16 September 2011

MEMORANDUM

To: Rodney Rogers, Interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

CC: M. Sue Houston, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

From: Neal G. Jesse
Chair, CUE Development Taskforce

Re: Draft of a Proposal for Accomplishing Strategy 1

Please find attached a pdf file. It contains the document entitled, “The BGSU Undergraduate Experience: A Draft of a Proposal for Accomplishing Strategy 1.” This document is a summary of the efforts of the Connecting the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) Development Taskforce over the past year, as well as, the work of the previous CUE Committee chaired by Cathi Cardwell.

The CUE Development Taskforce met on Tuesday, 13 September 2011. By a unanimous vote the Taskforce approved forwarding this report to the Provost’s Office. We hope that this document can serve as a starting point for further discussion and dialogue on this campus about re-envisioning our undergraduate education, with the goal of creating a truly exciting, rigorous, intentional, and connected experience that furthers the completion of our vision of being a premier learning community.
The BGSU Undergraduate Experience: A Draft of a Proposal for Accomplishing Strategy 1

I. An Introduction to CUE: History and Concerns

A. Introduction
This document reflects the current thinking of the second of two university groups whose task was to re-envision undergraduate education at Bowling Green State University. It owes much to the thinking of the first group, but it has also been shaped by the constructive criticism and cogent comments provided by the university community over the past year. Officially, this is a final report to the Provost, but the content is anything but final. In this document, we present our suggestions and recommendations for creating an undergraduate curriculum that has no peer. At a time when many academic programs are described as being adrift, we aim to develop a curriculum that is anchored in the simple belief that BGSU students should embody our university learning outcomes: that they acquire knowledge, both broad and deep; use that knowledge in the service of thinking, reasoning, and problem solving; develop communication skills and a sense of social responsibility; accept differences and behave ethically; and realize a personal growth that mirrors the growth of their intellect. This, after all, is what we promise our students when they enroll here. We need to fulfill that promise.

Other universities have learning outcomes as well; if we want ours to be more than window dressing, we need to rethink our undergraduate curriculum. Make no mistake: this is a tall order, one that calls not so much for radical change as for the courage, stamina, and resources to provide for all our students what some already receive in isolated pockets throughout the university. Accordingly, in this document we propose one model through which we can make our university learning outcomes universal learning outcomes. We believe that doing so means that our students’ learning experiences -- not all of which occur in the classroom -- must be chosen with purpose and intent, that there be both a structure and a process for integrating the learning experiences, and that there be some way of ascertaining what has been learned.

Although this report has been prepared for the Provost, it is being made available for everyone to read so that everyone may respond. Our intent is to begin dialogues among the Provost's Office, College Deans, academic departments/programs, and the wider university community about how we can ensure that all our students successfully attain our learning outcomes. As a starting point for discussion, we present one model. It is clearly not the only solution, but one that dozens of faculty members, staff, and administrators developed after doing considerable amounts of reading, thinking, and sharing of ideas. Furthermore, it has benefited from the contributions of hundreds of others who provided feedback at general forums, small-group meetings, through email and public comments. Our current thinking has been shaped by feedback, and we anticipate that that process will continue. This document, then, is a sketch or part of a study; it is far from the final tableau. To provide some context for the current picture, though, some background is in order.

B. History
In May 2009, Acting Provost Mark Gromko asked the Faculty Senate to form an ad hoc committee whose purpose was to examine the role of undergraduate education and, more specifically, the role of general education, in support of Strategy 1 of the University’s strategic
plan (Charting Our Future). This committee’s official title was the Connecting the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) Steering Committee. The committee’s charge was:

1. to develop educational criteria and potential conceptual models for a revised general education program,
2. to share those models with the University community through appropriate channels,
3. to propose a potential general education model that connects the undergraduate experience, and
4. to contribute to work leading to the University’s adoption of the model and its implementation.

In July of 2010, the CUE Steering Committee wrote and circulated *Connecting the Undergraduate Curriculum: Mapping a Proposed Framework for General Education*, which will be referred to as the July 2010 Report. (A second report, *Signature Elements of the Bowling Green Experience*, was written in response to initial feedback to the July 2010 Report.) Shortly after Faculty Senate reconvened in the fall of 2010, the CUE Steering Committee presented the elements of the framework to Faculty Senate, and was subsequently discharged, having completed its task. The July 2010 Report can be found at http://www.bgsu.edu/cue/page83887.html

[Note: The background work for the framework proposed in the July 2010 Report is not reproduced in the current document. In particular, the content of “Section Two: CUE Background, Rationale, and Significance,” which presents the mandate for change, the benefits and impacts of change, and a description of instructor-centered and learner-centered pedagogies is not found here, nor is “Section Three: Conceptual Learning Model—An Outcomes-driven Roadmap,” which discusses high-impact practices and the conceptual learning model. Readers unfamiliar with that material should consult the July 2010 Report.]

In September 2010, Provost Ken Borland formed the Connecting the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) Implementation Taskforce to continue the work of revising and updating BGSU’s undergraduate curriculum and to begin implementing elements of the July 2010 framework; we refer to this second group -- us -- as the Taskforce. During the fall of 2010, departments were invited to submit “blue sheets” for new courses that would be part of the Inquiry series for incoming first-year students. Inquiry courses were vetted through both the college curriculum committees and the BG Perspective Committee based on guidelines created by the Taskforce.

Around the same time, the Taskforce drafted a proposal for a new general education program, whose elements were largely based on the July 2010 report, and submitted it to Undergraduate Council in the fall of 2010. The proposal met with mixed reviews and subsequently was not approved by Undergraduate Council. Inquiry courses were still being created and approved, but the plan to roll out the new curriculum by a Fall 2011 deadline was halted.

Throughout the spring of 2011 members of the Taskforce met with constituents to better understand campus concerns about the proposed framework and its implementation. The purpose of this “listening tour” was to hear and gather all the concerns, comments, and critiques of the entire CUE process. There were many concerns raised about the framework that was presented in the July 2010 report, some of which are equally applicable to what’s being proposed here. In
particular, people had concerns about the administrative implications of CUE and its cost, course availability and course development, the impact on transfer students, the impact on students who change majors and on graduation rates, and finally, the timeline for implementing the framework. Here are the best responses to those concerns that are currently available:

**Administrative Implications & Cost**
Adopting the CUE framework will clearly have administrative and cost implications. In spring 2011, the Provost committed $2 million, over a three-year period, to meet the administrative needs of this program. Moreover, Finance & Administration is projecting minimal cost implications as BGSU moves from the current general education model to a new one. Finance and Administration is working with the Provost’s office on various funding models. These offices will provide a more detailed cost analysis and funding model for CUE.

Concerns about teaching loads, shifts in department and college enrollments, and state mandated requirements were posed to the college Deans who have committed to addressing these issues within their colleges.

**Course Availability & Course Development**
Registration and Records is modeling scenarios related to increases in course availability and the number of sections needed to meet the demands of the new general education components. These figures will be consulted before embarking on a full implementation of the revised general education program.

A template for the Inquiry courses was developed in the fall of 2010, but no professional development to assist course proposers was made available. Based on the feedback received, adjustments need to be made to the Inquiry Course template to enhance the flexibility of course design while still allowing students to develop a full repertoire of inquiry skills. Accordingly, opportunities for faculty to provide feedback on what should be included in course templates will be included in the course development process. In addition, state transfer requirements will be consulted during course development in order to facilitate transferability.

**Transfer Impacts**
Initial consultation with staff from Registration and Records indicates that the proposed course changes will need further consideration to identify difficulties for students transferring to Bowling Green State University. Continued consultation is planned.

**Changing Majors & Graduation Impacts**
The current BGSU model grants each academic department control over the course requirements for graduation and over how the general education courses integrate with the major. With the new general education model, departments will still be able to make adjustments to graduation requirements, subject to approval by their colleges.
Timeline
The Taskforce recommends that consideration of a proposal for approval by the appropriate university bodies be brought forth only after a period of dialogue with the university community. Moreover, implementation should be thoughtful and considerate of the challenges it will impose upon many programs. As such, we recommend that implementation not be completed for at least two years after approval.

In addition to the general concerns mentioned above, there were specific concerns about the CUE framework and its implementation. Toward the end of Spring 2011, the CUE Taskforce developed working groups to address some of the most serious shortcomings of the framework. These were:

Faculty and Staff Professional Development
In order to execute the various elements of CUE effectively, BGSU needs to develop a system for delivering professional development (to both staff and faculty) that enhances pedagogical skills resulting in increased cognitive gains for students.

Assessment of Student Learning
Assessment is at the heart of CUE. The need exists for identified institutional level assessment, specific and targeted learning assessment, and the administrative structure necessary for executing a comprehensive, holistic assessment plan.

Connecting Learning Outcomes
An intentional integration of the University Learning Outcomes across the curriculum is needed to emphasize the critical thinking, reading and writing skills that transcend all elements of the curriculum. The July 2010 framework did not elaborate on how the integration would occur.

Problem Solving Courses
We refer to the major categories of our general education courses – arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences – as domains. In the July 2010 framework, the Problem-Solving courses were presented as 4-credit courses that are inter-domain in nature and designed to be team-taught. Major concerns were raised about the intent, organization, and feasibility of offering these courses as proposed.

Integrated Undergraduate Experience
The means by which students would obtain co-curricular learning experiences that would complement their classroom learning was unclear. So, too, were the mechanisms for ensuring that co-curricular learning would enhance student learning, reflection, application and synthesis.
Through the end of Spring 2011 and at its retreat in Dearborn, Michigan during the summer, the Taskforce and its working groups came to some resolutions of the issues mentioned above. In the remaining sections of this document, we present that set of resolutions and await your feedback.

II. The Curriculum

This proposed revision of the undergraduate curriculum calls for transforming general education from a traditional “menu of courses” model to a comprehensive program that connects skills acquired in the major through a holistic integration of all learning experiences. This entails:

- Redesigning the baccalaureate experience so that throughout their enrollment at BGSU, students have systematic roadmaps for achieving a personalized liberal education, guided by faculty and staff
- Demonstrating the meaningful incorporation of all learning experiences for every academic major
- Linking general education to other parts of students’ experiences
- Documenting and assessing students’ experiences as a critical component for success

The curricular elements of the Bowling Green Undergraduate Experience include courses that satisfy general education requirements, college requirements (if applicable), and those in a student’s major. The general education curriculum consists of a set of foundational courses that are taken during the first year and a series of inquiry courses that are typically completed by the end of the second year. In addition, there are several core educational experiences that will be delivered in the student’s major during the third and fourth years of study. Naturally, the courses in the major are not general education courses per se, but consistent with the spirit of general education, we recommend that all students take courses that provide these core experiences. These curricular components are summarized below and are subsequently elaborated upon.

1. Foundational Courses (12 credit minimum)
   a. GSW 1110 and 1120 (6 credits)
   b. Quantitative Literacy/Math (3-5)
   c. University Seminar (3).

2. Inquiry Courses (9 credit minimum)
   a. One course in “Inquiry in Humanities and the Creative Arts” (3-5 credits)
   b. One course in “Inquiry in Individuals and Society” (3-5 credits)
   c. One course in “Inquiry in Science and Technology” (3-5 credits)

3. Global Issues Courses (12 credit minimum) drawn from:
   a. Single-discipline (single domain) courses (3-5 credits) or
   b. Cross-discipline (single domain) courses (3-5 credits) or
   c. Cross-domain courses (3-5 credits)

Students must take at least 12 credits with at least 3 credits within each domain
4. Cultural Diversity and International Perspective Experiences
5. Upper Division & Capstone Experiences
   a. Upper Division Experience (at least 3 credits)
   b. Capstone Experience (at least 3 credits)

The total number of credit hours that we have in our general education curriculum – most likely components one through four – will need to be discussed by the BGSU community. Shaping those discussions will be the need to comply with the Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy.

A. Foundational Courses
The purpose of the foundational courses is to introduce incoming students to the intentional and coherent education process that is our signature. In addition, these courses provide the foundation for developing skills in critical thinking, reading, writing, and quantitative reasoning, skills that are necessary for achieving our University Learning Outcomes (ULOs). [See: www.bgsu.edu/catalog/University/University8b.html]

1. University Seminar. This three-credit hour, semester-long course is required of all beginning students and provides early exposure to subject-specific content with specific emphasis on skill development. The university seminar will advance a student’s ability in achieving the ULOs through common learning outcomes, common types of experiences, common reading materials, and common writing requirements and standards. Central to this course is the development of critical thinking skills that will be applied throughout a student’s academic career.

The university seminar positions students to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Development of habits of mind that comprehensively examine issues and ideas as a means for forming an opinion and conclusion.
- Understanding and application of the skills necessary to achieve an ongoing basis of improving knowledge and competence and continued ethical learning.
- Ability to self-analyze prior learning experiences in depth to reveal significantly changed growth in knowledge, skills, or dispositions about educational and life experiences.

The emphasis on common experiences and the development of skills occurs within the context of specific content areas and as students develop their learning portfolios (see Section IV on Assessment). Academically rigorous content delivered and developed by knowledgeable faculty is fundamental to the success of the university seminar. A current example of how content, skills, and learning outcomes are successfully integrated and incorporated into a university seminar is BA 1500 (Overview of Business Administration).

2. Quantitative Literacy. At its most basic level, quantitative literacy is a way of thinking that realizes that the world uses numerical data to draw conclusions and that the mathematical analysis and understanding of these data are essential in the ability to draw solid conclusions. In order to achieve a standard of quantitative literacy, this course needs to meet the following learning outcomes:
• Ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations
• Ability to understand and create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence
• Ability to clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats
• Ability to analyze and critique the use of numerical arguments in a variety of real-world settings

The Quantitative Literacy requirement has been approved by Undergraduate Council and will go into effect Fall 2012. Currently, there are four categories of courses that have been designated *a priori* as satisfying the requirement; departments may propose additional courses for meeting the requirement. There will be ongoing assessment to determine whether students in these courses are achieving the learning outcomes listed above.

3. General Studies Writing 1100/1110 and 1120. The two-course General Studies Writing sequence is designed to prepare students for the types of academic writing they will be expected to do in college. The emphasis in GSW 1120 is on the development of critical and analytical skills that are used in both writing and reading. Upon completion of GSW 1120, students will have achieved GSW’s stated learning outcomes:

- Rhetorical knowledge
- Critical thinking, reading, and writing skills
- Writing processes
- Knowledge of conventions
- Values exploration
- Use of technology and library resources

(For more on the GSW learning outcomes, see www.bgsu.edu/offices/gsw/page31242.html)

B. Proposed Inquiry Sequence: Overview
In the proposed revision of the curriculum, inquiry, analysis, and problem-solving skills are taught through a two-step sequence: a series of Inquiry courses followed by a series of Global Issues courses (the Global Issues courses replace the Problem-Solving courses proposed in the July 2010 report). In the first step, students learn how knowledge has been created in the broad domains of the humanities and the creative arts, the study of individuals and society, and science and technology. In these single domain courses, students learn how to ask and answer questions using the methods of inquiry that are characteristic of a particular discipline. In so doing, students learn both the content of a discipline and how the thinking skills that operate on that content have been used to create existing knowledge within a domain. Students will take one course in each of the domains.

As mentioned earlier, the Problem-Solving courses were the subject of much concern and criticism. In the July 2010 report, they were presented as 4-credit, inter-domain courses (e.g., social science and natural sciences) that would most effectively be delivered through team-teaching, a pedagogical format not readily embraced by the administration. The more common critiques were that such courses were administratively unfeasible (e.g. team-teaching staffing
issues, course-load issues, problems with scheduling) and content-wise undeliverable (e.g. faculty not trained to teach across domains). The Taskforce heard these concerns and re-envisioned these courses as summarized below and detailed later in this document.

In the second step of the proposed inquiry sequence, students take Global Issues courses to formulate answers to questions that cannot be answered completely using the knowledge and tools of a single approach. These courses provide opportunities for students to further develop their inquiry skills by applying them to major questions facing us today. Deciding what to do about climate change, for example, requires us to look through the lens of more than one mode of inquiry. By learning how scholars who engage different modes of inquiry approach answering the same question, students acquire additional content knowledge and begin to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of each mode of inquiry. Moreover, because these courses involve generating answers to complex questions, students will have the opportunity to explore the values that underlie the answers that are proposed.

Upon completion of this two-step inquiry sequence, students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Apply appropriate methods of inquiry to relatively well structured questions or problems both in- and out-of-classroom experiences;
- Select and synthesize in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches within each distinct mode of inquiry;
- Analyze evidence to reveal patterns, differences, or similarities related to the well structured contemporary questions or problems drawn from both in- and out-of-classroom experiences;
- Draw logical conclusions extrapolated from the inquiry findings while discussing limitations and implications of each mode of inquiry;
- Propose one or more solutions/hypotheses, comprehend the complexities of, and be sensitive to, the ethical, logical, and cultural dimensions of the issues;
- Provide thorough and insightful explanations, consider the feasibility of solutions, and review the logic/reasoning of each potential solution;
- Provide answers to issues with solid rationales for their implementation and implement then in a manner that addresses multiple contextual factors;
- Review results with a critical understanding and define specific considerations of need for further work; and
- Articulate the values behind the proposed solutions to global issues.

1. The Inquiry (Q) Courses. Over the past academic year, approximately 30 single-domain inquiry courses were developed, and roughly two dozen are currently being offered during fall 2011. Each of the existing single-domain inquiry courses is worth three-credits, but there is no a priori specified credit limit or format for these courses. Inquiry courses in the sciences, for example, could be worth four or five credits because of a laboratory component. The focus of these courses is on how scholars have answered questions about the world using different modes of inquiry, and on learning about the modes of inquiry themselves: What methods are considered appropriate? What types of evidence are considered valid? To what degree are the answers
generalizable? Of what concern is variability in the findings? Through the presentation of
discipline specific content, each of the three courses highlights the process and procedures of
inquiry and how they take place in academic study. In this manner, students are introduced to
what it is to be, say, a biologist, an economist, or philosopher.

The Taskforce recommends one change from the way that these courses were conceived
previously. The July 2010 Report recommended that inquiry courses should all incorporate a
small number of “Themes” or topics that integrated and unified the sections. We believe that the
current level of professional development and assessment at BGSU makes this goal of unifying
themes unmanageable at present, but we recommend that the idea be revisited in the future.

Students are required to take at least one inquiry course in each of the three domains in order to
satisfy general education requirements. The courses are discipline specific and have an emphasis
on the dominant mode or modes of inquiry within that discipline, but each course should address
inquiry within the broader domain as well. The typical student will probably complete all three
courses during the first year of college, but it is not required that he or she do so. At least nine
hours of Inquiry courses must be taken to fulfill this part of the general education requirement.

2. The Global Issues Courses. One goal of the Global Issues courses is to have students
develop further the skills they learned in their three Inquiry courses. As such, completing the
latter is a pre-requisite for enrollment in the former. Whereas in the Inquiry courses, students
learn how scholars answer questions using single modes of inquiry, students learn in the Global
Issues courses how to use multiple modes of inquiry to find solutions to ill-structured problems
or answers to open-ended questions. In these courses, students continue to learn how biologists,
economists, and philosophers answer questions, but the answers benefit from using more than
one mode of inquiry. The typical student will take the Global Issues courses during his or her
second year, but many students may take them during their third year as well.

Recall that in the July 2010 report, the Problem-Solving courses were designed to be 4-credit
courses that were strictly inter-domain (e.g., counted for both social science and natural science
credit). These courses were renamed because “problem-solving” could suggest to the students
that a correct solution exists, much like when solving a physics or math problem from a
textbook. Moreover, owing to the resistance to, and difficulty in, developing appropriate inter-
domain courses, Global Issues courses need not be inter-domain. Ultimately, it is the pairing of
different modes of inquiry rather than of content from different disciplines that is important.
Consequently, we propose that there can be at least three types of courses that satisfy this
requirement: (1) single-discipline courses where students learn to use different modes of inquiry
to answer open-ended questions within a discipline (e.g., geology); (2) cross-discipline (single
domain) courses where students learn to use different modes of inquiry from two or more
disciplines within the same domain (e.g., a course that draws from psychology and political
science, both social science courses); and (3) cross-domain courses that draw upon different
modes of inquiry from two different domains (e.g., a course that draws upon both science and the
social sciences).

Allowing three types of courses that can satisfy the Global Issues requirement creates an
additional layer of bookkeeping. In order to meet current Ohio Transfer Module requirements,
students would take at least 12 credits of Global Issues courses, with at least three credits in each domain. Both single-discipline and cross-discipline courses can be worth 3-5 credits, with all of those credits applying to that domain. So, a student could satisfy the Global Issues requirement by taking three 4-credit courses, one in each domain, or by taking four 3-credit courses, with one course in two domains and two in a third. The cross-domain courses can be worth 3-5 credits, but only half of those credits count towards fulfilling the credit requirement for the component domains. Accordingly, if a student were to take a 4-credit cross-domain course that spans both humanities and science, he or she would earn two credits towards satisfying the 3-credit humanities requirement and two credits towards satisfying the 3-credit science requirement. Students would be allowed to mix and match single- and cross-domain courses, but would have to keep an eye on which courses count how much towards what requirements.

Some possible examples of single-discipline global issues courses with multiple modes of inquiry would be a gerontology course using theoretical and analytical perspectives of cross-cultural aging, a psychology course on sleep and dreams, and a business course on materialism, consumption, and sustainability. These courses would be offered through those respective departments and may be used to satisfy major requirement if the department so desires. Examples of cross-disciplinary courses that embrace different modes of inquiry are a course where aggression is studied through the methods of neuroscience and ethology, and a course where a sociologist and a political scientist team up to study social issues using quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry. Possible topics for inter-domain courses might include a social science/arts & humanities course on negotiating life and meaning in the city, a science/humanities course on women’s health in equatorial Africa, and a social science/science course on mental illness. These courses could also be used to satisfy major requirements.

We hope that faculty will view the Global Issues courses as opportunities to explore with their colleagues and students the multiple approaches that drive and sustain research within and across disciplines. To create inter-domain courses, faculty should be encouraged to seek other faculty who are willing to develop creative and unique ways to help bring multiple perspectives into the classrooms. We likewise encourage Academic Affairs to facilitate such discussions and innovation, and to support professional development opportunities that allows innovation to take place.

C. Cultural Diversity and International Perspective Experiences
One goal we have for our students is that they understand and take seriously the perspectives of others, particularly when those perspectives arise from the cultures of different countries or different ethnic groups within the United States. Accordingly, the current general education curriculum requires that students take courses that fulfill the International Perspective and the Cultural Diversity in the United States requirements. The CUE Taskforce strongly and unanimously endorses the stated goal, but there was less agreement on how to achieve it. Do we continue with a menu of courses model? Should cultural and international issues be deliberately woven into the curriculum, rather than have specialized courses that focus on those issues? Should we eliminate the distinction between cultural and international perspectives and aim instead for broad intercultural competence? Is there evidence of a developmental sequence for accepting and understanding different perspectives, and, if so, can we use that evidence to inform the structure of our curriculum? These are questions that the CUE Taskforce feels need to be
answered before making recommendations. We also feel that they need to be answered by the university community as a whole, and we eagerly await campus-wide discussion of these important matters.

D. Upper-Division Learning Experiences
A rigorous, intentional undergraduate curriculum is not solely the purview of general education: the student’s major field of study must contribute to this effort. The following high-impact learning experiences should be incorporated into the third and fourth years of study:

1. Intensive Writing Course. The GSW compositions courses prepare students for college-level writing, but it is in the major that the students develop proficiency in writing within their disciplines. The learning outcomes for the writing component of an intensive writing course are:

- Demonstration of a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose of writing
- An ability to use appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of a subject, convey the writer’s understanding, and shape the whole work
- Demonstration and execution of a range of conventions particular to a specific genre and/or discipline
- An ability to use high-quality, credible, and relevant sources and evidence to develop ideas
- A control of syntax, mechanics and language that skillfully communicates meaning

We leave it to departments to decide how best to implement the practice of writing in their disciplines. We also note this recommendation is consistent with a writing-across-the-curriculum initiative, should the faculty decide to formally move in that direction.

2. Upper Division Experience (3-credit minimum). We feel that it is important for students to participate in an experience or course appropriate to the major where they can apply what they’ve learned and practice their intellectual skills. These credit-earning experiences include, but are not limited to, additional writing-intensive courses, common collaborative experiences, participation and leadership in co-curricular and civic experiences, undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, and/or internships and co-ops. These experiences can be used as a precursor to the capstone experience and must be worth at least three credits.

3. Capstone Experience, in the major or college (3-hour minimum). The capstone experience intends to integrate general and liberal education with the learning, knowledge, and skills from the majors and minors, culminating in a product that demonstrates comprehensive mastery of University and program-specific learning outcomes. Such mastery is demonstrated by the integration and application of diverse kinds of knowledge, providing tangible evidence of having achieved the full spectrum of desired learning outcomes and serving as an instrument for summative evaluation. In the event that no capstone is available in the major program, students may take their capstone using an experience designed by their college. These experiences should afford the student the opportunity to demonstrate their development in cognitive maturity, independent learning ability, and ability to decipher ambiguity (Baxter Magolda, 2009).
Programs and departments will determine capstone experiences that are appropriate for their majors while still satisfying university learning outcomes.

**III. The Co-Curriculum**

A co-curricular activity is typically a non-credit bearing opportunity that requires students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in order to enhance that learning. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to: service learning, learning communities, internships, undergraduate research, study abroad, student leadership, and student employment. Currently, when students engage in co-curricular activities, they are not necessarily required to articulate how their classroom learning has been enriched. This is a shame, particularly when out of class experience can make course work more meaningful.

Accordingly, one important feature of the revised undergraduate curriculum is the development of a co-curriculum that provides the opportunity for all students to engage in co-curricular activities, for students to plan their co-curricular learning in much the same way that they plan what courses to take, and for students to demonstrate how these activities allowed them to achieve learning outcomes that could not have been achieved in the classroom. These last two components are critical, for they demand that there be intentional tie-in to what is learned in the classroom, that these co-curricular activities do more than run parallel to the classroom activities. What we propose is that every student receives a planned, integrated learning experience in which learning accumulates across classroom and out-of-classroom settings and over time as detailed in the Integrated Learning Plan (below).

**A. While Taking Foundational and Inquiry Courses**

As students begin their academic journey at BGSU, active engagement outside of the classroom will help students increase their self-knowledge and recognition of varied opinions and experiences (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007). Therefore, the following co-curricular elements are recommended to augment classroom learning:

1. As part of the University Seminar course students complete a plan – the Integrated Learning Plan (ILP) -- that connects their academic majors to the out-of-class experiences necessary for student success:
   a. Reviewing major and developing a relationship with an academic advisor to assist with the ILP
   b. Investigating student organization involvement
   c. Building relationships with faculty
   d. Establishing values and goals (short- and long-term)
   e. Exploring careers
2. Students engage in at least one relevant co-curricular learning activity when taking their single-domain Inquiry courses, some of which may incorporate co-curricular activities (e.g., service learning)
3. Students place in their electronic learning portfolios one artifact that demonstrates their gains in critical analysis and evaluation; identity development; embracing diversity; and the ability to make meaning internally versus relying on external influences (Baxter Magolda, 2009).
4. Student progress would be monitored in one-on-one meetings with an advisor and assessed through the Integrated Learning Matrix (ILM), a rubric designed to measure how the university learning outcomes have been achieved through both curricular and co-curricular activities (see prototype in Appendix). The ILM would be kept in the student’s learning portfolio.

B. While Taking Global Issues Courses
As students expand their engagement in out-of-class experiences they will increase their self-awareness, beliefs, attitudes, and worldview (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007). Therefore, the following co-curricular elements are recommended to augment classroom learning:

1. Students engage in at least one relevant co-curricular learning activity when taking their Global Issues courses, some of which may incorporate such activities
2. Students submit at least one artifact that demonstrates their growth and development in self-authorship. Specifically the students should demonstrate gains creating in interdependent relationships; collaboration; consideration of multiple ideas; and valuing of diversity (Baxter Magolda, 2009).
3. Student progress would be monitored in one-on-one meetings with an advisor and assessed through the ILM.

C. While Taking Upper-Division Courses and Engaging in Capstone Experiences
As students move toward graduation they enhance their academic skills by translating knowledge into tangible skills that enhance their sense of self and results in socially responsible behavior including engagement in larger communities (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007). Therefore, the following co-curricular elements are recommended to augment classroom learning:

- Participation in one or more experiences where students apply learning and practice critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills
- Completion of a capstone experience deemed appropriate by the academic major
- Submission of at least one artifact that demonstrates their growth and development in self-authorship. Specifically students should demonstrate gains in cognitive maturity; independent learning ability; and ability to decipher ambiguity (Baxter Magolda, 2009).
- Student progress would be monitored through an exit interview during the final 30 hours of enrollment and assessed through the ILM.

IV. Assessment

Based on the premise that measuring mastery and deployment of concepts and skills is the best indicator of student learning, rigorous assessment of University, program, and course learning outcomes must be woven into all aspects of the undergraduate curriculum. This will require a wholesale reconsideration of the current meaning and practice of assessment on the part of both faculty and students. While there is a great deal of assessment activity at BGSU, most of it is summative (mid-term and end of course), is aimed at the departmental and program level, and varies widely in scope and quality. Such summative approaches give only the broadest snap shots of student achievement and fail to influence either faculty activities in the classroom or student learning.
Research on learning indicates that there is another way to view assessment, one with utility not only at the macro level, but one that possesses the capability to enhance every aspect of students’ learning experiences. Formative, as opposed to summative, assessment is used by instructors to help guide educational activities by taking inventory of what students know and can do at a certain point. The purpose of formative assessment, unlike summative assessment, is not to evaluate what students have learned, but to evaluate how effective the instruction has been and how to modify instruction to foster student learning. We urge a stronger University commitment to formative assessment at the course and activity level, which embeds assessment activities deeply into the structure of teaching while instruction is taking place and there still is time for faculty and students to make changes. Formative assessment practices have the potential to erase long-standing distinctions between academic work and its evaluation. They can help faculty and students together to focus on cumulative mastery based upon the concepts of the learning cycle and reflective critique, broadly defined as activities requiring students to propose, reflect, revise, and re-propose. Applied across the University to general education coursework and to coursework within majors, these concepts will transform BGSU’s learning environment in profound and powerful ways.

To reach such an ambitious goal we propose establishing a range of formally scheduled assessment activities for every student enrolled at the University (see the Appendix for a working version of the Assessment Grid). These activities will function as a structured series of occasions bringing students, faculty and advisors together in support of integrative and cumulative student learning. Two advising innovations will be key to success.

1) All freshrn enrolled in the University Seminar will initiate a four-year personal electronic learning portfolio. The learning portfolio will serve as a repository for assignments, projects, and other learning artifacts and the reflective critiques from all courses and co-curricular activities during their matriculation at BGSU. For example, students taking both the Inquiry and Global Issues course are expected to provide at least one appropriate learning artifact and an accompanying reflection on why that artifact was chosen and how it demonstrates achievement of the courses’ stated learning outcomes.

Toward the end of the spring semester of the students’ second year, faculty assessment “panels” will review common assignments in the learning portfolio in order to evaluate achievement of learning outcomes. The learning portfolio will also serve as a useful assessment tool for departments and programs seeking to improve assessment practice within majors, particularly capstone courses. Specific use will vary depending upon need.

2) Establishment of the Integrated Learning Matrix (ILM), a document designed to evaluate and record achievement of Learning Outcomes within and outside of courses. Rubric-driven, the ILM will function as a companion to the course based structure of the student’s major checksheet. The ILM will be accessible and reviewable by faculty through a student’s learning portfolio.

V. Supportive Services, Processes and Practices
In order for the proposed curriculum to be implemented and maintained, a variety of support services, processes, and practices need to be in place. Some support services, such as advising and faculty/staff development, already exist but would have to be greatly expanded. Some processes (e.g., transfer student matriculation) cannot be modified whereas others can (e.g., course approval), and still others would need to be developed (e.g., assessment of learning outcomes using the ILM).

Perhaps the most critical practice that has to change is our current practice of teaching. In calling for a shift from instructor-centered to student-centered learning, we are asking for a major transformation. [For more information about student-centered learning, see the July 2010 report.] We recognize that we are calling for a dramatic change in culture, and we note that such changes take time and need strong institutional support. Some excellent instructional practices already exist at BGSU (e.g., learning communities, the Honors Program, some departmental programs), but bringing these practices to the entire undergraduate population requires a deliberate and steady transformation of the current culture at the university. As such, our recommendations should be seen as part of a decade-long movement toward changing the teaching and learning culture at BGSU. Realizing this transformation will require a systematic program of faculty and staff development, a much wider attention to and develop of genuine assessment, and a faculty reward system that places more value on the integration of research on how students learn into teaching and rewards instructors who use those research findings to regularly update their teaching and their courses in ways that maximize demonstrable student learning.

**Faculty and Staff Development**

Implementing the curricular and co-curricular elements and assessment regimen described in the previous sections means implementing wholesale changes in how we teach, what we teach, and how what we teach is assessed. These changes will not arise spontaneously. A thorough, well-planned professional development program for faculty and staff is essential for ensuring that there is consistency in how the curricular and co-curricular elements are delivered and assessed.

Professional development should be informed by what faculty and staff in different departments identify as important. Accordingly, a faculty-driven needs assessment would precede the development of any professional development curriculum. This needs assessment will be informed by discussions with chairs and faculty and by surveys of current teaching practices, and be based on what faculty are currently doing the and their goals. Areas that are likely to cry out for professional development and instruction as a result of such an assessment include:

- **Course development**: instructional staff will need help when developing the Inquiry courses, the Global Issues courses, the university seminar, courses that incorporate co-curricular activities, and writing intensive courses that do not overburden the instructor.

- **Pedagogy**: the instructional staff, most of whom were themselves taught using teacher-centered approaches, will need to learn about student-centered learning and how to incorporate active and reflective learning in their own courses.

- **Assessment**: in addition to learning how to incorporate both formative and summative assessment activities in the classes they teach, the instructional staff will need to learn
how to use electronic portfolios, how to develop valid rubrics, and how to use rubrics consistently.

- **Advising**: faculty and staff will need to learn how to move from a model of academic advising whose primary concern is selecting the courses a student should take to a developmental academic advising model where the focus is on the student’s college experiences as a whole.

We envision a variety of ways that professional development will occur, depending upon the complexity of the target topic (e.g., incorporating new technology into assignments vs. developing assignments and rubrics for an entire course) and the experience of the instructor:

- The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) already offers an impressive array of developmental and instructional workshops, some designed for those wishing to explore a new method or learn a different style of pedagogy, and others for those building on acquired skills in new pedagogies
- Extended workshops that last a day or two – or through a sequence of 3-5 CTL workshops – would be good for beginning instructors
- Faculty learning communities are essentially extended workshops that run for an entire semester with a small cohort of instructors and at least one facilitator
- On-line professional development and training would be ideal for target topics where input from fellow instructors isn’t necessary
- Bringing it home: faculty who have been identified as having expertise in, say, developing rubrics or incorporating active learning in their classes can share their expertise with colleagues in their home and in other departments.

**VI. Resources and Infrastructure**

Many concerns about the July 2010 proposal centered on the question of how we know whether what we are proposing – or, for that matter, what we are doing now -- is producing the desired results. This is a highly appropriate concern: it is a concern about the need for reliable assessment of current practices as well as any new practices that will be established.

**A. Administrative Structure for Assessment**

Meaningful, transformative assessment will require appropriate administrative structures and resources. The University should signal its commitment to the importance of assessment through the allocation of adequate personnel and financial resources. We propose that the function of the University’s current Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) be transformed from one that reviews programs annually to one that assesses student learning more directly. To do so, SAAC, under the leadership of an Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator selected from the faculty by the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, should oversee the implementation and long-term maintenance of assessment practices of the university-wide undergraduate experience. We feel it is important that assessment has a “face,” and can be associated with an individual who is responsible for its success, and individual who will seek out best practices and periodically review and revise our program. The Assessment Coordinator will also offer advice to departments and programs as they seek to establish effective assessment structures.
Proposed responsibilities of the SAAC Committee and Undergraduate Assessment Coordinator:

- Creation of specific CUE assessment structures, including the introduction of electronic learning portfolios, creation of the Integrated Learning Matrix document, the establishment of benchmark assessment teams, and the development and implementation of a “CLA style” instrument for measuring institutional progress.

- Training of faculty, college advisors, and student affairs personnel in all aspects of assessment practice. Training of associates for assessment panels. Sponsoring of assessment workshops. Staying abreast of current assessment research and scholarship and serving as a general resource for faculty members wishing to improve assessment pedagogy.

- Collation and management of assessment data. Dissemination of assessment data to departments and programs. Continuous data based re-evaluation of assessment practices.

VII. Concluding Remarks

This document, like the curriculum it describes, is a work in progress: prefatory remarks to a dialogue rather than the final word. As the curriculum takes shape, the processes and services that are needed to support it properly will become clearer, and the resources and structures that are needed to provide that support will emerge. What is currently a 20-page abstract will necessarily grow as the ideas contained herein are fleshed out through conversation, conciliation, and consensus.

In these twenty pages is the promise of something truly exciting: the ability to provide for all our undergraduates an education that has been forged through rigorous assessment, made deliberate and intentional by equally deliberate and intentional advising and teaching, and characterized by intellectual strength, personal growth, a sense of social responsibility, and a desire to learn. We already accomplish some of that here at BGSU; we can do better. We already have a good reputation in the state of Ohio; we can have a great reputation that transcends state boundaries. The CUE Task Force believes that revising the undergraduate curriculum following guidelines set forth in this proposal will do just that.

References


### CUE Development Task Force Members

**Current Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Assistant to the Provost &amp; Director of BGeX</td>
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<td>Marketing &amp; Communication</td>
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<td>Chanelle Vigue</td>
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- Colleen Boff  | Jerome Library
- Jill Carr     | Student Affairs
- Frank Goza    | College of Arts & Sciences
- Barb Henry    | Non-Traditional & Transfer Student Srvs
- Emily Lutenski| Dept. of Ethnic Studies
- Emily Monago  | Student Affairs
- Jesse Powell  | USG
- Bettina Shuford| Student Affairs

### Appendix

#### A. Integrated Learning Matrix (Prototype)

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Course Assessments can be used for multiple purposes like formative assessment, summative assessment, program assessment, institutional accountability (accreditation), etc.
Learning Outcomes are assessed along a developmental continuum. Developmental performance profiles for each learning outcome will be created with benchmarks (assessments) at different milestones that become gateways for progression in the major or remediation.
### B. (Proposed) Assessment Grid for the BGSU Undergraduate Experience

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**Notes:**
- **CLA** = Collegiate Learning Assessment, proposed for sampling (N=350) members of an incoming class on three occasions (except for baseline demonstration project in 2011 with 4 assessments) to evaluate critical thinking, problem solving, and analytic writing skills.
- **BGLA** = Bowling Green Learning Assessment, proposed homegrown performance and analytic writing instrument to replace CLA.
- **BGSU 1000:** Artifacts to allow assessment of critical thinking, writing, co-curricular integration via learning portfolio and assessed by review panels.
- **Inquiry:** Artifacts + reflections from Inquiry courses to be administered pre (1) and post (2) and evaluated by panels of assessment associates using inquiry rubric.
- **Global Issues:** Artifacts + reflections from Global Issues courses to be administered pre (1) and post (2) and evaluated by panels of assessment associates using problem solving rubric.
- **GSW** = General Studies Writing, continue to employ their comprehensive assessment of writing with expansion to writing within disciplines.
- **Program (high impact practices) plus capstone assessments** proposed to be conducted by panels of experts from within programs/majors.