General Studies Council Reflections Regarding Participation in
Phase II of the General Education Roundtable
Discussions

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Introduction

The General Studies Council (GSC) met in a working session to discuss its involvement in the second phase of the Roundtable discussions. The basic outcome of the discussion was that the GSC wants to be actively involved in the Roundtable process. The extent of the involvement is dependent on the goal(s) of Phase II and the governance procedures that will be implemented if the General Studies Program (GSP) is to be changed. The remainder of this memo will identify and explain concerns that were identified and that need clarification in order to determine the best method for involving the GSC in this Faculty Senate initiative.

Concern #1

The specific goal(s) or accomplishments intended for Phase II need to be identified as explicitly as possible. For example, if the intent of the Roundtable discussions is to extend the "brainstorming" of "fresh" ideas toward a general description of a General Studies Program then extensive participation by the GSC is not as critical a need for Phase II. However, if the goal is to produce a specific GS curriculum with identified courses, the participation of the GSC is considered to be very essential in the process.

Concern #2

The second concern that was raised is related to the specific goals and accomplishments mentioned above. A product of Phase I was a draft of a Mission Statement and Goals/Objectives. Is the draft "cast in stone" or is it meant to facilitate the next round of discussions? Addressing this question is essential because the answer implies what is intended to happen with the final product of Phase II. For example, if the intent of Phase II is to develop and present a curriculum that is a "done deal" the participation of the GSC is inherently critical to ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard. If the intent of Phase II is to produce a set of ideas for future reflection or work by the GSC in revising the current program or developing a new one, then participation by the GSC in this phase may be much more limited.

Concern #3

The implementation of the governance processes for approving a revised GS Program (or a new one) is unclear. Two very different scenarios for approving any changes or a new program were discussed. Either of these has different implications for GSC participation in Phase II. The possible scenarios discussed were

1. The Phase II recommendations will be forwarded to the GSC for its review, continued work with curriculum development, and initiation of the process for GS Program approval. This

scenario best reflects the role of the GSC and its assigned duties. If this scenario occurs, then GSC participation in Phase II could be relatively limited since its real work would begin later.

2.  The Phase II recommendations are forwarded to the Faculty Senate and approved by it and then SVCAASL. The GS Program is then given to the GSC to implement. If this scenario is implemented, the GSC should be extensively involved as participants in Phase II.

**Concern #4**

The degree of GSC involvement could be described as occurring potentially at any of four levels. The degree of involvement should be linked to the intended goal(s) and accomplishments of Phase II. The levels of involvement are identified below.

1.  **General Studies Council:** The entire GSC needs to be involved if the intent is to produce a completed program that reflects all voices.

2.  **Representatives from the Council:** Representatives from the GSC who represent each college and the library may suffice if a smaller number is needed and the intent is to produce a draft for later work by the GSC.

3.  **The Director (or another GSC member):** Minimal representation may be needed if the intent is to simply continue the "brainstorming" process.

4.  **No GSC representation:** No representation maybe needed if the intent is to simply "brainstorm" and not move toward a specific curriculum at this stage.

**Conclusion:**

The members of the GSC were very clear in their desire to play a constructive and objective role in the Roundtable discussions. The element that is unclear is what is expected to happen as a result of the Roundtable discussions. If the result is simply to encourage campus-wide discussion with the actual work and decision-making then being done by the GSC then representation is then quite different from its being given a completed curriculum with the "order" to make it work.