

**To: Bloomington Faculty Council**  
**From: Agenda Committee**  
**Date: September 12, 2008**

### **Approval of Indiana University Bloomington General Education Policy**

For more than two years, the BFC and its committees have worked to develop a campus General Education Policy. We recommend that the Council now give that policy its final approval

On April 3, 2007 the Council received a presentation of the General Education Report. The outcome of that presentation was an understanding that the General Education Committee would proceed with implementation of the policy as written. There was no BFC vote on the policy at this meeting. In the course of the discussion, Ted Miller, then BFC President, noted that the Council was not then being asked to adopt the policy because he hoped that the General Education Committee would develop refined descriptions of the "Shared Goals" part of the guidelines part of the document. Ted hoped "that we can have something happen during the summer [of 2007] that will move us forward toward getting this stuff organized, so that very early in the fall the council can take action on this document..."

The General Education Committee continued its work but the next time it reported to the BFC was at our final meeting last year -- April 15, 2008. As in 2007, this was only an informational item. Professors Barbara Bichelmeyer and Russ Hanson, co-chairs of the General Education Committee, thoroughly summarized debates that had arisen within that committee and how they had been resolved. Everything discussed at that meeting pertained to the policy guidelines of the General Education Report and not to the policy itself. When the General Education Committee encountered things in the guidelines that needed interpretation in order to proceed with implementation, it debated those matters, conducted formal votes and arrived at conclusions supported by the Committee. Professors Bichelmeyer and Hanson reported to the BFC how the Committee had resolved these matters and how it was moving forward. Lisa Pratt, then BFC President, noted that "the BFC will meet in the fall [of 2008] and offer some sort of blanket support for the changes [in the guidelines] or some one or two of them may be called out to revisit... We do not bring this in intending an action item at this time."

What this means is that the BFC has never given its formal approval of the Indiana University General Education Policy.

We believe this should now be done as promptly as possible.

There must be some finality to the policy so that the General Education Committee and schools and departments can rely upon it as they move forward with all the details of implementing the policy and modifying school and departmental degree requirements. The BFC, BFC Presidents Ted Miller and Lisa Pratt, the Provost and others have committed us to a 2011 implementation deadline. This 2011 deadline was set so that the General Education Policy would kick in concurrently with the expectation that students admitted to IUB will have completed the "Indiana Core 40" secondary school curriculum and also to coincide with our own revised admissions standards.

In order for the schools and departments, and many others, to be certain that we are not going to change the underlying policy, we must finalize it. The sooner we finalize it, the sooner -- this academic year -- everyone else can confidently move forward with all they have to do. The sooner they do that, the better. If they are not confident about doing it soon, then we might miss the 2011 deadline -- something we simply can not allow to happen.

The policy needs to be included in university publications and on web sites.

Hundreds of faculty and administrators will now be involved in the implementation of the policy. Some of them, we know, are uneasy proceeding until they know that the policy is final. We are asking much of them and need to assure them that they can proceed.

Professors Bichelmeyer and Hanson tell us that implementation has continued since the April 15, 2008 BFC meeting and that it is still the case that they have been able to proceed without finding any need to change the policy presented to the Council in 2007 in any way. We commended it to the General Education Committee in 2007 to see if it could be implemented as then written. We now know that it works and that no changes are needed. There are still a few matters related to the Guidelines upon which the Committee is working and some of those, we know, may be important to some BFC members. At this point, however, we trust the process and institution we created -- the General Education Committee -- to proceed. We may want them to report back to us, sometime this year, on how the guidelines are working out. But everybody needs to know (1) that we formally have adopted the policy and (2) what it is.

The policy has had extensive vetting before the BFC and in the Educational Policy Committee since 2007. Had the General Education Committee recommended changes, we would have recommitted the policy to the EPC. Since, however, the General Education Committee has concluded that the policy as written in 2007 is workable and since that Policy has been agreed to by the Bloomington schools and by the College of Arts and Sciences, we have decided to bring it directly to the BFC for final action.

We urge the Council to approve the policy as quickly as possible so that nobody has doubts about proceeding with the implementation. To do anything else would, we believe, result in missing the 2011 date, raise concerns among many about the willingness of the BFC to entrust implementation of the policy to the many units on campus that must flesh it out, and be inconstant with our decisions in 2007 and 2008 to have the General Education Committee try to implement the policy as it was written in 2007 with us stepping back in only to fix any problems they uncovered.

The policy we propose for adoption follows. We have made but two non-substantive changes -- substitution of an "is" for an "are" and a "may" for a "might." We trust that this alternation troubles no one.

## Indiana University Bloomington General Education

The Indiana University Bloomington General Education Program consists of two parts, each of which is viewed by the campus faculty as equally important in the overall undergraduate educational experience. This two-part structure recognizes that some experiences are better completed universally by all undergraduates and other components are better defined within the context of each degree program. The faculty in each degree program ~~are~~ *is* responsible for developing the most appropriate ways of incorporating these two components into each degree program. The Common Ground must be incorporated into every degree program. The Shared Goals are recommended for inclusion in every degree program.

### **I. The Common Ground** (Required; up to 31 credits)

- a. Foundations
  - i. Writing: English Composition- 3 credits
  - ii. Mathematical Modeling – 3-4 credits
- b. Breadth of Inquiry
  - i. Arts and Humanities- 6 credits
  - ii. Social and Historical studies- 6 credits
  - iii. Natural and Mathematical Sciences- 5-6 credit hours; two courses  
OR a single 5-credit course that includes a substantial lab component
- c. World Languages and Cultures
  - Second-year level of a world language (6 credits)
  - OR World Culture courses (6 credits)
  - OR International experience in an approved study abroad (6 credits)

### **II. Shared Goals** (Recommended; to be structured by faculty in each degree program; ~~might~~ *may* be completed by embedding these goals in current curricula, through coursework for credit, or non-credit bearing activities)

- a. Intensive Writing
- b. Information Fluency
- c. Diversity in the United States
- d. Enriching Educational Experiences  
(service learning, internship, capstone project, student teaching, independent research/creative activity program, an approved study abroad experience, honors thesis, show, recital, performance)