

The following statement is an advisory statement to the College of Arts and Sciences faculty vote in favor of parts 1 and 2 of the proposed General Education program (ACE) at its meeting on December 7, 2006. It reflects the conversation and sentiments expressed at that meeting.

The faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences appreciates the efforts of the GEAC in undertaking to develop a new General Education program for the University. We understand the challenges that go into such an endeavor. As the college most involved in the General Education program of the University, we wish to raise several concerns about the proposed ACE program, and request that the GEAC take these concerns most seriously.

A General Education program is by its very nature a statement on behalf of the faculty of a university on what is intellectually essential in the education of every student who matriculates at that university. As such, the primary goal should be to deliver to every student a sound educational basis on which they can choose their majors, their careers, and build their life's work. We feel that the ACE program, as it is currently conceived, lacks several primary elements for such a sound education program.

1. We are dismayed that as the ACE program now stands it would be possible for a student to graduate from the University without having had any course that deals with history in any form. We firmly request that the GEAC require a course with an historical perspective in its outcomes. If that proves completely impossible, then it would be acceptable to change the structural criteria so that a course with an historical perspective is required among the present outcomes.

2. We believe that college students today require several intensive writing experiences in order learn to write clearly and elegantly. We understand that the ACE program requires only one course with an intensive writing component. We request that this requirement be raised to five courses out of the ten ACE courses. This is an additional structural criterion; such courses could be indicated by a "W" designation in the ACE course list. Thus, every student would have five "W" courses on his or her ACE courses. This five course requirement would give the students sufficient writing experience.

3. We find the conceptualization of outcome #2 difficult to understand. We would like to see three changes made.

a) The "problem-solving teams" option should include both "leading" and "participating." Learning to lead teams is a critical skill.

b) We recommend deleting the phrase "with reporting responsibility" as too directive and thus inappropriate for a general statement of learning outcomes.

c) An option focused on the "repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships" should be added. Our stakeholders, when using the term "communication skills," are in large measure referring to just these skills.

In addition to these changes to the existing proposals, we would like to suggest the following items for subsequent proposals.

1. Create clear and rigorous guidelines for each outcome, so that every course proposed will do precisely what is desired by the ACE program.

2. Propose a process of rigorous and continuous (but not burdensome) review of the courses in the ACE program, to ensure that they continue to meet the desired outcomes of the program. We do not believe that courses now part of the ES/IS General Studies program should be grandfathered into the ACE program unless they go through this rigorous process of review. This will mean that it will take longer to implement the new program, but we believe the delay will be worth it.