

**Question 1: Do you believe General Education in its current form at the College is effective in meeting the AAC&U's Learning Outcomes? If not, please identify ways in which you think General Education could meet these outcomes more effectively.**

## **ARTS MANAGEMENT**

The AAC&U's Learning Outcomes set appropriately high standards. The majority of students that take arts management courses or major in arts management have not achieved these standards. We find that the majority of our students have not yet developed strong analytical and written and verbal communication skills. In addition their ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one situation to another and their research skills are weak.

Our faculty recommends that the current Written Communications general education expectations listed under the English 101-102 requirement should be integrated, where appropriate, into the general education requirements for Social Science, Humanities and History to insure that courses in these areas are helping students develop written communication skills.

In addition we recommend that all students be required to take six hours of Communications Department general education courses to increase their verbal communications skills. We find that junior and seniors in arts management, who have not had either communication or theater classes have had little experience giving verbal presentations. Therefore they don't know what to include in the presentation and are nervous about speaking in front of the class. It is vital that students learn the skills necessary to analyze information, organize their thoughts and create visuals for public presentations, and also be able to stand in front of a class and present the material with confidence. These skills and abilities would enhance learning and class participation in higher-level courses.

## **CHEMISTRY:**

Two comments about the AAC&U's Learning Outcomes:

First, the outcomes address the entire four year experience and not just the General Education requirements. The outcomes demand too much from just the Gen Ed courses and cannot be accomplished *in toto* by Gen Ed. The goals in and of themselves, if solely for Gen Ed, are overambitious. To wit, how possibly could one develop a "deep understanding" (goal 2) within the context of a single Gen Ed offering; this is best left to the major. It may be that the question posed is mal-phrased.

Second, while noble, the fourth goal addressing a "proactive sense of responsibility" is biased towards a particular philosophy. Our goal, much to the students' oftentimes

chagrin, is to make them “thinkers.” We are not to teach them to think the way that we think, but to teach them to think for themselves. This goal is too “politically correct.”

## COMMUNICATIONS

*No, we do not.* Following our review of the full 2002 AAC&U report (and the summary of the report you provided to us), we will share three specific concerns.

One AAC&U outcome identifies a desire for “strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills— achieved and demonstrated through learning in a range of fields, settings, and media, and through advanced studies in one or more areas of concentration.” We can identify in the current College of Charleston general education curriculum a solid commitment to analytical skills, a less solid but still substantial commitment to quantitative skills, and a sporadic commitment to information skills. The commitment to communication skills is in our judgment embarrassingly thin. Concerning written communication, we applaud the work of our colleagues in the Department of English in the ENGL 101 and 102 courses, but no three- or six-hour course requirement should be expected by itself to develop written communication competencies. In our opinion the current curriculum design places our colleagues in English in the untenable position of being asked to “fix” students who come to the college without the necessary college-level writing competences. Not surprisingly, the English faculty are then (quite unfairly) blamed when those same students, sometimes years later, are not fully formed and proficient writers. We believe that emphasis on written communication should be woven through the curriculum in the same way that analytical skills appear to be, and there should be some formal mechanism to assure that all undergraduate students have substantial writing and revision opportunities in other general education courses. The same formal mechanisms ideally should exist to require such opportunities in the student’s major program of study as well, given the AAC&U emphasis on these outcomes as ideally transcending the boundary between general education and undergraduate major.

The communication discipline is in part the product of an ancient research and teaching tradition in speech and orality, and we are compelled to note another serious deficiency in the current general education curriculum. While written communication at least receives substantive curricular attention at the College of Charleston, oral communication is almost ignored in the 1998 goals-and-objectives document, other than the desire that students be able to “communicate statistical conclusions orally and in writing” and that students be able to speak the spoken languages they study. There are no required general education courses designed to provide systematic and substantive instruction in oral communication. Further, there is no formal mechanism guaranteeing that students will have significant speaking opportunities (with feedback on oral performance) in their general education and/or major courses. The combination of oral communication instruction *and* opportunities for further development of those oral communication competencies in other general education courses ideally would be features of a revised general education curriculum.

A second AAC&U outcome emphasizes concepts and modes of inquiry in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts. Where the humanities and social sciences are concerned, the current general education curriculum provides an oddly inconsistent approach to the identification of suitable courses in those distributions. As members of your committee are aware, humanities courses presently are identified on a course-by-course basis, while social science courses are assumed to be the products of a limited number of disciplines. Beyond the obvious inconsistency of this approach, we believe the distinction between the humanities and social sciences is not so tidy or easily made. Humanists have been known to teach in political science and psychology departments, for example; social scientists have worked in English departments. Our own department employs both humanists and social scientists, as our discipline for decades has straddled the humanities-social sciences distinction.

At a minimum, we would recommend that all courses fulfilling general education requirements be individually approved as having the appropriate content. Doing so would bring some measure of consistency to the design and implementation of the general education curriculum. Doing so also would expand the possibilities for course offerings in the social sciences, as many courses taught in the School of Education and the School of Business and Economics, for example, are presently excluded from the general education curriculum despite their self-evident grounding in social-scientific research traditions.

A third AAC&U objective addresses “forms of learning that connect knowledge, skills, values, and public action.” At many universities such forms of learning include service learning, internships, and other forms of experiential education. We applaud the support given at the College of Charleston to service-learning courses and internship programs, but we also note that experiential education is not integrated into or required in the general education experience of College of Charleston students. This seems a deficiency of our current general education curriculum.

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE**

The Computer Science Department feels that the current general education requirements are inadequate to address the growing need for students to be prepared to handle an increasing flow of data into their professional and personal lives. We have attached an accompanying proposal to add some objectives to address this issue.

Beyond this, the department is generally satisfied with the current distribution of requirements in principle, but feels that better oversight should be exercised over the implementation of these requirements. In particular, the choices of courses that students have for satisfying these requirements should be reviewed to be sure that they are appropriate for meeting the intent of their associated requirement.

## ENGLISH

Some of the AAC& U outcomes are being addressed well now. Some skills in written and oral communication and in analytical thinking are required of students in every course they take. The current Gen Ed course requirements also ensure that students use these skills in a variety of disciplines. Since these are usually entry-level courses, students are not required to exhibit very *advanced* skills in much of their Gen Ed coursework; they reach that level of skill in the coursework they do in their major. Another outcome—“familiarity with the inquiry practices that explore the natural, social, and cultural realms” is well addressed through our current Gen Ed requirements because the coursework must be in several disciplines.

“Intercultural knowledge and collaborative problem-solving skills” are often the *result* of courses students take in the Gen Ed curriculum, but there is nothing in the curriculum now that actually *requires* students to achieve these outcomes. To insure that students acquire this kind of knowledge and these kinds of skills, the College could require students to complete either courses or other experiences (internships, travel abroad) that develop this outcome a little more intentionally. Even a brief experience devoted to intercultural knowledge could heighten students’ awareness of cultural diversity, and make them more receptive to subsequent coursework that addressed such topics.

The last two outcomes (civic and personal responsibility, mature habits of mind/ability to see connections) are certainly encouraged by many of the Gen Ed courses, but there is nothing in the current setup that *insures* that students will grow in their ability to do these things. Coursework in every major should be designed to promote these outcomes: to develop students’ intellectual maturity and their appreciation for the interconnectedness of all human activity. If the curriculum of a major does not help its students see the value of other disciplines besides itself, there is more of a chance that those students will not value the Gen Ed coursework they have done, or see its relevance to their own studies and futures.

Such intellectual and cognitive development is recursive, so it must be reinforced over time rather than over a single semester. The effects of the current Gen Ed curriculum could be more powerful if the students’ education were sequenced more carefully, so that students were frequently reminded of the connections between the courses they were taking, and were invited to use the skills they develop in one course in another course. It would also be helpful if the major coursework, or some other aspect of students’ experience in the major, made more explicit reference to the skills and knowledge base students are gaining in the Gen Ed courses. This might take the form of interdisciplinary requirements in the major, or internships or other experiences which asked students to use skills and knowledge from several courses. Beginning courses in the major could help here by including some attention to the nature of this discipline and how it is different from and similar to other disciplines. The majors’ capstone experience should include not only high-level work in the discipline, but some means of connecting this work to other courses and to the students’ lives beyond the classroom.

## **HISPANIC STUDIES**

We believe that what is in place, theoretically, meets the AAC&U's Learning Outcomes. Essential to all programs is a capstone experience during the senior year, whether a senior thesis, service learning, or an exit exam measuring existing skills. Hispanic Studies has implemented all three of these experiences in some form and continues to do so.

We believe that is essential that all programs foster the ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another. This can only be achieved by linking disciplines and creating interdisciplinary opportunities for students to make use of their skills in one area to another.

In Languages, for example, the ability to transfer language skills to the study of other disciplines is an important goal. We provide some of those opportunities in our own department through our curriculum, but would welcome other departments' providing instruction and instructional opportunities in Spanish (or languages other than English).

We strongly recommend and support an interdisciplinary capstone experience of some sort in all departments for the purpose of linking disciplines across the curriculum.

## **HISTORY**

On the whole, the General Education curriculum introduces students to the analytical, communication, information and quantitative skills and knowledge identified in the AAAC&U statement of outcomes. To their credit, departments which are directly responsible for General Education do carefully identify the goals and objectives of their particular courses. We would like to see greater dialogue and collaboration among departments who teach General Education courses. There need to be more planned opportunities for departments to share their General Education course goals and objectives. We want students to begin to integrate what they have learned, to make connections among disciplines, and to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained in each discipline. Many students do not understand the relationship between the General Education curriculum and a liberal arts and sciences education. Students too often see the General Education curriculum as a disconnected series of hurdles to be jumped.

## **MATHEMATICS**

**Overall, the answer is yes, however there is room for improvement.**

- strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills— achieved and demonstrated through learning in a range of fields, settings, and media, and through advanced studies in one or more areas of concentration;

**The College's current general education distribution model and program majors/minors appear to meet this aim. We would like to see, where possible, courses across the curriculum (in students' majors or other parts of general education) build more on the analytical and quantitative skills students gain in their general education math courses. For example, PSYC 211, Psychological Statistics, could build on Math 104, Elementary Statistics, or Math 250, Statistical Methods I, if psychology majors were required to take one of those courses first.**

- deep understanding of and hands-on experience with the inquiry practices of disciplines that explore the natural, social, and cultural realms—achieved and demonstrated through studies that build conceptual knowledge by engaging learners in concepts and modes of inquiry that are basic to the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts;

**The current general education distribution requirement appears to satisfy the breadth of this aim.**

**Depth is a function of required sequences (in a foreign language and a lab science) as well as content, pedagogy, and rigor in all of our courses. Maintaining and enhancing our expectations of students at all levels would be a worthy focus as we examine General Education at the College.**

- intercultural knowledge and collaborative problem-solving skills—achieved and demonstrated in a variety of collaborative contexts (classroom, community-based, international, and online) that prepare students both for democratic citizenship and for work;

**These aims are indirectly met by the College's General Education requirements and program majors/minors. Through our enhanced travel abroad programs and the "Internationalizing the Curriculum" efforts of the past decade, part of this aim appears to be met for a portion of our students. Based on the current College goals for our foreign language requirements, this aim is partially achieved through that requirement also. Collaborative problem solving is a pedagogical technique used by many of our instructors. It is often used as well in community-based service learning courses, which are becoming increasingly available at the College.**

- a proactive sense of responsibility for individual, civic, and social choices—achieved and demonstrated through forms of learning that connect knowledge, skills, values, and public action, and through reflection on students' own roles and responsibilities in social and civic contexts;

**This aim is substantially addressed in many of our social science and humanities courses. Examples include POLS 102, Contemporary Political Issues, and ethics courses in PHIL. This aim would also appear to be**

**addressed by community-based service learning courses.**

- habits of mind that foster integrative thinking and the ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another—achieved and demonstrated through advanced research and/or creative projects in which students take the primary responsibility for framing questions, carrying out an analysis, and producing work of substantial complexity and quality.

**Currently, requirements for our mathematics majors appear to address this aim more effectively than the general education requirements because of our Capstone Experience requirement (which is often satisfied with an undergraduate research experience) and the structured interdependency of our courses. We have a similar position on the Discovery Informatics major.**

## **MUSIC**

We believe that the General Education Curriculum in its current form at the College is effective in meeting the AAC&U's Learning Outcomes in that it offers students the opportunity to achieve all five of the outcomes identified in the AAC&U's report. We recognize that this opportunity is not a guarantee in the same way that a student is not guaranteed a diploma simply by registering. We believe that the “learning in a range of fields,” referred to in the very first AAC&U outcome, is not only one of our most important goals, but one that is insured in our present General Education Curriculum. Additionally, we appreciate the flexibility in choice that students have under the current system. This flexibility helps our institution attract and retain a diverse student body.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The College's current system of General Education seems especially effective at meeting outcomes (1) and (2). In our current system, students are asked to take a variety of courses distributed throughout different disciplines. This has two main results. First, students are necessarily exposed to different “inquiry practices,” and cannot avoid exploring each of the “natural, social, and cultural realms,” just as outcome (2) requires. Second, students are necessarily enrolled in classes that have no direct connection to their major fields or to their specific career objectives. Since the faculty teaching these classes are fully aware of this, the focus of these classes must be “general analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills” as much or more than any specific disciplinary content.

With respect to outcomes (3)-(5), however, things are less clear. Outcome (5) stresses advanced research and creative projects, which in our current curriculum are standardly pursued in upper-level classes within a student's major. In this sense our current General Education curriculum tends to ignore (5), but it is not clear that this is in any way inappropriate. General Education classes in different fields, however, do allow

students to “transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another,” e.g. by placing science majors in humanities classes, and vice versa.

Outcome (4) stresses individual and civic responsibilities, and that focus seems to imply a specific content that is not necessarily required in our current system. This outcome is especially well served by many of the General Education courses offered in Philosophy, which tend to stress ethics and values, and also by many courses in other disciplines. But it is less clear that students who elect other courses to fulfill their General Education courses are pushed to meet this outcome. (A stress on this outcome would suggest the need for something like Harvard’s “moral reasoning” requirement.)

Outcome (3) seems like two different outcomes: it is not clear that there is any special connection between “intercultural knowledge” and “collaborative problem-solving skills.” A course focused on a single culture might force students to do valuable collaborative work, and a course that requires cross-cultural comparison might require only individual papers and tests. Our current system does go some distance toward the first outcome, given the language requirement and the World History option within the history requirement. The second outcome is now more often addressed by smaller classes within a student’s major, which provide better settings for organizing collaborative work.

## **PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY**

We see no compelling reason to increase the course requirements in general education, which would come at the expense of fulfilling major requirements, or electives for students in any major. However, any weakness in the breadth of our general education is certainly in the science and math component. Adding a third semester of science, with or without a lab component would be advisable in our technical society because the balance of science vs. non-science courses taken by science and non-science majors does not appear to reflect and serve the increasingly technical nature of our society.

## **POLITICAL SCIENCE**

General Education at the College has many deficiencies, including:

- Too often, students report that the coursework duplicates material they were supposed to have learned in high school. We have the sense that students treat general education courses (particularly in the first semester) as if it was high school and therefore the level of effort is quite low (in part because it is our perception that in many departments, the level of expectation and challenge is quite low). We have the sense that students treat general education like a punch-card—something to do quickly and something to “get out of the way” and that it fails to promote an academically serious campus climate.

- Too often, general education courses seem focused on preparing students for advanced coursework in a major field of study. Whether these courses focus on “foundational content” or “skill building” this is *not* the same as cultivating a liberally educated person.

The goal of a liberal education has to include all 5 of the AAC&U goals. In our current program, most of the focus is on goal 1 (communication, and information skills). Goal #2 (conceptual knowledge engaging learners in concepts and models of inquiry that are basic to the natural sciences, humanities, and arts) is often not met either because: (a) the account of models of inquiry is restricted to a particular field of study or (b) because modes of inquiry are not adequately discussed, in favor of incorporating more content so the student’s knowledge base in a particular field is expanded. Goal 3 (intercultural knowledge and collaborative problem-solving skills achieved and demonstrated in a variety of collaborative contexts) is actually two goals: intercultural understanding and collaborative learning practices which are not necessarily connected. Moreover, the distributional requirement does little to ensure “intercultural knowledge. Goal 4 (a proactive sense of responsibility for individual, civic, and social choices) is not explicit enough in Gen Ed requirements. Finally, the first part of goal 5 (habits of mind that foster integrative thinking and the ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another) seems to require a far more explicit interdisciplinary requirement and the second part (which requires that these skills be “achieved and demonstrated through advanced research”) isn’t appropriate for general education but instead relates to advanced learning within a discipline.

- The distributional requirements can be met with such a broad array of courses, few of which are designed with the goals of a liberal education in mind. Often they serve as introductions to a field of study, or they can be quite specialized and narrow in focus. While we have not explicitly designed our 100 level courses as Gen Ed. Classes (we are not a service Department and we have a growing number of majors) these 100 level POLS classes (American Government, Contemporary Political Issues, World Politics, and World Regional Geography) are often taken by students as General Education Social Science courses and they are likely to achieve at least three if not four of the stated goals (skill acquisition, inquiry practice, intercultural knowledge, responsibility/social action). The fact is, however, that students can take *any* Political Science course and have it count towards their General Education requirement, whether or not it serves the goals of a liberal education.
- It is possible for students to complete the General Education requirements without encountering a course that focuses on the non-Western world.

This is simply wrong, any serious attempt to provide a liberal education has to remedy this in some way.

## **PSYCHOLOGY**

Some members of the department stated that they believed that General Education in its current form is effective in meeting AAC&U's Learning Outcomes. However, others made the following observations:

### **Outcome #1**

Strong analytical skills are acquired thru math and science courses.

“Communication” should be more clearly defined. There is no public speaking requirement, so there is no guarantee for public speaking experience per se. However, it is true that communication skills are acquired thru English courses ( written communication) and somewhat in foreign language courses ( oral communication and understanding the importance and value of communication).

Quantitative skills are acquired thru required math courses.

Information skills, meaning technological skills, are not currently addressed by a course in the GenEd curriculum, although indirectly assumed thru GenEd course assignments requiring use of the library and such technology resources.

### **Outcome #2**

In the natural sciences, the required experiences are being gained thru labs associated with the required courses. In the social sciences, these experiences are not guaranteed. These skills are more likely to be acquired if the students choose to take courses with labs or choose to participate in ongoing research.

For the humanities and arts, students get elective credit if they choose to take a “hands on” course in art. We cannot judge whether there a such “hands on” experiences required by the GenEd curriculum.

### **Outcome #3**

The GenEd curriculum does not guarantee experience with intercultural knowledge and collaborative problem solving skills, although language courses provide introductory exposure to non-native cultural experiences .Collaborative work is conceivably achieved in lab courses within the natural sciences. Collaborative group work is conceivable experienced in foreign language courses in which requires skilled communication of ideas and concepts. In the opinion of some faculty group work may be further encouraged within GenEd courses, but it may take a paradigm shift to incorporate grading practices and course design that emphasized and reinforced “true” group work.

#### Outcome #4

The current GenEd curriculum does not guarantee that a student will gain a “proactive sense of responsibility for individual, civic and social choices.”. Service learning courses would address this goal, but they are not required.

#### Outcome #5

The current GenEd curriculum does not guarantee that a student will gain these advanced research skills. These outcomes should be achieved thru individual majors ( e.g., capstone courses and independent research experiences).

Although the GenEd curriculum does not guarantee that all of these student outcomes will be realized, the individual majors ( including our own) do contribute to many of these aims. Further, many of these desired outcomes are achieved within individual courses. For example, Goal #3 ( intercultural knowledge) is easily incorporated into psychology courses by examining topics and concepts from a multicultural perspective. Our major provides considerable experience in critical thinking ( research methods, reading and critiquing research), communication ( writing and presenting for class or for research purposes), quantitative ( statistical analyses) and information technology ( use of library/online journals/databases for research purposes, word processing, mastery of SPSS).

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

- *Aim One: "strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills—achieved and demonstrated through learning in a range of fields, settings, and media*

**Reply:** Analysis, communication skills, and information gathering are part of the Gen Ed program, and are reinforced in most upper-level humanities courses; quantitative skills are addressed primarily by the Math and Science requirements, possibly in some social science courses as well.

*and through advanced studies in one or more areas of concentration"*

Gen Ed does not meet this goal, nor should it. This is the goal of the major and Minor, particularly in upper level courses.

- *Aim Two: deep understanding of and hands-on experience with the inquiry practices of disciplines that explore the natural, social, and cultural realms—achieved and demonstrated through studies that build conceptual knowledge by engaging learners in concepts and modes of inquiry that are basic to the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts;*

**Reply:** "Deep understanding" is not likely to be obtained in an introductory course, and courses taken to meet the Gen Ed requirements tend to be such, although upper level Religious Studies courses, which offer deeper understanding of "inquiry practices

in the social and cultural realms," can be used to meet Gen Ed requirements. This may be true of other upper-level humanities and social science courses. However, we consider that depth of understanding of an inquiry practice or discipline is to be sought in the major and minor, rather than Gen Ed. "Hands-on experience" is more likely to be obtained in laboratory courses than the humanities, unless through internships. In conjunction with the new Internship Program, Religious Studies is in the process of developing a new an internship course for both majors and minors in order to facilitate a more "hands on" approach.

- *Aim Three: "Intercultural knowledge"...*

**Reply:** This term needs to be better defined. If it means knowledge of cultures other than the student's own, it is the area in which we consider the current Gen Ed requirements to be lacking. This lack could be fulfilled by adding such a requirement to the Gen Ed Curriculum. "Requirement" should not be read as "course"; most Religious studies courses, which are regularly taken to meet the Gen Ed humanities requirement, introduce students to cultures other than their own, as do many other humanities courses which can be taken to fulfill the Gen Ed requirements. We note that knowledge of other cultures is not merely an academic ideal, but rather an essential part of being a world citizen; more pragmatically, it is a necessary prerequisite for any career that may involve travel to, or business in, countries outside the US. Further, many history courses and RELS courses introduce students to cultures of the past; such knowledge can be essential for understanding today's world. See response to Aim Five.

*and collaborative problem-solving skills—achieved and demonstrated in a variety of collaborative contexts (classroom, community-based, international, and online) that prepare students both for democratic citizenship and for work;*

If this includes classroom discussions on debated issues, then some degree of collaboration can be attributed to many Gen Ed courses. If it refers to specific learning modules, as in student assisted research or tutorials, than such learning is not a visible feature of the Gen Ed plan.

- *Aim Four: a proactive sense of responsibility for individual, civic, and social choices—achieved and demonstrated through forms of learning that connect knowledge, skills, values, and public action, and through reflection on students' own roles and responsibilities in social and civic contexts;*

**Reply:** This will depend largely on the courses chosen. Religious Studies courses strongly emphasize "reflection on students' roles" in social relations, and promote tolerance, empathy, and sensitivity in responding to cultural differences. Issues of diversity, plurality, and cultural norms are regularly raised in RELS courses which require students to reconsider their beliefs and values in a learning context of critical thinking guided by respect for the worldviews of others. RELS courses strongly emphasize "reflection of student roles" in social relations and consciously seek to promote tolerance and appreciation in responding to cultural differences. RELS

courses, at all levels, strongly support this aim.

- *Aim Five: Habits of mind that foster integrative thinking and the ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another ...*

This aim is primarily achieved and demonstrated through advanced research and/or creative projects and RELS upper level courses are specifically structured as thematic and comparative across traditions using a variety of methodological skills from other disciplines. In RELS courses, students are taught to use various approaches to the study of religion, beginning with the 100 level courses. RELS courses require students to transfer skills from various disciplines depending on the religious context or phenomena under study.

*in which students take the primary responsibility for framing questions, carrying out an analysis, and producing work of substantial complexity and quality.*

This goal applies to the major (to a lesser extent the minor) rather than Gen Ed. We presume that most majors at the college require some form of capstone student-designed research project. As Religious Studies courses are multidisciplinary, students learn to use various approaches to the study of religion, from the 100 level on up. RELS 210 is specifically designed to introduce students to the multidisciplinary study of any religion and all RELS majors are required to take an RELS 450, an integrative Senior Capstone course.

## **THEATRE**

In general our Department feels that the current system effectively meets most of the AAC&U's Learning outcomes. We feel that outcomes #1 and #2 are the most effectively realized outcomes in our current system. We have a system that fosters "strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills (outcome #1) and "deep understanding of and hands-on experience with the inquiry practices of disciplines that explore the natural, social, and cultural realms (outcome #2)". Our current Distribution system offers a substantial breadth and depth of experiences, which appear to accomplish these goals. Where we feel we may be slightly less effective are in the remaining three goals "intercultural knowledge and collaborative problem-solving skills (outcome #3)" and "a proactive sense of responsibility for individual, civic, and social choices (outcome #4)" and "habits of mind that foster integrative thinking and the ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another (outcome #5)". There appears to be a commonality between these three outcomes, that common feature is the ability to take knowledge gained in outcomes #1 and #2 and to then apply it by means and methods outside the proscriptions of specific disciplines. To think collaboratively, civically, and in an integrative manner means to think in an interdisciplinary way.

We feel that our current system lacks some of the connections necessary to completely realize outcomes #3 through #5. Therefore, we believe that any attempts to create

stronger inter-disciplinary connections are a direct path to a more effective realization. Currently, many possible solutions are and have been discussed, ie Learning Communities, a rigorous Freshman Seminar, more interdisciplinary focus in our current courses. These methods would mean only minor adjustments to our current system, and we are generally in favor of such initiatives.

Two other possibilities are the following. First, to make General Education a focus that occurs through out a student's academic career, not just in their Freshman or Sophomore years. Doing so does not mean we advocate drastic change to our current model. We do not. Areas of focus like *Communication Across the Curriculum* (formerly *Writing Across the Curriculum*) or others are ways to increase the General Education experience throughout the tenure of a student, while staying within the discipline of their major. CAC need not change the content of any discipline, but may change the way we think about teaching that content. All disciplines require the skillful writing of or the communicating of ideas. The ability to analyze data and to then clearly and succinctly express those analyses means that writing is not only a "Freshman English" problem, but an all-inclusive disciplinary goal.

The second possibility may already be occurring. If it is, we think it should be more clearly articulated. If it is not, it requires only a "cultural" shift of minor effort. That shift would mean that in our current General Education courses, departments and disciplines would endeavor to explicitly express the connections and the relationships between a particular course's content and other disciplines. That expression comes easily to most theatre courses (and likely to countless others,) but we also believe that there may be ways for it to be expressed in all General Education courses. Making General Education an integrated element of the curriculum does not have to mean a lessening of the depth of inquiry in any discipline. Rather, it serves to be a "frame" to the depth of that knowledge, giving it context and endeavoring to embody the spirit of goals #3, #4, and #5.