

## General Education Proposal

**Mission Statement:** As humans, our greatest challenges are to understand ourselves, others, and the natural world. Our goal is to prepare well-rounded citizens who can begin to address these challenges and learn to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world.

**Well-rounded citizens should:**

1. have a basic competency in writing and mathematics;
2. be able to make informed choices about their personal lives and health;
3. have some understanding of other cultures and peoples;
4. have some understanding of the natural world.

**General Education Requirements (all courses between 100 and 299 are eligible):**

1. A (foundational) writing course.
2. A (foundational) mathematics course.
3. A course in personal health and well-being (broadly defined).
4. 13 credits in the natural sciences and mathematics from at least 3 different departments<sup>1</sup>.
5. 18 credits in the humanities and social sciences from at least 4 different departments. At least two courses must survey or focus on non-Western European cultures<sup>2</sup>.

**Total: 40 credits**

**Requirement 1 and 2** courses may be determined by individual departments with a notification to the General Education Council (GEC) and Registrar. This gives flexibility to all majors, but especially to professional programs in the College of Business (COB) and College of Education (COE).

**Requirement 3** courses must be approved by the GEC. As a starting point, courses that meet Goal 9 may serve.

**Requirement 4** courses will be selected from departments in the College of Science and Technology (COST). Four courses can fulfill 13-credits if at least one is 4 credits. This *encourages but does not require* a laboratory course or other 4-credit course (e.g. Calculus 1 or Java Programming).

**Requirement 5** courses will be selected from departments in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA). *One* of the diversity courses may come from either COB, COE, or COST. As a starting point, courses in the current Goal 4 may serve the caveat.

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<sup>1</sup> Different *departments* are mandated because multiple course codes may be housed within a single department (e.g. COMPSCI, DIGFOR, DATASCI, MATH, and WDD are all in the Dept. of Mathematics and Digital Sciences).

<sup>2</sup> **Transfer courses** with 199/299 designation will automatically count for **Requirements 4** or **5**, depending on the department. Departments may petition to count them for **Requirements 1-3**. Transfer courses with a non-Western focus will be given a 198 or 298 department course number. Then any such course will automatically fulfill the **Requirement 5** caveat.

### **This proposal meets the following criteria.**

1. It is straightforward and easy to communicate.
2. It works well with transfer credits and does not require waivers, petitions, or other work.
3. It makes up one-third of a student's coursework.
4. It gives students wide latitude for exploration and promotes well-roundedness.
5. It can be quickly implemented. Except for Requirement 3 and the caveat to Requirement 5, no courses must be approved by the GEC.
6. No departments are favored, and the program cannot be gamed. Students will be required to take courses from a *minimum* of seven departments within two or more colleges.

### **Problems with the Current General Education Program**

1. Courses must be put through a laborious and **time-consuming** process before they are approved for General Education. Although well intentioned, it has a negative benefit and discourages new general education offerings.
2. Unless they have an exact course equivalent at BU, **transfer courses** are not given general education points. The new 196/197/198 patch to this problem is unevenly implemented and of limited value. As a result, a significant number of "petitions" (and workload) are required for students with transfer credits. These numbers are growing.
3. The system is subject to gaming. It is possible for a student to complete as many as a third of their GEPs within a single department and almost all within a single college.
4. It complex and difficult to communicate to students, transfers, and new faculty.

### **Concerns about the General Education Task Force's Proposed Revision**

1. Although a Capstone/Applied experience is of great value to all students, **it should be a requirement of a major, not a general education requirement.**
2. Goals 1-6 are noble, but **do not solve** any of the problems listed above. Courses will still need to go through GEC for approval. Transfer courses will still require petitions. And because Goals are not tied to disciplines, departments, or colleges, they are all subject to gaming.
3. **The loss of a Natural Sciences Goal is disturbing.** The current program has already reduced it to a bare minimum. More than ever, citizens must know something of the natural world if they are to make informed decisions in a democratic society.
4. **Goal 1 is especially problematic.** A student could fulfill their General Education program with a single course in the Natural Sciences, Arts & Humanities, or Social Sciences.