ASSESSMENT OF GER ARTS REQUIREMENT

Report to General Education Outcomes Assessment Task Force
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I. CURRENT GER OBJECTIVES, DEFINITIONS, AND CRITERIA FOR THE ARTS

Objectives - Distribution Requirements General Policy
The objectives of the distribution requirements of the GER are on page 8 of Faculty Document #1382 are:

1. Development of a strong foundation of verbal and quantitative skills
2. Understanding the rules of methods and processes
3. Acquisition of cultural and historical perspectives on the world
4. Development of consciousness of the self
5. Appreciation of creativity
6. Relation of ideas to social structures
7. Understanding of the roles of values in both action and inquiry

Definitions and Criteria for the Arts
The area definitions and specific criteria for the arts can be found on page 10 of Faculty Document #1382:

Area Definitions and Specific Criteria
a. The Arts

1) Definition A branch of learning involving the conscious use of skill and creative imagination in the production of artistic objects or performances which stress values that stand outside conventional ideas of utility.

2) Criteria To satisfy the GER Distribution requirements for the Arts a course must meet criteria a) and one other,

a) deal with the history, philosophy, theory, or practice of the creative and/or expressive arts
b) introduce the students to the historical, critical, or theoretical dimension of a specific art
c) require the creation of an art work
d) involve students in the practice of specific art medium

II. GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE CHARGE

A. Identify measurable learning goals for the General Education requirements at UWM drawing from Faculty Document No. 1382.

B. Determine what assessment is currently being done and what measures are being used by departments.
C. Identify how we are communicating the value of general education to our students and other constituents.

D. Develop an overall plan for assessing and evaluating general education

III. SELECTED INSTITUTIONS REVIEWED FOR GEN ED CRITERIA

The GER Subcommittee on the Arts reviewed the web sites of 20 institutions with established GEN ED programs or GEN ED assessment reviews:

Michigan State University
http://www.ns.msu.edu/cisgs/CISGSHOMEPAGE/assessing.htm

Marquette University
http://www.marquette.edu/pages/home/about/wearemu/academicexcel/assessment

Arizona State University
http://www.asu.edu/oue/assessment.html
http://w3.arizona.edu/~uge/gened/guide/mgt2.htm#Arts

University of Wisconsin-Madison
http://www.ls.wisc.edu/Gened/FacStaff/assessment.html

SUNY-Buffalo:
http://wings.buffalo.edu/vpaa/ctlr/files/assessment.htm
http://wings.buffalo.edu/vpaa/ctlr/files/assessment.htm#iii

University of Cincinnati
http://www.uc.edu/gened/

IUPUI:
http://www.planning.iupui.edu/

University of Minnesota
http://www.mrs.umn.edu/committees/asl/

University of Michigan
http://www.umich.edu/~provost/slfstudy(ir)/assessment.html

University of Missouri
http://provost.missouri.edu/assessment/general-education.html

University of Illinois – Chicago
http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/genedconv/

Portland State University
http://portfolio.pdx.edu/Portfolio/Institutional_Effectiveness/

University of Colorado – Boulder
http://www.colorado.edu/pba/outcomes/
IV. INITIAL FINDINGS -- GEN ED CRITERIA FOR THE ARTS

A. Of the 20 institutions researched, most sites referred to general education requirements or assessments, but specific objectives, criteria, or definitions could not be located. Of these 20 institutions, only five had published criteria on general education requirements for the arts. These requirements, definitions and criteria are consistent with those currently in place at UWM:

1. All institutions with a GEN ED fine arts component require 3-6 credits in a fine arts area, either individually or as part of a humanities category.

2. Example definitions and criteria at five selected institutions:

   University of Minnesota
   Fine Arts Objective: To develop students' understanding, analysis, and appreciation of the arts. Artistic Performance Objective: To introduce an understanding of the creative process through individual performance, demonstrate skill in such activities as composition, theater, dance, studio art, and music.

   University of Missouri
   Humanistic Studies and Fine Arts
   Following completion of the requirements in humanistic studies and fine arts, MU students should be able to:
   a. Understand the development of the Western tradition (in history, literature, art, music, philosophy, etc.).
   b. Examine the nature of research in the humanities and the arts.
   c. Understand the impact of non-Western nations, women, and minorities on the cultural traditions of the U.S. and the world, and examine the positions taken by those who attack the canon (in literature, history, music, etc.).
d. Demonstrate an understanding of the creative and artistic processes.
e. Interpret and evaluate artistic expression.
f. Become more sensitive to the implications of the arts and the humanities the life of the individual.
g. Develop an understanding of ethical principles in the arts and the humanities.
h. Develop an understanding of the institutions and ideas of our shared humanity.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Courses in the arts approved for General Education credit (a) will study the art forms produced through the written arts, music, architecture, dance, theatre, painting, sculpture, other visual arts; (b) will address appropriate issues concerning the characteristics and essential qualities of the medium; (c) and will address such basic questions as the social function of the art form, its means of conveying meaning, and how it and other art forms are to be evaluated. Courses in the arts approved for General Education credit may involve the student in the experience of the actual doing of the art; to be approved for General Education credit, such courses must meet both the general criteria for all Humanities and the Arts courses as well as those detailed in this paragraph for courses in the arts.

Arizona State University
Expected Outcomes: Arts, Tier Two
Art courses emphasize verbal, visual, musical, spatial or kinesthetic forms of expression. Components of these courses will either emphasize student creativity, expression, and production or require students to identify and analyze the impact of cultural and historical factors on the creation and reception of artistic works. All Arts courses ask students to develop critical thinking and interpretive abilities.

State University of New York (SUNY)
THE ARTS
Students will demonstrate understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein. In order to be approved for the Arts category, offerings should engage the creative process directly as well as foster understanding of a principal form of artistic expression. Both performance-oriented and scholarly/historical offerings in the expressive arts are approvable for this category. Literary offerings are also approvable depending on campus-based criteria for distinguishing the Humanities and Arts categories. Courses imparting purely technical skills with no demonstration of aesthetic content are not approvable.

For inter- or multi-disciplinary courses whose scope does not obviously fall within the envelope of traditional principal forms of artistic expression (e.g., courses on technical or practical aspects of design or electronic media) submitted course information should demonstrate clearly: which principal form(s) of artistic expression students will encounter; the amount of time spent on each form; how students will show understanding of the creative process(es) inherent in the form(s).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS
A. The GEN ED acronym/abbreviation is used at most institutions across the country. In order to be consistent with this national understanding, the subcommittee recommends GEN ED replace the
current GER acronym/abbreviation in all campus documents in order to establish it as the common descriptor for General Education course requirements.

B. The current GER objectives be restated and more specifically defined along areas of competency. These redefinitions should include consideration of the following competencies (not currently expressed in UWM’s objectives, but among those commonly defined at other institutions):

- Knowledge integration
- Social responsibility/accountability
- Information literacy
- Lifelong learning skills
- Diversity of expression
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis skills
- Citizenship, civility, and community

C. Based on a review of data from other institutions, as well as a need to update and clarify, the subcommittee recommends the Area Definition and Specific Criteria for the Arts, as currently stated in UWM faculty Document #1382, be rewritten according to the following guidelines:

**DEFINITION:** Courses that emphasize verbal, visual, musical, spatial or kinesthetic forms of creative expression. Components of these courses emphasize creation, interpretation, or production of works of art.

**CRITERIA:** GEN ED Arts courses must satisfy the following three criteria:

1. Create, collaborate, participate in, or interpret a work of art.

2. Interpret, evaluate, identify, and analyze artistic expression according to its medium, culture, social context, historical relevance, theoretical significance, and philosophical import.

3. Understand the characteristics and essential qualities, techniques, and processes of the medium.

VI. PROGRESS REPORT ON CURRENT PSOA GER ASSESSMENTS

The Peck School of the Arts offers close to seventy GER courses out of the more than 600 GER courses offered on campus. In the spring semester 2004, the first assessment of GER-Arts courses was conducted in three large enrollment GER courses in the Visual Art Department (Art 100-Basic Art Experiences, Art 106-Art Survey, and Art 124-Design Survey) and in one large enrollment course in the Music Department (Music 102-American Popular Music). This initial GER assessment was conducted with survey questionnaires specific to each course. A description of GER goals and criteria in the arts was included on the surveys, and students were asked to evaluate the course’s success in meeting these GER goals and criteria. The number of questions on each survey ranged from eight to twelve, and the format was either yes/no or a 5-point rating scale (with responses spread from excellent to poor) for each question. Over 1,000 students completed the surveys on "scantron" sheets and the results were machine tallied. Students in all four courses generally agreed that the courses met the goals listed for the specific courses (no or below average/poor responses rarely exceeded 10% of the total responses to each question). Additional GER courses in music were surveyed during the fall semester 2004, and all GER courses in the Visual Art Department will be surveyed in the spring semester 2005.
GER assessment was conducted in Dance 103-Yoga, Dance 122-Beginning African Dance, and Dance 220-Body Sense during the summer session 2004. The Dance Department faculty also included the GER goals and criteria on course syllabi and developed specific survey instruments customized to the curricular content of each course. In the fall semester 2004 students in each of the dance GER courses were surveyed. The analysis of those surveys is not yet complete. When the results are finalized, the dance faculty will use the survey information to make improvements to dance GER courses and to fine tune future GER assessment instruments.

The Theatre Department modified its GER course assessment somewhat from what was being done in the Dance, Music, and Visual Art Departments. Rather than just asking students to complete an end-of-semester survey, the Theatre Department is using both a pre-survey and a post-survey. At the beginning of the fall semester 2004, students in eight theatre GER courses (Theatre 100-Introduction to the Theatre, Theatre 101-Introduction to the Actor's Art, Theatre 108-Performance Techniques for Musical Theatre, Theatre 109-Theatre Production, Theatre 120-Performance and Popular Culture, Theatre 204-Participatory Theatre, Theatre 305-The Theatrical Experience, and Theatre 460-Storytelling) were asked to complete an eight question pre-survey about their prior theatre knowledge and experience. At the end of the fall semester 2004, these same students completed a sixteen-question post-survey on how the course had impacted their learning about theatre and the arts. Two of the questions asked students to specify the activities and assignments which were most beneficial and least beneficial in meeting the course GER goals. The department will be conducting a second series of pre- and post-surveys during the spring semester 2005. Once results of the second series of surveys are completed, the Theatre Department hopes to analyze the surveys to see if changes need to be made in theatre GER courses.

The Film Department offers very few GER courses; in fact, during 2004-05, it only offered Film 301-Conversations with Filmmakers and Critics and Film 302-Video in the Classroom. At the beginning of the spring semester 2005, GER goals and criteria were included in the syllabi of both of the film GER courses offered. The department is currently developing an assessment instrument and will distribute it in both courses at the end of the semester.

Peck School of the Arts administrators, including the Dean, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, and department chairs have continued discussions on GER assessment during their weekly meetings. Although there is interest in developing a standardized survey instrument that can be used across all five arts disciplines in the school, there is concern that a standardized survey would not provide data that could be of significant value in improving individual GER courses and that course specific surveys would be more beneficial for assessment. The use of pre-surveys and post-surveys in each course might also be a stronger method of assessment. It is hoped that an analysis of all completed surveys will be finalized in the summer of 2005 and that decisions can be made on (1) how to best conduct assessment of PSOA GER courses in the future and (2) how often to schedule assessment in each GER course.