GENERAL STUDIES ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION – PHASE I
April 8, 2005

Present: Tom Martin, Daren Snider, Darleen Mitchell (CFAH)
      Bev Frickel, Steffen Habermalz, Kay Hodge (CB&T)
      Petula Vaz, Kate Heelan, Jane Ziebarth-Bovill, Deb Brandt (COE)
      Scott Darveau, Joe Benz, Paula Rieder (CNSS)
Ex-Officio: Deb Bridges, Martha Kruse, Finnie Murray, Glenn Powell, Bill Wozniak
Observer: John Lillis (Library)

Moderator Deb Bridges called the group to order. Members reported receiving the following feedback/questions from colleagues:
   a) Ideas should be focused toward an articulated goal.
   b) UNK students/graduates should be able to use various modes of inquiry (scientific inquiry, aesthetic inquiry, etc.)
   c) Could disciplinary areas be broken down into skills and critical thinking?
   d) The “preamble” to the outcomes section of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) document could be useful in the GS endeavor. Does the Round Table need a general overarching statement to guide its discussion?

Given the apparent need for a mission statement, participants were divided into small groups to draft such a statement for General Studies. Each group included representatives from the different Colleges. The results are summarized below:

Group 1: considered the statement in the SPC document adequate for a GS mission statement. This statement says:
   We will graduate persons who know the accomplishments of civilizations and disciplined thought and who are prepared for productive careers, further education, and responsible citizenship.

Group 2: drafted the following statement:
   A successful student will have tools for lifelong learning, for disciplined thought, and for ethical and responsible citizenship.

Group 3: drafted the following statement:
   Students will know the accomplishments of civilization, be able to engage in disciplined and creative thought in different contexts, possess the disposition for responsible citizenship, and develop skills that transfer across all disciplines.

The ensuing discussion foregrounded the following commonalities and questions:
1) The GS program should not emphasize preparation for a specific career.

2) GS courses should be separate from courses offered in the major.

3) GS courses should emphasize development of the mind, historical awareness, and social responsibility rather than discipline-specific skills.
4) GS courses should constitute a stand-alone program rather than feeding into a specific major.

5) Our current “cafeteria plan” will not allow us to meet the goals we have in mind.

6) Should the academic disciplines require specific GS courses for their majors?

7) Could/Should a stand-alone GS program be shortened (assuming that students could no longer count GS courses toward the major)?

8) What is the role of cross-disciplinary courses? Discussion of the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration revealed substantial interest in this concept.

Glen Powell noted that an interdisciplinary, thematic approach to general studies would make assessment much easier.

The round table adjourned.

Martha Kruse, recorder