LIBERAL EDUCATION
A draft proposal

STEM-enhanced Courses and Comprehensive Proposal
LAST TOWN HALL MEETING:

Comprehensive Proposal
Next Friday, 11/8
3-4:30 p.m.
LC100
STEM-enhanced courses

• Students are required to take 2 or more STEM-enhanced courses from approved list.

• Math and NSCI courses used to meet GE requirements do not count toward these two courses.
  – Note that only one NSCI course is required in the new comprehensive proposal; math requirements are the same

• Waivers for the 2nd STEM-enhanced course will be applied for students in high-credit programs without sufficient STEM-enhanced courses and for transfer students with an AA or 45-60 credits.
STEM-enhanced courses: A definition

- Any course for which at least 10% of instructional time is devoted to topics within Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics.

- The technology component would include use of computer software or other technology in a nontrivial way; for example, Geographic Information Systems or digital media software (but not using Word or PowerPoint).

- Mathematics would include use of logic and interpretation of graphical data. Also included would be nontrivial use of spreadsheets like Excel – just entering data would not be sufficient, but performing calculations on the data would count.
Examples of STEM-enhanced courses

- Any currently offered research methods course
- Digital Visual Learning
- Speech Science
- Basic Recording, Music Therapy Practicum
- Philosophy of Natural Science
- Teaching and Learning in the Digital Environment
- Intro. To Theatre Tech., Lighting Design, Audio Engineering
- Forensic Anthropology and Human Osteology
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEM-enhanced status</th>
<th>Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major will easily satisfy this requirement</td>
<td>All SSE, Business, Comm. Disorders, Economics, Elem. Ed., Geography, Psychology, Sociology, Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major has at least one STEM-enhanced course AND problems meeting STEM requirement are unlikely</td>
<td>Anthropology, Comm. &amp; Media, Music, Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely to fulfill STEM requirement in major, but major has &lt;50 credits</td>
<td>Art History, Black Studies, History, LLC, LACS, Political Sci., WGSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely to fulfill STEM requirement in major; major has up to 55 credits</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely to fulfill STEM requirement in major; major is credit-intensive. Waiver may be required.</td>
<td>Art Ed., Secondary Ed.</td>
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</table>
Why get rid of one NSCI and add two courses with [potentially] less STEM content?

- Give students the opportunity to apply STEM in their major or other field of interest. Connecting the two will increase student motivation and retention.
Comprehensive Proposal
Why “Liberal Education” rather than GE4?

- In the last 10 years, the College has seen notable increases in selectivity and academic quality of admitted students, significant faculty turnover, and declining reliance on adjunct instruction, creating a markedly changed institutional context for general education.

- Significant external changes are not reflected in the current curriculum (heightened expectations for graduates, new educational thinking and models; AAC&U liberal education campaign).

- Increased flexibility in SUNY trustees general education requirements and assessment enacted in 2009-10.

- A need to align campus goals and mission with a new SUNY system strategic plan.
Goals of Liberal Education Reform

- GE, and the curriculum overall, must transition from something to get through to something to achieve
  - Encourage learning with intent
  - Scaffold learning experiences, beginning with a first-year seminar and culminating in a capstone experience
  - Foster stronger connections between courses and all the individuals involved in SUNY New Paltz’s learning environment (staff, faculty, and students)
Liberal Education: Desired Student Outcomes

• Our liberal education program seeks to promote self-aware, reflective, and thoughtful citizens. We want to create the possibility of graduates liberated by their New Paltz experience to understand and fulfill their own human potential.

• Additionally, a liberal education prepares students for an increasingly complex world, focusing on critical thinking and analytical skills applied across a broad array of disciplines.
## Comprehensive Proposal: Student Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>0-4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science (NSCI)</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language (FLNG)</td>
<td>6-8 credits, in same language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 more courses in different GE categories below, one of which must meet the Diversity requirement</td>
<td>12-15 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>USST</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSCI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total GE Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>30-32 credits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year Seminar</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Required Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>33-35 credits</strong></td>
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*GE3-Required Credits for Graduation: 39-42 credits*
Comprehensive Proposal: Student Requirements

• Additional Graduation Requirements:
  – 2 STEM-enhanced courses (within major or otherwise)
  – 2 communication-enhanced courses (within major or otherwise)
  – Capstone course or equivalent experience (within major)
Communication-Enhanced Courses

• Emphasize both oral and written communication
• At the intermediate or advanced level to promote the scaffolding of these skills (developed in the 4-credit Composition class)
• This would replace the current WI requirement
• Classes would be capped at 20 like current writing-intensive courses are to allow time for grading of written assignments as well as time for oral presentations and activities.
What about Comp 1 and 2?

• The 4 credit Composition course would NOT be either Comp 1 or Comp 2. It would be revamped to include the most critical foundation-level content.

• Learning outcomes for Comp 1 & 2 that are not met in the new Composition course would be met either:
  – In FYS
  – In the scaffolded courses emphasizing writing

• Intent: Give students instruction and practice with writing in multiple courses throughout their time at New Paltz.
FYS Nuts and Bolts

• 20 students/section: 55 sections/year, split equally between fall and spring

• Collaboratively taught: 1 faculty member per section, but multiple sections meet jointly every other week (with all involved faculty co-teaching); faculty members “switch” sections for the day at least twice/semester

• 2-3 common “texts” (learning objects) around 1 common theme, but individual professors supplement with additional texts of their choice

• Co-curricular components related to core texts:
  – General campus lectures
  – Monthly faculty seminars
Department & Faculty Responsibilities

- Identify or develop a capstone course or other capstone experience
- Consider how current course offerings either fit or could be amended to fit STEM- and Communication-enhanced course; submit course paperwork
- Reexamine DIVR courses for dual inclusion into another GE category
- Consider teaching the FYS and participating in the Liberal Education professional development seminar
  - 1st-time development of a FYS course compensated like development of online courses
Liberal Education Faculty Development Seminar

• **Avenue:** a 2-week, full-time program held during the summer intersession
  – Faculty participation is voluntary
  – Faculty will receive a stipend for their time

• **Goals:**
  – Enhance the quality of teaching on our campus
  – Increase faculty engagement with liberal education principles
  – Provide an avenue for faculty to make connections across disciplines and learn about teaching approaches taken by faculty outside their field
Liberal Education Faculty Development Seminar

• Content:
  – Oral and written communication skills
  – Experiential learning integration into curriculum
  – STEM-enhanced courses
  – Active & creative learning
  – Critical thinking & problem-solving
  – Presenting opportunities for ethical reflection

• Objectives:
  – Faculty will gain an understanding of the goals and ideals of liberal education from readings, discussions with colleagues, and presentations by experts
  – Faculty will begin constructing a tool-chest of in-class exercises and graded assignments that reflect liberal education principles
  – Faculty will revise at least one syllabus from an existing course
Other Resources Needed

• 55 faculty/year to teach FYS (ultimately Deans’ responsibility)
• FYS coordinator
• Compensation for faculty developing first-time FYS courses and participating in the Liberal Education development seminar
• More FLNG course offerings (note that overall need for GE courses would decrease)
• Liberal Education Board (would replace Writing Board)
The Liberal Education Board would need to be well versed in the language, goals, and practices of promoting liberal education across the campus. The initial composition of this board will come from the first cohort of those who went through the Liberal Education summer seminar.

Duties:
- Oversee certification of both STEM and communication-enhanced courses
- Select the theme and readings for the FYS
- Driving force behind promoting and developing a culture of liberal education across campus
Alignment with the original proposals voted on by the faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Proposal, May 2012</th>
<th>This proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year Seminar</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Knowledge</td>
<td>2 semester requirement rather than requiring all students to meet intermediate-level proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>Achieved in principle; no mandated learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral and Written Communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge and Engagement</td>
<td>Not mandated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone</td>
<td>✓</td>
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How to stay informed and give feedback

• Liberal Education Committee webpage: http://www.newpaltz.edu/lec

• Ways to voice your opinions:
  – Forum discussions
  – Comments link on our webpage
  – Contact your representative
DISCUSSION