker. This person has the ability to understand and use analytic reasoning, logical thinking, can synthesize ideas…”
- General education courses create a student who is a critical “reader, able to find information, comprehend and integrate information, and critically evaluate the credibility of information and information sources.”
- “The educated person is skilled in expression, communication and social interaction…can organize ideas for presentation and deliver them effectively and convincingly in writing and speech. Powerful, clear, and rhetorically sound writing and presentation skills provide the vehicle for the educated persons ideas to travel …the world.”
- The educated person “has the ability and willingness to question his or her own information, beliefs and values.”
WCSU Foreign Language General Education Objectives

Objectives:
Objectives for the “Foreign Language” general education requirement:

- In a course taught primarily in the non-English target language, the student will demonstrate oral proficiency as defined by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) in the target language at a level of Novice High or above for European languages and Novice Mid or above for all other non-English languages.
- In a course taught primarily in the non-English target language, the student will demonstrate written proficiency as defined by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) in the target language at a level of Novice High or above for European languages and Novice Mid or above for all other non-English languages.
- In a course taught primarily in the non-English target language, the student will demonstrate content knowledge of diverse cultures.

Rationale:
Currently WCSU allows students to choose courses designated as Foreign Language for partial completion of Humanities General Education Requirements.

In order to streamline the process of approving and assessing courses for this piece of the general education curriculum, we propose the above set of objectives that courses in this category should, at least in part, satisfy. These objectives were arrived at through careful consideration of the ideas that where highlighted in the documents “State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles” and “Western Connecticut State University General Education Task Force: The Educated Person,” both of which can be found on the General Education Committee's website. In particular:

From the “State of Connecticut General Education Statement of Principles” students should know how
- “the past and present diversity of human achievements and perspectives at the levels of individuals, groups, and cultures”
- “to express themselves clearly and fully in both speech and writing, and to work collaboratively with others”

From the “Western Connecticut State University General Education Task Force: The Educated Person” an educated person should have
- “awareness and understanding of other cultures”
- “skilled in expression, communication and social interaction”
Please check the area proposed and attach course proposal and rationale for inclusion

☐ Communication Skills: This course fulfills a communication skills requirement.

Humanities (Seven areas)

☐ Fine and Applied Arts: This course contributes to the understanding of the processes of creation in the fine and performing arts, and/or the appreciation of methods of evaluating the arts.

☐ Communication: This course contributes to the understanding of expression, relational communication, media appreciation/criticism, or communication and social interaction.

☐ World Languages and Literature: This course involves learning another language or reading literature and writing in another language.

☐ Humanistic Studies: This course contributes to the understanding of the philosophy and human activities in the arts, society, morality, or other aspects of philosophy and the human condition.

☐ Literature: This course involves substantial reading and analysis of texts.

☐ Philosophy: This course contributes to the understanding of philosophy, including its history, logic, critical reasoning, ethical issues, or religion.

☐ Western History: This course contributes to the understanding of the history of Europe, the United States, African-Americans, or the major religions from these regions.

☐ History: This course contributes to the familiarity with basic historical content in key periods in history across the world.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (Three areas)

☐ Non-Western Cultures: Courses in this category introduce students to cultural norms and patterns of civilizations associated with Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Native America, and elsewhere, alternative to those of the Greco-Roman and European traditions.

☐ Psychology: This course contributes to the understanding of the methods and content of the discipline of psychology.

☐ Social Sciences: This course contributes to the understanding of anthropology, economics, geography, political science or sociology.

Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science

☐ Lab Science: This is a course in a physical or natural science which includes a laboratory experience.

☐ Mathematics: This course contributes to the understanding of mathematics at the college level.

☐ Computer Science: This course involves computer concepts, computer principles and algorithmic processes; their design and use in problem-solving; their application; and their impact on society.

Physical Education

☐ Health & Physical Exercise: This course includes a physical activity in recreation or sports and/or contribute to one’s physical well being.