LIBERAL EDUCATION
A draft proposal

Comprehensive Proposal
Why “Liberal Education” rather than GE4?

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

• 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
• 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.

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

Composition 1 course (4 credits)
Math 1 course (3-4 credits)
Natural Science (NSCI) 1 course (3-4 credits)
Foreign Language (FLNG) 2 courses in same language (6-8)
4-5 more courses in different GE categories below, one of which must meet the Diversity requirement

ARTS
HUM
SSCI
USST
WEST
WORLD

4-5 courses (12-16 credits)

Total GE Credits 30-32 credits
First Year Seminar 3 credits
Total Required Credits 33-35 credits

* 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 \textit{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)
• Would replace the current WI requirement
• At the discretion of departments, classes would be capped at 20 like current writing-intensive courses
STEM-Enhanced Courses

• Includes significant content or exploration of STEM topics
• Provides *regular opportunities* for students to deepen their understanding of STEM processes as well as skills in application
What about Comp 1 and 2?

• The 4 credit Composition course (Eng120) 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.

• Eng110: Intro to Composition (3 credits):
  – An option for students who need extra preparation before Eng120
  – Transfer credit for Comp 1
  – Does not meet graduation requirement, but counts toward 120 credits
FYS Nuts and Bolts

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

• Collaboratively taught:
  – 1 faculty member per section
  – Multiple sections meet jointly every other week
  – 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
Comprehensive Proposal: Student Requirements

Composition
Math
Natural Science (NSCI)
Foreign Language (FLNG)

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Optional LE Focus Tracks

• Have several themed topics, each with a list of GE courses relating to that focus
  – Example tracks: Leadership, Multiculturalism and Global Affairs, Sustainability

• If students take X courses within a given track, they get an acknowledgment of that on their transcript
  – Show students that their GE courses are related to both each other and the students’ interests
  – A way for departments to encourage students to take their GE courses
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 be STEM- and Communication-enhanced courses; 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
Liberal Education Faculty Development Seminar

• Avenue: a 2-week, full-time program held during the summer or winter intersession
  – Participation is voluntary
  – Stipends (~$2000) will be provided

• Goals:
  – Enhance the quality of teaching
  – Increase faculty engagement with liberal education principles
  – Facilitate pedagogical dialogues across campus
Liberal Education Faculty Development Seminar

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

• Objectives:
  – Gain an understanding of liberal education from readings, discussions with colleagues, and presentations by experts
  – Develop a tool-chest of in-class exercises and assignments
  – Revise a syllabus from an existing course
Other Resources Needed

- 55 faculty/year to teach FYS (ultimately Deans’ responsibility)
- Compensation for participating in the Liberal Education development seminar and developing first-time FYS courses
- More FLNG course offerings (note that overall need for GE courses would decrease)
- More MATH course offerings
- Liberal Education Board (would replace Writing Board)
- FYS coordinator (chosen by LE Board)
Liberal Education Board

- Oversee certification of both STEM- and communication-enhanced courses
- Select the theme and readings for the FYS
- Driving force behind developing a culture of liberal education across campus
- First group elected to this board will be given priority placement in the first Liberal Education faculty development seminar
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>
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<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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The next steps

• Liberal Education Committee webpage: http://www.newpaltz.edu/lec
  – Draft proposal, FAQ, and appendices are posted
  – Use the comments link (or contact your representatives)

• Visiting department/school meetings to answer questions and solicit feedback

• LEC will consider this feedback as we revise the draft proposal

• March 7 faculty meeting slated for discussion on the proposal; vote on/before the May meeting