

APPENDIX I. Departmental Responses to current general education curriculum

Department/Program: Asian Studies

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

1. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
2. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
3. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	Gives students a solid grounding in the liberal arts;	May take over too much of a student's undergraduate program
<i>Implementation</i>		WRI and ORC in particular are used to manipulate class enrollments (add them to increase enrollment, take them away to decrease) Need to orient new faculty who teach rotating courses with GE designations Perhaps WRI and ORC should be embedded in all courses Should there be a limit on the total number of GE credits any one course can have (say, no more than 2)?
<i>Impact</i>	Supports programs in less commonly taught languages and in global diversity	EIN—not something that faculty without background in Western philosophy and religion can participate in. In fact, such faculty feel excluded by a preoccupation with Western ethics. If we wish for a global perspective, how can we ignore the ethical traditions of the East, for example? The perception among some faculty and students that GE requirements prevent students going abroad.

Department/Program: Art/Art History
March 4, 2004

1. Educational Goals

Strengths

- Breadth of student learning

Weaknesses

- This, and all colleges, should have a Visual Thinking general education requirement. It should promote thoughtful use of visuals in academic matters to help prepare students for handling a world in which much information is now conveyed in visual form. Such a requirement would include attentiveness and schooling in how to read visual information and judge its value and would include development of self-consciousness about the production of visual material in class activities. The requirement should be handled something like ORC. People in different disciplines can teach it, and it would be worked into course classroom activities and assignments. (A statistics course, for example, might have students read some of Edward Tufte's work on graphs, do critiques of professional and student graphing, and have some assessment and grading related to the quality of visual thinking each student displays.)

2. Implementation

Strengths

- A wide range of students gets exposure to the arts.

Weaknesses

- Cost to college.
- So many students are interested we cannot serve them all given our reduced F.T.E.

3. Impact

Strengths

- Faculty have opened specific courses to include multi-cultural, global, diversity, writing, and historical content making courses richer and more inclusive.

Weaknesses

- It is not clear that the WRI and ORC standards are adhered to among courses awarding these requirements. There appears to be no follow-through regarding what students do in these classes. Assignments and activities vary markedly among classes, and faculty sometimes inherit these courses without being aware of the requirements or planning for them. This is a danger with other general education requirements but seems more a problem for ORC and WRI.

Department/Program: Biomolecular Science (Molecular Biology)

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Comments on the Educational goals of the College's General Ed curriculum</i>	<p>Our GE curriculum does a pretty good job of promoting a broad education.</p> <p>All students should take a selection of science and math courses as a pre-req to living in an increasingly technological world.</p> <p>We should have as a goal “scientific literacy” of all students.</p>	<p>Our current GE curriculum makes it tougher to get a deep major.</p> <p>The intention of the developers of the current curriculum was to increase the number of science courses students take (beyond what was required by the “distribution requirements”). This was done by separating out the math course to its own category. There is some concern that the introduction of NST courses not taught by scientists dilutes the intended science requirement. (Courses <i>about</i> science, rather than courses containing modern science content.)</p>
<i>Comments on the Implementation of the current GenEd curriculum</i>	<p>Registration process has been made smoother of late.</p> <p>Students taking a course simply because it is “open” and fits their schedule can have a positive result (students sometimes favorably surprised by how much they end up liking such a course.)</p>	<p>Students have a perceived need to double major—this makes things tight.</p> <p>The number of requirements can be viewed as cumbersome.</p> <p>Poor advising early can limit student choices.</p> <p>First year (or two) science students are locked into an inflexible schedule.</p> <p>Students tend to “shop” for GE attributes rather than course content.</p>
<i>Comments on the Impact of the GenEd curr. on faculty development, student learning and instruction</i>	<p>Workshops (such as ORC) are useful.</p> <p>Faculty can grow by seeking to teach in new GE areas or by new methods (WRI, or ORC).</p>	<p>Workshops (such as ORC) seem daunting, especially to younger faculty working at gaining tenure and promotion.</p> <p>Younger faculty feel they need help as advisors—science-specific refreshers? Takes long to learn all the acronyms.</p>

Department/Program: Chemistry

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Comments on the Educational goals of the College's General Ed curriculum</i>	<p>Pushes students to explore (but, really, any GE curriculum would do this).</p> <p>Encourages scientific literacy (but see associated weaknesses...)</p>	<p>Science courses (courses with NST) can be taught by non-science faculty who lack a background in modern science. This weakens the courses as a "science" course.</p> <p>Doesn't go far enough in promoting fundamental science literacy.</p>
<i>Comments on the Implementation of the current GenEd curriculum</i>	<p>Sometimes students learn a lot about themselves by taking a course for GE credit but finding that they resonate well with the course material.</p> <p>A GE curriculum provides a balancing mechanism for registrations—it makes course populations easier to predict over time, regardless of changes in what majors are the most popular.</p>	<p>Attributes are connected to a course, rather than a course/instructor combination.</p> <p>Monitoring GE courses over time—not all do what they say they will do.</p> <p>Allowing multiple attributes in a single courses must somehow dilute the student experience of each attribute to some extent.</p> <p>GE attributes tend to drive registration.</p> <p>Skewed usage of courses by groups of students diminishes variety of experience: premeds all taking biomedical ethics for EIN and music majors taking musical acoustics for one of their NST, for example.</p> <p>There are insufficient resources for proper monitoring, education of new instructors, etc.</p>
<i>Comments on the Impact of the GenEd curr. on faculty development, student learning and instruction</i>	<p>Encourages faculty to prepare new courses for a broader audience.</p>	<p>Does this long list of requirements have a negative impact on student recruiting?</p> <p>Faculty temptation to design courses for maximum appeal instead of maximum learning.</p> <p>Competition for student populations</p>

Department/Program: Dance

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

4. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
5. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
6. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	It does help with college's goal. Just the fact that it has Liberal Arts as a focus. It is a diverse curriculum. It allows students to try courses they might not have otherwise.	It is too big, too many requirements. Students feel that have to take it rather than just coming to experience it. We think it could have less rigid rules and more opportunities for students to choose.
<i>Implementation</i>	It is clear what the students need to take before they graduate.	It forces the schedule of classes to be out of wack. Students now have to classes/labs in the late afternoon. When they want to be participating in an organized activity. The science requirement is too expensive in it's current form.
<i>Impact</i>	Students are getting a diverse education broad in it's perspective.	Some departments are hit hard because of these requirements. If the curriculum were not so set in stone other faculty could do professional development to fulfill less specific requirements.

Department/Program: Economics

Only two faculty members had something positive to say about the GE curriculum - that adding GE credits (EIN and ORC in this case) significantly strengthened their courses.

The department identified three major weaknesses:

1. By far the biggest complaint is that there are too many requirements. It would even be better to have fewer requirements combined with more "honest counting" (not allowing double, triple, quadruple??? counting of the same course) than the current situation. On a side note, many faculty in our department have always favored giving students the flexibility to double major, and the current curriculum makes that more difficult than the previous one.
2. Some members of the department do not like the idea of "non-experts teaching courses". ORC is most commonly mentioned with this statement, but other GE requirements would also apply.
3. Some members of the department are concerned that, in the current curriculum, no one checks to make sure that an instructor is doing what the course proposal says. These members understand why this is the situation, but note that having non-experts teaching courses creates a greater need for some sort of follow-up to the course proposal.

Department/Program: Environmental Studies

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

7. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
8. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
9. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	<p>Encourages students to explore areas of scholarship that they might otherwise ignore in the pursuit of a major(s) in one disciplinary area.</p> <p>Has clearly increased the number of students taking courses that consider the interplay between humans and their physical and biotic environment</p>	<p>Does not include 'ecological literacy' as an explicit goal. Feelings are mixed in ES as to whether ecological literacy should be an additional GE requirement or might be included in broader curriculum outside of bounds of classroom.</p>
<i>Implementation</i>	<p>In general seem to be working better than anticipated and students seem to be completing requirements in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>Never fully implemented the goal of an interdisciplinary component to General Education limiting, for example, the opportunity to more directly consider relations among the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.</p>
<i>Impact</i>		<p>Presence of large numbers of students in ES 137 has led to difficulties in teaching this course due to greater variability in student background/interest/effort.</p>

Department/Program: Environmental Studies

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

10. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
11. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
12. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	Encourages students to explore areas of scholarship that they might otherwise ignore in the pursuit of a major(s) in one disciplinary area. Has clearly increased the number of students taking courses that consider the interplay between humans and their physical and biotic environment	Does not include 'ecological literacy' as an explicit goal. Feelings are mixed in ES as to whether ecological literacy should be an additional GE requirement or might be included in broader curriculum outside of bounds of classroom.
<i>Implementation</i>	In general seem to be working better than anticipated and students seem to be completing requirements in a timely fashion.	Never fully implemented the goal of an interdisciplinary component to General Education limiting, for example, the opportunity to more directly consider relations among the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.
<i>Impact</i>		Presence of large numbers of students in ES 137 has led to difficulties in teaching this course due to greater variability in student background/interest/effort.

Department/Program: Mathematics

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

13. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
14. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
15. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	A broad view of the liberal arts. Low level courses with a high intellectual content demonstrating the breadth of our disciplines	Not focused enough. Some courses are simply too easy. Overall goals not clear.
<i>Implementation</i>	Plenty of offerings in some GE areas.	Not nearly enough in some crucial areas. Some GE requirements are the sole responsibility of a single department.
<i>Impact</i>	Some courses probably impact students.	Not clear that any GE courses really affect the career course of students. Do any students go on to major in discipline after a great intro GE experience?

Department/Program: Music Department

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

16. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
17. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
18. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

Educational goals:

Strengths: The Breadth of the liberal arts education.

Weaknesses:

- The complications of the curriculum sometimes seem to make it hard for a student to pursue breadth in a way that is most valuable to them. (i.e. a particular requirement available at a particular time may not be the best choice for a student, but they may feel they still need to get the requirement out of the way.)
- Science requirements should be reduced to one, or otherwise two from areas of science and math. Having two science courses required of all students is an extremely costly aspect of the new curriculum and it is important to address it before the new science center is built.
- One ALS -A is insufficient, particularly since a number of students are excused from this requirement by taking Great Con or Am Con.
- One person suggested moving to GE with few requirements.

Implementation:

Strengths: No comments

Weaknesses:

- Overly complicated. Approval process is too detailed, requires too much oversight
- For demanding majors (such as Music Ed) students find few electives are "choices"; rather, they tend to be double counters that fulfill remaining requirements
- Overly complicated and overly prescriptive. We have a rich curriculum but general education can still happen without the very complicated structure. Less would be better.
- Difficulty in getting classes. Not enough choices, particularly ORC.
- No need for a superstructure approving the courses, the GEC. Individual departments should be trusted to decide which courses are approved or not.
- There should be a relationship between what students are seeking to take and FTE the particular department has available.
- Insufficient attention to Fine Arts, only one course required: Great Con and American Conversation students are essentially excused from it.
- "I'd be curious to know: what are the enrollment patterns of schools that have very few or no ge requirements? Personally, I feel the goals of GE are worthy. But I guess I'm more *laissez faire* about the implementation. I think with less structure and coercion, the goals of the curriculum would still be met. Departments would have an incentive to offer attractive courses to non-majors to keep enrollments strong, and students would be attracted to those courses."

Impact:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

- Students' strengths are not as central to advising as meeting requirements.
- Students are not taking classes they'd like to take, just taking them to fulfill requirements.

- Limiting during senior year...few slots open to fulfill the GE and students find themselves taking courses they aren't interested in just to fulfill the credit.
- It is difficult for student to try to go abroad and fulfill requirements.

Specific written comments from one faculty member:

- WRI -- do we need 4? (Maybe this is something that assessment could help answer.) 2 sounds ok to me unless there is good evidence that 4 makes a big difference.
- ORC -- a noble goal, but the fact is we don't have a communications department, so I don't think this requirement represents a strength, and we shouldn't require it.
- NST, HWC, ALS, HBS, Religion: 1 requirement instead of 2 for each? This may seem a little sweeping, but I don't see any logic in cutting one of these and not the others.
I like the "bookends" of FYS and the EIN capstone course.
(I was trying to think of why I gave MCS privileged status here by not suggesting only one course, and I think it's because that is such a general category it could actually be fulfilled in virtually any discipline.)
- Basic math literacy seems pretty important to me, so I'd keep that.
- I don't see how you can cut language since language study only become useful after you've reached a certain minimum level (i.e. 3-4 semesters).

Department/Program: Norwegian**Strengths** include:

GE curriculum enables departments to create courses that will attract students from outside the department, get students to venture out into areas that they might otherwise not

GE curriculum enables departments/faculty members to think about courses in new and different ways (for example, by adding EIN, ORC, and WRI to courses), and by providing workshops for some of these requirements adds a significant faculty development component

The GE curriculum supports the liberal arts

The current GE curriculum promotes clustering of courses (Conversations programs, etc)

The differential 3-4 FL requirement levels out enrollments between CTLS and LCTLs

Weaknesses include:

Science requirement too complex

Some requirements too closely tied to departments, or require students to fulfill in different departments. This adds complexity and works against depth. This aspect is also unequally applied in different areas of the curriculum.

Lumping Artistic Studies and Literary Studies together. This precludes some very interesting possibilities for double counting. If these were separated, creative writing might logically move from literary to artistic studies, which would make sense.

Other comments/questions about GE

How much should we steer what students take?

Should we promote sampling or integration (or let students decide which)?

Better advising, particularly in helping students realize which GE requirements can best be saved for study abroad

Departments could be more strategic in order to manage enrollments. Some courses could have prerequisites, or could better count only toward the major and not GE (English dept for example)

Students need to be helped to see options beyond the obvious, for example, by listing world literatures in translation courses. There may well be other requirements that could be presented this way to help steer students from looking for GE courses only in particular departments

Department/Program: Nursing

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

- 19. the *educational goals* you believe the College’s general education curriculum should advance
- 20. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
- 21. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	Facilitates interdisciplinary work; allows courses from different departments to meet requirements based on content rather than strict disciplinary lines	Lack of college department with expertise in communication to oversee and implement ORC; limited EIN courses available; lack of emphasis on development of responsible citizenship in society; lack of a requirement to enhance/develop a commitment to service or leadership in all students; comprises a large, perhaps too large, portion of the courses needed to graduate and thus limits the student’s ability to explore areas of interest
<i>Implementation</i>	Double counting of courses to meet more than one requirement allows students greater flexibility in completing the overall educational experience	FTE cuts in departments have reduced courses/sections offered; increased student registration problems have resulted when students cannot take courses they desire; for some requirements there are many courses available but for others choices are limited; pre-registration into courses does not follow a consistent process
<i>Impact</i>	Grant support has been beneficial to develop ORC, EIN and FLAC courses	Overall support for development is limited and competitive serving only a small portion of the faculty

Department/Program: Philosophy

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

- 22. the *educational goals* you believe the College’s general education curriculum should advance

23. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
24. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>		
<i>Implementation</i>		
<i>Impact</i>		

1a. Strengths: We appreciate that the GE curriculum is not so much an introduction to various answers or even to various methods of how to answer an agreed on set of problems, as an introduction to a range of questions important to the liberal arts—here’s how our discipline or our interdisciplinary outlook sheds some light on questions this faculty as a whole thinks are important for you to consider. Of course, answers and debates may be part of such an into, and certain skills are presented and practiced as important assets in thinking about these questions, but the emphasis is on how and what it is important to inquire about, not just now but for the rest of one’s life.

We think that, in general, the current structure is a worth-while alternative to either a common core (*a la* Great Con for everyone) or the old distribution system, the latter of which too often encouraged a graduate school “gotta cover this too” mentality.

We note that there is more emphasis on math and natural science than on most other areas when one tries to link up the questions with the departments that typically offer courses that explore them. This observation is meant as neither a strength nor a weakness, though we think that early efforts to rule out history of science and science study courses, whether motivated by fears of post-modern anti-intellectualism or turf protection or whatever, has left our natural science colleagues (and lab spaces) with a huge GE “service” load.

1b. Weaknesses: We also note (in this case, with regret) that the emphasis on interdisciplinary work that was part of the original plan has, for various reasons, never developed. We think that developing linked courses is a feasible way to work on a stronger ID or even team-teaching element.

2a: We think it is important that a college-wide committee have the gate-keeping and monitoring responsibility for GE, rather than simply leaving it up to departments or individual faculty. We applaud the hard but good work done by so many on the GE committee.

2b: We think it has perhaps been too easy to get approval for a given GE requirement, or at least that there is little objective confirmation that what a course promises is actually delivered. (But we also think that similar problems would be part of almost any requirement structure, so this issues invites us to improve what we have rather than switch.)

3a: We think that the EIN requirement, as taught across the curriculum, has had a good impact on students and faculty, not the least of which is its undermining any fact-value dichotomy that is sometimes implied in separate ethics courses.

3b: We think that too many students, and even faculty, see the requirements as those three-letter nuisances that get in the way of efficient course-enrollment planning, and they too often do not understand (even enough to responsibly reject) the content of the requirements and the educational rationale behind them. A revisable booklet on the GE requirements could be part of the orientation for new students and faculty.

Department/Program: Physical Education Department

Summary of GE Requirements Discussion

? Language requirement has many pros and cons:

It is true to the liberal arts.

We require the most courses (4) compared to our Lutheran college peers.

Could we have language/culture combo classes?

Multi-cultural students and students from a bad or small high school end up taking four courses, while more privileged students test out of two.

? ORC remains problematic.

? Christian Hakala reports that the curriculum is not seen as a barrier by prospective students. The admissions staff does field questions about the religion requirement (Catechism classes? Trying to indoctrinate me? Must I be Lutheran?)

? GE courses should be entry-level and not so prescriptive.

? The increase in the number of interim classes was a welcome improvement. Student-athletes have problems, however, when professors change the start of their classes from the ones advertised in the class and lab.

? As you would expect, we think that the PHA requirement is great (body, mind, spirit)! We would love to offer .25 PHA classes during interim to keep everyone active.

Department/Program: Physics

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

25. the *educational goals* you believe the College's general education curriculum should advance
26. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
27. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	Foundation Studies – generally working well	Some in department dislike the enforced breadth at the expense of depth (e.g., requirements that courses must come from different departments for some requirements) and think that the curriculum as a whole is too proscribed.
<i>Implementation</i>	Requirements are clear, procedures for approval of new ones seem to work well.	Anecdotal evidence from students describes non-uniform application of “rules” in some courses (e.g., WRI’s which don’t assign enough papers or involve multiple drafts.) Problem of maintaining standards in approved courses as time goes by, instructors change, etc. Too many WRI’s required. Fewer but better focused ones would serve better. Where is the “authority” for seeing that enough appropriate courses are available?
<i>Impact</i>		
	(continued)	

We also discussed the overall size of the GE curriculum and came to the conclusion that for most students completing one major, the curriculum is not too large. Discussions about whether the GE curriculum is too large should be coupled to discussions about philosophy of multiple majors.

We didn’t come up with good ideas on the “Impact” area.

Department/Program: Political Science

The Political Science department met to discuss the GE program and offer the following comments. They are, more or less, the sentiment of the department. But we didn’t vote on anything.

1. More attention should be paid to the mix of general education and department-only courses. Some departments offer general education credit for virtually every class. Others do not. Is there a logic behind this? In some cases, we've made a conscious effort to staff a department for high general education offerings (religion for example). In other cases, there seems to be little planning.
2. We like the "area of knowledge" approach to general education. In my judgement, this is an underappreciated aspect of the curriculum. With limited exceptions, no one department controls a requirement. In an era when we feature interdisciplinary thinking, that seems important.
3. The committee should consider retaining the current structure of the GE curriculum, but reducing it. What if all the 2s in our long list of requirements became 1s? Would that solve some of the problems while still retaining the basic structure of the curriculum?

4. We discussed the WRI requirement and many of us said that every course at St. Olaf should be a WRI course. If so, we could eliminate the requirement without sacrificing attention to writing.

Department/Program: Religion

(Notes from meeting of March 15, 2004)

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Comments on the Educational Goals of the college's General Education Curriculum ("GE")	<p>Integration of learning across disciplinary boundaries (but see . . .)</p> <p>Two courses in religion is an appropriate, minimal commitment to the goal of "theological literacy"</p> <p>Aspiration to support team teaching/linking courses</p>	Lack of regard for disciplinary expertise
Comments on the Implementation of GE	Most students complete it without undue difficulty	<p>Very complicated</p> <p>Students perceive it as a game</p> <p>The attributes are used by departments to manage enrollment</p> <p>BTS-T is defined more narrowly than necessary to meet GE goals</p> <p>Faculty competencies not considered when awarding GE attributes</p> <p>Never implemented team teaching/linking courses</p>
Comments on the Impact of GE	<p>Faculty development opportunities, like EIN (but see . . .)</p> <p>Many religion faculty benefit from learning theology (i.e., to teach BTS-T courses)</p> <p>Develop of faculty interests in "collateral fields"</p>	<p>There aren't <i>enough</i> faculty development opportunities (lack of internal funding)</p> <p>Because its implementation coincided with reduced religion fte, BTS-T has reduced the breadth and variety of the religion major ("homogenized" religion courses)</p> <p>Emphasis on generalist teaching restricts faculty opportunities to teach strictly within their areas of expertise</p>

Other comments:

Many of the component requirements (e.g., WRI, ORC) should be treated as faculty commitments, supported through faculty development, and delivered throughout the curriculum, rather than required.

The Religion Department (and presumably some other departments) lack the fte to deliver a quality major while supporting GE.

In more cases there should be explicit oversight of the competencies of faculty offering courses for GE, rather than mere review of the syllabi. Some colleagues who are competent to develop a syllabus that conforms are not as well prepared to teach the actual material as others (e.g., EIN).

Some things should be added (perhaps not as requirements, but as faculty commitments supported through faculty development opportunities):

- World Religions
- Media literacy
- Visual literacy
- Practical statistics

Department/Program: Romance Languages (French & Spanish)

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

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29. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
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	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goals currently emphasized in French and Spanish are: FOL, MCS-D (Span.), MCS-G (Fr.), ALS-L, and ORC and EIN (Fr.) • Current faculty think that GE attributes must fit the nature of a program carefully and that the above are a good match for our department. 	
<i>Implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For our majors, it is important to be able to get GE courses from study abroad programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often miss out on the opportunity to get GE credits from abroad and end up “duplicating” some areas (HWC, ALS-A, etc.). This could be due to advising problems or from students’ anxiousness to “kill off” as many GE requirements as possible as soon as possible. • Too many students pursuing double or triple majors without really considering the alternatives is making it difficult for them to get GE requirements done. • There are not enough WRI courses in some humanities areas. Spanish at present offers no WRI courses because of the high course enrollments across the board in our area. Our majors, thus, are at a disadvantage. • Students seem to be avoiding WRI courses at times; WRI is no longer a draw and some faculty are dropping it. • There needs to be on-going training for WRI, ORC, and EIN to prepare new faculty.
<i>Impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our faculty feel very positive about the impact of the FOL requirement in French and Spanish, especially as connected to MCS courses in 232. • The GE curriculum has lead to wonderful faculty development opportunities (WRI, ORC, EIN, MCS in particular for us). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten years of enrollment patterns make us think about perhaps a need to reevaluate the FOL requirement in terms of which languages require 3 versus 4 courses to complete it. One could argue now that French and German are no longer “commonly taught languages”. With regard to St. Olaf, one could also argue that Norwegian is as “commonly taught” as French and German. Should nationally-influenced enrollment

		trends have an impact on how foreign languages should be treated vis -à-vis the FOL?
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Department/Program: Russian Language and Area Studies

From the perspective of your academic unit, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum? Please comment on each of the following aspects:

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32. the *implementation* of the curriculum to date (including scheduling, resources, and any other practical considerations)
33. the *impact* of the curriculum on faculty development, instruction, and student learning

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Educational goals</i>		Educational goals: While there is agreement among the faculty of RLAS that the general education goals are sound, there are some concerns about particular aspects of them that surfaced in our discussion. One concern is the goal of oral proficiency as it has become defined in practice. Probably most faculty thought that this requirement would be fulfilled by students enrolling in courses in the Speech Department. Now that Department no longer exists. Students now often fulfill the requirement in foreign language courses.
<i>Implementation</i>		Implementation: St. Olaf has wisely retained its foreign language requirement, but here as elsewhere in U.S. higher education student enrollments to meet the requirement are disproportionately in Spanish. Although the College has taken some steps to address this problem, more needs to be done to encourage enrollment in language courses other than Spanish as part of our goal to provide global perspective. There is also some concern about the process of approval for courses designed to meet the General Education program. Specifically, the process seems cumbersome and excessively bureaucratic in demanding “proof” that a particular course meets the guidelines for GE credit.
<i>Impact</i>	The GE requirements and guidelines have encouraged instructional innovation, particularly with respect to the oral proficiency requirement.	However, the courses that offer this feature often obtain such a high enrollment that the goal of improving oral proficiency is hampered. Some courses are simply too large to do this work in a serious way.

Department/Program: Theater

Please pass along to the task force the importance of the Arts in our students' educations as a means to empathy, to global understanding, and to their broader understanding of what it is to be active, expressive, serving members of society.

--We would like to see a balance of the GE disciplines that continues to place Fine Arts as a fundamental part of the lives of all St. Olaf students.

--We would like to see a greater emphasis on the development of verbal, spoken communication skills, through the study of Mass Media, Theatre and Public Speaking courses, among others.

--We wish to bring it to the attention of the task force that students still pursue public speaking courses on this campus, although none are regularly offered as part of the St. Olaf curriculum any longer. We would like to see a curriculum where St. Olaf students can hone their skills of verbal communication, which will be vital to their vocational as well as personal futures as doctors, teachers, lawyers, public servants, performers, and ministers, etc.

--We feel that the concept of the ORC credit needs to be reexamined and redefined to place more emphasis on speaking skills for our students.