

**Association of American Colleges and Universities
General Education for Global Learning
Fayetteville State University**

Application Narrative

Overview

In fall 2004, the University College Advisory Board (UCAB) of Fayetteville State University (FSU) recommended that the institution conduct a comprehensive review of its general education program, the University College Core Curriculum. Comprised of representatives from all units of the university and responsible for giving oversight to all aspects of students' first two years of university experience, the UCAB was concerned that, with the exception of minor modifications, no comprehensive review had been conducted since 1992. Moreover, board members sought to bring to bear on FSU's curriculum the insights of recent developments in the national discussion of liberal education. Finally, a review of the core curriculum was consistent with the university's overall efforts to improve student learning.

With the support of the Provost and Chancellor, the UCAB formed a Core Curriculum Review Committee with representatives from all of the university's academic units. The review committee sent a representative to the AAC&U conference on general education and assessment in February, 2005. A team of five faculty members participated in the AACU Institute on General Education in May, 2005. This team has outlined a two-year plan for reviewing the institution's general education curriculum that will engage the entire campus community in review and revision of the core curriculum.

The primary aims of the core curriculum review plan are consistent with the goals of AAC&U General Education for Global Learning Project. The FSU plan reflects the newly revised university vision statement: "Fayetteville State University is a leading institution of opportunity and diversity committed to producing learned and responsible global citizens." The plan ensures widespread campus involvement in 1) defining the skill and knowledge required for "learned and responsible global citizenship," 2) promoting pedagogies that facilitate the acquisition of these skills and knowledge, and 3) establishing effective strategies for assessing them.

The core curriculum review process will be facilitated by the university's involvement in the Collegiate Learning Assessment Project conducted by the Council for the Advancement of Education (CAE) and sponsored by the Lumina Foundation, among others. One of 61 participating institutions, FSU will use the results of the Collegiate Learning Assessment to evaluate and improve student development of reading, writing, and analytical reasoning skills, competencies that are essential for learned and responsible global citizenship.

The Core Review Committee recognizes that effective general education reform requires the implementation of strategies that will engage students in learning inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, the curriculum review plan incorporates the work underway as part of the BEAMS (Building Engagement and Achievement at Minority Serving Institutions) Project. The plan calls for reviewing the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) to identify strategies that enhance student engagement in learning.

Need

The current general education model at FSU combines a core of common courses in intellectual skills with a distribution requirement of courses in different knowledge areas. A two-semester, Freshman Seminar (two credit hours) orients students to the University and guides them through the first year to the declaration of their major. In addition, students complete the following:

Core skills

- Freshman Seminar (2 hrs)
- English Composition (6 hrs)
- Mathematics (6 hrs)
- Speech (3 hrs)
- Critical Thinking (3 hrs)

Distribution requirements

- Health and Physical Education (2 hrs)
 - Natural Sciences (8 hrs)
 - Humanities/Fine Arts (3 hrs)
 - History/Social Sciences (3 hrs)
 - Restricted Electives (9 hrs), consisting of Foreign Language sequence (6 hrs)
- OR
- Two courses from History/Social Science or Humanities/Fine Arts (6 hrs)
- AND
- One other course from the University College Core Curriculum (3 hrs)

The University College Core Curriculum is overseen by University College, the academic unit that teaches the Freshman Seminar.

In many ways this model has served the University and its students well. The Freshman Seminar assures continuity and advisement through the first year. The Core skills courses ensure that all students have the same preparation in the intellectual tools needed for the educated life: oral and written communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking. The Distribution requirements provide a general knowledge of the world and its human inhabitants. Requirements in the humanities and fine arts, the social and behavioral sciences, and the natural sciences provide students a general understanding of the methods and content of these various disciplines.

A number of factors have led University College to initiate a review of the core curriculum. Retention of students beyond the first year is one concern. FSU has a good record of retention in the first year, thanks to the Freshman Seminar, the freshman advisement system, and the other University College programs. Retention after the first year does not match this performance. In addition, FSU would like to improve student performance on standardized assessments such as the PRAXIS exam for teacher education majors. Founded as a normal school for Blacks during Reconstruction, FSU has always identified itself with teacher education, and it must continue to

be a leader in education. Concern about student performance is one motivation to look for ways to improve the teaching of general education skills.

Structural changes and new programs have also influenced the need to review the general education program. In 2003 the College of Arts and Sciences was split into two schools: the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. A new chancellor charged these schools to develop new programs, a challenge to which the new colleges have responded with energy and innovation. At the same time, University College, which had been a department of the former College of Arts and Sciences, was moved to Enrollment Management. These structural changes altered the institutional basis of the general education program. The College of Arts and Sciences had been the de facto custodian of general education. Arts and Sciences faculty taught most of the core classes, and University College provided the Freshman Seminar. With the division of Arts and Sciences, the focus of its successor colleges on new programs, and the shift of University College, there is no longer a natural institutional basis for the general education program. The current review is intended in part to rethink the institutional support for the core curriculum.

Assessment of the general education program is a widely acknowledged concern on our campus. Currently, all students are required to take the College Basic Academic Subject Examination as a rising junior exam after 45 hrs of completed coursework. This exam is intended to be an assessment of general education, but its implementation has never lived up to its promise. Some students escape the requirement. Students who do take the exam are not required to achieve a specific score. Faculty and advisors make little use of the results. And no other means of assessment exists to remedy these shortcomings. New trends in higher education, such as embedded assessment, may offer ways of supplementing or replacing reliance on a standardized instrument.

The need to improve assessment of the core curriculum led the university to participate in the Collegiate Learning Assessment Project, which focuses on student learning outcomes in reading, writing, and analytical reasoning. This project is being used as a catalyst for reviewing the learning outcome goals for courses in the core curriculum and the majors and for promoting effective pedagogies.

Finally, the revision of FSU's vision statement makes general education review an institutional imperative. The recently revised statement affirms: "Fayetteville State University is a leading institution of opportunity and diversity committed to producing learned and responsible global citizens." To fulfill this vision statement, the university must define and assess the skills and knowledge required for global citizenship. The university has made concerted efforts to integrate global learning into its curricula. For example, the university offer courses in world civilizations rather than western civilization; the humanities sequence focuses on the humanities in a global context. Many degree programs include required courses that help students develop a global perspectives.

Goals

The Core Curriculum Review Committee has outlined a two-year plan with the overall goals of 1) defining the skill and knowledge required for “learned and responsible global citizenship,” 2) promoting pedagogies that facilitate the acquisition of these skills and knowledge, and 3) establishing effective strategies for assessing them. More specifically, the plan has the following goals:

Year One

- Involve the entire campus community in a series of seminars that will introduce participants to the aims and goals of the core curriculum revision process;
- Engage the faculty in a review of current assessment results from such instruments as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), the Rising Junior Examination; the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE);
- Engage the entire campus community in a process of defining the skills and knowledge required for learned and responsible global citizenship;
- Develop exemplary teaching strategies for promoting these skills;
- Begin review of the core curriculum and majors to determine their effectiveness in promoting these skills.

Year Two

- Adopt “Preparing Graduates for Global Citizenship” as the overriding theme of the academic year;
- Present lectures, workshops, and faculty development activities that focus on global learning.
- Develop specific proposals for revising curricula and individual courses in light of the review of the previous year;
- Conduct institutional review of proposals;
- Obtain approval for curriculum revisions;
- Publicize and implement the revised programs and courses.

The primary measure of success for FSU’s project will be the implementation in Fall 2007 of a revised core curriculum that ensures that students acquire the skills and knowledge required of learned and responsible global citizens and the existence of a comprehensive assessment plan of these skills and knowledge.

Team Characteristics

Leadership for this project will be given by the Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the five-member team that attended the AAC&U General Education Institute. The team includes faculty representatives from each of the major academic units at the university: Business, Education, Basic and Applied Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. The team includes individuals with extensive experience at the university and in teaching courses in the current core. Two of the team members were involved in the restructuring of the core curriculum in 1992. The team also includes faculty members who are relatively new to the institution and who will thereby bring new insights and experiences to the process. All of the

team members are respected by their colleagues so that their views and recommendations will be regarded highly by other faculty and administrators. The team has strong support from the chief academic officer and the chancellor.

In addition, members of the Core Curriculum Review Committee, which includes representatives from all the university's units and departments will also support and contribute to this project.

Contributions

Fayetteville State University will also be able to make significant contributions to this project. As indicated above, the university has already affirmed its commitment to global learning with its revised vision statement. This institutional commitment is also reflected in a number of initiatives designed to promote internationalization, including establishing agreements for student exchanges with institutions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In addition, Fayetteville State University serves one of the most diverse student populations in the nation. Fayetteville State University is an Historically Black University, but has a non-African-American enrollment of 25%. Moreover, Fayetteville State University has won national recognition as an institution that promotes students learning; FSU was one of twenty institutions highlighted in *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*.

These commitments and accomplishments will enable FSU to contribute positively to the Global Learning Project.