

## **Report on Student Learning Outcomes, Areas of General Education Approved by General Education Assessment Committee May 12, 2003**

The general education area student learning outcomes are designed to determine, through assessment, whether undergraduate students learn these outcomes at least partly as a consequence of the University's general education program. Obviously, there is no single assessment method that can be used for all learning outcomes simultaneously – and the faculty teaching in each area of the general education program will have to consider how best to do assessment in each area of the general education program.

After an experimental two-year assessment of general education at Western Michigan University during the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 academic years, we will again collaboratively consider how to refine the student learning outcomes, with some use of the assessment results for the prior two years. Assessment results from this experimental period should provide valuable insights about student learning and, perhaps, provide some ideas into how to restructure and change the University's general education program in cooperation with the Faculty Senate's Committee to Oversee General Education (COGE). Any such restructuring of the general education program will require the initiation and support of both the Provost and the Faculty Senate for a formal review of general education at the University.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AREAS**

#### **AREA I – FINE ARTS**

- Explain the role of the arts in reflecting and influencing the human condition.
- Describe the historical context of various art forms.
- Interpret, evaluate, and describe aesthetic experiences and creative activities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of formal and thematic characteristics of different media and genres.

#### **AREA II - HUMANITIES**

- Explain the intellectual traditions that have helped shape present cultures.
- Describe the historical context of various literary, philosophic, historic, or religious works.
- Evaluate qualities and characteristics of works of literature, philosophy, history, or religion.
- Explain the role of at least one of the humanities in reflecting and influencing the human condition.

#### **AREA III - U.S. CULTURES & ISSUES**

- Explain the characteristics and historical background of diverse racial, religious, political, and social groups in the U.S.
- Identify issues such as age, class, disabilities, gender, race, or discrimination that have an impact on the cultural life of the United States, and analyze the roles those issues play in U.S. culture.
- Identify some of the historical dynamics (social, economic, political) that have shaped a current social condition (for example, economic and social segregation in U.S. cities or economic inequality) and explain how that dynamic has contributed to that condition.

#### **AREA IV – OTHER CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS**

- Explain the adaptive nature of culture.
- Explain the influence and contributions of at least one other culture and/or civilization.
- Describe the history, literature, arts, religion, ideas, and institutions of at least one culture other than one's own.
- Compare, contrast, and evaluate two or more different cultures, including one's own.

#### **AREA V – SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

- Describe how geographic, political, and historical processes influence the social and behavioral science issues.
- Examine critically the applications of the social and behavioral sciences for policy and public service.
- Analyze data and draw appropriate conclusions.

#### **AREA VI – NATURAL SCIENCE WITH LABORATORY**

- Apply the scientific method of discovery to the study of natural phenomena by critically evaluating and analyzing data and reaching the appropriate conclusions.
- Use scientific concepts and vocabulary to explain and make predictions about natural phenomena in a physical, life, or behavioral science.

#### **AREA VII – NATURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Applications and Implications**

- Describe the history of technological innovation and its impact, both positive and negative, on society.
- Explain the interconnection between the natural sciences and advancements in technology as they impact:
  - health, social and economic welfare;
  - the storage, transfer, and processing of information;
  - the environment.
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and participate in making societal decisions regarding science and technology.

#### **AREA VIII - HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

- Identify major health issues affecting students and other people and describe ways of reducing preventable disease, disability, and death.
- Describe the principles of a healthy lifestyle and ways of assessing health risks.