McHale Report Review
Project E-6

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Final Report

As approved by the Undergraduate Student Government Senate on March 8, 2006 and submitted to the Executive Vice President and Provost Barbara Snyder

March 15, 2006

This project was researched and funded by the Undergraduate Student Government’s Policy Committee

President: Suzanne Scharer
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Introduction

The Undergraduate Student Government undertook a review of the McHale Report after its release in November 2005. We solicited feedback from students in a variety of methods including a direct email to all students, a letter to students published in The Lantern, and direct feedback from leaders within USG. The report was referred to the Policy Group, a subcommittee of USG’s executive branch, who was tasked with reviewing the report and weighing student concern. The panel consisted of twelve members, including five USG Senators representing various colleges within our University. The Policy Group chose to separate all the proposals into general categories and provided an opinion on each category. The Undergraduate Student Government recommends that this report be implemented in part. The specific programs and recommendations are included in the report that follows. The opinion of USG may take one of four forms:

1. **Approve** – USG agrees with the proposal as stated.
2. **Approve with Recommendation** – USG approves of the general concept; however, we have one or more recommendations that need to be considered and acted upon prior to implementation.
3. **Fail with Recommendation** – USG disapproves of the general concept; however, we have one or more recommendations for an alternative proposal.
4. **Fail** – USG disapproves of the general concept.

Following the completion of the committee’s review, the final report was submitted to the Undergraduate Student Senate for approval. The report was approved as the Undergraduate Student Government opinion on the McHale Report as of 8 March 2006. The dissenting opinions were kept in the report as comment on several contested issues by members of the review committee; however, they are solely the opinion of the dissenters. The Undergraduate Student Government’s officers and members of the USG Policy Group’s GEC Review Group are available should you have questions regarding the research dedicated to producing the opinions included in this report.

Overall, undergraduate students are pleased to see that our current academic program is undergoing such a rigorous review. We believe that continuous research and development of a leading educational program is necessary for the future success of our university. The substantive changes discussed in the McHale report provide our University the opportunity to have an open dialogue as we continue as a nationally recognized school for academic excellence. The Undergraduate Student Government wishes to compel the University and its administration to move forward with this report in mind as we seek to discern the best reforms for our general education curriculum. We are thankful for the efforts of so many faculty, administrators, and students and look forward to working together on this issue as it now moves into its implementation phase.

Respectfully,

Dave Knapp
Policy Director

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Dave Knapp
Policy Director

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The Objectives of the McHale report and the key questions they asked throughout the process are:

**Four Objectives:**
- Coherence
- Flexibility
- Oversight
- Transparency

**Overarching Questions:**
- What body of knowledge should all undergraduate students be expected to master prior to graduation?
- How can OSU best prepare undergraduate students for a lifetime of learning and citizenship?
Reduction in Credit Hours

Proposals:
Proposal 1: Reduce the total number of credits from 191 to 180.
Proposal 3: Reduce the number of Non-major requirements from approximately 85 credit hours to 60-65 credit hours.
Proposal 13: Reduce Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Arts and Literature by 5 credits each for a total of 15.
  • Natural Sciences (15 credit hours for B.A./ 20 credit hours for B.S.)
  • Social Sciences (10 credit hours)
  • Arts and Literature (10 credit hours)

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Decision: APPROVE with Recommendation
The Undergraduate Student Government finds that a reduction in required GEC courses is desired by the student population. Over the last several years concern has arisen regarding the necessity of certain courses for graduation. Undergraduate Student Government finds it illogical to require a heavy course load of non-major intensive courses (Proposals 3 & 13).

Concern arose regarding the total number of classes required to graduate (Proposal 1). In the course of the committee’s research, it identified that Ohio State currently requires at least 38 classes to graduate; however, several other institutions require 45 classes because their standard general education classes are only 4 credit hours. Other students also raised concern with the level of difficulty associated with some very small credit hour classes, particularly in engineering. Students do not feel that it is clear when signing up for a class that the credit hours required actually reflect the amount of work required in the class.

Recommendation:
Students are concerned with the integrity of their degree and while the issue of reducing credit hours looks good on the surface, it is important to consider the strength of one’s education. Therefore, the Undergraduate Student Government recommends that a clear and uniform method be used in evaluating the credit hours for a class, and that this method is published and made available to the University community as a whole.

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Modification of Categories

Proposals:
Proposal 4: The new categories will reflect the pattern below:

Proposal 7: No significant change in the NMR from the GEC

Learning Objectives:
- Students demonstrate computational skills and familiarity with algebra and geometry, and can apply these skills to practical problems.
- Students comprehend mathematical concepts and methods adequate to construct valid arguments, and understand inductive and deductive reasoning, scientific inference, and general problem solving.
- Students understand statistics and probability, comprehend mathematical methods needed to analyze statistical arguments, and recognize the importance of statistical ideas.
- Students demonstrate skills and familiarity with the use of technology for solving quantitative and mathematical problems.

Options of New Policy:
(Complete the following requirements (9-10 credit hours))
- Basic Computational Skills (not a credit requirement)
  - Math Placement Level R or higher, or Math 075
- Mathematical and Logical Analysis (0-5 credit hours)
  - Math Placement Level L or by taking one course from a designated list of courses
- Data Analysis (5 credit hours)
  - One course selected from a designated list of courses. May double count in major.

Proposal 14: Natural Science Requirement
- Students must take class in two areas:
  1. Biological Science
  2. Physical Sciences
- Requires one sequence and one lab.

Proposal 15: Social Science Requirement
- Students must take a class in two areas:
  1. Individuals in Society
  2. Institutions and Social Context
Proposal 16: Historical Survey Requirement

- For the NMR, the Historical Survey sub-category was removed from beneath the Arts and Humanities category and made its own category.
- The number of required credit hours was kept the same, but there is no longer any requirement for the courses to be in a sequence.
- This requirement can be filled by more classes outside of the Department of History such as a History of Art, History of Language, or History of Science course.

Proposal 17: Arts and Literature Requirement

- The Arts and Humanities sub-category Analysis of Texts and Works of Arts was renamed to Arts and Literature and made its own category.
- The number of sub-categories under this was reduced from three to two, eliminating Cultures and Ideas.
- The number of credit hours was reduced from 15 to 10 credits but the NMR kept the requirement that one course be in each sub-category of Literature and Visual/Performing Arts.

**Decision: APPROVE with Recommendation**

The Undergraduate Student Government chose found that each one of the modifications was designed not to remove the focus from a liberal arts education, but to allow each student a more coherent general education program. In order accomplish this it was necessary to reform the categories in the GEC program so they do not overlap. The Undergraduate Student Government does recognize the concern voiced by many students who feel the university is drifting away from a liberal arts education. However, the Undergraduate Student Government did not see any specific academic objectives removed in the new NMR program that was not replaced or combined with similar categories.

**Recommendation:**

The Undergraduate Student Government takes specific issue with the Moral Reasoning category. Morals are generally perceived as principles one derives from religion or upbringing. The Undergraduate Student Government concurs with student opinion that moral reasoning does not fall within the domain of a state university’s curriculum. Instead we recommend that the category be renamed “Ethical Reasoning” and focus on a more substantial teaching of ethical analysis by discipline.

**Dissenting Opinion:**

None
Written, Oral, and Visual Expression Requirement (WOVE)

Proposals

Proposal 5: Similar to the GEC requirements, two writing requirements will be required
  • The biggest change is that each class will have a new focus:
    Class 1: Focus on fundamentals of expository writing
    Class 2: Focus on oral discussion, and visual presentation
  • First two WOVE requirements may also be satisfied by successful completion of a freshman cluster

Proposal 6: Each major will require a third writing course.
  Class 3: Each major is required to have a third writing course
  (3rd writing course was optional under the current GEC program)

Decision: APPROVE
The Undergraduate Student Government recognizes that the current academic program does not provide support for visual and oral communication. This change to the current academic program will help ensure a more united curriculum and provide students with skills for post-college success.

Notes

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Moral Reasoning Requirement

Proposals:

Proposal 8: Create a Moral Reasoning Requirement
- New category that is intended to be double counted in the same way as the current diversity requirement.
- Emphasizes the need for a more substantial teaching of justice, fairness, obligation, honesty, citizenship, loyalty, courage, and personal responsibility.

Decision: FAIL with Recommendation
The Undergraduate Student Government finds that the goals of Moral Reasoning do not belong in a required general education program at a state university because moral reasoning implies a predetermined right and wrong. We draw a distinction between moral reasoning and ethical reasoning. Ethical reasoning falls better in line with some of the core objectives of the moral reasoning proposal because the focus is on the analysis of moral decisions and the reasoned paths to varying views on right and wrong. Please see the notes for further clarification on the definitions of moral and ethic.

Furthermore, the Undergraduate Student Government finds the objectives of teaching justice, fairness, obligation, honesty, citizenship, loyalty, courage, and personal responsibility as specific and restrictive. The focus of education regarding ethics and morals should be analytical in nature which allows students the freedom to develop their own opinions.

Recommendations:
The Undergraduate Student Government recommends the renaming of this category to be “Ethical Reasoning” and the objectives to be focused on a more substantial teaching of ethical analysis by discipline. Additionally, we believe that students should be free to pursue ethical analysis in any discipline for the fulfillment of this requirement (even those outside of their major).

Furthermore, we feel that the implementation of ethical reasoning as a requirement needs to include the following goals:
1. Focus on the reasoning process
2. Ensure (to the best of our ability) an unbiased perspective
   - This may be accomplished by having lecturers trained in ethical reasoning teaching
3. Ethical courses should be conducted by the departments/disciplines, but a student should be free to pursue ethics courses outside their major.
4. Have an oversight mechanism to ensure that the class is actually encouraging analysis of ideals versus preaching them.

Dissenting Opinion:
None

Notes
Definitions (From Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary):
Moral: of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior
Ethic: The study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person; moral philosophy.
Creation of a Foreign Culture Category

Proposals:

Proposal 9: Reorganizes the former GEC categories of foreign language, social diversity in the U.S., and international issues.

Options of New Policy:
(Choose two of the following, Study Abroad can only be counted once)
1. Language Proficiency through the 104 level
2. An Advanced Language Course
3. Foreign Culture Course
4. Study Abroad Program

Proposal 11: Rolls “International Issues” into the new “Foreign Cultures” category.

Decision: APPROVE with Recommendations

The Undergraduate Student Government finds that the foreign culture category is a necessary part the general education curriculum because it encourages students to further analyze issues and ideas that they may not come in contact with on a daily basis. Several different subcategories were reviewed in relation to these proposals.

Recommendations:

1. Study Abroad should be able to be double counted and a specific definition for what qualifies as a study abroad should be made readily available.
   The Undergraduate Student Government discussed in detail the possibilities for why a study abroad should only count once. No clear answer could be established and the McHale report offers no justification for this policy. As a result we believe that no specific qualifier should be established for Study Abroad programs.

2. In concurrence with the McHale report, the GEC Group finds no need to have separate subcategories for Western and Non-Western Culture
   Majority Opinion: Students should not be forced to examine non-western culture. The Undergraduate Student Government recognizes that it is to their benefit to do so, but believes that if both Western and Non-Western cultures are required, it will add further requirements.
   Dissenting Opinion: (Mike Hemmelgarn): It is my opinion that the fulfilling of a Western and non-Western requirement of the current GEC should be maintained under the curriculum suggested by the McHale Report. With the requirements outlined by the new “Foreign Culture Category,” I have no doubt that a student will receive sufficient exposure to and knowledge of another culture outside of his or her native one. I feel that the division of the world’s cultures into two categories defined as Western and non-Western is effective as it initially provides a distinction between characteristics, nations and cultures associated with Western civilization and those that are considered non-Western. The distinction could made as simple as defining western society using the United States and most European nations as a backdrop and defining non-Western societies using Middle Eastern and Asian cultures in the same way. Exposure to both fosters a better understanding of a globalized world in which aspects of both cultures play crucial roles in influencing political and economic decisions. Even if a student’s education path will not lead them to a position in which they will have to make those decisions, at least some knowledge will enable them to make an informed opinion on how to deal with how such decisions affect them. I use the example of China and its current emergence as an economic power to illustrate my point. All aspects of American society are affected by policy decisions regarding China in areas of trade and diplomacy. Should a student fulfill the Foreign Culture Category through the study of a culture defined as Western, then one of the other non-major requirements must contain a non-Western component and vice versa to allow for at least some exposure to both types of culture.
3. **In concurrence with the McHale report, the GEC Group finds that two classes are the minimum number of classes needed on Foreign Culture**

*Majority Opinion:* Two foreign culture classes offer either the opportunity for subject depth or contrasting cultures. This cannot be achieved with only one class.

*Dissenting Opinion (Kyle Fox):* While not in opposition to the creation of the Foreign Culture category within the Demonstrated Cultural Competencies section, it is unnecessary to require students to complete two of the four proposed requisites. It is sufficient to require one of the options, exposing the undergraduate to a previously unknown culture through mastering its language, taking an advanced language or culture course, or studying abroad. If the aim of the Foreign Cultures category is to present students with the opportunity to learn about something outside their scope of reference, then allow them to do so without burdening them with undue requirements. Moreover, those students who will benefit most from such studies in foreign culture will be those that will pursue these studies with or without requiring them for the entire undergraduate body.
Foreign Language requirements will be determined by the Colleges

Proposal:
Proposal 10: Foreign language proficiency would be decided at the college level.

Decision: APPROVE
The Undergraduate Student Government finds that the recommendation to have the colleges determine the necessity of foreign language is an important step that is already done in practice by most colleges and should be formalized. Foreign language through the 104 level, which is the current GEC requirement, does not provide a student with fluency and in order for foreign language education to really have an effect, it must include significantly more depth.

The Undergraduate Student Government heard many concerns from students who believe there is a need for foreign language in the general education curriculum because it is a necessary part of an increasingly global world. The Undergraduate Student Government agrees; however, the current GEC curriculum and education through the 104 course level do not satisfy this need, and more emphasis should be given to completing a foreign language minor which is addressed in Proposal 22.2 of the McHale Report (See page 17).

Finally, it is important to note that we expect very little to change by leaving the decision up to the colleges. Most colleges outside those encompassed in the Arts and Sciences, do not have a foreign language requirement, including the College of Social Work, Human Ecology, Engineering and the Fisher College of Business. Colleges in which foreign language matters the most, notably Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences, we expect will continue with a foreign language component and that only colleges like Math and Physical Sciences (which is contained in the College of Arts and Sciences) will opt out of foreign language.

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Social Diversity in the United States Requirement

Proposals:

Proposal 12: Students will need to complete a course from the following list:
- Take a course related to Social diversity in the United States
- Participating in an approved internship or outreach program
- Taking an intermediate or advanced course in American Sign Language,
- Taking an advanced course in North American Spanish beyond 104, with a focus on Latino language and/or culture in the U.S.

Decision: APPROVE with Recommendation

The Undergraduate Student Government approves of the concept of a Social Diversity in the United States component because it ensures recognition of the differences with our domestic society and serves as a complement to the Foreign Cultures category. Additionally, we believe the available options are too restrictive.

Recommendations:
1. The Undergraduate Student Government’s GEC Group found it difficult to clearly determine the value a “U.S. Social Diversity Internship”. The concept of an internship that focuses solely on U.S. diversity is exceptionally broad and open for abuse. The Undergraduate Student Government feels the options in Social Diversity in the U.S. need further review from Academic Affairs and options such as the internship should be reconsidered as a feasible option.
2. Broaden the options for fulfilling the Social Diversity in the United States requirement. Students should not be restricted to North American Spanish because the U.S. includes many other cultures outside those of Hispanic origin.

Dissenting Opinion:

None
Senior Capstone Requirement

Proposals:

Proposal 18: Students may meet their capstone requirement in one of two ways:
   1. 597 – Issues of the Contemporary World
   2. Specialized Major Capstone course

Decision: FAIL with Recommendation
The Undergraduate Student Government feels that the traditional concept of the “Senior Capstone” is an appropriate end to one’s college career, but we also find that exploring real life issues and applications is just as important and may meet the needs of some students better than a capstone.

It is important to note, that under the university’s current system, most Issues in the Contemporary World classes (the current “capstone”) are not true capstone course but specifically the exploration of real life issues and applications. Therefore the Undergraduate Student Government finds that there is a need to ensure that this requirement meets a student’s final needs as they prepare to complete their degree.

Recommendations:
   1. Rename category from Senior Capstone to Senior Seminar. The name senior capstone is deceiving because most 597 courses do not actually tie the major together, but focus on specific topics.
   2. Have two options to fulfill the senior seminar requirement.
      a. Senior Capstone by area of concentration
      b. Issues in the Contemporary World
      This reflects the McHale report recommendation; however, the important difference is that students must recognize that they have a choice between a capstone course geared at tying concepts together within the student’s concentration and an “Issues in the Contemporary World” class that reviews current applications of concepts learned by the different disciplines.
   3. The primary goal of the Senior Capstone should be to tie together the concepts presented throughout a student’s major curriculum. Secondary goals should include (as necessary) preparation for graduate school and future careers as well as practical skills training such as interviewing techniques, resume writing, etc.
   4. Priority for the Senior Seminar courses should be given to students with senior rank or by permission of the instructor.
   5. Capstone courses should focus on concentrations within majors rather than be overly broad (to the best of the University’s ability).

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Freshman Cluster System

Proposals:

Proposal 19: A freshman cluster system will count for 3 Demonstrated Breadth courses and count for the first two writing courses (This will cover 40% of NMR coursework).

Decision: APPROVE with Recommendation

The Undergraduate Student Government believes the Freshman Cluster will serve as a valuable addition to the academic program because it will offer entering freshman the opportunity to accelerate their education. We recognize there are many concerns with the implementation process, which are addressed in our recommendations.

Recommendations:
1. Evaluate the opening of the program to non-freshman and transfer students
   Often students do not recognize the full spectrum of options available to them at Ohio State prior to enrolling in classes. Additionally students entering at times other than the fall would not have this option available to them. The Undergraduate Student Government recognizes that some freshman may be prevented from entering the clusters if enrollment is filled with upperclassmen (this is addressed in the next recommendation).
2. If the Freshman Cluster simply becomes simply a Cluster than provide freshman (rank 1) the option of priority registration.
   A common concern at Ohio State is the ability to register for classes you wish to take. In order to ensure that the predominant focus of the Clusters stays on students just starting their academic career, the implementation committee should grant priority registration to rank 1 students which will prevent freshman from being overshadowed by upperclassmen.
3. Evaluate the potential ramifications of the following:
   - Taking faculty away from non-cluster classes
   - More work for faculty to develop program
   - AP Classes may discourage students from taking clusters (particularly honors students)

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Exemption/Substitution

Proposals:

Proposal 2: NMRs tied to the Major
The new Non-Major Requirements depend on a student’s major.
- Exempting an NMR in a student’s field of study.
- Substitute an alternative learning experience for a demonstrated breadth of knowledge.

Proposal 21: A student may exempt one NMR course “most closely related” to their major (Except WOVE).
Example: A political science major may use one of their major requirements to exempt out of a social science requirement.

Proposal 22.1: Students may replace one demonstrated breadth class by:
- An upper level course in a breadth area the student has already fulfilled.
- An approved extracurricular internship.
- Five Credit Hours of independent research.
- A three to five credit Freshman Seminar.

Decision on Exemption: APPROVE
The Undergraduate Student Government recognizes the need for flexibility in the general education program because of the diverse student population at Ohio State. An exemption in the “most closely related” field offers students the opportunity to opt out of a requirement that they may or may not have taken as part of their major. The majority opinion of the committee feels that the role of the exemption is to serve as a “catch all” in case students are forced to fulfill NMR requirements near their major that are not specifically required by the major.

Contention regarding the exemption arose based on the suggestion of a blanket exemption option of a single GEC requirement available in Allied Med College. This policy would nullify this option for Allied Med students. Furthermore, students feel that most students will fulfill their “most closely related” NMR by it being required in their major and should be able to apply an exemption to other areas.

Dissenting Opinion on Exemption (Mike Noon):
In the McHale Report, the current “drop a GEC” policy in some colleges will be replaced with an exemption for an NMR “most closely related” to a student’s major except for the WOVE requirements. This exemption should be changed to allow a student to drop 5 credit hours in any NMR requirement.

The proposed McHale report exemption policy has a few notable problems that would undermine the very concept of allowing NMR exemptions. In some majors, the NMR’s “most closely related” to that major are still required as a prerequisite to acceptance in that major. Therefore a student may be exempted out of that NMR requirement, only to have to take those classes anyways to be accepted into their major. For example, a student majoring in Physics, under the McHale proposal would be exempted out of 5 credit hours in the Physical Science under the Natural Science category. However, a prerequisite to the Physics major is Physics 131–2–3. Therefore Physics major would be exempted out of one course in the Physical Science requirement but still have to take Physics 131–2–3 that would satisfy the requirement. This would likely increase the overall credit hours Physics major would have to take.

A second notable problem is the lack of exemption for the WOVE requirements. Therefore, an English major may have to take extra classes outside of their major requirements to fulfill the WOVE requirements. This would increases the number of credit hours an English major may have to take as compared to other majors at the University.

The McHale exemption policy would most likely create an imbalance in the number of credit hours a student would take in certain majors due to overlap between NMR and major requirements. A better
method would be to allow a student to drop 5 credit hours in any NMR requirement. This would address the concern of NMR and major requirements by allowing, for example, a Physics major to drop 5 credit hours in another category besides the Physical Sciences. Also English majors could drop 5 credit hours in another category besides WOVE. This would ensure a uniform exemption application for all majors and therefore not unfairly exempt some majors out of courses that other majors would have to take anyways.

**Decision on Substitution: APPROVE with Recommendation**

The Undergraduate Student Government believes that being able to substitute courses for those specifically listed is critical to making the general education program flexible. The current proposal (Proposal 22.1) allows for students to use their internship, research and seminar experiences to count for NMR credit. These offer rich opportunities for student to concentrate or exercise their skills, and should be encouraged by the University. However, the Undergraduate Student Government’s GEC Group was concerned with the restriction on only one substitution for an upper-level course and in only a breadth area. The Undergraduate Student Government believes the purpose of the general education program is to enhance and not restrict a student’s educational experience and it should not restrict a student wishing to pursue more advanced studies.

**Recommendation:**

1. A student should always be allowed to substitute an upper-level course within any NMR category.
   Taking an upper-level course does not prevent a student from developing or experiencing a particular area of study and it should be encouraged.

2. Allow a student to replace any NMR class by:
   - An approved extracurricular internship.
   - Five Credit Hours of independent research.
   - A three to five credit Freshman Seminar.

The significant change here is that a student may replace “any NMR” instead of only the demonstrated breadth categories.

**Dissenting Opinion on Substitution:**

None

**Considerations by Students:**

**Exemptions**

- Allows students more flexibility
- Does not require students to do excessive work within their discipline.
- Policy will supercede existing exemption policies to provide more choice.
  Ex: Allied Med allows students to exempt one class of any GEC category.
- A student may only be able to exempt out of classes that are prerequisites with their major, which will not make the exemption useless.

**Substitutes**

- Allows students to focus their studies more on their interests which may not be aligned with NMR-specific courses.
- Provides encouragement for students to take advantage of alternative study options.
- An increase in the amount of Freshman Seminars may be difficult with the creation of freshman clusters.
- Students should be able to substitute more than one class because students learn more from upper level courses, research, and internships.
Senior Cluster System

Proposals:

Proposal 20: A senior cluster system will count for 3 Demonstrated Breadth courses

Decision: FAIL
The Undergraduate Student Government feels that the Senior Cluster system offers no distinct advantage to students. The senior cluster system is limited to seniors only, with no definable purpose except helping to possibly satisfy the senior capstone. Overall, the Undergraduate Student Government emphasizes the need to have a cluster system that supports everyone, regardless of rank.

Notes

Dissenting Opinion:
None

Minors contributing to satisfy NMRs

Proposals:

Proposal 22.2: Minors contribute to satisfy NMRs
This policy suggests that minors are given special standing in meeting NMRs, specifically:
- A minor in a NMR category should satisfy that category
  Example: A history minor satisfies the Historical Study category.
- A foreign language minor should satisfy the cultural competencies category and count for five credits in Social Science, Historical Study, and Arts & Literature (Total 15 credits)
- Interdisciplinary minors may be evaluated for NMR credit by the Oversight Committee.

Decision: APPROVE
The Undergraduate Student Government affirms that each one of the options for fulfilling NMRs with minors is satisfactory and helps to encourage flexibility. The key advantage is in the role provided to foreign language minors, which offers double-counting with Breath of Knowledge requirements. The Undergraduate Student Government sees this as an important feature because it provides students choosing to minor in a foreign language with additional benefits and relaxes their course load. Allowing colleges to determine the need for requiring foreign language may reduce initial involvement in the foreign language programs, but it is our hope that students who normally would not engage in foreign language minors because of the increased course load would decide to participate in them, thereby providing motivated students with opportunity to pursue depth in another field.

Dissenting Opinion:
None
Creation of a NMR Oversight Committee

Proposals:

Proposal 23: Creates a committee to continuously monitor the effectiveness of the NMR system and institute changes when needed.

Decision: APPROVE with Recommendation

The Undergraduate Student Government believes that an Oversight Committee is critical to the new GEC Program. The university must take an active role in ensuring that the new NMR program does not become as incoherent and inflexible as the system is now.

Recommendation:

Student opinion and representation is not present as part of the oversight process. In order to ensure transparency, which is a key tenet of the McHale report, students must have a role in oversight of the NMR program because the actions directly impact them. This may be accomplished through membership on the oversight committee or through a transparent method of gathering student concern.

Dissenting Opinion to Recommendation (Stephen Knoepfler):

The USG Committee reviewing the McHale report would like to see student input in the General Education Oversight Committee. I respectfully disagree. First, proposals XXIV, XXV, and XXVI all incorporate effective student input into the GEC by including assessments and surveys to see whether or not students feel their classes have fulfilled the objectives of the NMR requirement under which their courses fall. These assessments are scientific, and include a student perspective encompassing the entire student body for every course, so a course can be evaluated for its effectiveness in educating students accurately, and after the fact.

Second, the GEC Oversight Committee will have a lot on its plate, which will not be conducive to student input. The Oversight Committee is in charge of reviewing proposals for the Freshman Cluster and GEC/NMR courses through the ASCCI Sub-Committee on Assessment, as well as hearing reports from the WAC program. Such extensive work will require constant quarterly review of future class syllabi and course objectives, which will be too time-intensive for any student to feasibly sit on the GEC Oversight Committee.

Third, a method that is less time-intensive will similarly be infeasible and cumbersome. To survey students beforehand to see if they believe course will satisfy the objectives stated in the NMR is unrealistic; it would require surveying students for every course proposed.

Fourth, some issues should just be left to the experts. Department representatives, including faculty and administration, are the most qualified at reviewing proposed course objectives and syllabi, since they are involved in syllabi creation and review in their own colleges. It is not my opinion that students can judge whether or not a course is likely to satisfy the objectives of the NMR category, as they have never planned a syllabus before.

The GEC report, as it stands, incorporates student input by assessing student satisfaction and opinion after the class has been taken. The recommendation presented by the USG Committee is to incorporate student input before a class is offered. Such student input is either infeasible (because of time-intensity), unrepresentative of the student body (because the sample size is too small), and a detriment (due to inexperience) to quality course design. With student input already in place, I see no need to suggest more.
Endorse the Assessment Plans of the ASCCI Sub-Committee on Assessment

Proposals:

Proposal 24: Creates an assessment committee that is a subcommittee to the General Education committee (introduced in proposal 23) to evaluate the effectiveness of individual NMR courses.

Decision: APPROVE

The Undergraduate Student Government agrees with the McHale Commission and finds that the ASCCI committee, who currently handles the GEC program, should continue its oversight.

Dissenting Opinion (Mike Noon):

The current proposal suggests the creation of sub-committee’s based out of the respective colleges that those NMR courses are taught, such as the ASCCI sub-committee on assessment for the College of Arts and Sciences. A better sub-committee format would be to base the sub-committees on their respective NMR categories, for example a sub-committee for assessment on Demonstrated Breadth of Knowledge.

Currently, the majority of GEC courses are taught within the College of Arts and Science. As the new NMR system is proposed, that is unlikely to change significantly. Therefore if the sub-committees for the Oversight committee are determined by college of instruction, then the majority of NMR oversight and review will go through the sub-committee for the College of Arts and Science, i.e. the proposed ASCCI sub-committee on Assessment. This would place most of the burden of the rolling reviews and other oversight concerns upon one sub-committee, unequally distributing the oversight work.

Furthermore, the majority of the ASCCI Sub-Committee on Assessment would most likely be made up of representatives from the College of Arts and Sciences. This would unnecessarily reduce the representation of other colleges whose students are equally affected by the proposed NMR system. Although there should be sub-committees under the Oversight committee, basing them on college of instruction would create an imbalance of workload and representation.

A way to solve this problem is to base the sub-committees on the NMR categories. For example, there would be a sub-committee on the Demonstrated Breadth of Knowledge category, with possible sub-sub-committees on Natural Science, Social Science, Historical Study, and Arts & Literature if needed. Although this would not eliminate the imbalance in workload and representation, it would greatly reduce it. A college representative would be able to sit on whichever sub-committee that they feel has the greatest affect on their students. This would in turn distribute the reviews and oversight more evenly and allow for greater representation outside the College of Arts and Science.
Comprehensive Information Collection and Synthesis

Proposals:

Proposal 25: Creates different methods of data collection to help ensure the success of the new NMR program.
1. Creates databases to provide information on students, student’s colleges, courses, and instructors, among other things.
2. Creates surveys to be completed by the student after a NMR course to assess general satisfaction with course.
3. Creates detailed rolling reviews of categories of NMRs. The unit or units responsible for the delivering of the courses in that category will evaluate how the course has met its original goals and recommend changes. Every year one category is reviewed; hereby a cycle of review is ten years.

Decision: APPROVE
The Undergraduate Student Government affirms that the methods employed in collecting information with help produce the necessary information needed to ensure a continually strong general education program.

Dissenting Opinion (Andy Schreiber):
Proposal 25 of the McHale Report is unclear regarding how information collection will be achieved as well as to whom the information will be available at what time. First, the report asks for a review of a different category of NMR’s every year, making reviews of all the courses in a category occur every ten years. If the McHale Report is committed to overview of the new program, do they not feel a course can go hopelessly off topic in less then ten years? The report also suggests new surveys that consider how well a course stays on topic and how well the goals of the NMR curriculum have been achieved at the conclusion of the course. This is no point of contention; however, the Report makes it clear that these surveys will not be allowed to critique the instructor, only the course. While the Report has detailed plans to collect data information on instructors, how this data is collected now becomes unclear and raises issues of objectivity and worth. Also, the Report proposes keeping information on students. The Report does not expand on this, raising questions regarding where this information is coming from and who is using it. If this is information on what classes students are taking and how students feel these classes meet the goals, this is an outstanding idea. However, it is unknown if this information is going to be used by instructors to gather information on students and possibly bias instructor against a student before he or she sets foot inside the learning environment. This would be counterproductive for everyone involved and a terrible way to allocate the resources of the University. While this may not be the spirit of the proposal, one cannot assume to be in the heads of the committee. Perhaps more clarification would be advantageous. Meanwhile, there are too many negative possibilities of perverted intention in this proposal; therefore, it cannot be considered to be passed at great peril to the student body.
NMR Program Communication

Proposals:

Proposal 26: Establishes different reforms for ensuring the new NMR program is clearly communicated to students, faculty, GTAs, advisors, and administrators.

- Redesign the GEC web-site to include accessibility, information about general education goals, and course descriptions of all NMR courses
- All freshman and Transfer students must meet one on one with their NMR advisor and must discuss include a discussion of NMR goals and requirements. This meeting supplements the freshman seminar course and orientation advising. All students meeting with their advisor get priority scheduling over students failing to do so.
- All advisors must take a clinic to get approval to use the MARX system
- A “general education refresher” should be built into the annual advisors conference.
- The NMR goals should be discussed at all new faculty and GTA workshops.
- The NMR syllabi should include a statement on the appropriate category for the course and why it is so, as well as an explanation of how the course fulfills the goals of that specific category. The course’s placement should be reviewed with the rolling review of the course and category
- A survey similar to the SEI should be given at the end of every NMR course to evaluate the course, but not the instructor. This would focus on the effectiveness of the course in meeting its goals.
- The freshman survey course should be reviewed and its efficacy assessed.

Decision: APPROVE

The Undergraduate Student Government finds the McHale Commission’s emphasis on ensuring that the University keeps advisers informed, information available, and opinions recognized as a critical step for ensuring the continued success of the NMR program. The majority of the Undergraduate Student Government also believes that first year students should be required to meet with their adviser once during the their first quarter because it will help them identify who their adviser is and ensure that they are on the correct academic track

Dissenting Opinion:
Students should not be mandated to meet with their advisers. Students who are sure of their career path and their academic plans should not be penalized for being prepared.
Appendix A
Changes to the current General Education Curriculum

**Figure 1: Current GEC Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEC</th>
<th>Natural Science (20 BA, 25 BS)</th>
<th>Social Science (15)</th>
<th>Arts and Humanities (25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>Biological Science</td>
<td>Individuals and Groups</td>
<td>Organizations and Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Human, Natural, and Economic Resources</td>
<td>Historical Survey (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of Texts and Works of Arts (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Visual/Performing Arts</td>
<td>Cultures and Ideas</td>
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**Figure 2: Proposed NMR Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NMR</th>
<th>Demonstrated Breadth of Knowledge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science (15 BA, 20 BS)</td>
<td>Social Science (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>Biological Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3: Required Credit Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>GEC</th>
<th>NMR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>BA 20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>BS 25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Study / Survey</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Literature / Analysis of Texts and Works of Arts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>