

## General Education Task Force

Meeting notes

July 29, 2004

**Present:** Bauer, Beld, Booth, Cisar, Hoekstra, Larson, Ostebee, Zempel

1. **Approval of minutes.** The minutes from the meeting of July 22, 2004 were reviewed and approved.
2. **Descriptive data on GE courses offered and completed.** IRP, in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar, has generated a great deal of data analyzing how students go about completing their GE requirements. Degree audits for the entire class of 2004 have been analyzed and Susan Canon and Lynn Steen have prepared a number of tables, charts, and graphs showing what students and departments are doing with respect to General Education. The group reviewed these data and will include them in an appendix to its interim report.
3. **EIN requirement.** The Task Force reviewed the following proposed statement of learning outcomes for the EIN requirement:
  - *Students will gain some understanding of the idea of moral reasoning.*
  - *Students will gain some understanding of particular moral theories (including some Christian theories).*
  - *Students will be able to analyze current issues from a normative perspective.*

The group agreed that these three objectives represent accurately the content and probable intent of the current EIN requirement and guidelines. However, there was some discomfort with the first objective, not because it is not an appropriate goal for this requirement, but because the faculty who teach EIN courses may not all share the same understanding of the nature of moral reasoning (for example, is moral reasoning distinctive in some ways or different from other kinds of reasoning?). The first objective could be revised to read as follows:

- *Students will increase their ability to think systematically about moral issues.*

The group concluded that this is probably a more modest goal and a better statement of what EIN courses actually accomplish, though perhaps not as demanding as the first version. The EIN requirement may be revisited in “Phase II” of the examination of the GE curriculum, and both versions of the first objective, as well as the second and third objective, will be presented as alternatives to the group that takes up possible revisions to the EIN requirement.

A second issue with the EIN requirement is its odd positioning as the only “integrative” course in the overall structure of the current GE curriculum. It was originally intended to be one of two integrative GE requirements, paired with a team-taught course or linked courses bringing different disciplinary perspectives to bear on a single topic or theme. However, it is unlikely at this point that the second integrative requirement will ever be implemented;

moreover, there are many places in the GE curriculum where integration occurs. It seems advisable to recast the EIN requirement as either a Foundation Studies or Core Studies requirement.

4. ***Preliminary outline for Task Force report to the Provost and Dean of the College:*** The Task Force was charged with making some recommendations by the end of the summer to Dean May. The group prepared a tentative outline for the content of this report.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Jo Beld, Recorder