

# Annual Report 2009 - 10

## General Education

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# Annual Report

2009-10

## General Education

### Accomplishments in Relation to University Mission and Goals

#### Summary

**Revision of General-Education Requirements:** In brief, the general-education committee (GEC) concentrated on revising program's learning outcomes and redesigning the domains.

Addressing problems related to the intensives requirement was the GEC's first task. The completion rate for the general-education requirements (GER) has gone from between 50 and 60% to more than 90% in nearly every college as a result of this change.

**Military Block:** Upon the recommendation of the Veterans' Education Committee, the GEC unanimously accepted and presented a method for granting block credit to veterans to the Academic Senate. Because of some questions related to OBOR policy, we withdrew the proposal pending clarification. We anticipate its being reintroduced in the fall.

**Transfer Policy:** The general-education coordinator worked with Marie Cullen to update YSU's transfer policy for in-state general-education courses. YSU is now be in compliance with state law and OBOR policy.

**Assessment:** We have made some progress on genuine and relevant assessment. Because of the Voluntary System of Accountability and the College Portrait, YSU has supported the Assessment Office in carrying out the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a written exam that tests writing and critical-thinking skills.

**E-Portfolio Taskforce:** As a member of the e-portfolio taskforce, the coordinator has argued for the institution of an assessment program, such as LiveText or TaskStream, to enable GER learning-outcome assessment. This process is ongoing.

**Miscellaneous:** The coordinator has been involved in several additional activities related to general education that warrant mention: for example, participation in the HLC Academy, the newly formed Council on Teaching and Learning, and the Assessment Council.

#### Revision of General-Education Requirements

Revising the general-education program has been a high priority since the Higher Learning Commission's site visit and its subsequent report that called for changes, particularly in implementation and assessment.

##### Intensives Requirement

This year witnessed the biggest change to the general-education model since its inception: the Academic Senate approved the GEC's proposal to remove the intensives requirements from the GER. The learning outcomes related to writing, critical thinking, and speaking remain part of the GER; capstone courses are still required to include writing, critical thinking, and speaking.

In *YSU Assurance Section Two* of the HLC report, the HLC team noted the following:

However, after seven years, it is alleged that only about half of current graduating students

meet all the requirements of the general education curriculum.

In meetings with the deans, the General Education Committee members and members of the Assessment Council, a number of reasons were proffered for this outcome. Among them are:

- Lack of sufficient courses in the disciplines that meet the upper level writing, oral and creative [sic] thinking “intensive” course criteria
- Delayed development of “oral intensive” courses in those disciplines that do not have much background in rhetoric
- Deans’ ability to exempt students from meeting the requirements
- Difficulty of assessing writing across a major
- Delayed departmental response to option that allows departments to document assessment of “intensive” course requirements “throughout” the major courses (which would allow students to document satisfaction of requirements)

Those involved believe that departments will gradually submit assessment plans that document student completion of general education criteria, but there has been slow response to date. (10–11)

Included in the 2008–09 report were student-completion data regarding general-education requirements. Completion rate in some colleges hovered just over 50%; this figure improved over the course of the year, largely because of the HLC report and intensive work on the part of deans and department chairs across the University, but it was still poor. By the end of the academic year, we were barely above 60% in several colleges.

The GEC discussed this apparently intractable problem. Over the course of more than ten years, under three provosts, three general-education coordinators, and changing committee members, it has been impossible to do more than slightly improve these statistics.

The GEC had tried many different strategies to improving this poor compliance rate. In 2006, the GEC proposed a programmatic option for departments, which would allow them to spread out the intensive requirements across their curricula; the Academic Senate approved it at its May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. This option seemed attractive to departments, but it still required proof that a specific kind of pedagogical process was followed. For writing, for instance, departments had to prove that at least two sets of drafts and revision options were guaranteed. Some departments asserted that their students wrote challenging documents with plenty of input and feedback and that their students graduated fully capable of writing in their disciplines, without the imposition of a specific, pretty simplified writing-process pedagogy. Their pedagogy clashed with the one approved by the Senate and used by the GEC for more than ten years.

Presenting a somewhat different difficulty, the oral-intensive requirement was criticized for requiring far too much class time to implement, particularly since the requirement involved instruction, not simply the opportunity for students to present orally. In the programmatic intensive option, departments were faced with somehow guaranteeing the same amount of practice and instruction across a curriculum and documenting it. How would they prove or keep track of that? Since they were failing under a simpler system, it seemed unlikely that it would work in a more complex one.

The GEC unanimously decided to continue the learning outcomes related to basic skills (writing, speaking, critical thinking, and math); every university or college in the United States includes writing, speaking, and critical thinking in its general-education learning outcomes.

The GEC also unanimously decided to recommend eliminating the current intensive-course and program requirements. Departments would still be obligated to ensure that their students meet the appro-

priate writing, speaking, and thinking learning outcomes; their programmatic learning outcomes should reflect these skills (most already do), and their program assessment should include them (again, most already do). This year's assessment report to the Assessment Council will use the 2009–10 program reports to pilot assessment of writing, critical thinking, and speaking via programs.

This recommendation was presented to the Senate at the February 10, 2010, meeting (see attachment 1). Because this change entailed a change to the general-education model itself, it required a vote on the senate floor. After a vote of hands, the motion passed with 55 yes, 13 no, and 2 abstentions.

The HLC Academy mentor has voiced some concern that this change might lead to eroding attention to those pivotal learning outcomes. The same concern was voiced by Dr. Bowers and several colleagues from the floor of the Senate. The GEC's intention was to simplify and clarify the learning outcomes, not reduce their importance. The GEC will have to work with departments to ensure that these outcomes remain central to every department's learning outcomes and assessment. Also, benchmark assessment of writing, speaking, and critical thinking will need to be done at the lower-division through general-education courses to ascertain student growth and problem spots.

With no writing-across-the-curriculum coordinator to encourage and support including writing or serious faculty-development initiative that might address writing pedagogy, YSU has to rely on more indirect methods of support and encouragement.

The deletion of intensive courses has vastly improved compliance with the GER (see appendix 1), but some colleges are exempting students from skill and knowledge domain courses. This problem is of long standing. Some programs, such as the BSMD program, does not require the full complement of general-education domain courses; Senate action should be taken to formally exempt those students from the requirements so they do not count again YSU's GER statistics. This action has never been taken.

In summary, the intensive course and program system had not worked; a change of course was essential. It will be part of the general-education coordinator's task to develop ways to help departments to include and measure the effectiveness of writing, speaking, and critical thinking. This change alone has resulted in compliance statistics that are well over 90% in all colleges except STEM.

### **Revision of GER Model**

Far more time-consuming and difficult has been the revision of the GER structure and learning outcomes. This revision has absorbed several months of weekly meetings; the discussion has continued into the summer. This process will continue through at least the next academic next year.

Early in the discussion, the GEC agreed that problems inherent in the current structure makes revision essential:

- Thirteen learning outcomes distributed, often with replication, across eight domains, themselves divided into skills and knowledge domains, has created an unwieldy program that is nearly impossible to assess.
- From the GER's inception, advisors have reported that this system is difficult to explain to new students and that transfer students are often disadvantaged because our model differs substantially from that of our sister institutions. Many faculty advisors are still confused by the model and how it applies to their majors.
- Some domains, such as Selected Topics, are dysfunctional. Selected Topics was originally intended to be interdisciplinary. It was to allow experimentation and the inclusion of worthy courses that might pull together learning outcomes in unusual ways. In the final analysis, there are few selected topics courses, and most programs require students to take additional courses

in math, science, societies and institutions, personal and social, or artistic and literary perspectives rather than a selected-topics course. This domain is impossible to assess.

Another troubled domain is Personal and Social Responsibility (PS). Its required learning outcomes are so disparate that it is impossible to determine how effective this domain might be. The focus group on PS of spring 09 noted that faculty members in this domain have little ground for comparison or assessment across the domain. Individual courses can be assessed, but measuring the success of the overall learning outcomes across the domain is impossible. Several courses in this domain are popular with YSU students; one of the challenges will be to integrate those courses into a new GER structure.

- YSU's obligation to abide by Ohio's transfer module has been complicated by our general-education model. The state's model is traditionally organized; its domains have been part of general-education for decades:
  - English [writing]/Oral Communication
  - Mathematics, Statistics or Formal Logic
  - Humanities
  - Social Science
  - Natural Science

The GEC has considered many different models, primarily from sister institutions from across the state.

First, the GEC considered learning outcomes distinct from the domains, following the process used in revising YSU's GER in the mid-nineties. They decided to consider models in which learning outcomes were integrated in specific domains. That is the format they're working on now.

They have drafted an early version of a possible revision. The committee is meeting this summer to discuss this draft and whether it is complete enough to warrant presenting to campus to gather further input. The goal would be to encourage colleagues from across campus—faculty members, students, department chairs, advisors, and so on—to reflect on the general-education model and how it might be improved at YSU. This drafted model would provide a starting point for this discussion. In the GER revision of the mid-nineties, when the model was presented at Senate, many changes were proposed from the floor. If we are able to gather these ideas at an earlier stage, it should be possible to refine these ideas.

Ideally, the GEC would gain insight from this process. It's likely that colleagues will see something that we missed, or they may recommend something that we've not considered. The challenge is to integrate the best ideas and suggestions that arise from the process into the next iteration of the model.

The current general-education coordinator, Dr. Gergits, has met with Bruce Waller, chair of philosophy, in particular, since Philosophy has such a huge stake in general-education, and they are particularly interested in seeing specific changes. She also presented on this topic at several department chairs' meetings and at the senate. As much as feasible, the campus has been prepared for this discussion. More work needs to be done to develop input and feedback cycles, or the revision will face stiff fights.

## **Military Block**

The Veterans Affairs-Academic Planning Committee proposed that veterans be granted one of three possible blocks of general-education credit. The full proposal is attached. Below are two excerpts of the proposal to the GEC:

- Completed three or more years of activity duty would be awarded 18 semester hours of academic credit (listed on the cover page).
- Military Reservists who have completed two or more years of service and have been deployed

for a minimum of six months would be awarded 12 semester hours of credit (they would not receive credit for the following: Three (3) semester hours of credit—Selected Topics and Three (3) semester hours of credit for CMST 1545—Communication Foundations).

- If military personnel do not meet the qualifications listed above to obtain the 12 or 18 semester hours of general education credit, then they will be awarded six (6) semester hours of credit for Personal and Social Responsibility (PS)—15xxPS. This will represent basic training credit

It is therefore proposed by Veteran Affairs—Academic Planning Committee that qualified military personnel be awarded up to 18 semester hours of general education credit depended on military service record:

- Six (6) semester hours of credit—Personal and Social Responsibility (PS) 15xx PS—6 s.h.
- Six (6) semester hours of credit—Societies and Institutions (SI) 15xx SI —6 s.h.
- Three (3) semester hours of credit—Selected Topics (ST) 15xx ST—3 s.h.
- Three (3) semester hours of credit for CMST 1545—Communication Foundations CMST 1545—3 s.h.

Over the course of two meetings, one that included Tammy King, Jim Olive, and Cary Horvath, the GEC discussed the block. The GEC was concerned that the proposal looked, at first, like it was a simple “give-away” of credit; it initially seemed unlikely that soldiers received the academic background YSU hoped to foster in the general-education program. The committee members have little experience with military preparation and training; most of them are traditionally trained academics, sceptical of the ability of outside agencies, particularly such stereotypically “rigid” ones such as the military, to match the rigor and substance of traditional academic delivery methods. Drs. King and Horvath spoke to the academic nature of a typical veteran’s training and experience. The committee was persuaded, and they unanimously agreed to the proposal.

Marie Cullen had worked with the Veteran Affairs committee to craft how this credit might be counted on veterans’ transcripts as generic general-education credit. The GEC considers this credit to be akin to transfer credit; Dr. Bowers noted that it fits into life-credit models.

The GEC presented this new policy to the Senate. As a transfer or life-experience credit policy and not a change to the GER model, it didn’t require a vote.

Dr. Bowers suggested that YSU may run into questions from OBOR regarding how well this credit will be evaluated and by whom. She followed up with questions to Paula Compton, Associate Vice Chancellor, Articulation and Transfer, and Hideo Tsuchida, Assistant Director of Articulation and Transfer Policy. Jim Olive also arranged a phone conference with Cliff Payne, administrator of GI Promise. This kind of block credit is being considered across the state.

The GEC withdrew the block from implementation until YSU gets further information from Columbus regarding credit for military personnel. This summer, the Veterans Affairs committee is discussing some refinements to their proposal. If they create a new proposal this summer, the GEC is prepared to consider it and present it to Senate in the fall, at which time, it is very likely that someone from the floor will request a vote on the block.

## **Transfer Policy**

A persistent problem with YSU’s current GER model has been transferability, primarily with incoming transfer students (it may well be a problem for outgoing students, too, but we have no data on that). YSU’s model includes several domains that are not typical around the state. The state’s transfer module remains a traditional format, as noted above. Below is a table that compares the state’s version to YSU’s. Where we differ, problems erupt.

<p><b>Ohio Transfer Module</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics, Statistics and Logic</li> <li>• English: Composition</li> <li>• English: Oral Communication</li> <li>• Social Sciences</li> <li>• Arts and Humanities</li> <li>• Natural Sciences</li> </ul>	<p><b>YSU’s General-Education Domains</b></p> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Speaking</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge Domains</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Sciences</li> <li>• Artistic and Literary Perspectives</li> <li>• Societies and Institutions</li> <li>• Personal and Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Selected Topics and Electives</li> </ul>
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YSU’s domain structure includes Personal and Social Responsibility and Selected Topics; in addition, we spread some programs, such as Philosophy, between as many as three different domains. In Ohio’s transfer module, these departments would be located in primarily one domain; in the case of philosophy, it is Arts and Humanities.

Although many Ohio universities add additional requirements to this simple structure, such as diversity, freshman seminars, or service learning, most of Ohio’s universities use a version of the transfer module as their foundational structure.

In addition, YSU’s strategy for equating courses led to many students failing to get general-education credit at YSU that they have earned. For instance, many transfer students have taken Social Problems in sociology and anthropology departments across the state. At most of those universities, this class is in the social-sciences domain; it is not at YSU. Students with this course on their transcript got discipline-specific credit but not general-education credit; they had to take another societies and institutions course.

Another example, this time in math, demonstrates a different problem: most colleges include college algebra in their transfer module; we have no such course. Until this past spring, students entering with college algebra were given remedial credit only and required to take additional math.

Marie Cullen suggested that she and Julia Gergits work through the courses included in Ohio universities’ and community-college transfer modules to determine equates that make sense. Before we proceeded, we spoke with Dr. Bowers and then with Paula Compton and Hideo Tsuchida to make sure that we were understanding the situation appropriately. We were: state law and OBOR policy dictate that if a course is included in the transfer module, we are obligated to grant it general-education credit. These courses are not to be treated as remedial, nor are students to lose credit that they have earned.

We worked through the thirteen university- and twenty-three community-college-transfer modules to grant appropriate credit to incoming students. Department chairs will not need to review these courses for general-education credit, although they will still review them for specific equates.

Gergits met with Nate Ritchey and Gary Salvner to discuss the implications of this project. Many transfer students come in with math or writing courses that do not equate. By following state law and OBOR policy, many will now get that credit. These department chairs needed to know about the changes so they understood why it was happening and what they should do in the future.

Our current GER model made this equating process additionally difficult. Philosophy courses show up in the TM in the Humanities domain. At YSU, those same courses are distributed between three domains, often leading to students having holes in their general-education completion that they had not expected.

## Assessment

Assessing general-education programs is particularly challenging, yet we are obligated to do so. The Higher Learning Commission's site-visit report to YSU noted that general education, in particular, needed to repair its assessment methods and design reasonable methods of assessment.

It's much harder than it first appears. In *The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes: A Practical Guide*, Andrea Leskes and Barbara Wright write about general-education assessment:

Are students learning what the faculty expects them to learn? How well are they doing so? How can this learning be demonstrated? How might it be improved?

These are the basic questions of assessment—difficult questions about the core learning of general education that no institution can ignore. The Greater Expectations vision, while acknowledging the centrality of general education, suggests that a liberal education for the contemporary world encompasses much more than specific general education courses. It involves nourishing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed by all students (both for individual success and for responsible citizenship) and by society (for the demands of the workplace and of a globally interconnected world). These capacities should develop throughout the college years: in a student's major, minor, elective courses, extracurricular activities, and in community settings. (Excerpt of book included on the AAC&U web site, accessed July 6, 2010).

The Association of General and Liberal Studies notes the following on its web site:

Assessment of students' learning in General Education programs presents special challenges. In contrast to assessment of majors, the outcomes of General Education are diffuse, pervasive, and expressed in every course a student takes across the entire institution. The General Education curriculum is the responsibility of faculty across the institution but often administered by a special office not directly tied to any academic department. (AGLS web site, accessed July 6, 2010)

The GEC tried assessing general-education through individual-course assessment, a complex and time-consuming process. Departments had to submit learning outcomes for each general-education course that were specific both to the course and to general-education outcomes; then each course included two or more assessment tools to measure each of their learning outcomes. Some departments have eight or ten general-education courses. Each of those courses might have four to six different learning outcomes; each might have distinct assessment tools. Departments quickly found the process burdensome and pointless. It was very difficult to gain compliance with this method of assessment.

Further, the GEC found the reports nearly useless for assessing whether general-education was succeeding at YSU. This fractured approach provided tons of data, but that data led us nowhere.

We suspended this method of assessment last year. This year, we have focused on revising the model, but some progress toward genuine assessment has been achieved:

- The focus groups and survey of spring 2009 led to action being taken in the English department to address specific issues related to consistency.
- That same data and the completion data provided by Degree Audit (Marie Cullen) led the GEC to discuss the intensives requirement and to recommend its deletion. That action has

vastly improved compliance with the GER. Discussion on how to teach and assess writing, critical thinking, and speaking effectively will be necessary.

- The need to assess general education has led to serious talk of changes to the model. Other problems had shown up, as discussed above: transfer problems and compliance issues, in particular. But to that we add domains that overlap in their learning outcomes; individual departments pushed into three domains; some outcomes not required anywhere; some domains including so many learning outcomes that assessment is impossible; and so on.
- The Voluntary System of Accountability will provide additional data. The NSSE includes a few questions relevant to the current GER, particularly the diversity learning outcome. The Collegiate Learning Assessment test, a 90-minute writing exam, will provide additional data on writing and critical thinking. The results from the freshman testing are in; they show that YSU freshmen perform at about the same level as those at comparable institutions. The results for graduating seniors are due in August.
- Gergits will review all undergraduate program reports submitted in the 2008–09 academic year to determine what general-education learning outcomes have been measured and how. The GEC may be able to use those reports to supplement other measurements.

The complete assessment report will be submitted to the Assessment Office by the end of July. Tod Porter, the new general-education coordinator, may send an addendum that includes the new CLA data.

### **E-portfolio Taskforce**

In the HLC Academy proposal and subsequent plan, using an assessment/e-portfolio system to support general-education and program assessment was pivotal. We had proposed 2009–10 as the implementation dates; that hasn't worked. It looks as if YSU will not be implementing across the curriculum; GER isn't the primary focus of the current plan. Implementing through individual programs is the current plan; adoptions will be voluntary. The adoption across campus is likely to be sketchy, so assessing general-education's effectiveness across the curriculum will be difficult.

This year's work on the E-portfolio Taskforce was frustrating. In brief, the E-portfolio Taskforce proposed adopting LiveText as the primary assessment/e-portfolio system; the College of Education protested this selection; and the provost requested that we look again at TaskStream. The taskforce grew by nearly a third to accommodate BCOE representatives. After review, the newly re-formed taskforce recommended TaskStream.

In addition, Tod Porter, the soon-to-be general-education coordinator, believes that it's not feasible to assess general education through such a system; Nancy White, the YSU-OEA president, argued that it's a workload issue and can't be pursued without negotiations.

The provost and many of the deans think that this system cannot proceed without substantial support from faculty members, most of whom have not shown much interest in assessment, much less in a system that would help them to assess better.

The provost has asked that Sue Leson and a few others meet with each dean individually to gather advice on how to proceed with targeted implementation. Our first meeting was with Martin Abraham; although he is supportive of the enterprise, he also doesn't believe that the faculty will cooperate. It looks very much as if this enterprise may well fail because of a lack of support of assessment and scepticism about the utility of assessment/e-portfolio systems.

Without this system, however, the GEC and new coordinator will have to devise another system of assessment.

## Other Activities

Below is a list of selected activities undertaken by the general-education coordinator on behalf of the GEC during this academic year:

- HLC Academy Team: This year we ran two more Round Table meetings. We're planning for a mentor to visit campus next academic year. Tod Porter will assume this position when he becomes coordinator of gen-ed.
- Council on Teaching and Learning: Worked on a sub-committee led by Sherry Linkon on a project to improve faculty members' use of technology.
- Assessment Council: Reviewed program assessment reports, worked with Council on various issues.
- Cleveland State Assessment Seminar: Sharon Stringer, Hillary Fuhrman, and I were invited speakers at their fall assessment seminar.
- Eastern Michigan's SOTL Conference: Gergits and Stringer were invited to participate (YSU is a member of this Academy, too).

## Plans

Since I have stepped down as general-education coordinator, I offer these plans as suggestions. Tod Porter may wish to develop different goals.

For the 2010–11 year, the GEC will

- Continue revising the GER model; invite input and incorporate suggestions that merit it.
- Work with departments to ensure that the learning outcomes related to writing, speaking, and critical-thinking are being met within programs.
- Work with departments, such as math and sociology, to include more courses in the GER.
- Aid with developing distance-learning versions of general-education courses. Nancy White, newly appointed to the Provost's office, has made this a goal.
- Develop an assessment plan that is independent of assessment/e-portfolio support.

## Outgoing Coordinator's Observations

I have some concerns about the future of general education at YSU. One of the problems noted by the HLC was a lack of support for academic endeavors:

Within academic affairs, this partly results from the large portion of budget reductions being applied at the central level of the provost in order to protect college and department budgets as much as possible. Consequent reductions in such programs as support for teaching and learning and for general education occasioned criticisms of the administration for reducing support of activities central to the strategic plan. (*YSU Assurance Section Two*, 13).

The support for general education has eroded gradually over the past seven or so years. We briefly gained ground related to reassigned time, but that ground has been lost.

I stepped down from this position earlier than I would have because the provost cut reassigned time from the position. He cut time further when he appointed the new coordinator. Instead of three-quarter-time, the position is now half-time, the same as it was when I first took the position. That time was insufficient then, and it is insufficient now, unless duties are removed from the position.

If the new general-education coordinator is to make headway in assessment, he will need additional support. If it's not in the form of reassigned time, then he will need administrative support and a more substantial budget to manage assessment.

# Appendix 1: Completion Data for Spring 2010

SPRING 2010 GRADUATES ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION COMPLETION						
NUMBER/PERCENT WITH GENERAL EDUCATION COMPLETE						
CLASS Students	BUS Students	EDUC Students	FPA Students	HHS Students	STEM Students	Total Students
49 / 100%	63 / 98%	51 / 93%	34 / 92%	102 / 93%	84 / 82%	383 / 92%

SPRING 2010 GRADUATES - ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION COMPLETION							
NUMBER/PERCENT DEFICIENT IN EACH GENERAL EDUCATION DOMAIN							
	SPEECH MISSING 1 COURSE	AL, NS, SI MISSING 1 COURSE	AL, NS, SI MISSING 2 COURSES	AL, NS, SI MISSING 3 COURSES	MATH MISSING 1 COURSE	SELECTED TOPICS MISSING 1 COURSE	PERSONAL & SOCIAL MISSING 1 COURSE
	Number / Percent	Number / Percent	Number / Percent	Number / Percent	Number / Percent	Number / Percent	Number / Percent
<b>CLASS</b> 49 Students	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
<b>BUS</b> 64 Students	0 / 0%	1 / 2%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	1 / 2%	0 / 0%
<b>EDUC</b> 55 Students	0 / 0%	4 / 7%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
<b>FPA</b> 37 Students	0 / 0%	1 / 3%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	1 / 3%	0 / 0%	1 / 3%
<b>HHS</b> 110 Students	0 / 0%	5 / 5%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	2 / 2%	2 / 2%	0 / 0%
<b>STEM</b> 103 Students	0 / 0%	9 / 9%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	17 / 17%
<b>Total</b> 418 Students	0 / 0%	20 / 5%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	3 / 1%	3 / 1%	18 / 4%

- A significant number of spring 2010 graduates had multiple general education deficiencies across the domains listed above.
- Each number reflects the number of spring 2010 graduates deficient in the particular domain within the college. For example, in the College of Education, 4 students were missing 1 course in the AL, NS, SI domain.
- Each percentage reflects the percent of spring 2010 graduates deficient in the particular domain within the college. For example, in the College of Education, 7% of the students were missing 1 course in the AL, NS, SI domain.

## Appendix 2: Military Proposal

### Introduction:

In discussions with incoming students, the Office of Veteran Affairs has seen a significant number of inquiries as to what and how the prospective, as well as the current, student's military training, schooling, and certifications will convert into YSU undergraduate credit hours. As the procedure stands now, the student submits evidence of such training to Undergraduate Admissions. Here credit is usually awarded with 4 hrs. of Health Science applied for completing basic training. For other military credit to be applied to the degree or major, the student must present evidence to the department for review and determination. It is the opinion of the Veteran Affairs—Academic Planning Committee, in consultation with the Office of Degree Audit, that this process is too cumbersome for Faculty, Admissions Staff Members, and Military Students.

There is a need to recognize various military training and experiences as legitimate transfer credit that can be applied to the degree, as well as bringing a level of standardization to the process of equating military training across the academic spectrum. One particular conversation is illustrative of this need. A student with senior status was in the Navy and served on a nuclear submarine. During his tour of service he supervised five seamen and was in charge of the reactor aboard the submarine for two years. Upon entering YSU as undergraduate majoring in Physics, none of his experience in the navy was applied towards his major.

Because of this example and many others like it, the Office of Veteran Affairs formed an Academic Planning Committee with the intent of reviewing the process of how and when military credit is awarded and applied. The committee is currently made up of Associate Dean of BCH&HS, Dr. Tammy King, Assistant Professor of Geology, Dr. Shane Smith, Chair of Psychology and Professor, Dr. Vern Haynes, Chair and Associate Professor of Communications, Dr. Cary Horvath, and the administrator of Veteran Affairs, Jim Olive. The committee in consultation with the Department of

Degree Audit proposes the following structure:

### Proposed Credit to Award

Since training among the various military branches often has common themes, goals, and objectives, it was determined that in order to simplify the admissions process at YSU, and to maintain YSU's "Military Friendly" status, that a block of credit would be awarded to military personnel who meet the following qualifications:

- Completed three or more years of activity duty would be awarded 18 semester hours of academic credit (listed on the cover page).
- Military Reservist who have completed two or more years of service and have been deployed for a minimum of six months would be awarded 12 semester hours of credit (they would not receive credit for the following: Three (3) semester hours of credit - Selected Topics and Three (3) semester hours of credit for CMST 1545 - Communication Foundations).
- If military personnel do not meet the qualifications listed above to obtain the 12 or 18 semester hours of general education credit, then they will be awarded six (6) semester hours of credit for Personal and Social Responsibility (PS)- 15xxPS.

This will represent basic training credit.

After detailed discussions and long debates, it was determined that if YSU was going to help all military personnel uniformly, then the awarding of general education credit was the best option. General education credit is applicable to all disciplines and the nature of military training and life experiences

meet many, if not all, the learning outcomes and the purpose of general education on this campus (the rationale for awarding general education credit is discussed later in this document). It is therefore proposed by Veteran Affairs - Academic Planning Committee that qualified military personnel be awarded up to 18 semester hours of general education credit depended on military service record:

- Six (6) semester hours of credit - Personal and Social Responsibility (PS) 15xx PS - 6 s.h.
- Six (6) semester hours of credit - Societies and Institutions (SI) 15xx SI - 6 s.h.
- Three (3) semester hours of credit - Selected Topics (ST) 15xx ST - 3 s.h.
- Three (3) semester hours of credit for CMST 1545 - Communication Foundations CMST 1545 - 3 s.h.

In addition to the semester hours of credits awarded to qualified military personnel, an individual may apply for addition academic credit based on advanced training or college course work completed. In order to obtain this additional academic credit, military personnel must meet with Admissions Personnel or Department Chairperson in which they are seeking the additional course credit. This credit is awarded on an individual basis.

### **Goals/Objective and Learning Outcomes**

As stated earlier, the nature of military training and life experiences meet many, if not all, the learning outcomes and the purpose of general education on this campus. The following is offered as support.

The purpose of the general education requirements is to foster:

- Qualities such as curiosity, intellectual honesty, fairness, civility, and an openness to ideas and the sharing of knowledge All branches of the military foster civility, honesty and fairness.
- Thinking that is critical, independent, and objective: Training in the military teaches critical thinking techniques. Military personnel must be able to make decisions that impact lives. This requires not only critical thinking skills, but the ability to think independently and objectively.
- Integration of knowledge across disciplines: Military life involves each person being multi-skilled in areas such as interpersonal and group communication, personal, physical and mental wellbeing, and operational knowledge of equipment and technology relevant to the military occupational skill.
- The ability to function effectively in a technological society: Today's military is very dependent on technology and technological advancements, from the maintenance and operation of a wide variety of equipment and technologies relevant to the military occupational skill.
- Understanding of the importance of studying the past and present: Military personnel are very aware of the need to understand past behaviors and current political conditions in the world. When deployed in various areas of the United States and around the world, they are expected to understand the past and present culture of their new environment, as well as the history of the United States of America.
- Appreciation of literature and the arts as expressions of human culture Although individuals in the military appreciate literature and art, it is not possible to claim that military training and life encourage this general education purpose, but are trained to recognize a wide variety of cultural expressions.
- Recognition of the importance of acting as informed, responsible, democratically-minded citizens and members of the global community This purpose is the "goal" of military life and training. The military, although not a democratic organization, exists for many reasons, one being to preserve the United States' democracy. Individuals in the military are taught their role in the global community and their importance as peace keepers. All military members are taught they are ambassadors of the nation by wearing the uniform of the United States of America.
- And an attitude that learning is a personal and a collaborative process exercised over a lifetime.

Training and education occurs constantly in the military and is necessary for promotion and certification.

## GER Learning Outcomes

### Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **Write and speak effectively:** Verbal and written skills are taught to members of the military.
2. **Acquire, process and present quantitative and qualitative information using the most appropriate technologies:** The military is dependent on its ability to process and present information using the most appropriate technologies.
3. **Reason critically, to distinguish among forms of argumentation, and to derive justified conclusions:** Military personnel, especially in survival situations, must be able to reason critically. They are not taught how to specifically distinguish among forms of arguments but are specifically taught to present observed conditions and to contribute their assessments and conclusions to the decision.

### Students will demonstrate an understanding of:

4. **The importance of ethical reflection and moral reasoning:** Military personnel, although trained to follow orders, are also taught to reflect on the ethical foundation of those orders. Individual must determine the legality and ethics of individual behaviors. Each member is taught the Military Code of Conduct, Geneva Convention, and the Uniform Military Code of Justice.
5. **The use mathematics for problem-solving and decision-making:** The military uses mathematics at every level of its operation.
6. **The scientific method:** Members apply the scientific model continuously upon assessing situations in daily military life by knowing the problem (given an order), observing the situations, assessing the situation, applying trained techniques, and adjusting outcome.
7. **The interrelationships among science, technology, and society:** This is paramount in military operations and is taught on many levels to its members.
8. **Artistic expression in multiple forms and contexts:** Although individuals in the military engage in artistic expression, it is not possible to claim that military training and life encourage this general education learning outcome.
9. **The relationships between physical, mental, and emotional well-being and the quality of life of the individual, the family, and the community:** This is paramount in military operations and is taught on many levels to its members.
10. **The development of cultures and organizations of human societies throughout the world and their changing interrelationships with Western Society:** This is paramount in military operations and is taught on many levels to its members. Further, military personnel deployed overseas live multiculturalism and learn to work with allies from around the world.
11. **The organization of and theories behind legal, governmental, and social systems as well as economic markets:** Military members are cognizant of village, city, and regional cultural and economic expressions of their tour of duty stations.
12. **Diversity in America in all of its forms:** Military personnel are taught to respect others and to appreciate their differences, and work for the most diverse organization on the globe.
13. **The natural environment and the processes that shape it:** Military members are aware of the natural environment and constantly train for a multitude of environs and recognize changing land, sea, and airspaces.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Veteran Affairs—Academic Planning Committee.