General Studies Proposal of the College of Business and Technology

University of Nebraska at Kearney

September 15, 2008

The College of Business and Technology faculty voted in general session to convene an ad hoc committee to offer an alternative General Studies document. This report is the product of that committee and reflects the position of the College of Business and Technology faculty.

Faculty members have a number of concerns with the Phase II document and do not believe it is in the best interests of the students. A few of our concerns are as follows:

- Transferability. The program would increase the difficulty of transferring in or out of UNK.

- Cost to students. For a number of programs in which general studies courses are used to meet program requirements, the Phase II program adds hours and costs to the students' programs. In some programs, students would not be able to graduate in 125 hours.

- The absence of economics as a general studies class. The UNK strategic plan states that the UNK vision is to "… [prepare] students to lead responsible and productive lives in a democratic, multicultural society…[Its programs should] encompass regional, national, and world environments…and prepare students for life in a global society." Based on this statement, economics is important to prepare students for active, productive lives in society since they will be participants in the economy and asked as citizens to make decisions that will affect the economy. Thus, we think that an understanding of economics should be included in student learning outcomes.

The College of Business and Technology recommends a program similar to the one adopted by the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The UNL program outlines ten student learning outcomes and requires a student to take a class to satisfy each of those learning outcomes (a total of ten classes in the general studies program). The UNL plan could be modified by using UNK student learning outcomes in place of the UNL learning outcomes. In addition, it could be improved by making the first writing class a portal course as recommended in the Van Ingen proposal. We believe that developing a program similar to the UNL program has several advantages.

- The program is streamlined with a class directly addressing and assessing each student learning outcome.

- The program is flexible, allowing each college to designate classes that would meet both general student learning outcomes and specific requirements of the students' majors. In addition, because it is only a 30 hour program, it allows students flexibility to experiment in different academic areas or to change majors without the sizeable penalty of additional classes or additional time to graduate.

- It is a program that is already designed, already considers NCA goals and requirements, and has an assessment plan in place.

In the table that follows we have listed UNL's ten student learning outcomes next to those of UNK General Studies Roundtable: Phase I. The table illustrates the similarity of goals and demonstrates the possibility of adopting a similar program. The complete UNL program can be found at ace.unl.edu. Our hope is that a program will be developed that will give students the best education and be workable for all departments and programs.

UNL Learning Goal	UNK Learning Goal
1. Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to specific audience needs, incorporate research or existing knowledge, and use applicable	1. Students should be able to communicate effectively by: applying the principles of effective writing and other forms of communication
2. Demonstrate communication competence in one or more of the following ways: (a) by making oral presentations with supporting materials, (b) by leading and participating in problem-solving teams, (c) by employing a repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships, or (d) by creating and interpreting visual information.	2. Students should be able to communicate effectively by: applying the principles of effective oral communication in group and individual presentations, and participating in fruitful intellectual dialogue and working cooperatively on issues of personal and public importance.
3. Use mathematical, computational, statistical, or formal reasoning (including reasoning based on principles of logic) to solve problems, draw inferences, and determine reasonableness.	3. Students should be able to think critically by: articulating a problem and developing a logical and reasonable response to it using appropriate sources, and demonstrating the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information in problem solving.
4. Use scientific methods and knowledge of the natural and physical world to address problems through inquiry, interpretation, analysis, and the making of inferences from data, to determine whether conclusions or solutions are reasonable.	4-7. Students will be able to: understand the logic, content, methods, and theoretical approaches of different disciplines, and develop creative thought in ways that foster intellectual curiosity and the ability to ask why and research the question
5. Use knowledge, historical perspectives, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and issues.	
6. Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior.	
7. Use knowledge, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to understand their context	

and significance.	
8. Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.	8. Students will be able to: identify and demonstrate the knowledge, attitudes, and actions essential to making ethical and responsible decisions in personal and public life, identify and analyze ways to balance individual needs and rights with responsibilities to a larger public purpose (the common good), and respect the views of others and show concern for future generations
9. Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue. Integrate these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities.	9. Students will be able to - describe, analyze, and evaluate the achievements of civilizations in their historical, scientific, philosophical, and social dimensions - identify and evaluate the contributions of diverse world cultures in the sciences, arts, languages, literature, and philosophy - recognize cultural influences on the development and expression of worldviews, historical and contemporary - understand the cultural and historical influences that account for similarities and differences among human beings, past and present - examine how their own worldviews affect the ways they view themselves and the world
10. Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.	10. Students will be able to integrate knowledge across disciplines

	11. Students will be able to: • recognize and apply the knowledge, skills and behaviors which promote physical and emotional well being • integrate their knowledge in ways that will deepen their understanding of issues of personal and social importance
	12. Students will be able to: identify and examine important principles and concepts that frame our American heritage and democratic government