

# **GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT DU:** **Governance and Additional Comments**

**February 20, 2009**

This proposed curriculum reduces the number of overall credits that the typical University of Denver undergraduate student must complete in general education, while building in flexibility for departments, programs, and divisions. The proposed curriculum builds on the strengths of the current curriculum, and ties each part of the curriculum together as a whole.

In this document, the General Education Review Committee further explains the new structure we are proposing and the primary governance of the proposed curriculum (and each section of the curriculum: other Divisions and Schools of the University providing courses in each area of the curriculum will be invited to participate in that area's governance as appropriate). At the end of the document is a mapping of the proposed curriculum onto the University of Denver's Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes.

## **PRIMARY DIVISIONAL OR PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROPOSED CURRICULUM:**

<b>AREAS OF INQUIRY → EXPERIENCES ↓</b>	<b>The Natural &amp; Physical World</b>	<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>
<b>First-Year Seminar</b>	<b>FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COMMITTEE</b> 1 course (4 credits)	
<b>Writing &amp; Rhetoric</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY WRITING PROGRAM</b> 2 courses (8 credits)	
<b>Language</b>	<b>DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES</b> (through the Department of Languages and Literatures) 1-3 courses (4-12 credits)	
<b>Ways of Knowing: Analytical Inquiry</b>	<b>DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE</b> (through the Departments of Mathematics and of Computer Science) 1 course (4 credits)	<b>DIVISION OF ARTS &amp; HUMANITIES</b> 2 courses (8 credits)
<b>Ways of Knowing: Scientific Inquiry</b>	<b>DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS</b> 3 courses (12 credits)	<b>DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES</b> 2 courses (8 credits)
<b>Advanced Seminar</b>	<b>ADVANCED SEMINAR COMMITTEE</b> 1 writing-intensive course (4 credits)	

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

- Proposed language requirement: Students must either complete the first-year sequence in a language, *or*, if they have tested higher than the first-year level in a language, one quarter in that language (by taking the course they tested into; they may also choose to start a new language and complete the first-year sequence).
- Proposed delivery of General Education courses in AHSS: Courses may be departmental courses that meet the stated outcomes for the primary equivalent of the AHUM and SOCS areas. Students may apply 1 course (4 credits) per major/minor program to partially satisfy both major/minor and General Education requirements as appropriate, and if that course is listed as a course meeting the outcomes of a section of the General Education requirements.
- Proposed upper-level general education curriculum: The number of required courses is reduced from three to one writing-intensive course, which must be taken at DU. Specific themes and the requirement for interdisciplinarity are eliminated, but the courses explicitly require attention to multiple perspectives on the course topic(s). Students must have completed all other General Education requirements before taking the Advanced Seminar.
- The General Education Central Committee, as well as divisions, departments, and programs, are encouraged to take the opportunity provided by the proposed new general education requirements to re-examine questions of academic exceptions, AP and IB credit, and transfer credits as appropriate.
- The Governance structure may change if there is a reorganization of divisions and departments at the University.

## **GOVERNANCE OF EACH SECTION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The General Education Curriculum at the University of Denver is governed by the faculty of the University of Denver. Departments, programs, and committees are empowered to select the courses that they decide are suitable for the Curriculum, and, working with the Office of Academic Assessment, are responsible for making certain that these courses are appropriate for the Curriculum in terms of content, outcomes, and rigor. Again working with the Office of Academic Assessment, these units are also charged with assessing their courses as part of the overall assessment of the Curriculum, in order to ensure on-going relevance, continuous oversight, and improvement when necessary. Each area's governance (and some additional comments about the courses) is listed below.

### **Governance of the General Education Curriculum at the University of Denver:**

#### **GENERAL EDUCATION CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

A General Education Central Committee, consisting of members responsible for curriculum in the various undergraduate divisions, will form a group that will communicate the policies and goals of the General Education Curriculum of the University of Denver as a whole. The General Education Central Committee, in conjunction with the Registrar, the deans and other appropriate campus officers, is charged with capacity planning and coordination of the curriculum. Responsibility for determining appropriate courses and apportioning seats to meet major, minor and General Education curricular needs lies with departments and programs with approval of the dean.

The General Education Central Committee is responsible for making the various elements of the Curriculum function together as a cohesive whole, and for formulating the overall assessment of the Curriculum. This Committee is the clearinghouse for all courses in the General Education Curriculum: for example, all courses intended to satisfy the Ways of Knowing portion of the Curriculum are first sent to the Committee so that it can then forward the courses to the appropriate divisions for approval.

This Committee is composed of one Associate Dean, or equivalent, chosen by the Dean of each undergraduate division at the University of Denver. Deans should appoint those individuals who are already responsible for the curricular oversight for their respective divisions. There will also be one representative from the Office of Academic Assessment on the Committee. The group will be chaired by a representative chosen by the Office of the Provost, who may be one of the representatives listed above. The General Education Central Committee may decide how it wishes to function with respect to procedures and votes, and will consult with other units providing the General Education Curriculum at the University as needed, including to periodically review the Curriculum's learning outcomes in order to make certain that they are effective.

### **Governance of General Education Areas:**

#### **FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS:**

Oversight of the First-Year Seminar program resides with the First-Year Seminar Committee, which is composed of two representatives each from the divisions of AH, SS, and NSM, and two ex officio members, one from the University Writing Program and one Provost Office appointee, who is primarily responsible for this program and reports on it to the Office of the Provost.

#### **WRITING AND RESEARCH:**

The WRIT 1122 and WRIT 1133 sequence of courses is offered through the Writing Program of the University of Denver. Responsibility for this area lies with the Division of Arts and Humanities.

**LANGUAGE:**

These courses are fulfilled under the auspices of the Department of Languages and Literatures, which also approves alternative experiences (such as courses taken while studying abroad). Responsibility for this area lies with the Division of Arts and Humanities.

**WAYS OF KNOWING****Analytical Inquiry and The Natural & Physical World:**

This area corresponds to courses that use rigorous mathematical or computational formalisms to a variety of application areas from business calculus to computer animation. Intentionally this covers all existing MATC objectives. In addition, it acknowledges the importance of formal computational approaches as a means of analytic inquiry. These courses are fulfilled under the auspices of the Departments of Mathematics and of Computer Science. Responsibility for this area lies with the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

**Analytical Inquiry and Society & Culture:**

This area corresponds mostly to courses offered by departments in the Division of Arts and Humanities, such as Art and Art History, English, History, Languages and Literatures, Music, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theatre, although faculty in other departments may also offer courses that meet the area's learning outcomes. Oversight of these courses lies with the Division of Arts and Humanities, with the participation of any other Divisions or Schools offering courses in this area. Students take courses in two different disciplines, so that they are exposed to different cultural content and analytical techniques. These courses should be taught by full-time appointed faculty.

**Scientific Inquiry and The Natural & Physical World:**

These courses are for the most part taught by faculty in Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Geography, and Engineering. These course sequences are managed by the division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, with the participation of any other Divisions or Schools offering courses in this area. The learning experience should be structured in such a way that it helps students to gain a working understanding of the processes and skills that are employed in scientific inquiry and to develop an appreciation for the ethical norms that foster good science and technology. These include concepts of empiricism, testability, verification, skepticism, independent confirmation, uncertainty, and the social implications of the peer review process. The experience should seek to advance skills for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of scientific investigation. Examples include evaluation of study design, data quality and quantity, the use and misuse of descriptive statistics, and the role of judgment and perception of risk in evaluating scientific evidence and interpretation. The experience also seeks to foster communication skills about science and the implications of scientific and technological discoveries for societal choices. It should challenge students to develop learning and study skills, and foster a life-long desire for learning about new frontiers of scientific knowledge that inform choices for healthy living and educate civic and social responsibilities. These courses should be taught by full-time appointed faculty.

**Scientific Inquiry and Society & Culture:**

These courses are typically taught as introductory courses in the Division of Social Sciences, although other courses may be offered if they are taught from a social science perspective and address the core learning outcomes. Oversight for these courses lies with the Division of Social Sciences, with the participation of any other Divisions or Schools offering courses in this area. Students take courses in two disciplines, so that they are exposed to differing approaches and levels of analysis. These courses should be taught by full-time appointed faculty.

**ADVANCED SEMINARS:**

These courses are senior-level (preferred) or junior-level four-credit writing intensive experiences that synthesize and develop upon the learning outcomes the students will have demonstrated during their first two or three years at DU. This fusion of learning styles and academic areas is one of the prime components in developing reflective judgment at the undergraduate level. Reflective judgment

requires the development of reasoning skills where solutions for complex problems must be constructed by weighing conflicting evidence and opinion and is linked to the application of knowledge and skills to new settings and complex problems. These courses are taught by appointed faculty, are designed for non-majors, and are not housed within the majors. These courses are capped at 15 students, must be taken at the University of Denver, and can only be taken once the other General Education requirements have been completed. Topics for the courses are open but each course must have appropriate learning outcomes. Oversight for the Advanced Seminars resides in the ASEM Committee; the General Education Central Committee will compose the ASEM Committee yearly with at least one faculty member from each division or school providing courses in the curriculum.

## MAPPING OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER'S UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

	FSEM	WRIT	LANG	WAYS OF KNOWING				ASEM
				Analytical Inquiry & The Natural and Physical World	Scientific Inquiry & The Natural and Physical World	Analytical Inquiry & Society and Culture	Scientific Inquiry & Society and Culture	
Epistemology & Inquiry		x	x	X	X	X	X	X
Quantitative Reasoning	x			X	X		x	x
Communication	x	X	X			X	X	X
Intellectual Engagement & Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Engagement w/ Human Diversity	x		X			x	x	x
Community Engagement	x	x	x			x	x	x
Disciplinary Knowledge & Practice	x	X	x	X	X	X	X	

Note: Large **X**'s mean that the courses always address those outcomes. Small x's mean that the courses may do so, as applicable.