Response to the General Education Program Review
Vice Provost for Academic Programs
July 16, 2001

I accept and support the Findings and Recommendations of the Program Review Committee report. The report finds that the structure of the program is “fundamentally sound.” The external reviewers note, in particular, that the published statements of skills and knowledge domains are a programmatic strength. This strength may not be widely appreciated by on-campus constituencies. The ongoing review of general education courses has the potential for improvement in the general education program, but the PRC report notes that the review needs to be “coupled with assessment of student learning and with faculty development to be most successful.”

There are several areas of concern, as well, and many of these center around communication. The external reviewers note a need for a “broader base of support for general education;” and the PRC finds that the “purposes and nature of the General Education Program are not adequately understood by most students and faculty.” This is a dangerous weakness, and must be rectified. Many of the PRC’s recommendations are designed to address this principle shortcoming.

In her response to the PRC report, the Director notes the potential benefit to be derived from an in-house small grants program, modeled on the Creative Imaginings for Student Success program, and directed at renewal of the general education program through innovation in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Such a program, I agree, could have a significant impact on improving general education at BGSU.

However, in the months over which the program review has occurred, the budgetary climate has taken a downturn. It may well be more difficult to find funds for such a program than it would have been a year ago. The budgetary limitations will undoubtedly affect our ability to respond fully to the resource recommendations in the PRC report.

Given this context, I would like to add one recommendation to those in the PRC report: the General Education Committee should play a greater role in setting the direction for General Education at BGSU. In particular, the committee should outline a plan for action addressing the recommendations in the PRC report, prioritizing as necessary on the basis of what is feasible in the context of current budgetary limitations. It may be the case that restructuring of the administrative organization of General
Education is necessary in order to respond most effectively to the challenges presented in the PRC report.

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Concurred:

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