

**Minutes of General Education Task Force Meeting  
July 8, 2004 10-12 am**

Present: Umbanhower, Jr., Cisar, Hoekstra, Bauer, Larson, Zempel, Beld, Booth, Ostebee.

We continued to discuss the outcomes that can be deduced from the GE requirements.

**MAR**

Student Outcomes:

Students will gain a greater facility with mathematical problem solving and a greater understanding of mathematics, including (a) an enhanced ability to read and explain mathematics and (b) an introductory knowledge of origins and historical development of mathematics or applications of the mathematics to other disciplines.

Points of discussion:

The original debate was whether MAR should introduce students to the discipline of math or to quantitative reasoning; and in that original debate, the math department opposed the requirement as stated.

Many things have changed since those discussions preceding the adoption of MAR and it may be time to rethink this requirement. We should be sure to invite Lynn Steen to engage the faculty on the issue of mathematical reasoning.

**NST**

Student outcomes:

Students will gain a better understanding of basic scientific knowledge and the process of scientific discovery.

Students will gain a better understanding and appreciation of the role of the sciences in society and culture, and knowledge of the interdependence of the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences.

Discussion:

Why are 2 courses required, rather than 1, as in other areas?

The ways grants are coming now and the goals of grants are far more mixed by discipline so that our ways of labeling this requirement is counterproductive. We've made "boxes" for ourselves.

The process/content debate is very alive here, too.

We have to remember that any changes here have pedagogical and staffing implications.

**ALS-A**

Student outcomes:

Students will gain an informed appreciation of the aesthetic and formal properties of at least one of the fine arts.

Students will gain an understanding of that art in the broader context of human life, the ways in which the art affects the performer, viewer or audience, and the distinctive experience and knowledge it has to offer.

Discussion:

The problems here may lie not so much in the description of the requirement as in the fulfillment of it. The description itself is not problematic.

Do we need to think about a “visual literacy” requirement?

It appears that no one is arguing for changes.

### **ALS-L**

Student outcomes:

By the time students graduate from St. Olaf College, they will develop habits of the mind that exemplify those of a liberally educated person and that prepare them for lifelong learning, for personal and professional development, and for responsible and knowledgeable citizenship in the world.

Specifically, students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the formal properties of a primary work of literature (poetry, prose, drama);
2. Make an informed aesthetic judgment of a work of literature based on a certain breadth of the experience of reading and/or writing literature;
3. Identify the cultural context of the work of literature and analyze its effect on the work as a whole;
4. Pinpoint the effect of the work of literature on themselves as persons.

Discussion:

This is a very prescriptive requirement.

What’s missing—an emphasis on “ways of knowing.” It should be consistent in its description with the HWC requirement.

Is there really any consensus for change on this?

### **General**

One aspect of general education that we need to address sometime: are these elements our current curriculum does not include? If so, how would we integrate them? We feel reluctant to add requirements at this point. In our report to the Leadership Group, we should include a listing of concerns regarding elements that are not included currently.

### **Schedule of meetings**

**July 22**, 10 a.m.-12 noon, in Norway Room

Agenda: WRI (Diane LeBlanc’s report), EIN (David), PHA (Mary), and FOL (Zempel).

**July 29**, 10-12 am, BC 146

Agenda: divide up responsibility for writing up the report

**August 3**, 10-12, in BC 146

Agenda: revise report

Minutes taken by Phyllis.