

General Studies Roundtable – Phase II
Notes—March 2, 2007

Unwavering in its resolve to keep things moving, the group began with an extended discussion of the portal course described on page 3 of Chuck Peek's draft of 2/23/07.

The following questions arose over the function and delivery of the portal course (PC):

Where should the PC appear? Is this an introduction to General Studies at UNK? An intro to the Modes of Inquiry?

How does/would the PC differ from FY courses?

Is "portal" the best name for this course?

How is the PC different from core courses? Modes of Inquiry courses?

Which pedagogical strategies should the PC include?

These responses emerged during discussion:

If the PC is indeed an introduction to General Studies at UNK, it should be a freshman-level course. If, as Richard Rorty suggests, the function of education is to individualize, the PC could be a second-semester offering.

The PC would serve some of the same functions as FY courses. The PC would perhaps be more focused upon the development of intellectual attitudes and habits of mind whereas FY courses offer more specific skill development.

The term "portal" is not self-explanatory. The group considered different names for the course, including "Engaged Intellectual Discourse" and "Intellectual Engagement." The concept/definition of "citizenship" may be too vague or loaded.

Widespread agreement that the objectives and scope of the PC must be clear to the faculty teaching it. The PC should include a focus on critical thinking, the use of primary texts, and attention to social/political issues. Furthermore, the PC should be writing intensive and devoted to engaging students in wanting to learn.

Course objectives:

- Develop students' ability to engage in inquiry.
- Develop the ideal of liberal studies.
- Develop students' ability to engage with ideas, the beginning of lifelong learning.
- Help students understand why they are taking GS courses.
- Help students engage in critical thinking—probing assertion, considering alternative explanations, evaluating evidence.

Discussion then turned to section IIIB of the proposal, *Modes of Knowing/Types of Inquiry*. Again, the group raised questions over structure and requirements. How many of these "modes" courses should be required? Are the natural sciences adequately represented in the proposal? Is the proposal skewed in favor of the arts and humanities? Agreement that these should NOT be traditional introduction-to-the-discipline courses.

Given that the group will not be meeting for a few weeks, members are asked to work on the following assignments for the 3/30/07 meeting:

General Studies Roundtable Assignments

Assignment: In each of the areas below

Fully describe what criteria must be met by a course in that category, including type of texts, level of instruction, amount and type of required writing, title for the section, etc.

Give a rationale for requiring the course as it relates to the goals of a general education program with specific reference to the Phase I goals and outcomes. (This will enable us to see if any of the goals of Phase I are missed.)

Create a description that would be suitable for the undergraduate catalog for this category of course.

Overall, we should think about this work as creating a draft that GSC might build on in creating the requirements for approval of courses in each section. In addition to clarifying our own thoughts with respect to each course or section, we are creating the first pieces of a work that will sell the program to campus.

The following assignments were accepted at our last (3/2/07) meeting. (Jim, Don, Lynne, and Nita: please let Martha or Scott know which one(s) would you like to work on.

Task Groups:

Core:

Writing Course: Martha Kruse

Wellness Course: Greg Brown

Math for the Educated Person: Mary Rittenhouse

Communications Course: Aaron Dimock

Foundations of Literate Society Course: Vern Volpe, Mary Barton

Portal Course: Daryl Kelley, George Lawson, Chuck Peek

Modes of Knowing Courses:

Social Science Perspective: Ed Walker, Rick Miller, Mary Rittenhouse

Natural Science Perspective: Scott Darveau, Janet Trewin

Humanities Perspective: Mary Barton, Aaron Dimock, Chuck Peek

Arts Perspective: Mark Hartman, Sonja Kropp, Janet Trewin

Capstone: John Anderson, Jeanne Stolzer, Sylvia Asay

Unresolved Issues:

Number and distribution of courses in Disciplinary Focus

Required number and distribution of perspectives in Modes of Inquiry section

Credit Hours for portal and capstone courses

Total credit hours of program

World Perspectives Section