

Undergraduate General Education



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General Education

General education is that portion of the undergraduate curriculum that focuses on the development of the whole person including the acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual curiosity, creativity, social values, leadership skills, and the commitment essential for improving the human condition in a diverse society.



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General Education

■ **Goals and Objectives:**

- Develop the knowledge and skills to be a contributing member of the democracy.
- Development of skills for lifelong learning.
- Development of “soft skills” of critical thinking, communication, working in teams, etc.
- Successful transition to the academic challenges of college life.
- Exploration of variety of areas of study.



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The Undergraduate Curriculum

■ **Degree requirements**

- **120-128 hours**
 - **General Education**
 - **Major concentration**
 - **Minor concentration**
 - **Electives**



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General Education - Basics

■ **Requirements by all:**

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities
- History and Social Science
- Physical education (most)
- Fine Arts (most)

Credits

4-9 hours

3-6

3-12

0-18

3-12

0-4

3-9

■ **TOTAL HOURS**

36-53 hours

■ **Requirements by some:**

- Speech
- Foreign language

1-3 hours

3-11



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UNC General Education Requirements

	English	Speech	For Lang	Hum/Lit/Ph/R	Fine Arts	SocSci/Hist/W	Science	Math	P.E.	Other	Tot (min)
ASU	6-9			9-12	3	9-12	8	4	2	15	44
ECU	6		**	1/9***	1/9***	12	8	3	3		42
ECSU	6			6	4	12	7	3	4	1	43
FSU	6	3	0-6*	0-3*	0-3*	3	8	6	2	14*	45
NCA&T	3	*	0	3	*	3	3	3	0	22*	37
NCCU	6		3	5-6		6	6-8	6	2	4****	38-41
NCSA	6	0	0-18	8-10	0-6	2-10	2-10	0-2	0	*2-10	36-44
NCSU	4 ¹	0-3 ¹	0-3 ¹	3-12 ²	0-3 ²	6-18 ²	11-14 ³	6-9 ³	2	3 ⁴	50-53*
UNC-A	4		0-6	12	3	3	7	4	2	6-7*	47
UNC-CH	6	0	7-11	6	3	9	7	3-6	1	0	42
UNC-C	6	1-3	0-6****	3	3	9	7	6	0		35
UNC-G	6			9	3	9	6-7	3			36
UNC-P	6	0-3	0-6	9	3	9	6	3	2	0-6	44
UNC-W	6		3-9	6-18	3-9	9-21	7-12	3-8	2		45
WCU	6	3		3	3	12	6	3	3	3	42
WSSU	6	3		6	3	9	6-8	3-4	3	4***	43
CAA	6	0-3		12	0-3	12	8	6			44

Questions to Consider

- What is the campus philosophy behind the General Education Core?
- What is the relation between the mission of the campus and the General Education core?
- Do all faculty participate in the creation of the General Education Core or just the Arts and Sciences faculty?



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Current and Future Issues

- Who owns the General Education curriculum?
- Why is it so difficult to change the curriculum?
- How do we ensure its relevance for today?



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UNC at Chapel Hill

Bobbi Owen

Senior Associate Dean

General College



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Premise

UNC-Chapel Hill should strive to...

“...cultivate the skills, knowledge, values and habits that will allow graduates to lead personally enriching and socially responsible lives as effective citizens of rapidly changing, richly diverse and increasingly interconnected local, national and worldwide communities.”

AND

“...The undergraduate experience should foster in Carolina graduates the curiosity, initiative, integrity and adaptability requisite for success in the complex, demanding environment of the 21st century world.”



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Review and Implementation Process

“What does an educated person in the 21st century need to know?”

- **Review and recommendations (2001-2003) by:**
 - **Steering committee and satellite committees comprised of faculty and students**
 - **Focus groups and forums with hundreds of faculty, students, alumni, Trustees, etc.**
 - **Students and instructors in General Education courses**



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Review and Implementation Process

- **Process (2004-2006):**
 - **Departments reviewed, revised and developed courses to meet new requirements**
 - **Revisions for majors/minors based on new requirements submitted, reviewed and approved**
 - **Administrative Boards reviewed 4,000 courses and approved half of them**



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Making Connections: Study in Breadth and Study in Depth

Our General Education Curriculum seeks to provide all students with:

- **Foundations:** The fundamental skills that facilitate future learning;
- **Approaches:** broad experience with methods and results of the most widely employed approaches to knowledge;
- **Connections:** A sense of how to integrate these approaches to knowledge in a way that crosses traditional disciplinary and spatial boundaries.

Our undergraduate curriculum also seeks to provide all students with a thorough grounding in one particular subject, through the academic major.



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Assessment began Spring 2007

- A longitudinal study began tracking the academic performance of 400 students on their first day of class and will continue until graduation to analyze to determine if courses are fulfilling curriculum goals;
- An analysis of course enrollment patterns is conducted annually to show how students are navigating the new curriculum;
- Focus groups are conducted with advisors and instructors;
- Data is compared with data collected from students who completed the former curriculum.



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Fayetteville State University

Juliette Bell

Provost and Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs



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FSU - Current Core Curriculum

- Minimum of 45 credit hours
- Courses required of all students:
 - Freshman Seminar (2)
 - English (6)
 - Speech (3)
 - Critical Thinking (3)
- Distribution requirements:
 - Mathematics (6)
 - Natural Sciences (8)
 - Humanities/Fine Arts (3)
 - Social Sciences/History (3)
 - Physical/Health Education (2)
 - Restricted Electives (9)



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FSU - Why review?

- Last comprehensive review in 1992
- Renewed interest:
 - Leef Report from the Pope Center
 - Report in response to HB 1264
 - AAC&U *Greater Expectations Project*
- Increased emphasis on assessment of learning outcomes



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FSU Focus on learning outcomes

- **“A purposeful educational program starts at the endpoint, with the desired characteristics of an institution’s graduates, and asks the faculty to reason backwards from outcomes to the implementation of intentionally designed curriculum to cultivate the desired qualities.”** *Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Project on Assessment and Accreditation*



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FSU - What have we done?

- Core Review Committee (2004-05)
- Faculty symposia that raised the question: What should all of our graduates know and be able to do? (Focus: outcomes, not courses) (2005-06)
- Faculty task forces developed list of learning outcomes in six general areas; Editorial-Reconciliation Committee merged six reports into one (2006-07)
- List of student learning outcomes approved by Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee (September 2007)
- Approval pending in the full Faculty Senate



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FSU - What next?

- Review current core courses and/or propose new courses
- Identify assessment methods, including university-wide and course specific
- Implement procedure for ongoing assessment and revision



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North Carolina State University

Larry Nielsen

Provost and Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs



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General Education at NC State

General Education helps student learn

- **Logical and creative thinking**
- **Respect and value for diversity, history and cultures**
- **Global understanding**
- **How the universe works (i.e., science)**
- **Morality, philosophy and aesthetics**
- **Effective communication**
- **Interaction among disciplines and people**
- **Healthy life-styles**



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General Education at NC State

Why we needed to change

- Too large (50-53 hours, peers ~ 40)
- Combined “general” and “major-related”
- Not transportable among majors
- Impairs graduation rate
- Too focused on disciplines
- Too few “electives”
- Too few options for minors, certificates, specializations



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General Education at NC State

Our process

- Task force appointed in 2004 (40 months now)
- 20-25 members (faculty, students, staff, administration)
- Core rationale and implementation

Issues

- Educational philosophy
- Who teaches what?
- The classroom only—or beyond?
- Who owns the curriculum?
- Every major needs to change



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General Education at NC State

Our proposed “General Education Plan”

- **Total reduced from 53 to 40**
- **Completely portable (and transferable from Community C)**
- **Core disciplines reduced from 41 to 28**
- **Interdisciplinary perspectives increased from 3 to 6**
- **Advanced communication moved to majors**
- **Must take designated courses covering “U.S. diversity” and “global knowledge”**
- **Thematic tracks available (e.g., environment)**



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Questions



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