Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to
General Education, 1 April 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 1 April 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the fifteenth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order. He reminded the Senate that last year’s Senate had passed Goals 1.1 (First-Year Experience) and 1.2 (Writing, Critical Reading, and Oral Communication) of the Gen-Ed Proposal, and that they had been incorporated into the version of the Gen-Ed Proposal that was defeated at last week’s meeting. He added, however, that it was unclear what the current status of those goals was. One interpretation of last week’s vote was that Goals 1.1 and 1.2 were rescinded with the defeat of the Gen-Ed Proposal; another was that they were not rescinded and that only the other goals in the proposal were eliminated. The Speaker said that his interpretation was that Goals 1.1 and 1.2 were not rescinded and would come into effect in Fall 2008. However, he said that it was essential that the will of the Senate be expressed on this matter and that one way to measure the Senate’s will was to challenge his ruling. He thus invited the Senate to challenge and vote on his ruling.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) moved to overrule the Speaker’s ruling on Goal 1.2 only (Writing, Critical Reading, and Oral Communication). The motion received a second. The Senate voted to overrule the Speaker. Goal 1.2 was rescinded with Goal 1.1 remaining in effect.

George Pothering, chair of the ad hoc Committee on General Education, moved to form a standing Committee on Gen Ed.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) said that he would offer two amendments, one to the motion to form a standing Gen-Ed Committee, and another to the duties of the Academic Planning Committee. Beginning with the first amendment, he moved to alter a number of details to Mr. Pothering’s motion and referred to a document listing the changes, which had been circulated before the meeting, and which is presented below:

Insert a new Standing College Committee, the Committee on General Education.

1) Composition: Seven regular faculty shall be elected to serve on the Committee. Preferably, each academic school should be represented on the Committee. The Committee shall have one voting student member selected by the Student Government Association. Committee members shall serve a term of one year and may, if re-elected, serve as many as three consecutive terms. The Associate Vice President for the Academic Experience (or other administrator designated by the Provost) and the Director of Assessment (or other administrator designated by the Provost) are ex officio, non-voting members.

2) Duties:

a) TO MONITOR AND REVIEW THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND to initiate and/or review all General Education Program revision proposals and/or changes prior to their consideration by the Faculty Senate; [=OLD ITEM 2.c REVISED & MOVED]
b) WHENEVER REQUIRED BY CURRENT GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICIES, to review proposals from departments and programs requesting that individual courses and/or sequences be counted for General Education credit, and to forward THE COMMITTEE’S recommendations to the Faculty Senate; [=OLD ITEM 2.a REVISED & MOVED]

c) To initiate actions, devise procedures, and make recommendations to the Provost and to the Faculty Senate on any and all aspects of General Education Program administration and program features; [=OLD ITEM 2.b]

d) To consult with the Faculty Committee for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness, and with the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment, when they conduct periodic assessment of the General Education Program; [=OLD ITEM 2.d]

e) To promote and explain the goals of the General Education Program to the relevant audiences. [=OLD ITEM 2.f]

f) To recommend that courses already fulfilling General Education program requirements be modified or that certain courses or course sequences previously fulfilling General Education Program requirements no longer be permitted to do so. [=OLD ITEM 2.e]

3) Course approval procedures:

a) The Committee shall use a public process of review when considering proposals for courses to count for General Education credit.

b) The Committee shall be responsible for publishing the approval criteria for each requirement, as well as proposal forms and instructions that may be used by any department or program. The department or program proposing the course is responsible for supplying evidence that the course fulfills the criteria that the Senate has approved for a particular requirement.

[OLD ITEM 3.c DELETED]

c) The Committee shall maintain a regular schedule of meetings and shall publish an agenda of course proposals scheduled for consideration. The agenda and copies of scheduled course proposals shall be available to all faculty at least one week in advance of the meeting. Meetings shall be open to all faculty unless the Committee has entered into executive session. Meetings may also include conversations between the Committee and other invited guests with expertise in a discipline, department, or program relevant to a particular course proposal.

d) The Committee shall forward all recommendations to the Faculty Senate.

e) In consultation with the Faculty Secretariat, the Committee shall maintain an archive of all materials submitted to it.

f) Requirements for a public process of course proposal review shall not interfere with the right of the Committee to enter into executive session.
4) Appeals: No changes in the General Education Program shall be presented to the Faculty Senate without the Committee’s action. Any decision of the Committee on General Education can be appealed to the Faculty Senate.

5) Effective ON THE DATE ON WHICH THIS COMMITTEE IS FIRST CONVENED, no change to the General Education Program shall be approved without CONSIDERATION BY this committee.

After the motion received a second, Mr. Wilder explained that in light of last week’s vote on Gen Ed, the College needed a committee that would work with the current Gen-Ed system and envision reform. In his review of the proposal to form of Gen-Ed Committee offered by the ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee, he tried to keep as close to the original proposal as possible, but saw that the standing committee needed to be charged with the task of continuously reviewing Gen Ed. In the original proposal for a committee, the committee’s purpose was mainly to review courses and monitor the Gen-Ed system. What is needed now, he stressed, is a committee that will take ideas generated by the earlier ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee and the Senate in its deliberations and use them to propose changes. To have a committee charged with this purpose, Mr. Wilder pointed out, was expressed by the Senate in recent meetings. He then briefly discussed some of the particulars of his amendment that would redefine the committee’s purpose and enable it to achieve that purpose.

Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said that the Academic Planning Committee is supposed to review academic programs. Mr. Wilder pointed out that his second amendment would address that issue. Julia Eichelberger (guest and 2006-07 chair of the ad hoc Committee on Gen Ed) asked Mr. Wilder to elaborate on 2.b of his amendment. Mr. Wilder replied that that he wanted the committee to work with a goal-driven Gen-Ed program, which would require it to review courses regularly in light of the goals. Ms. Eichelberger asked about the extent of the committee’s jurisdiction over the Gen-Ed curriculum. Mr. Wilder responded that the committee would only review courses that deal directly with Gen Ed. Why that set up, asked Ms. Eichelberger? Why not give the committee greater power. Mr. Wilder replied that the committee’s purview was considerable, and that he thought he was trying to accomplish what Ms. Eichelberger was envisioning for the committee.

Moving to a different topic, Bob Mignone (guest) said that the Senate has clarified its wishes with respect to Goals 1.1 and 1.2, but asked about the status of the other goals approved by the Senate two years ago. Will the Gen-Ed Committee base its assessment of courses on those goals. Speaker Kelly answered that those are the goals, and that they have been approved. They were approved by the Senate in January 2006 and then amended by Senate in Fall 2006. Thus the Senate from two different academic years has twice approved the goals, which are already in use. SACS complained about the absence of a goal-driven, assessable curriculum, and our response is that we have established goals and that our current Gen-Ed program is being assessed in accordance with those goals. Last week’s vote defeating the Gen-Ed Proposal did not, the Speaker continued, rescind those goals. A specific attempt had been made to rescind goals 5 and 6, but it failed. Goals 1-6 are all in effect. Mr. Mignone replied that that history of the goals was not his main concern; rather, his concern was that the Senate today be aware that any approved Gen-Ed Committee will be basing its decisions on those goals.
Jeffrey Diamond (History) thought there was a problem with throwing the task of reform on a committee that didn’t succeed last time. He wondered, too, how one goes about implementing a new system piecemeal. Susan Kattwinkel (guest) answered that the *ad hoc* Gen-Ed Committee was charged with re-thinking and remaking the Gen-Ed program, whereas the standing committee will be monitoring our current program for assessment and offer some changes. Mr. Phillips said that he was very optimistic about the committee. It can be even more all-encompassing than the *ad hoc* committee was. It can offer small, incremental changes to our current system or whole-scale revisions. With respect to the issue of goals, Mr. Phillips said they were good and that he had no problem with them. The new committee can work with them and propose changes. It was essential, he said, to have the committee and he endorsed Mr. Wilder’s proposed changes to the committee. George Hopkins (History) agreed, and recalled that one mistake in the failed Gen-Ed reform effort of ten years ago was not creating a standing committee to look at Gen Ed.

Phil Dustan (Biology) asked why the Academic Planning Committee couldn’t do what the proposed new committee is supposed to do. Why create more bureaucracy? Mr. Pothering said that the Academic Planning Committee is a Senate committee and helps the Senate do its business, but the proposed committee would be a *faculty* committee and is thus more appropriate for the tasks it is being proposed to do.

Gary Harrison (Mathematics) moved to divide the question with respect to Mr. Wilder’s amendment and separate the proposed deletion of 3c from everything else. The motion received a second. The Senate approved the motion to divide the question. The Speaker said the issue of deleting 3c would be discussed second, after the Senate had deliberated on the other parts of Mr. Wilder’s amendment.

Richard Nunan (at-large) asked about the use of the word “convened” in item #5. What if the committee is never “convened”? Mr. Wilder responded that he had never imagined such a possibility. Mr. Hopkins asked for unanimous consent to change the word “convened” to “established.” Unanimous consent was granted.

Brian McGee (Communication) asked if the intent of the amendment was to make the committee exempt from reviewing courses that would satisfy the First-Year Experience (FYE). Mr. Wilder said that his intent was that the Gen-Ed Committee would review such courses as the original motion on the committee (Mr. Pothering’s) had intended. Mr. McGee then asked Mr. Wilder if his intent was to take away the authority of the Faculty Curriculum Committee with respect to Gen Ed. Mr. Wilder said that he would like to see some modification in the language of the Faculty/Administration Manual (FAM) with respect to that issue.

The Senate voted on the first part of Mr. Wilder’s divided amendment, which passed.

The Senate then deliberated on the second part, which called for the deletion of 3.c, which states the following:
If a department or program submits a proposal for a general education course that is intended to accomplish learning goals that fall outside the traditional disciplinary purview of that department or program, this proposal should be accompanied by proposal assessment documents from departments and/or programs with disciplinary expertise in that learning goal. If the proposal is not accompanied by the necessary assessment document(s), the Committee on General Education shall solicit proposal assessment documents from all relevant departments and programs, and must include these departments’ and programs’ assessments of the proposal when forwarding the recommendation of the Committee to the Faculty Senate.

Mr. Harrison commented that he thought it was important that departments give input on courses in their domain. The Gen-Ed Committee doesn’t have to accept it, but having that input is valuable. Mr. Blackwell said that he took Mr. Harrison’s point, but approached the issue differently. He thought having a representative from each school of the College on the committee to provide oversight was the best form of input. He pointed out that sometimes there are feuds between departments, and he was not sure that keeping 3.c was the wisest plan. Mr. Calcagno asked Mr. McGee if the Curriculum Committee has something similar to 3.c in its description of duties. Mr. McGee said “no,” that nothing that specific with stipulated. Thomas Ross (Psychology) observed that in practice consultation with departments has been done and proven to be very helpful. He thought some standardization of practice and procedure in his regard would be useful. Mary Beth Heston (Art History) agreed, adding that departments have always been consulted when curricular changes have affected them. She thought that it would be wise to keep 3.c, especially given that the Gen-Ed Committee would be a new kind of committee and would need input from departments.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) thought that it was very important that departments not have veto power on Gen-Ed decisions. Jason Coy (at-large), arguing against the amendment, thought that departments with expertise in a field need to be consulted when courses in that field are presented for approval. Keeping 3.c would codify a custom that has long been practiced and best serve the interests of students. Jeffrey Diamond (History) couldn’t see how a course could be evaluated properly without such consultation. Mr. Mignone added that consultation never implied extending veto power to departments. It is merely a best practice.

Arguing for deleting 3.c, Mr. McNerney pointed out that all departments have representation in the Faculty Senate, which is the final authority on curricular matters, and where final approval of courses takes place. Departments can voice their views there. He did not see a need for 3.c. Mr. Pothering added that the Senate has traditionally expected the Curriculum Committee to consult with relevant or affected departments. He did not see a need to make consultation a formal requirement. Susan Kattwinkel (guest) agreed and said that making consultation a formal requirement would just add more paperwork and slow things down tremendously. Consultation will happen, she said, when it is needed. Mr. Nunan also agreed and said that it is not always clear who the “expert” is. By appointing departments as experts, it virtually gives them veto power. He preferred to rely on the ethos of college custom.

Mr. Diamond argued that because we don’t have sub-goals to define how courses will meet goals, we will still have to rely on departments. In response to Mr. McNerney, Mr. Mignone said that though the Senate is the final word, we don’t want the Senate to fight out issues that should have been resolved at the level of the Curriculum Committee. The point is to avoid
such moments. Mr. Harrison in response to Ms. Kattwinkel did not think that paperwork would proliferate. Consultation could be done with a simple email message. He also disagreed with the view that consultation implied veto power.

Pete Calcagno (Economics and Finance) called the question. The motion passed.

The Senate voted on the second part of Mr. Wilder’s amendment to delete 3.c, which passed.

Debate resumed on the main motion of establishing a standing Gen-Ed committee. Mr. Blackwell made an amendment to change item 1 so that the second sentence reads “Preferably, Each academic school shall be represented…” After receiving a second, the Senate voted and the amendment passed.

Mr. McGee said that he was concerned about the relationship between the Gen-Ed Committees and other committees, such as Budget, Curriculum, and Academic Planning. He suggested that the ad hoc Committee on Faculty Governance look into this matter so that there is no overlap or duplication of work among committees. Mr. Krasnoff, who is chairing the ad hoc Committee on Faculty Governance, said that the committee is looking into the issue.

Mr. Blackwell added that none of the other committees mentioned have contributed to the Gen-Ed reform effort, which was proof that a standing Gen-Ed Committee was needed. Mr. Overby said that while that was true, they should be doing something. He proposed making better use of existing committees, such as the Academic Planning Committee, which doesn’t do much work. Mr. Wilder responded that that committee concerns itself with long-range planning issues, some of which have nothing to do with Gen Ed. It is not charged to deal with the daily business of evaluating courses, which is what the Gen-Ed Committee would do. Ms. Kattwinkel added that when she had been on the Academic Planning Committee, it had a lot to do and worked hard getting its business done. It isn’t necessarily true that that committee doesn’t do much. A lot depends on who is running the committee.

On a different matter, Mr. McNerney was concerned about the composition of the committee. Eight members, he pointed out, was not a good number because it could produce divided decisions. Mr. McGee said that any decision by a committee can be brought before the Senate for challenge.

Denis Keyes (at-large) called the question. The motion to call the question passed.

Before the vote on the motion to establish a standing Gen-Ed Committee, Mr. Nunan raised a point of order. He asked what the status of Goals 1.1 and 1.2 was. The Speaker summarized the what had happened earlier in the meeting and said that Goal 1.1 remained and would be in effect, and that Goal 1.2 had been rescinded.

The Senate voted on the motion to establish a standing Gen-Ed Committee, which passed.
The Provost then spoke about the importance of assessing general education competencies in order to examine what knowledge, skills, and abilities students are getting from the Gen-Ed program. Now that the Gen-Ed Committee has been approved, we can begin the process of finding a way to assess Gen Ed. She also informed the Senate that the College will eventually adopt the Voluntary System of Accounting, a reporting tool that includes the administration of a standardized test of general education skills such as effective writing and critical thinking.

Next Mr. Wilder Hugh made a motion to revise the Faculty By-Laws to change the duties for the Academic Planning Committee. Specifically, the motion sought to revise the Faculty By-Laws, Art. IV, Sect. 2.B.1.b as follows:

Duties: To consider and recommend long-range academic programs and goals for the College. [DELETE THE NEXT PHRASE IN THE ORIGINAL: “INCLUDING GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.” THE TEXT OF THE SECTION WILL THEN CONTINUE WITH NO CHANGES.]

After the motion received a second, the Speaker said that before a vote could take place, the By-Laws Committee would have to look at the motion and present a report. He therefore remanded the motion to the By-Laws Committee.

With its business completed, the Senate adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 25 March 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the fourteenth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order. The minutes of the December 4, 2007 Faculty Senate meeting were approved. Next, debate resumed on Meg Cormack’s pending proposed amendment, which had been divided into two parts. The first part sought to remove the requirement of Goal 2 specifying that the second intensive writing course be a literature course.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) began the discussion by stating that he opposed the amendment not only because it diluted the literature requirement, but also because it affected the ability of students to learn to read critically. There was a sense, he thought, that the foundational elements of Gen Ed would be watered down by the proposed amendment. Freshmen won’t read and write as much. Instead, what we should be doing, he stressed, is increasing first-year reading and writing requirements.

Mr. Wilder stated that he had mixed feelings about the amendment. The Philosophy Department, he said, had tried to move the literature requirement to a different goal of the Gen-Ed Proposal, but it was defeated. George Pothering (guest) remarked that that proposal would have eliminated literature as requirement and made it merely an option. Ms. Cormack (at-large), responding to Mr. Phillips’ remarks, said that critical thinking, reading, and writing skills are taught in non-literature courses. For example, her courses in religious studies develop those skills. Tim Carens (English), also in response to Mr. Phillips, said that we do need to teach writing and reading skills to first-year students, but they need to continue developing those skills beyond the freshman year. Many students, he continued, come to ENGL 102 weary and think that they are done with their writing courses upon completion of 102. It would be better to have the writing instruction spread out over the course of four years while the students are in college.

The Senate voted on the first part of Ms. Cormack’s motion, which failed.

The Senate then turned its attention to the second part of her motion, which would require all intensive writing courses to include workshops as well a require students to produce at least 15 pages of writing. Ms. Cormack wondered if this part of her amendment was necessary given the failure of the first part. Scott Peeples (English) and Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) thought it was. Mr. Peeples said that it’s not just the English department that should insist on these requirements, but other departments as well.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) thought the standards were too specific. Such a level of detail was not appropriate for the Gen-Ed document. The craft of teaching writing, he added, develops and changes. Draft workshops, which are standard now, may not be in a few years as other methods are introduced.
Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) agreed, saying that we don’t want to “micromanage” here, though we can express to the future Gen-Ed Committee that writing is important. He then moved to amend Ms. Cormack’s amendment to change Approval Criterion 1 by underlining the word “significant” and striking the parenthetical phrase “at least 15 pages.” The motion received a second.

Jason Overby (Chemistry & Biochemistry) thought that focusing on such textual details was inappropriate. George Hopkins (History) agreed, saying that the minutes will reflect what the Senate wants when it comes to writing instruction and other pedagogical and curricular matters.

The Senate voted on Mr. Boetje’s amendment, which failed.

The Senate next voted on the second part of Ms. Cormack’s amendment, which failed.

Discussion of the proposal as a whole resumed. Speaker Kelly said that in the interest of moving deliberations forward he would limit debate on any proposed amendment to 20 minutes.

Mr. Hopkins asked when the Gen-Ed Proposal would go into effect if it were enacted. The Speaker said that it would be in about two years.

Alex Kasman (guest) spoke about the B.S. and B.A. degrees and said that the current Gen-Ed Proposal, because of its size, might make it impractical for students to earn a B.S. Students would have to stay in college more that four years to earn the degree. If the College were then to drop B.S. degrees, it would be a very serious development.

Calvin Blackwell (Economics & Finance) spoke against the Gen-Ed Proposal, arguing that though it has some good features (e.g., the interdisciplinary science course and the speaking course), it was too big, too complex, not very flexible, and required extra hours to complete. The added complexity and size will increase advising time, he continued, and create negative, hard-to-predict effects (such as forcing students to take summer courses to meet their requirements). He thought that our current Gen-Ed program was good, that it too (as Darryl Phillips has argued) contained goals, that it could be presented as a goal-oriented system, and that the proposed Gen-Ed program was no better than the current one. Mr. Overby agreed and said that his amendment last week was intended to inject flexibility into the proposal, but that the Senate voted it down. Rohn England (Mathematics) thought the new system would require heavy use of adjuncts and urged the Senate to remand the proposal to the Gen-Ed Committee for remodeling. Pete Calcagno (Economics and Finance), also speaking against the Gen-Ed Proposal, was concerned that it would create all sorts of unintended consequences, which could become exacerbated by a lack of resources.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies), speaking to the concern over unintended consequences, said that such a view could be applied to any Gen-Ed reform. Todd McNerney (Theatre), speaking to Mr. Blackwell’s view that the current Gen-Ed system is good, said that the reason
for initiating the Gen-Ed reform was that the current system is inadequate and needed to be changes. He said that he thought there would probably be problems in transitioning to a new system, but that they would be sorted out. He said that double-counting would take care of the concerns about the Gen-Ed Proposal’s sizes and extra hours. He added that the proposed Gen-Ed system is in some ways more flexible than the current system (e.g., in the new system a student who gets a D in a science course wouldn’t have to take the next course in the sequence and could switch to a different science). He stressed, too, that Gen Ed must play a big role in a liberal arts college. The new proposal highlights Gen Ed’s centrality in the College and is designed to allow students to forge connections among disciplines.

Garret Mitchner (guest) saw as a flaw the fact that the proposal didn’t have a “phase-in period. He also thought there were some hidden inflexibilities in the proposed system and suggested that the proposal first needed to be tested before being fully implemented. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) also stressed that there were risks to adopting the new system. He thought that the current one was pretty good and that no one has persuasively explained what is wrong with it. He thought, too, that the proposed system wasn’t much different from the current one, but the risks involved in adopting it were high. Mr. Phillips echoed the view that a case has not been made as to what is wrong with the current system and why it should be scrapped. He said that one argument he has heard—that change is good—may be appealing, but isn’t sound. Another argument—that we need assessable goal-based system—has merit, but the current system could also be assessed, as shown in the blue sheet he circulated in a prior meeting, which mapped onto the current Gen-Ed system the goals of the proposed one. He added that good people could be opposed to the Gen-Ed Proposal and still be for Gen Ed and the liberal arts. He listed what he perceived as two more problems with the Proposal were it to pass: (1) it would require that every course come back to the Senate, which was a cumbersome way of processing courses and no a good use of the Senate’s time: and (2) it lacked adequate resources to implement. As an example, Mr. Phillips referred to the mention of six new lines in Appendix B, which he thought were insufficient.

Tim Carens (English) said that various claims have been made in Senate about resources, and wondered if the Provost (who was present at the meeting) could speak to the issue. Provost Elise Jorgens said that the institution was prepared to commit the resources to implement the proposed Gen-Ed plan. The resources, she emphasized, would not be unlimited, but they would be there. Some big figures have been thrown about, she said, but it was important to remember that the new system would not require more courses. She stressed again that the institution was willing to commit the resources to a new Gen-Ed system.

Mr. Peeples, addressing the question of what is wrong with the current system, said that the answer is found in various goals and requirements of the Gen-Ed Proposal, which includes the oral communication course, the interdisciplinary science course, and the international and global context goal. Those fill deficiencies in our current Gen-Ed curriculum. Conseula Francis (English) supported that view and said that scare tactics are being used to defeat the Proposal. Yes, there will be growing pains and difficulties to overcome in implementing a new system, but that is not a sufficient reason to vote down the proposal. In addition to benefits of the proposal mentioned by Mr. Peeples, she noted the writing-across-the-curriculum component and the intercultural goal. And as to the issue of flexibility, she said
that the fact that the Senate voted down amendments that would have eliminated or drastically modified certain goals was not an indication that Senators were against flexibility; rather, it indicated that they thought those goals were important. Mr. Pothering added that the Gen-Ed Proposal has the benefit of involving departments and schools in Gen Ed that have not participated (e.g. Dept. of Computer Science, School of Education, School of Business). That increased participation is a great opportunity for faculty.

Mr. Krasnoff announced that he was not going to vote for the proposal, though he had planned to so. He said that there was still no clear reason as to why the current Gen-Ed system was bad. Though there were some benefits to the proposed new system, as a whole it was still too complex and cumbersome and he did not think it worth the cost and risk. As for the argument that we need a new system for assessment purposes, that issue could addressed by the fact that the goal framework could be mapped onto the old system for assessment purposes; but more importantly, assessment shouldn’t drive the curriculum. Mr. Newhard, also speaking to the question of what is so bad about the old system, cited the original Gen-Ed Proposal, which stated that in the current Gen-Ed scheme the major is disconnected from Gen Ed, that students don’t see the long-term value of Gen-Ed, and that the Gen-Ed curriculum is not challenging. Do we need, asked Mr. Newhard, an entire new system to address these issues? He thought that better advising would help with these problems, and that instead of remaking the whole system, we should try to improve and strengthen the current one.

Brian McGee (Communication) said that he respects all his colleagues (“I like you,” he declared) and that he will continue to do so after the vote on Gen Ed. He disagreed, however, with the view that the current system could be tweaked and improved. He said that it was rigid and stultifying for faculty and students, that it was impossible to produce consistent learning outcomes from it, that its science education was seriously flawed, and that simply mapping our new goals onto our current system was an inadequate response to the issue of assessment. He concluded by stressing that the new system, should it prove not to work very well, could always be changed. The Faculty Senate as a legislative body can reverse itself. He asked the Senate to remember that it has this power.

Laura Turner (Theatre) said that she had heard that students were in favor of the Gen-Ed Proposal and had voted for it. She wondered if that were true. Ms. Eichelberger said that the Academic Council had voted for last year’s version of the Gen-Ed Proposal. Carol Toris (Psychology) thought that was an important fact. She said that she was for the Proposal and urged her colleagues not to be swayed by fears that problems might appear in the new system.

Mr. Wilder proposed a “new third path” between adopting the proposal and rejecting it entirely. We’ve learned a lot, he said, during the last two years. The new Gen-Ed Committee will benefit from that knowledge, retain many of the goals in the Gen-Ed Proposal, but present them in a modified form.

Jennifer McStotts (at-large) called the question. The Senate voted in favor of calling the question.
Mr. Krasnoff asked for a roll call vote. Speaker Kelly granted the request, but said that the Senate could overrule him, if it desired. RoxAnn Stalvey (Computer Science) challenged the ruling, arguing that the knowledge of how Senators were voting could influence those Senators who hadn’t voted. She favored a simple show of hands. The Senate voted on the challenge to the Speaker’s ruling and the challenge was successful.

Phil Dustan (Biology) moved that the vote be conducted by secret ballot. The motion received a second. The Senate voted and the result was a tie: the motion failed. The Speaker explained that lacking a majority, the motion was defeated.

The Senate voted on the Gen-Ed Proposal and it was defeated, 33 voting in favor, 37 voting against.

The Speaker reminded the Senate that next week deliberations on the second Gen-Ed Proposal regarding the formation of a permanent Gen-Ed Committee would begin.

The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 18 March 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the thirteenth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

After the Speaker, Joe Kelly, called the meeting to order, the minutes from the November 27, 2007 meeting were approved. The Speaker then announced that he was resolved to conclude the Senate’s deliberations this semester and would take steps, if necessary, to speed them up.

The Speaker reminded the Senate that Calvin Blackwell’s (Economics/Finance) motion to take Richard Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal off the table was pending from the last meeting, and that it was not debatable. He added that, even if Mr. Blackwell’s motion failed, Mr. Nunan’s proposal would automatically come off the table when the Senate had finished its deliberations on Larry Krasnoff’s proposed amendments. The Senate voted and the motion to take the “Third-Path” proposal off the table failed.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) moved to amend Goal 2 Requirement to read, “Two courses: One first-year writing course, and one writing-intensive literature course.” The amendment sought to eliminate the speaking-intensive course. After the motion received a second, Mr. Krasnoff said that the purpose of the amendment was to streamline the Gen-Ed Proposal and reduce the total number of credit hours. Passing this amendment was now urgent because his prior amendments to accomplish the same goal had failed. He added that the speaking-intensive course would be an expensive addition to the curriculum and entail a big commitment in resources. He wasn’t sure if the gain from the course was worth the expense.

Brian McGee (Communication) spoke against the amendment, stating first that the addition of the speaking-intensive course requirement does not help his department. He said that the trend among colleges is to have this requirement (he cited Harvard as an example), that oral and written communication go together and have long been part of the traditional discipline of rhetoric and the liberal arts, and that American students are seen as being weak in the area of oral communication skills. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy), speaking in support of the amendment, agreed that oral communication has been part of the liberal arts tradition, but said that the proposed Gen-Ed Program was too big, and that some hours needed to be cut. Despite his dislike for cutting out worthy parts of the proposed curriculum, he said it that needed to be done, and that the speaking requirement was a place to start.

Kay Smith (guest) said that the number of hours in Gen-Ed is inflated by the fact that many students receive credit for foreign language classes, and that some students take foreign language classes below their level to get a high grade with little effort, which is a practice that the College can eliminate. Todd McNerney (Theatre) also spoke to the issue of the total number of Gen-Ed hours and reported that the accrediting agency for his discipline recommends that at least half of a student’s credit-hours go to Gen Ed. According to that recommendation, he said, the College has room to expand its Gen-Ed program.
After a bit more discussion on foreign language placement tests and Gen-Ed percentage figures brought up Mr. McNerney, the Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s motion, which failed.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to amend Requirement #3 of Goal 5 to read as follows: “At least one course must be in the physical sciences, and one must be in the biological sciences. Courses will be tagged to indicate which sub-requirements they satisfy.” The motion received a second. The purpose of his amendment, he explained, was to simplify how the content requirements to be covered by the goal were categorized. Content areas #4 and #5 in the Defining Characteristics would be covered by all science courses, and content areas #1 through #3 would be reduced to two areas: the biological sciences and the physical sciences. The amendment was intended to help reduce the complexity of the Gen-Ed Proposal. Mr. Krasnoff said that he saw this motion as a key test for Senate to make the Gen-Ed Proposal workable for students and faculty.

One faculty member responded that the amendment was premature and that it was the responsibility of the Gen-Ed Committee (not the Senate) to determine what courses satisfy what content areas. Jaap Hillenius (at-large) said that the five content areas were mainly for internal housekeeping purposes to track which kind of courses would cover which content areas. He said, too, that changing the content areas as proposed by the amendment would reduce the kinds of courses that could be offered. Interesting and creative combinations are possible in Goal 5, but they will be reduced if the amendment were to pass. George Hopkins (History) added that the Advising Office reported that the process of tagging courses in an easy-to-understand way is not a problem. He therefore didn’t think that the current set-up was too complicated. And if it turns out to be so, the Gen-Ed Committee can always come back to the Senate to make changes. Mr. Nunan disagreed, arguing that the third science course (the interdisciplinary course) makes it unlikely that students will cover all the content areas in three courses, which will create complications. He urged the Senate to deal with this problem now by approving the amendment.

The Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s proposed amendment to Goal 5, and it was defeated.

Because the Senate had finished its deliberations on Mr. Krasnoff’s list of proposed amendments, Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal came off the table.

Meg Cormack (at-large) moved to modify Mr. Nunan’s amendment to Goal 2 so that the Requirement of the goal would read as follows: “Two Three courses: One first-year writing course, and one writing-intensive literature course in the arts or humanities (see Goal 8), and one speaking-intensive course.” After the motion received a second, she explained that she thought students would learn to write better if they took subjects they were interested in. Her amendment would increase the kinds of courses offered that would satisfy the goal.

Kay Smith (guest) suggested that one way to streamline Gen Ed with respect to Goal 2 was to place the writing intensive course in the major. Denis Keyes (at-large) supported this idea, but Mr. Nunan pointed out that it was not clear that some majors were equipped to offer intensive writing courses. He was also not clear about the impact of Ms. Cormack’s amendment on Goal 8 in his proposal. Speaker Kelly also pointed out that Ms. Cormack’s
amendment implies that that the reference to the arts and humanities in Goal 8 be deleted. He therefore asked if there was unanimous consent to make that change. There was not unanimous consent.

Scott Peeples (English) spoke to Ms. Cormack’s proposed amendment with respect to its impact on writing and literature. He said that, on the one hand, everyone agrees that literature is essential to education and that writing and literature are closely linked in the educational process, especially because literature courses focus on the structure and nuance of language. Everyone in his department believes that. One the other, he said that the English Department supports Writing across the Curriculum efforts and doesn’t think it “owns” the courses that teach writing. He said that he would support Ms. Cormack’s amendment, but wanted to make sure that the writing intensive courses would have appropriate standards. He was therefore prepared to offer an amendment that would specify what intensive writing means. His main concern, he added, was that writing intensive courses meet stringent requirements. Steve Litvin (Hospitality and Tourism) responded that he could not envision a Gen-Ed curriculum at the C of C where students don’t study literature.

The Senate voted on Ms. Cormack’s proposed amendment, which failed.

Discussion of Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal resumed. George Pothering (guest) asked Mr. Nunan what became of Goal 7 (Knowledge of Human History) in his plan. Mr. Nunan replied that it was subsumed into Goal 8, and that the special provision made for history courses was eliminated: students could take history courses to meet Goal 8 (Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Traditions), but would not be required to do so. Because Mr. Nunan’s proposal eliminated the history requirement, Mr. Pothering said that he was opposed to it. Doryjane Birrer agreed with Mr. Pothering, adding that Mr. Nunan’s proposal eliminated some key goals that the Senate had long agreed upon. Mr. Krasnoff responded that Mr. Nunan’s plan simply takes specific requirements and changes them into a broad-based liberal arts requirement. He added that specific requirements demand the high use of adjuncts and discourage innovation: the more protected courses we have, the less innovation we have.

Steve Jaumé (Geology) then moved to amend Goal 5 of Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment. Specifically, he proposed to change the “Knowledge of the Natural World” section in both the Defining Characteristics and the Approval Criteria to read as follows (red indicates Mr. Nunan’s language struck by Mr. Jaumé, and blue indicates Mr. Jaumé’s added language):

**Knowledge of the natural world**
Students should acquire the following areas of knowledge of the natural world:
1) The origin and evolution of the Universe and of Earth, and the nature of the physical world
   1. The nature of the physical world and how it evolves over time
   2. The nature of the biosphere and how it evolves over time
   3. The processes of inquiry in science
   4. The integrative and synergistic nature of scientific knowledge within and outside of scientific disciplines.
After the motion received a second, Mr. Jaumé said that the intent of his amendment was to acknowledge that the physical world evolves as well as the biological world. Mr. Krasnoff supported the proposed amendment, pointing out that it reduces the number of content areas from five to four, which he had tried to do in an earlier proposed amendment. Rohn England (Mathematics) sought unanimous consent to add the words “origin and” to the text, but it was not granted.

Speaking against Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal, Mr. McNerney observed that it only reduces the Gen-Ed proposal by about a course’s worth of credit hours. It would be better to stick with the original proposal, he said, especially since the difference in credit hours is minimal. Speaking against Mr. Jaumé’s proposed amendment, Mr. Overby said that the Chemistry Department “abhors” the amendment because it seemed to eliminate chemistry as part of the science requirement.

The Senate voted on Mr. Jaumé’s proposed amendment, and it was defeated.

Mary Beth Heston (Art History) called the question on Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal, and the motion to call the question passed.

The Senate voted on Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal, and it was defeated.

Discussion of the Gen-Ed Proposal resumed. Ms. Cormack moved to amend the Goal 2 Requirements to read as follows: “One first-year writing course, one additional writing-intensive literature course, and one speaking-intensive course, meeting relevant approval criteria on p. 3.” Her motion also sought to amend the Goal 2 Approval Criteria and to reflect Scott Peeples’ ideas concerning the definition of “writing-intensive”:

Approval Criteria
1. Courses must require students to generate a significant quantity of written communication (at least 15 pages) or oral/visual communication appropriate to the discipline. …
5. Course must include several opportunities draft workshops or conferences for individualized feedback by the instructor and revision by the student.

The motion received a second. Ms. Heston then spoke against the proposed amendment, saying that while she didn’t disagree with its spirit, she didn’t like the 15-page requirement and the workshop requirement. Scott Peeples (English) replied that the workshops aren’t intended as the culmination of the intensive-writing course, but as part of the writing process that students go through. He added that the amendment helps students to learn to write within different disciplines, not just within the discipline of literary students. That change would also help compensate for the removal (last spring) of the intensive-writing requirement in the major from the original Gen-Ed Proposal. Mr. Blackwell said that he liked the fact that Ms. Cormack’s amendment gets rid of the literature requirement, but he thought it was inappropriate to specify a precise page-limit in the Gen-Ed document. That’s something that the Gen-Ed Committee should do. He added that if he were on the committee, he would support the requirement. Mr. Overby asked what else the Senate was going to specify in the
document—font sizes and margin widths? Ms. Birrer responded that we do need some minimum standards to make clear what we want and to hold faculty to. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) expressed his concern that the Senate was doing too much “micromanagement.” We don’t define and set standards for other courses, he pointed out.

Speaking to a different issue, Steve Litvin (Hospitality and Tourism) said that while he has his students do a lot of writing, he is not sure that he can improve their writing or that he wants the responsibility to do so. He was concerned that the amendment would be shifting the charge of teaching writing from those who have expertise in that area to those who don’t. Mr. Diamond also opposed the amendment because it would eliminate the literature requirement. Literature needs, he stressed, to be a part of Gen-Ed and the liberal arts.

At this point, Mr. Nunan moved to divide the question between Ms. Cormack’s proposed changes to the Goal 2 Requirements (which would separate the literature requirement from the writing-intensive requirement), and her proposed changes to the Goal 2 Approval Criteria (which would define “writing-intensive”). The motion to divide received a second. The Senate voted on the motion, and it passed.

On the issue of the literature requirement, Mr. Hopkins said that he would like to hear from the English Department and other faculty who teach literature. Tim Carens (English) said that while it was difficult for those in his department to imagine Gen Ed without literature, in the spirit of moving the Gen-Ed reform effort along, they were willing to give up the literature requirement. Jason Coy (History) opposed the amendment, saying that he was uncomfortable with any student going through college without taking a literature course. Changing his earlier view, Mr. Blackwell opposed the amendment that would eliminate the literature requirement. Mr. Wilder, however, while agreeing that literature is important, didn’t see why literature and writing courses have to go together. We can put the literature requirement elsewhere in the document, he said. Ms. Birrer supported that view, but Bob Mignone (guest) said that one consequence of passing the amendment would be that many courses across the campus would have to be capped at 20 students. Mr. Huddlestun echoed Mr. Litvin’s earlier view that it was important to keep the writing-intensive courses in hands of those who are good at teaching it, such as those in the English Department. Ms. Birrer responded that the dominant model is not to teach English 101 through literature. The move to divorce writing and literature, she said, is common now. Mr. Diamond stressed that it was important to include literature in the curriculum—whether through the intensive-writing requirement or some other way—because students don’t read much now and need to cultivate the habit and skills of reading. Jim Newhard said that he was conflicted about the amendment: students need to experience literature, but they also need to learn to write within specific disciplines. However, the amendment doesn’t allow for both. Mr. Peoples echoed that ambivalence.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting, and the Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 26 February 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 26 February 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the twelfth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

After the Speaker, Joe Kelly, called the meeting to order, the minutes from the November 13, 2007 meeting were approved.

Debate on Jason Overby’s (Chemistry/Biochemistry) motion regarding the science goal made at the previous meeting resumed. The motion sought to alter the Requirement section of Goal 5 in the following way:

1) All students must complete three two approved courses and two approved labs.

2) Coursework must be done in at least two different departments.

3) Students must select three two approved courses and two approved labs that, either separately or in combination, cover all five areas of knowledge designated under “knowledge of the natural world.” Courses will be tagged to indicate the topics they cover.

Jaap Hillenius (at-large) began the discussion by stating that if Mr. Overby’s amendment passes, the science goal will be unworkable because the remaining two required courses won’t be able to cover all the Approval Criteria of the goal—in which case he would suggest that the entire science goal be struck and replaced by what we currently have for the science requirement.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) moved to amend Mr. Overby’s proposed amendment by deleting the last sentence in the Approval Criteria of Goal 5.

One of the three approved courses must be defined by an interdisciplinary approach involving the relationship of scientific knowledge to culture and society.

The motion received a second. Jon Hakkila (guest) then expressed disappointment with the direction of the Gen-Ed amendment process and said that he “didn’t expect one person to cause so much havoc.” He spoke of how the faculty was losing a sense of common cause by segregating themselves into groups, and was worried that the Gen-Ed reform effort would collapse. Mr. Wilder replied, saying that he assumed Mr. Hakkila’s remarks were directed at Mr. Overby’s motion, but that the Senate needed to deal first with Mr. Krasnoff’s motion. The Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s motion, which passed.

Richard Nunan (at-large) responded to Mr. Hillenius’ comment, agreeing that with two science courses all the Defining Characteristics of the goal could not be covered, but he said that that was also true prior to Mr. Overby’s amendment. Mr. Hillenius disagreed, saying that
with three courses the key content areas could be covered, but with just two it was impossible. Norine Noonan (Dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics and guest) agreed with Mr. Hillenius. If Mr. Overby’s amendment passes, “we’d have to go back to the status quo ante.” She urged the Senate to defeat the amendment. Bob Mignone (guest) spoke against the amendment and urged Senators to trust their colleagues in the sciences on the point that the science goal could not be achieved in two courses.

George Hopkins (History), responding to point made by Mr. Overby at the prior meeting that the interdisciplinary course was not a science course, said that it had never been thought that the interdisciplinary course would contain no or little science content. The point is to see how science impacts society. He stressed that students need to learn science, but they also need to learn how it interacts with other disciplines. He didn’t want science to become isolated in the education process from other areas. Mitchell Colgan (guest) said he felt that he was experiencing a Rip van Winkle moment: he thought that all the issues about the third science course and the distrust among the disciplines had been resolved; now he finds that these problems have returned. He, too, urged the Senate to defeat the amendment and stressed that the interdisciplinary science course held the promise for many new, exciting, and creative courses that would benefit students immensely. He said that worries about the content of the third course were exaggerated and that there will be mechanisms in place (e.g., the Gen-Ed Committee) to vet them and monitor the system.

Mr. Krasnoff said that two issues had emerged: one concerns the science content of the interdisciplinary science course; the other concerns whether the Defining Characteristics of the goal can be covered. He wanted to know from his colleagues what courses would allow students to cover the Defining Characteristics of the goal. Mr. Colgan responded that the Gen-Ed Committee would make such determinations, and that he wouldn’t be forced to come up with courses on the spot. He was “not going to play that game.” Mr. Hakkila again expressed his disappointment with the tone and tenor of the discussion, and chastised those present for engaging in disrespectful behavior, which included making snide remarks and laughing while people had the floor. He agreed with Mr. Colgan’s last remarks, saying that many science courses would have to be revised to meet requirement, and that to be forced to come up with specific courses on the spot was unhelpful. He urged the Senate to work together to reform Gen-Ed science because what we have now is “stale and rigid.”

Addressing a different matter, Darryl Phillips said that staffing issues and resources have not been seriously addressed in these discussions, and that the Gen-Ed Proposal would require a massive re-distribution in resources, especially with respect to the science goal, which will go from eight required credit-hours to eleven. Mr. Hopkins responded, saying that greater resources will have to be found by the College administration. He also supported Mr. Hakkila’s sentiment that the Senate must work together to strengthen science education and to keep the eleven credit hours as stipulated in the Gen-Ed Proposal. Jack Parson (Political Science) remarked that he accepted the notion that eleven credit-hours were needed for science education, but he didn’t accept getting rid of the interdisciplinary course, which connects science to society. Paul Young (Mathematics) said that what bothered him about the interdisciplinary course in Goal 5 was the use the word “must” in the last sentence, which states that one of the three courses “must,” rather than “may” be interdisciplinary, and which
defines what kind of interdisciplinary course it must be. Agnes Southgate (guest) said that most faculty in the sciences don’t feel that the third course should be all science. We in the sciences, she said, want interdisciplinary courses that explore the connections between science and society, and we would love to teach them, but don’t want to bear all of the burden of teaching them. Mr. Huddleston supported Ms. Southgate’s remarks and urged the Senate to defeat Mr. Overby’s amendment. Mr. Hakkila also supported them, saying that he wanted more teaching collaboration between those in the sciences and other disciplines. Jerry Boetje also agreed and stressed the need for more interdisciplinary work: knowledge shouldn’t be isolated in big “silos”; it must to be exchanged and shared. That is why, he added, it is crucial that the word “must” remain in the last sentence of Goal 5.

Rick Heldrick (guest) said that he and his colleagues in the Chemistry Department had a different view. They thought that the extra three credit-hours in science was good, but thought that students should take two courses in one science and the third course in another science. From their point of view, the goal is make sure that students are well-rounded in science. When the science goal morphed into something else, he said, the department no longer supported it. His department also did not like the fact that the interdisciplinary requirement was located in the science goal. Mr. Krasnoff said that he appreciated those remarks, but said that if Mr. Overby’s motion passes, we will be back in our “silos.” He agreed, however, that the staffing issue is significant. He said, too, that he apologized if his earlier question seemed rude, but that was not his intent. He merely wanted to know why two courses could not meet the science goal because some faculty in the sciences have said that two courses could do the job. Ms. Noonan replied that when the science goal was mapped onto our current courses, it was clear that two courses would not meet it; hence the need for a third course, which the Senate had agreed upon last semester.

The question was called. The motion to call the question passed.

The Senate voted on Mr. Overby’s proposed amendment, which failed.

Mr. Hillenius moved to amend the last statement in the Goal 5 Approval Criteria to read, “One of the three approved courses must be defined by an interdisciplinary approach involving the relationship of scientific knowledge to culture and society.” The motion was seconded. Mr. Hillenius explained that there was concern among his colleagues that the third science course was too restrictive. His amendment sought to open up the course so that it was not limited to just courses focusing on the connection between science and society. He wanted to give more choices to students and to make room for other interdisciplinary science courses that did fit the current definition in the Approval Criteria. His intent, he added, was not that the third course should be taught solely by faculty in the science departments.

Mr. Nunan supported the proposed amendment. He said that it would help with the staffing issue, especially in light of his view that there were not enough faculty on campus to teach all the science-society courses that would be needed. However, he was still worried about whether all the Defining Criteria of the goal could be covered.
Scott Peeples (English), speaking against the amendment, addressed both the view that the interdisciplinary course was too restrictive and the notion that it severely diminished the science content of the course. The Approval Criteria don’t say, he pointed out, that the content of the course has to be “50-50”—half science and half social issues. It just says that a connection has to be made, which, as various Senators have said, is vital. In that regard, the course doesn’t dilute the science content of the course. Mr. Parson also opposed the amendment and said that he only voted for the extra science course because it was intended to connect science and society. However, he added that he would be willing to change the word “must” to “may” in the last sentence of the goal. Ms. Noonan, recalling the effort to add another science course last semester and the agreement that it should be interdisciplinary, said that she would stick by that agreement, especially because it offered the possibility of creating exciting new courses for students. She agreed, too, that the word “must” is “silo breaker” and shouldn’t be changed to “may.” Doryjane Birrer (English) echoed Mr. Parson’s point that the reason many Senators voted for the third science course was that it would make the connections between science and society.

Mr. Heldrick thought it would be difficult to create all the new courses that would be needed and said that use of the word “must” bothered his department. Mr. Young disagreed with the view that changing “must” to “may” would preclude the “silo breaking” that many desire. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) spoke in favor of the amendment and thought that the current wording of the Approval Criteria of Goal 5 was vague and would cause problems for the Gen-Committee and staffing problems.

After a few more comments along these lines, the Senate voted on Mr. Hillenius’ amendment, which failed.

Following up on Mr. Young’s idea made earlier in the discussion, Mr. Nunan moved to change the word “must” to “may” in the last sentence of Approval Criteria of Goal 5. The motion received a second. Mr. Peeples spoke against it, arguing that it would gut the interdisciplinary component of the third course. He said you might as well strike the whole thing, if you change “must” to “may.” Mr. Young disagreed, saying that it gives students options: they could take a third science course, if they wished, or a third course that is interdisciplinary linking science to society. He stressed, too, that he wants there to be interdisciplinary courses. The Senate voted on the motion, which failed.

Speaker Kelly reminded the Senate that at the last Gen-Ed meeting the Senate laid on the table a motion made by Mr. Krasnoff regarding the First Year Experience (FYE). Specifically the motion sought to amend the Goal 1 Requirement by adding the following sentence: “The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements below.” Mr. Krasnoff explained that the purpose of the amendment is to reduce the total number of Gen-Ed hours by making sure that the FYE counts for another Gen-Ed requirement. The cost of passing the amendment is that some FYE courses scheduled for next year probably won’t count for another Gen-Ed requirement.

Susan Kattwinkel (guest) spoke against the amendment. She said that while the majority of FYE courses satisfy another Gen-Ed requirement, not all do. The most popular FYE course,
for example, does not. She added that for certain students (e.g., athletes and majors in the School of Education), making sure that the FYE double-counts could be difficult. The School of Education of and the School of Business have supported and bought into the FYE, but she feared their support might be lost were the proposed amendment to pass. She added that the FYE is an opportunity for students to try some new things and some courses might seem a little odd because they are not always typical courses. The amendment, if it passed, might make some of the FYE courses less innovative and less attractive to students. However, overall she thought that 85% of the FYE courses would double-count.

Mr. Nunan agreed with Ms. Kattwinkel, saying that the FYE shouldn’t be burdened with the goal of slimming down a “bloated” Gen-Ed program. Kay Smith (guest) added that the FYE needs maximum flexibility so that enough courses can be offered to entering freshmen.

The Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s motion, which failed.

Mr. Blackwell then moved to take Mr. Nunan’s “Third-Path” proposal off the table. His motion was seconded.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting, and the Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 19 February 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the eleventh special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, George Hopkins (History) moved to strike the pending motion (made in the previous meeting by Doryjane Birrer of the English Dept.) and replace it with new language. (The pending motion sought to amend Goal 6—Interdisciplinary and Cultural Analysis—by changing the requirement from six hours to three, which could be met by the required interdisciplinary science course or by another interdisciplinary course. The exact wording of the proposed new language is as follows:

All students must complete two approved courses. This requirement may be satisfied by one of the courses taken in the Scientific Reasoning and Analysis, and Knowledge of the Natural World and by another approved course. An approved list of interdisciplinary courses fulfilling this requirement shall be maintained by the Registrar. Courses approved to fulfill other general education requirements also may be approved to fulfill this requirement.

Mr. Hopkins explained that the rationale for his motion stemmed from concerns regarding the number of hours in the proposed Gen-Ed plan and the complexity of the plan. His motion alleviates these concerns: it involves no extra courses and minimizes complications. The idea of making the interdisciplinary courses double-count for other Gen-Ed requirements is something that other school have done successfully and relatively easily. He then called on David Goss, Director of Academic Advising, to speak on the issue of double-counting and whether it is difficult to implement and track. Mr. Goss said that we already have double-counting, and that there is no reason to think that in the future it will be more difficult to track. In fact, it will probably be easier because the technology to run it will be better. Mr. Hopkins asked if advisors and students would be able to tell with ease what courses would double-count. Mr. Goss said that they would, and that the Battery Project would make it easier to look at a student’s records and track that information in coordination with other information concerning Gen Ed. Mr. Hopkins added that given Mr. Goss’ remarks, he didn’t think Senators should be concerned about double-counting issues or worried that the system would be too complicated for students and advisors to use.

There was some question as to whether Mr. Hopkins’ motion was in order (can you make an amendment to an amendment?), but Speaker Kelly ruled that it was.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) urged the Senate to vote against the motion, arguing that the Senate needed to decide on whether goal 6 should require three or six hours.

The Senate voted on Mr. Hopkins’ motion and it was defeated.
The Senate’s attention now returned to the motion pending from the meeting on February 5. Richard Nunan (at-large) wished to comment on the state of the Gen-Ed Proposal and to respond to some comments made by Senators in the last Gen-Ed meeting. He said that what he saw as the general problem of the Proposal remained: it was too cumbersome. Hours needed to be cut. Kay Smith in the previous meeting, he recalled, had argued for an expanded Gen-Ed package, pointing out because many students increasingly arrive with AP credit adding more Gen-Ed hours wouldn’t be a problem. Mr. Nunan said that AP credits have been around a while. That’s not new. There will still be a net increase in Gen-Ed hours, which will affect a lot of students. He also pointed out that we don’t have policy about how AP credits will transfer to the new system.

Ms. Smith (guest) responded, first mentioning that the College will be accepting IB (international baccalaureate) credits. She then said that she had investigated how many course credits graduating high school students entering the College will have. She found out that they will come with over 4,600 credits. While she was not sure about the implications of these findings, she was concerned about the integrity of the Gen-Ed experience for students. We have no control, she said, over AP courses; but we can control what students take here. She added that about one-third of students graduate with more than 122 hours.

Mr. Hopkins said that the desire to simplify the Gen-Ed Proposal was fine, but only up to a point. He urged the Senate not to be swayed by the argument that the Gen-Ed Proposal was too complex, and was confident that new technology would be able to handled perceived difficulties. Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said the total number of hours was his major concern. All chemistry students graduate with more than 122 hours because of the number of chemistry courses they must take, which are required by the accrediting agency. Chemistry majors have no flexibility. Adding more Gen-Ed requirements would be a burden for them. Gary Harrison (Mathematics) said that according to figures on AP credits provided by Ms. Smith, the freshmen class on average will come in with enough credits to cover two courses. But the Gen-Ed Proposal, he pointed out, adds 12 to 16 credit hours; so students won’t be able to make up those extra hours solely with AP credit. Meg Cormack (at-large) asked about the students who come to the College with no AP credit. She was also concerned that adding more Gen-Ed hours would limit the ability of students to take electives, and was skeptical that double-counting opportunities would enable students to deal with the extra Gen-Ed hours.

Todd McNerney (Theatre) said that his accrediting agency recommends that a minimum of 50% of total credit hours be devoted to Gen Ed. Our current Gen-Ed package falls below that minimum. He added that it was not just “crazy people in the arts” who recommend this. The state university system of New York recommends that about three-quarters of a student’s study be devoted to Gen Ed. Mr. McNerney thought that Gen-Ed should comprise about 50% (or slightly above) of a student’s total number of credits during his/her undergraduate career, and would like to see courses in the major double-count for Gen Ed so that students could make connections between their major and Gen Ed. Mr. Krasnoff responded that adding on hours would, as Ms. Cormack mentioned, reduce students’ freedom to take electives and pursue other interests. That freedom, he said, needs to be preserved.
At this point, a Senator called the question, and the motion passed.

The Senate voted on the amendment to Goal 6 proposed by Doryjane Birrer (English), which reads: “All students must complete one approved course. This requirement may be satisfied by one of the courses taken in Scientific Reasoning and Analysis, and Knowledge of the Natural World or another approved course.” The amendment passed.

Mr. Nunan asked what the vote count was. Speaker Kelly said it was 34 to 26.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to amend the Goal 1 Requirement by adding the statement “The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements below.” The motion received a second.

Ms. Smith said that because this motion affects the First Year Experience (FYE) she would like to postpone discussion until Susan Kattwinkel, the Director of the FYE, could be present to offer her input. Edith Ellis (Health and Human Performance) therefore moved to table Mr. Krasnoff’s motion definitely until Ms. Kattwinkel could be present. Mr. Krasnoff replied that he had no objection to the motion to table. Parliamentarian Brian McGee clarified that there is an assumption that Ms. Kattwinkel will be present at the next meeting. If she is not, then the motion can be taken off the table. The motion received a second. The Senate then passed the motion to table the amendment.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to combine Goals 10 and 11 to a single goal (to be labeled Goal 10 International or Intercultural Perspective) and to amend the Requirement as follows: “Students must complete one course, satisfying either the approval criteria on p. 13 or the approval criteria on p. 14. The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements above.” The motion received a second.

Mr. Pothering said that he would like to see both required courses, one for goal 10, which focuses on international contexts, and one for goal 11, which focuses on learning about multiple cultural contexts. He thought this amendment, if passed, would be a great step backwards. Jack Parson (Political Science) agreed, saying that the Senate has spent much time defining key goals. So to combine them just causes confusion. Mr. Gentry also thought that the proposed amendment would restrict students from taking electives in other areas in the humanities and social sciences. Mr. Krasnoff said that the intent of the amendment was to make study abroad count. If that is not clear, the language can be changed to make it so.

Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) moved to amend Mr. Krasnoff’s amendment by striking the sentence “The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements above.” His motion received a second. After a brief discussion about the what the amendment to the amendment meant and what its implications were, the Senate voted, and Mr. Blackwell’s motion failed.

Speaking to Mr. Krasnoff’s proposed amendment, Jeffery Diamond (History) said that he, too, had a problem with combining goals 10 and 11, arguing that today students need an international perspective on the world as well as an understanding of multiple cultures,
especially given the changes in our own society. He thought that conflating the goals was a mistake. Doryjane Birrer (English) agreed, noting that students need to be exposed to the larger world beyond what is familiar to them. Julia Eichelberger (guest) noted that some majors (e.g., in business and education) already have requirements that cover both goals 10 and 11.

Mr. Harrison said that while both goals are admirable, some streamlining of the Gen-Ed Proposal is needed. If we don’t begin here, then where will it happen? Let’s start making small changes now, he urged. If we wait till later to make a big change, instability to the entire system is likely to result. Mr. Parson disagreed with that assessment, as did Jerry Boetje (Computer Science), who said that even if the Gen-Ed package is a big change, it is needed. It’s been over thirty years, he continued, since Gen Ed at the College has been changed. Ms. Birrer added that she saw goals 10 and 11 as core goals that are crucial for students’ education. If we are going to reduce these goals, then we should do the same with science, math, and other core learning goals. Frank Morris (at-large) also spoke against the amendment, arguing that goals 10 and 11 address what has been lacking in Gen Ed at the College—a focus on the international, multicultural, and interdisciplinary. Mr. McNerney agreed with Mr. Morris, but Mr. Nunan said that while such arguments are good, the Gen-Ed Proposal is still too big and too complicated. He thought it was a mistake to think that computers or technology could easily deal with those issues, and that Senators had to make some tough choices about what to cut. Mr. Hopkins disagree, saying the “too complicated” has simply become a mantra, not a substantiated claim. Mr. Diamond called the question, and his motion passed.

The Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s motion to combine goals 10 and 11, and it was defeated.

Mr. Krasnoff commented that the issue is not just whether the computer can handle a complex system, but also whether we can sell the Gen-Ed Proposal to our colleagues. To do the latter, we need a clearer, simpler proposal. Mr. Krasnoff then made the following motion (item 2B of his list of amendments): “Delete Goal 11. Add to the Requirement of Goal 10: The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements above.” The motion received a second. He said that by just requiring the international requirement (Goal 10) and eliminating Goal 11, the Gen-Ed Proposal would be simpler and smaller. Also, not much would be lost because most internationally focused courses deal with other cultures; so the intercultural content of Goal 11 would effectively remain. Moreover, he thought that there should not be much concern that the study of multiple cultures in the USA would be lost by eliminating Goal 11 because many courses on American society taught in different departments deal with multiculturalism.

Von Bakanic (Sociology and Anthropology) strongly opposed the proposed amendment. She said that we face many social problems today and that students need to understand that we live in a diverse, multicultural world and learn about the issues of that world.

The Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s amendment, which failed.
Hugh Wilder then moved to add the following statement to the Requirements for Goals 10 and 11: “The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements above.” The motion received a second. Mr. Hopkins thought the motion was excellent, and was certain the computer system would be able to handle the double counting.

Laura Turner (Theatre) moved to amend Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment by changing the statement to read, “The course used to fulfill this requirement must also satisfy one of the General Education requirements and/or a requirement in the major or minor.” The motion received a second.

Jason Coy (at-large) spoke against the amendment to the amendment, saying that Gen-Ed requirements shouldn’t be mixed with the major’s requirements. He thought the motion would make the Gen-Ed Proposal more complex. Mr. Overby agreed and reminded the Senate that it has previously deleted a page from the Proposal that dealt with the Gen-Ed’s connection to the major. Ms. Cormack strongly disagreed with this view, arguing that the whole point of the Gen-Ed reform is to get students to forge connections between Gen Ed and their major. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) spoke against the motion, saying that he was having difficulty understanding the Gen-Ed package, and if he was having difficulty, surely students would find it even harder to understand. He stressed the need for simplicity and flexibility. Jennifer McStotts (at-large) asked what would happen if students switched majors. The motion, if passed, could create problems in this area. A few more comments along these lines were made until Gary Harrison (Mathematics) called the question. His motion passed.

The Senate voted, and Ms. Turner’s amendment to Mr. Wilder’s amendment failed.

Mr. McNerney called the question on Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment. The motion to call the question passed.

The Senate voted on Mr. Wilder’s motion, which failed.

Mr. Overby then proposed to strike the interdisciplinary science course. Specifically he proposed the following changes to the Requirement section of Goal 5.

1) All students must complete three two approved courses and two approved labs.

2) Coursework must be done in at least two different departments.

3) Students must select three two approved courses and two approved labs that, either separately or in combination, cover all five areas of knowledge designated under “knowledge of the natural world.” Courses will be tagged to indicate the topics they cover.

After his motion received a second, he explained the rationale. He argued that the interdisciplinary course, though worthy, was a public policy course, not a science course.
Scientific theory, he announced, was “not touchy feely,” but “bound by fact.” This interdisciplinary course, he continued, “isn’t what you think it is; it’s not science.” He added that if the Senate wished to keep it, then it should be moved to the interdisciplinary goal. He said that he would like to make the interdisciplinary science course interdisciplinary among the sciences, but that that idea had been shot down.

Bob Mignone (guest) asked why Mr. Overby couldn’t modify his amendment to make the interdisciplinary course include interdisciplinary courses among the sciences. He then recommended that the motion be tabled so that more science faculty could have a chance to think about the proposed amendment. Sorinel Oprisan (Physics and Astronomy) then moved to table the amendment. The motion received a second. Mr. Krasnoff asked the Speaker to rule the motion out of order on the grounds that there was some confusion in the motion. The Speaker declined to rule the motion out of order. Steve Litvin (Hospitality and Tourism) spoke against the motion, arguing that we have already gone over the Gen-Ed Proposal for days and it was time to deal with it now and not schedule more meetings so that others could be present. Pete Calcagno (Economics and Finance) agreed and said that the science faculty already have representation in the Senate and those Senators should be here.

Rohn England (Mathematics) thought there was some confusion about the current state of the Gen-Ed document because of the multiple amendments and thus urged his fellow Senators to table the motion. Steve Jaumé agreed and thought it prudent to provide time to think through the ramifications of Mr. Overby’s proposed amendment. Other Senators agreed, but still others thought that the Senate proceedings should not be “held hostage” by absent colleagues, and that the Senate should send a message to those colleagues by voting not to table the amendment. Finally, a Senator called the question, and the motion to call the question passed.

The Senate defeated the motion to table Mr. Overby’s proposed amendment.

At this point it was 7:00 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 5 February 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the tenth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the *ad hoc* Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order. Next, the Minutes of the November 6th meeting were approved. The Speaker also announced that Senators would be limited to speaking twice on a given issue.

Jack Parson (Political Science) moved to table the main motion on the first Gen-Ed Proposal so that the Senate could consider the second Gen-Ed Proposal concerning the establishment of a Gen-Ed Steering Committee. He said that in last week’s Senate discussion there seemed to be no disagreement over the benefits of a goal-driven system, and that disagreement mainly centered on double-counting and the number of total required hours. He was worried that power to make major decisions about Gen Ed might be handed to a committee that was unaccountable, yet powerful. He thought therefore that now was a good time to talk about the committee, to define and limit what it could and couldn’t do. The motion received a second.

David Gentry (at-large) asked if faculty approval would be needed to create the committee because it would entail a change in the by-laws, which the whole faculty would have to approve. Mr. Parson said that a faculty vote on the committee would not be necessary. Brian McGee (Communication), who chairs the By-Laws Committee, said that his committee prepared a report on the proposed Gen-Ed Committee. Its key points are that such a committee would have no influence on graduate education, and that the duties and authority of the Curriculum Committee would not change (the report also clarifies the relationship between the Gen-Ed Committee and other committees). Mr. McGee added that any decision of the Gen-Ed Committee could be appealed to the Senate.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) opposed the motion, arguing that since no Gen-Ed elements have been voted on, the committee’s necessity is not yet established. We should focus on the Gen-Ed goals, he said. Mary Beth Heston (Art History) added that the Senate should at this moment think about the larger issues of Gen Ed. Darryl Phillips (at-large) agreed that now is the not the time to for a discussion of the Gen-Ed Committee, especially given the fact that the Senate does not yet know what such a committee would be presiding over.

The Senate voted on Mr. Parson’s motion, which failed.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to re-number the goals in the Gen-Ed Proposals using Arabic numbers. The motion received a second. He then passed out a green sheet that listed the goals. There was some discussion as to whether the Senate would vote on the numbering of the goals as they appeared on the green sheet, with Susan Kattwinkel (guest) pointing out that the numbering in the motion didn’t match up with the numbering on the sheet. Steve Jaumé asked if the numbering in the motion corresponded to how the goals where numbered on p. 25 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, and Mr. Krasnoff responded “yes.” Jason Overby (Chemistry and
Biochemistry) supported the motion, arguing that the Roman numerals were confusing. The Senate voted on the motion, which passed.

Richard Nunan (at-large) moved to strike the main motion and replace it with a Gen-Ed proposal that he called “the Third Path.” Mr. Nunan had circulated the “Third-Path” document prior to the meeting, but highlighted some of its key features as he made his motion. His proposal, he said, would eliminate some requirements, modify lab courses, heap under one category all humanities courses (except ENGL 101), and address some double-counting issues. After his motion received a second, Mr. Nunan explained that his proposal also dealt with the “elephant in the room”: “turf protection.” Many departments, he continued, have a stake in the existing Gen-Ed system (e.g., English and History have guaranteed courses) and they have an incentive to protect their turf in the Gen-Ed reform effort. His proposal does away with all protectionism for individual departments. He said, too, that his proposed system is simpler and easier to use, requires few hours, and helps students graduate on time.

Mr. Overby praised the proposal for its simplicity. George Pothering (guest) asked Mr. Nunan why he cut the humanities from 21 to 18 hours. Mr. Nunan replied that the added three hours given to science had to be cut from some other area to keep the total number of hours down. Mr. Phillips said that while he shared some of Mr. Nunan’s sentiments about the Gen-Ed situation, he didn’t want to see a pattern develop where all 82 Senators each present their individuals visions of Gen Ed. Such a development would not be a good use of the Senate’s time. He urged, instead, that the Senate vote on the Gen-Ed Proposal before them. Mr. Nunan replied that it was a mischaracterization to suggest that he has invented something new. Rather, he has tried to take what the ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee has done and make it work. His proposal was a salvage operation.

Mr. Phillips, moving to a different topic, asked how he defined a “discipline.” Is history a discipline? Do the humanities constitute a single discipline? Mr. Nunan said that some wordsmithing would be needed to work out the issue of what counts as a discipline. Scott Peeples (English) was not convinced that Mr. Nunan’s “Third Path” was a goal-driven system, and suggested that the Senate might wish to consider a proposal crafted by Mr. Krasnoff that kept the goal-driven scheme created by the Gen-Ed Committee, but streamlined it. Jason Coy (at-large) agreed with Mr. Nunan’s effort to preserve the work of the Gen-Ed Committee, but felt that the spirit of their work had been voided in Mr. Nunan’s proposal. The history goal and the interdisciplinary goal, for example, were absent in his proposal. Jeffery Diamond (History) thought that Mr. Nunan’s proposal raised too many questions and was too radical to be acceptable. Mr. Krasnoff, responding to Mr. Peeples’ comment, thought that Mr. Nunan’s proposal was goal-driven. More importantly, it contained a big idea worth considering—namely, the idea of lumping together all the humanities courses in one group and not privileging certain departments.

George Hopkins (History) supported Mr. Peeples’ idea of considering Mr. Krasnoff’s proposal, which, he said, was much more in line with what the Senate has been working on. Doryjane Birrer (English) moved to table Mr. Nunan’s motion in order to view Mr. Krasnoff’s motion. The motion was seconded. Mr. Nunan said that he was amenable to
tabling his proposal so long as the intent was not to kill all consideration of his proposal. The Senate approved the motion to table Mr. Nunan’s motion.

Mr. Krasnoff then circulated a sheet that contained his proposal. More specifically, he said that it contained a set of suggestions for streamlining the Gen-Ed Proposal, reducing the number of required hours, and addressing uncertainties with double-counting. He proposed that the Senate take up and vote on each suggestion individually. The Senate did not have to take the whole package, but could adopt just those ideas that it found useful. He then moved to delete goal 6 (page 8 of the Gen-Ed document), which requires an extra interdisciplinary course (in addition to the interdisciplinary science course in goal 5). Mr. Krasnoff said that he saw this idea as the least controversial item in his proposal. His motion was then seconded.

Todd Grantham (guest) wondered if just the requirement could be deleted, but not the entire page. He said that he would like to keep the goal and strike just the requirement. Mr. Nunan thought that the remaining interdisciplinary course should no longer be exclusively linked to the sciences. Mr. Krasnoff in principle agreed with Mr. Nunan, but said that since the science faculty have argued that three courses are needed to cover science education, then the interdisciplinary course must remain linked to science to reduce the number of overall requirements. Picking up on Mr. Grantham’s point, Mr. Pothering said that one reason the Gen-Ed Committee put the goals in was to highlight what is important in education. To strike page 8, you take out the idea of the importance of interdisciplinary learning. It would be good, he stressed, to keep the goal in, even if the requirement is deleted. Mr. Grantham added that it was important to keep the goal so that a future standing Gen-Ed Committee knows the goal is there and makes sure that it is met. This remark prompted Mr. Overby to ask for whom the document was intended. Tim Carens (English) said that the document is in part for students: we are making a statement that interdisciplinary modes of inquiry are important. Jim Newhard (Classics) added that to delete page 8 would also send the message that only interdisciplinary learning linked to the sciences is important. This point was echoed by Margaret Hagood (Elementary and Early Childhood Education).

Phil Dustan (Biology) asked where the goals of the Gen-Ed Proposal came from and whether they were data driven. Mr. Pothering responded that they come from the faculty. Mr. Dustan asked if they were based on other data. Julia Eichelberger (guest) said that they were also based on studies done by one of the major education associations.

Norris Preyer (Physics and Astronomy), speaking in favor of keeping the goal, said that the goal gives us the chance to emphasize cross-disciplinary education. We don’t want, he added, to revert to disciplinary boundaries. Mr. Nunan did not think that removing the goal would send a message that we only value interdisciplinary learning linked to the science. He also did not think that keeping or removing the goal would have any consequences for what a future Gen-Ed Committee would do or not do.

At this point, Mr. Peeples called the question, but the motion failed.
Ms. Birrer moved to amend Mr. Krasnoff’s motion. Her amendment would retain goal 6, but change the requirement to read, “All students must complete one approved course. This requirement may be satisfied by one of the courses taken in the Scientific Reasoning and Analysis, and Knowledge of the Natural World or another approved course.” The motion received a second.

Jennifer McStotts (at-large) thought that the motion was redundant. Ms. Birrer responded that the aim is to make a rhetorical gesture to indicate that interdisciplinary learning is valued and can take place in other disciplines not connected to science. Mr. Overby thought that the motion wouldn’t have any practical consequences. Ms. Cormack agreed and asked for unanimous consent to strike the second sentence of the motion. Unanimous consent was not granted. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) then called the question, but his motion failed. Mr. Nunan stressed that the Senate needs to cut some hours in the Proposal; otherwise the Proposal will fail. He thought that that the motion was unnecessary, but not a crucial issue. He urged the Senate to move forward. Mr. Grantham said that his work is interdisciplinary, that keeping goal 6 was not frivolous, and that it would guide the Gen-Ed Committee.

Steve Litvin (Hospitality and Tourism) wondered why the burden of teaching interdisciplinary courses was falling on the science departments and suggested that the interdisciplinary science requirement be deleted. Norine Noonan (Dean of the School of Mathematics and Science and guest) said that she was delighted to accept the burden because it means that her school will grow by 20 new faculty. She added, however, that it was not right that the sciences are the only departments that must teach the interdisciplinary course. Other departments should have the right to teach such courses. Ms. McStotts said that she now changed her view and supported the motion, saying that cutting out goal 6 sends a message to the College as a whole that interdisciplinary inquiry happens only in the sciences. This would be insulting to other fields of study, she added. Responding to Ms. Noonan’s remarks, Mr. Parson asked if she was proposing that the 11 hours devoted to science should be reduced to 8. Ms. Noonan said no. She just wanted others to be involved. Mr. Litvin added that his earlier comment was not meant to be taken as hostility toward interdisciplinary learning; rather, his objective was to reduce the total number of required hours. Kay Smith (guest) remarked that it was important to question the desire to reduce the number of Gen-Ed hours. The Senate should consider the fact many students come to the College with AP credits and thus experience a diminished Gen-Ed package in college. Indeed, the freshman year is nowadays collapsed into the senior year in high school. Given this trend, she urged the Senate to consider expanding, rather than further contracting, Gen Ed.

Mark Long (Political Science) observed that last week the Gen Ed Proposal seemed headed to defeat because of concerns about its size, double-counting, etc. The Krasnoff proposal, he said, was put together as an attempt to address those concerns and move forward with the Proposal. Because the interdisciplinary requirement is not tied to a specific department, it seemed to be the easiest to cut. If it is not cut, he warned, the Proposal will likely go down to defeat because of the high level of territoriality among us.
Picking up on Ms. Smith point about the size of Gen Ed, Ms. Kattwinkel reminded the Senate of the transcript analysis done by the *ad hoc* Gen-Ed Committee, which showed that the proposed system would have little or no impact on the ability of students to graduate in a timely fashion. They would be able to get through college at the same rate as they do in the current system. Yet some Senators, she said, have chosen to ignore the study or don’t believe it. She suggested that those who don’t believe it do their own study to show that graduation rates would be adversely affected under the new system. Glenn Lesses (guest) said that he looked at the transcript analysis and thought that the proposed system would affect students. Mr. Pothering disagreed and said that when he did the study, he tended to be conservative in his estimates.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. Speaker Kelly announced that further debate on the Gen-Ed Proposal would resume at the next meeting devoted to Gen Ed, which was scheduled for February 19. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 29 January 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the ninth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order. Next, the Minutes of the October 30th meeting were approved.

Speaker Kelly then asked for unanimous consent to insert pages 2-3, which contained goals approved by the Senate in Spring 2007, into the current Gen-Ed Proposal. Darryl Phillips (at-large) asked if everything on those pages would still be in effect, even though the other goals of the Gen-Ed Proposal have not yet been approved. Speaker Kelly said that they would be in effect, including the rider about the Gen-Ed Committee. Mr. Phillips then asked if Senators could make changes to those goals, and the Speaker answered that they could. The Senate then gave its consent to insert the pages.

At this point, the Speaker said that the entire Gen-Ed Proposal was up for debate. Larry Krasnoff moved to delete page 7 of the document (Goal II.2: Social and Cultural Analysis) for the same reasons given for deleting pages 15-18 in the last Gen-Ed meeting. The motion received a second. George Pothering (chair of the ad hoc Committee on General Education and guest) responded that the reason p. 7 is there is to make clear that social and cultural analysis is part of Gen-Ed. The following pages specify the content of the analysis. The Senate then voted on the motion to delete p. 7, which passed.

Mr. Krasnoff said that it was important to look at the overall balance and structure of the Gen-Ed Proposal. To do that, he thought it would be helpful to remove the Roman numerals, which he thought were confusing, and replace them with Arabic ones. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) agreed that the current numbering system was confusing.

On a different topic, Gary Harrison expressed concern about the additional requirements contained in the Proposal (a speaking course, an extra science course, two interdisciplinary courses, and so on), which he said totaled to eighteen extra hours. He was skeptical about the view that double-counting would take care of this added burden, and thought that some students, such as those in secondary education, would be especially burdened by the added requirements. Steve Livin (Hospitality and Tourism) echoed Mr. Harrison’s concerns, adding that the additional requirements may cause other problems or burdens, such as with advising. Meg Cormack (at-large) thought the new requirements might make it difficult for students to graduate in four years.

George Hopkins (History) pointed out that the new Gen-Ed requirements were comparable with what many other schools required. Julia Eichelberger (guest) said that the Gen-Ed Committee examined the issue of graduation rates and asked whether it would take students longer to graduate under the new requirements. The answer, they found, was that it would not take them longer. There was room for every major to complete the new requirements in four
years. She added that the process of determining what courses double-counted would all be online and be easy to track.

Paul Young (Mathematics) asked how the Gen-Ed Committee could possibly determine that students would not take longer to graduate, especially given the fact that many courses (e.g., interdisciplinary courses) have not yet been approved. Mr. Pothering said that he did the graduation calculations, and did so by looking at those current courses that would probably count for the new proposed requirements. Though there was some approximation involved, he said that the scheme was likely to be pretty accurate, and that it gave a reasonable picture of what will happen under the new requirements.

John Hakkila (guest) reminded the Senators of why the College is reviewing its current Gen-Ed system. It’s because our current system needs improvement. Science education under the current system, he insisted, is inadequate. He said that Senators should ask not how the Proposal will impact their respective departments, but whether it is a good curriculum for the twenty-first century.

Returning to the issue of extra-required credits, Todd Grantham (guest) was concerned that they would discourage students from double-majoring or taking minors. Mr. Litvin suggested that the new requirements might provide the wrong incentives to students, encouraging them to focus on what courses double-count, rather than on what courses they need to take. He also thought that the new system would cut out electives (students would just take courses they have to take, not those they want to take), and that it would cut down on minors, such as foreign language minors, which his department thinks is important for their majors.

Pete Calcagno (Economics and Finance) also had concerns about double-counting and thought students would design their course schedules to double-, triple-, and quadruple-count. He also wondered about what students can do now with respect to double-counting. Cathy Boyd (Registrar and guest) said that currently, though there are some restrictions, students can double-and triple-count courses.

Mr. Pothering, addressing the issue of additional requirements, said that at the start of the Gen-Ed review process, the Gen-Ed Committee held forums about what should be included in Gen Ed. All the items in the Proposal—the speaking intensive course, the intercultural course, interdisciplinary courses, etc.—all came up in those discussions. The faculty, he said, wanted those things in the curriculum. He added that double-counting helps deal with the added requirements and allows students to cover a lot of ground.

Mr. Wilder observed that while each item in the Proposal is good, the total is too much. He said that the possibility of students having to take more than 122 hours to graduate would be costly to the College. It means that students who should have graduated will take up more faculty time and occupy seats that other students might need. He added that making sure that students graduate in a timely fashion is a problem that many colleges are trying to solve.

Mr. Young expressed skepticism about the advantages of double-counting, giving the example of a math student who chooses to take an interdisciplinary math course in differential
equations and a writing-intensive math course. Though such courses might double-count for the Gen-Ed requirements and the major, the math student wouldn’t be broadening his/her education much because he/she would still just be taking math courses. Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said that double-counting encourages students to take the path of least resistance and would be an incentive to try to game the system. Richard Nunan (at-large) thought these views about double-counting were a little exaggerated. He pointed out that some of Mr. Young’s examples were unlikely to double-count because they did not meet certain criteria in the Proposal as it has thus far been amended. He added that the Senate has put in some restrictions about what can be double-counted.

Jose Gavidia (guest) voiced concern about the size of the proposed Gen-Ed curriculum. He said that Harvard requires only 30 credit (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said that double-counting encourages students to take the path of least resistance and would be an incentive to try to game the system. Richard Nunan (at-large) thought these views about double-counting were a little exaggerated. He pointed out that some of Mr. Young’s examples were unlikely to double-count because they did not meet certain criteria in the Proposal as it has thus far been amended. He added that the Senate has put in some restrictions about what can be double-counted.

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but we can have Gen-Ed Committee monitor it and come back to the Senate to propose changes, if they are needed.

Mr. Hakkila endorsed the comments of the previous three Senators and spoke in favor of the Gen-Ed Proposal. He said that Gen Ed is important, that the College needs to take stock of its current system and expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, and that the Senate has a chance to implement a truly interdisciplinary Gen-Ed curriculum. He stressed that interdisciplinary work is especially important in science education and spoke of his frustration with working in other colleges where rigid systems prevented meaningful interdisciplinary work. He echoed the view that simplicity isn’t a reason for having something. If it were, we would try to simplify out current system.

Jim Neward (Classics) remarked that those in favor of our current system aren’t saying that it’s perfect, but that it is not as bad as some have made it out to be. A standing Gen-Ed Committee, he said, could be charged with making necessary improvements, but the whole system doesn’t need to be revamped. One problem now is that students don’t see connections between disciplines; that problem, however, could be addressed by better advising.

Ms. Cormack pointed out that Mr. Phillips was not advocating no change; rather, he said that change should be incremental. Proposals for interdisciplinary science courses, for example, could be implemented in this way. Jeffery Diamond responded that advocating incremental change can be a way of squashing change altogether. Perhaps no change will happen. He then asked if other colleges have used the goal-driven model, and wondered if distrust of the model could be alleviated by information on how well it has worked elsewhere. Ms. Eichelberger said that many colleges and universities use a goal-driven model (such as UNC Chapel Hill and Clemson), and that it is very common—more the norm than the distribution model. Kay Smith (guest) mentioned that Duke uses a goal-driven model and that many institutions are moving toward the model.

Mr. Phillips stressed that he was not arguing that the status quo should always remain, but that a standing Gen-Ed Committee could set up a process to implement gradually some of the good ideas mentioned today and throughout the Gen-Ed discussions. Doing so will ensure that this attempt to reform Gen Ed will not be a complete failure like the previous effort. Mr. Krasnoff remarked that specific goals need to be connected to requirements and that simply setting up a Gen-Ed Committee will not lead necessarily lead to incremental change. Mr. Nunan said that the idea of establishing Gen-Ed goals is good, but the problematic part is agreeing on goals and requirements. Ms. Cormack pointed out that in the last Gen-Ed reform effort, the faculty voted down a less complicated system than the one proposed now. She agreed with the incremental-change approach. Ms. Birrer remarked that the current ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee has already done the work that others are now asking a future Gen-Ed Committee to do. She advocated pushing forward and making use of the work already done. Scott Peeples (English) stated that he was not optimistic about the incremental-change approach, suggesting that departments may become more possessive about guarding their territory and that the gradual changes might create a Gen-Ed system worse than our current one.
Frank Morris (at-large) thought Mr. Phillips blue sheet provided guidance for change. He stressed the importance of international and interdisciplinary courses for our students and suggested that cross-listing courses is one way of making incremental change toward a more interdisciplinary curriculum. He also listed what he saw as deficiencies in the Gen-Ed Proposal: he thought that there was not enough emphasis on history, that there needed to be more science content, and that the international/global component of the Proposal put too much stress on the contemporary and excluded the historical. He said that overall he was not prepared to vote for the Proposal.

Norris Preyer (Physics and Astronomy) pointed out that some incremental changes can be done, but others can’t—such as in the sciences where there are lab-lecture pairings and course sequences. Garrett Mitchner (guest) spoke against the Gen-Ed Proposal. He gave the example of Duke University, which changed from a distribution Gen-Ed system to a goal-driven one. The new Gen-Ed system had problems: there was an imbalance between the sciences and the humanities; there were too many hours required; and there were problems with double-counting. In fixing these problems, the system that eventually emerged looked, he said, like the old one that had been replaced. Any new Gen-Ed system, he stressed, must first be tested.

Thomas Ross (Psychology) then called the question on whether to end discussion and bring the Gen-Ed Proposal to a vote. The motion to call the question failed.

Margaret Hagood (Elementary and Early Childhood Education) commented that change causes anxiety, but education is about change and trying new things to find out what works best. We have to make a decision, she continued, on the whole scheme, not on the details and on logistical issues, which can be worked out and fixed later. The key questions are whether the new system helps us, and where does the change get us. George Hopkins (History) agreed that Senators should focus on “the big picture,” and urged the Senate to adopt the Proposal. Incremental change, he added, can be also difficult to effectuate. It may not happen. During the Senate deliberations, accommodations have been made, he said, to address the concerns of Senators. Nothing is perfect for everybody, but the Gen-Ed Proposal overall is good for most everyone and helps the College.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. Speaker Kelly announced that further debate on the Gen-Ed Proposal would resume at the next meeting scheduled for February 5. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 15 January 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 15 January 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the eighth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After calling the meeting to order, Speaker Joe Kelly noted that a clean (and slightly re-formatted) copy of the amended Gen-Ed document (which included all amendments passed in previous meetings) was being handed out to the Senators. He said, too, that a Parliamentary procedure must be found that will allow the Senate to incorporate into the current Gen-Ed document Goals 1.1 and 1.2, which had been approved by the Senate last spring (4/10/08). He announced that he would entertain a motion to insert the goals into the document after the Senate finished its page-by-page deliberations on the document through page 18. The Speaker then asked for comments about the form of the re-formatted document and said that it could be formatted differently if the Senate so desired. Rohn England (Mathematics) said that he would like the document to be formatted in the form that it will appear in the catalog—or at least in the form that those outside the Senate (students, general faculty, administrators, the public) will end up reading.

The Senate then resumed its discussion of p. 13 (Goal IV.1) of the Gen-Ed Proposal, where it had left off at the previous meeting.

Jack Parson (Political Science) moved that the following changes be made to p. 13:

### Defining Characteristics

Students should deepen their understanding of contemporary international and global contexts one or more countries outside the United States by doing one or both by doing both of the following:

1. Develop knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the United States through analysis of examples of those regions’ or countries’ contemporary social, political, economic and cultural life; that country’s literature, culture and/or intellectual achievements.
2. Develop understanding of contemporary interconnections between regions/countries related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.

### Requirement

Students must complete one approved course.
**Approval Criteria**

1) Course must deepen students’ understanding of contemporary international and global contexts one or more countries outside the United States.

2) Course must include components of both focus on at least one of the following:
   a) Developing students’ knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the United States through analysis of examples of those regions’/countries’ contemporary social, political, economic and cultural life; that country’s literature, culture and/or intellectual achievements. Course presents these works as reflections of the country or region where they were created.
   b) Developing students’ understanding of contemporary interconnections between regions/countries related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.

   OR

3) Any course taken for credit while on a study abroad program.

Key elements of the proposed amendment include inserting the phrase “contemporary international and global contexts” in the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria, making Defining Characteristics #1 and #2 and Approval Criteria (a) and (b) required elements (rather than options), and allowing a study abroad program to satisfy the requirement. Mr. Parsons argued that the language “contemporary international and global contexts” clarifies that the goal seeks to help students gain knowledge of global issues that bear on our own time as opposed to a recent period.

George Hopkins moved to extend debate on p. 13 by fifteen minutes. The motion received a second and passed.

Godwin Uwah (guest) asked why literature had been removed from the goal and asked what the consequences of such a decision would be. Mr. Parson responded that he didn’t intend to exclude literature, and that certain courses focusing on literature could still satisfy the goal. Mr. Uwah wondered why literature couldn’t remain in the goal, since literature is part of culture and culture is part of literature. Mr. Parson replied that literature was implied as a possible subject because it fell under the broad heading of “cultural life.”

Jeffery Diamond (History) asked for more explanation as to why the term “modern” was removed. Richard Nunan (at-large) responded that the word “contemporary” refers to what is happening now, but that “modern” can mean several things. For example, in philosophy “modern” refers to a period beginning with Descartes in the seventeenth century. Evan Parry (Theatre) noted that historical knowledge is often needed for understanding current issues; so to preclude a historical perspective from Goal IV.1 might be a mistake. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) asked why a history course wouldn’t satisfy this goal.

Addressing a different issue, Maureen Hays (Sociology/Anthropology) asked whether any study abroad course would automatically count as satisfying the goal. Would a study abroad course in calculus, for example, taught in Australia count? Mr. Parson said yes. By virtue of being abroad and living in a different country, a student taking such a course is learning about
the culture and thought of a region of the world outside the USA. Given that explanation, Ms. Hays responded that she would like to see language in the goal that reflected that the study abroad experience is what is valued. Mr. Parson then proposed inserting the following phrase in item #3 of the Approval Criteria: “an experience of study abroad reflected in a course taken for credit in a study abroad program.”

Mark Long at this point (Political Science) moved to extend debate on p. 13 by fifteen minutes. The motion received second and passed. Ms. Hays then moved to adopt Mr. Parson’s language for Approval Criteria # 3. Frank Morris (at-large) pointed out that the Requirement of the goal stipulates that students must complete an approved course, but the amendment says something else. The Senate voted on Ms. Hays’ motion, which passed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Parson’s amendment, which passed.

Mr. McNerney returned to the issue brought up by Mr. Morris and suggested that the word “course” be included in item #3 of the Approval Criteria to accord with the language in the Requirement of the goal. This sparked considerable discussion about the wording of item #3 and various proposals to refine the wording. In the end, Darryl Phillips (at-large) moved to strike item #3 altogether, and the motion passed.

Having finished its discussion of p. 13 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, the Senate turned its attention to p. 14 (Goal IV.2 Experiencing, Understanding, and Using Multiple Cultural perspectives).

Mr. Nunan asked for unanimous consent to strike Requirement #2 (“Courses satisfying this requirement may be used to satisfy the foreign language requirement if they are above the 202 level”), as the Senate had done with other sections of document where this statement has been found. Unanimous consent was granted.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) asked for unanimous consent to strike Approval Criterion #4 (“Course must give students a culturally-derived frame of reference for interpreting the material being studied”). Unanimous consent was granted.

Having finished its discussion of p. 14, the Senate turned its attention to p. 15, (Goal V, Personal and Ethical Perspectives).

Mr. Nunan moved to strike the entire page, arguing that some educational goals, while admirable, aren’t easily achieved through courses. Goal V, he said, was one such goal. Gen Ed, he continued, is about courses, and this goal is not therefore really relevant to the Gen-Ed Proposal. Moreover, if the College were to make a serious effort to devise courses to reach this goal, some factotum would have to track and make decisions about those courses, which would waste the College’s resources. Julia Eichelberger (guest) responded that the goal is in the proposal because the Gen-Ed Committee had received so much input about the need for such a goal. Students, also, have made efforts to establish such a goal. She added that though a factotum would have to track student progress toward the goal, the main trackers would be students themselves, who could use their online record for the task. Many other institutions, she continued, have mechanisms for tracking students’ efforts in this area. Also, having the
goal in the Gen-Ed document sends a message about the importance of ethical development in education.

After several Senators elaborated on various points made by Mr. Nunan and Ms. Eichelberger, the Senate voted on Mr. Nunan’s motion, which passed.

*Having finished its discussion of p. 15 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, the Senate turned its attention to p. 16, (Expression of Intent Regarding Goal V).*

Mr. Nunan moved to strike this page. He said that since it was tied to page 15, which had just been deleted, it was logical to delete this page as well. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

*The Senate turned its attention to p. 17 (Goal VI. 1, Advanced Knowledge and Skills in Major Area of Study).*

Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) remarked that this goal struck him as odd because it is about the major, not Gen Ed. Senators Diamond (History) and Keyes (at-large) agreed, but Ms. Eichelberger pointed out that these goals and sub-goals are found on p. 36 of the Gen-Ed document, and that it seemed right to include the goal about the major because it is a fundamental part of each student’s education. Scott Peeples (English) said that he thought keeping the goal in the document was important because it made clear the connection between Gen Ed and the major. He reminded the Senate that the sense of disconnection between the major and Gen Ed perceived by both students and faculty has been a key reason for reforming our Gen-Ed program. Mr. Krasnoff responded that anyone who thinks even briefly about education knows that Gen Ed and the major go together; but in his view, this document was not the appropriate place for making a statement about their connection.

Mr. Krasnoff moved to strike p. 17. The motion passed.

*The Senate turned its attention to p. 18 (Expression of Intent Regarding Goal VI).*

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) said that while this page states some useful information, it is not appropriate for this document. Mr. Overby then moved to strike p. 18, and the motion passed.

The Senate completed its *seriatim* review of the first Gen-Ed Proposal. Speaker Kelly reminded the Senate that at the next special meeting (scheduled for January 29) the Senate would discuss the proposal in its entirety and be able to propose further amendments. The Senate adjourned at 6:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 27 November 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the seventh special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the ad hoc Committee on General Education.

After calling the meeting to order, Speaker Joe Kelly asked for unanimous consent to change the language in Requirement 2 on p. 9 of the Gen-Ed Proposal by replacing the words “all four eras of human history (ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern)” with “both eras of human history (pre-modern and modern).” This change, which was not made in the last meeting because of an oversight, is in keeping with the other changes made on p. 9 that specify which historical eras are to be covered. By unanimous consent the Senate approved the change.

Todd McNerney (at-large) moved that debate on p. 10 of the Gen-Ed Proposal (Goal III.2 Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Traditions and Achievements) be extended by fifteen minutes. The motion received a second and passed.

Debate resumed on the motion pending from the previous meeting that Meg Cormack (at-large) had made. The motion was to modify Requirement #2 of p. 10 by changing the word “three” to “two”: “Students must complete these courses in at least three two different departments or programs.” Ms. Cormack said that the change would allow students to explore topics in more depth and would simplify things. Mr. McNerney responded by pointing out that breadth was also important. Students need to take a variety of courses in a variety of departments. It is important for their development. He noted that such was especially important for students in his department: Theatre. George Pothering (guest and chair of the ad hoc Committee on General Education) pointed out that when his committee looked at student transcripts, they found that the vast majority (40 out of a pool of 43) took humanities course in three departments, though there was no requirement to do so.

Richard Nunan (at-large), speaking in favor of the amendment, said that there was no compelling reason for a three-department requirement, especially if students already take humanities courses in three departments. To put such a requirement in is just a form of window-dressing and “puts up more hoops for students to go through.”

Brian McGee (Communication) had a question about prefixes for departments. Is the department the restraining factor rather than the course prefix?

Mr. Pothering said that he saw Sociology and Anthropology as programs. Idee Winfield (Sociology) asked if it would help to use the term “disciplines,” rather than programs and departments. Bob Mignone (guest) thought that would be confusing. We know, he said, what our programs are (which lead to degrees), but the term “disciplines” is more ambiguous.

Tom Ross (Psychology) spoke in favor of the amendment. He thought it would insure that we don’t inadvertently disadvantage transfer students and double-majors. Jason Overby
(Chemistry and Biochemistry) asked why we should require any number of departments from
which students must take courses to satisfy the requirement. Mr. Ross responded that we
have to impose some parameters, but that we can find a happy medium between those
parameters and flexibility.

The Senate voted on Ms. Cormack motion, which passed.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) remarked that we are moving from a system that currently requires
four courses in the humanities to one that requires none. Students could, he pointed out, take
four courses in studio art to meet the requirements of Goal III.2. This sends a message to our
students, prospective students, and the public. He said that he was not sure that he could
support such a proposal. Can we really call this general education that has no humanities
requirement?

Mr. Nunan then proposed an amendment that would strike the words “unless it is above the
100 level” in Requirement #5. The proposed amendment received a second. He explained
that the reason for the amendment is that because the history requirement is more flexible,
many students may opt out of history courses to take easier kinds of courses. This
amendment would help minimize that potential problem.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) said that he had in a previous meeting brought up the problem
mentioned by Mr. Nunan. We need, he urged, to get rid of this loophole. Students could take
higher-level history courses and double-count them for Goal III.2, which was not, he thought,
the intention of those crafting the Gen-Ed Proposal.

The Senate voted and Mr. Nunan’s amendment passed.

Mr. Krasnoff said that he wanted to pick up on Mr. Wilder’s earlier point about the
humanities. Perhaps some re-labeling is needed, he suggested, to include the term humanities.
Or perhaps the performing arts courses could be limited to one or two. Susan Kattwinkel
(guest) responded that the intent of the ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee was not to have students
take all courses in the arts to satisfy Goal III.2. Perhaps, she suggested, the Senate could
appoint a sub-committee to work on the issue as had been done with the science requirement.

Mr. Pothering remarked that students will be required to take literature and history courses, so
the humanities aren’t being excluded in the proposed Gen-Ed curriculum.

Mr. McNerney moved to extend debate on p. 10 by fifteen minutes. The motion received a
second and passed.

Mr. Wilder acknowledged Mr. Pothering’s point, but said that compared to what students take
now, the new proposed requirements diminish the role of the humanities. We are moving
from a very strong humanities requirement to a system that has a much less significant
humanities requirement.
Mr. Krasnoff moved that for Requirement #3 the following sentence be added that would limit the number of performing arts courses that would count for Goal III.2: “No more than two such courses can be used to satisfy this requirement.” The motion received a second. The Senate voted and the amendment passed.


Tom Ross (Psychology) proposed the following three-part amendment to p. 11 on behalf of the Psychology Department.

(A) Modify the Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criterion #1 as indicated below, with italicized additions and striken deletions:

Defining Characteristic #2: “Understand and be able to develop generalizable explanations for human behavior and social interaction by using appropriate empirical evidence, systematic analysis, and models and ideas associated with the social scientific methods of inquiry.”

Approval Criterion #1: “Courses must require students to understand and be able to develop generalizable explanations for human behavior and social interaction by using appropriate empirical evidence, systematic analysis, and models and ideas associated with the social scientific methods of inquiry.”

(B) Modify the ‘Requirement’ to read:

“Students must complete two approved courses, in two different departments or programs, each of which must satisfy both Defining Characteristics.”

(C) Modify the introductory line of the Approval Criterion #2:

“Courses should advance students’ understanding must require students to demonstrate knowledge of at least one of the following.”

The proposed amendment received a second. Mr. Ross explained that in a spirit of cooperation colleagues outside of the Psychology Department were consulted and participated in forming the amendments. With regard to part A of the amendment, he said that they had attempted to strike a balance that centers the goal in the scientific methodologies of the social sciences tradition, yet allows for some flexibility. The main concern is to exclude courses that don’t rely on social science methods. He stressed, however, that he doesn’t think that colleagues outside of the social science departments aren’t capable of teaching courses in the social sciences. He added that his department wanted to make sure that the terms “social science” or “social scientific” were included in the goal statement. He remarked, too, that he did not understand why they weren’t in the document to begin with. With regard to part B, he said that eliminating the requirement that both required courses be taken from two different
departments allowed for greater flexibility. And with regard to part C, the changes insert language that is more consistent with the rest of the document.

Ms. Cormack urged the Senate to vote against the proposed amendment and said that she would be ready to propose an alternate amendment. While she appreciates the point that students should study social scientific methodologies, she said students need to be exposed to other methodologies in studying human behavior and social interaction, and that language that allows for the inclusion of such methodologies should be in the Approval Criteria. She added that in the areas of ethical behavior and religious practices or values, the social scientific methodologies, which tend to be quantitative, don’t easily lend themselves to those subjects. Her alternative amendment would allow for courses that don’t strictly use social scientific methodologies.

Mr. Pothering remarked that the requirement for Goal III.3 is different from earlier versions of the Gen-Ed Proposal, and that there was extensive consultation with colleagues in the social sciences. David Gentry (at-large) said that the Psychology Dept. made recommendations last fall, but that none of them appeared in the new Gen-Ed document.

Mr. Krasnoff said that he would like to hear more about why certain courses would be excluded and which courses. Would all anthropology courses that are qualitative in approach be excluded? What about political science courses? Mr. Ross replied that the aim of the amendment is to highlight social scientific methodology. The amendment seeks to achieve a balance by making sure that students learn that methodology, while not being too restrictive and excluding too many other courses within the broad category of social science.

Idee Winfield (Sociology) said that part of the issue here concerns how one interprets certain goals. To her mind, the topics that Ms. Cormack brought up deal with culture and thus might more appropriately belong in the previous goal (III.2), which broadly covers the domain of culture. Social science deals mainly with empirical evidence, and so we can ask that materials in courses correspond with social science methodologies involving empirical evidence. Currently, she estimated that there are nine programs offering courses that would count as social science courses.

Jack Parson (Political Science) emphasized that the proposed amendment was not just a creation of the Psychology Dept., and that other departments were involved. He thought, too, that this debate was a good one, that it would help the Senate focus on what social science methodologies consist of. He acknowledged that some courses would be excluded (such as environmental ethics), that some courses in his department would be excluded, but that was okay because they would count for other goals.

Mr. Wilder noted that the term “methods” is in the amendment, which suggests a diversity of forms of inquiry, yet the wording is not so broad that it would allow for courses outside the traditional social sciences. Mr. Gentry noted that the phrase “social science” does not appear in the Gen-Ed document, but the amendment helps rectify that problem.
Ms. Cormack wondered if it would help to insert the phrase “quantitative and/or qualitative” in the amendment and asked for unanimous consent that the words be added. However, unanimous consent was not granted. Mr. Ross remarked that if the wording is too broad, it might inadvertently privilege some courses over others. He suggested that the wording be simple and straightforward.

Brian McGee (Communication) observed that courses focusing on textual analysis would be excluded by the wording of the amendment, yet some forms of textual analysis are empirical and scientific in their methodologies. He asked that it be noted in the minutes that such courses would be included as qualifying to meet the goal, though they appear to be excluded from the goal.

The Senate voted on Mr. Ross’ amendment, which passed.

Mr. Krasnoff said he would like more clarification about what courses would count toward meeting the requirements of the goal. He thought that courses in political science and religious studies would serve as test cases because of the diversity of methodologies used in both disciplines. Which political science courses and which religious studies course would count or not count toward the goal? Mr. Parson responded that the question is hard to answer off hand. Departments will have to think about this when they propose courses. Mr. Pothering offered as examples of courses that would not count two mock-trials courses taught by the Political Science Department. Mr. Ross cautioned, however, that such courses might count if they are empirically focused. If, for example, the courses offer a lot of empirical work on how juries act, they could possibly count. We don’t, he advised, want to rule out courses prematurely before seeing the details. Mr. Krasnoff replied that while he appreciates those responses, he does so only up to a point. He would like more clarification on what more or less will count as meeting the goal’s requirements.

Mr. Nunan said that what Mr. Krasnoff is asking applies to other goals. The question of what will count, or what will satisfy the requirements of each goal, is a general problem. For example, for the mathematical reasoning goal, no course currently meets all the requirements that would satisfy the goal. For the science goal, four content areas must be covered, and no one has explained how they will all be covered. At the end of the day, it’s probably going to come down to a judgment call by the Gen-Ed Committee as to what courses will count. Ms. Cormack agreed with Mr. Nunan’s remark, and said that the problem of what courses will count is especially bad with respect to Goal III.3, and that it is better to deal with it now, rather than create a big problem for the Gen-Ed Committee.

Mr. McGee noted that the goal, if approved in its current form, would break up the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) because many social science methodologies are taught in other schools (e.g., Business and Education). Mr. Parson agreed, but applauded this change, saying it was not a bad thing. The same reconfiguring of boundaries applies to other disciplinary fields, which he thought was fine.

*Discussion of p. 11 ended, and the Senate turned its attention to p. 12 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, which covers Goal III.4 Perspectives and Contributions of Academic Disciplines.*
Mr. Overby remarked that it was “odd and silly” that there are “Defining Characteristics” for the goal, but no “Requirement” to show that students have achieved them. Ms. Kattwinkel (guest) responded that there is a requirement, which is that students complete a major. “What,” replied Mr. Overby, “does having a major have to do with Gen Ed?” That reason struck Mr. Overby as being inappropriate. He then moved to strike p. 12 (Goal III.4) from the Gen-Ed. His motion received a second.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) asked if someone could explain why p. 12 is in the document. Ms. Eichelberger (guest and former chair of the ad hoc Gen-Ed Committee) said that the goal comes from a set of holistic goals, that it is part of the overall educational aim that we have for students. Goal III.4 expresses the idea that the major and general education go together. The list of goals is in part for the benefit of students to remind them of the larger educational objective.

Jose Gavidia (guest) remarked that the C of C catalog specifies three forms of requirements (one for Gen-Ed, one for the major, and one for electives), and that listing the requirement for the major in the Gen-Ed document was redundant. He was also concerned about the size of the Gen-Ed requirement, adding that room needs to be made for students to meet all three forms of requirements.

Paul Young (Mathematics) noted that the rationale for Goal III.4 came from the January 2007 draft of the Gen-Ed Proposal, which seemed to conceptualize the major as a part of Gen Ed. He also pointed out that the earlier Gen-Ed draft tied the major to the on-line record, which would allow students to track the disciplines in which they had gained some level of knowledge.

Mr. Ross asked what the implications would be of deleting p. 12 form the Gen-Ed Proposal. Mr. Pothering responded by first explaining that an effort was made to lay out for students the overall context of their education and to show that the major is integrated with Gen Ed. It is important, he said, to reinforce the idea that the major is a part of a larger, cohesive educational experience. It is a good idea to make this clear somewhere in the document and that is why p. 12 exists. Mr. Krasnoff said that it was not clear that students would see this document, which is mainly for us. If we, the faculty, need it, then we should keep it. If not, we should get rid of it. He found the argument that it was for students unpersuasive.

Ms. Eichelberger spoke to the issue of how and when students would learn the Gen Ed goals. She said that some version of the Gen-Ed document would be integrated with their on-line record and probably be part of an on-line worksheet, which would serve as a reminder of their educational goals and indicate what goals their courses are working toward. It was hard, she said, to see what the harm is in keeping p. 12, which shows how their majors and Gen Ed are integrated. Including p. 12 seems generally helpful. Darryl Phillips (at-large) said that one problem with the wording of p. 12 is that it defines what majors do, not what we should be doing. He added that the upcoming International Studies major probably might not conform to the Approval Criteria of the goal. He also thought that keeping p. 12 does do some harm because it specifies what majors are supposed to do, which may not accord with what they actually do.
Mr. Parson wondered why we are talking about the major in the context of Gen Ed. He thought that Mr. Overby’s question had not yet been satisfactorily answered.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Overby’s motion to strike p. 12 of the Gen Ed document. The motion passed.

Discussion of p. 12 ended, and the Senate turned its attention to p. 7 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, which covers Goal II.2 Social and Cultural Analysis. Speaker Kelly reminded the Senate that at the October 23 meeting, the Senate had voted to postpone consideration of this page until it completed its review of all other pages of the Gen-Ed Proposal up to and including p. 12.

Mr. Wilder remarked that the question raised with respect to p. 12 applied also to this page: why is it here? The goal listed on p. 7 struck him as redundant and unnecessary.

Ms. Eichelberger asked the Senate to look at p. 36 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, which clarifies the idea that different kinds of critical thinking skills are needed. It is important to distinguish among those different critical thinking/reasoning skills, and p. 7 lists one mode of critical reasoning in which students should gain some expertise. Mr. Krasnoff replied that p. 36 lists a set of requirements. It is better he said to have a system that tracks neatly with the goals. It was not a good idea, he thought, to have a goal without a requirement that indicates how one meets the goal.

Mr. Overby said that he saw II.2 as an important goal, but the numbering seemed off to him because it seemed to be linked to the next section. Acting on this observation, Ms. Cormack moved to re-number the goal, changing it from Goal II.2 to Goal III.0, and to strike the “Requirement” and “Approval Criteria” from the page. The motion received a second.

Ms. Winfield spoke against the motion, arguing that p. 36 shows that there are two different kinds of reasoning, which, though distinct, overlap each other. We need, she said, to maintain the distinction. Mr. Pothering noted that the current number shows that there are overlapping contributions made by different disciplines to multiple goals.

Mr. McGee asked for a clarification about the proposed amendment: is the intent to change the number on p. 36 as well as on p. 7? Ms. Cormack responded that that was her intent.

Carol Toris (Psychology) thought that the amendment was helpful. She remarked that the organization of parts of the document was mystifying. For example, on p. 6 the goal is numbered II.1 and III.1, as if to suggest that III.1 courses (history courses) would satisfy the Goal II.1/III.1, but they wouldn’t.

The Senate voted on Ms. Cormack’s motion to change the number of Goal II.2, which failed.


The Speaker asked for unanimous consent to strike Requirement #2 of p. 13, but it was not given.
Ms. Cormack asked for unanimous consent to change all use of the term “countries” on p. 13 to “countries and regions.” Unanimous consent was granted.

Next, Ms. Cormack moved to strike Requirement #2, arguing that a foreign language course and a culture course about a foreign country are not the same. The motion received a second. Mr. Nunan said that he was puzzled why unanimous consent to make this change was not given when the Speaker asked for it because the Senate has made the same change in other parts of the document. The motion to strike Requirement #2 passed.

Expressing some skepticism about the usefulness of Goal IV.1, Ms. Cormack moved to strike p. 13 (and thus Goal IV.1) from the document. She argued that some courses (such as a course on Canada), though they might involve some kind of focus on another country or region, may not provide an international perspective at all.

Mr. Parson thought the motion was a very bad idea. He said it was important to give students some knowledge of life outside the USA. He added that what is missing from pp. 13 and 14 is knowledge of international life provided by the social sciences. There is a lot emphasis on literature and culture, but less on politics and economics.

Mr. Krasnoff asked if double-counting and triple-counting were allowed. Mr. Pothering said “yes.” However, Mr. Overby remarked that double- and triple-counting were not guaranteed because the Gen-Ed Committee, which would approve such counting, has not yet been established. Mr. Nunan responded that he could not conceive how at least one of the courses in this section of the Gen-Ed Proposal wouldn’t also satisfy a humanities requirement. The problem, he said, was getting students to see that they will double-count.

Darryl Phillips (a-large) observed that courses meeting the history requirement would also meet the requirement of Goal IV.1. A course, say, on Egyptian history could meet the criteria for Goal IV.1, in which case the goal is redundant and should be struck. Mr. Hopkins responded that since p. 13 references the USA, it implies that only parts of the world at least coeval with USA would count as areas of study for the goal. Thus a course on ancient Egypt would not count. Mark Long (Political Science) thought it was important that students focus on places beyond the USA today. That seemed to be the spirit of the goal and he supported it. Mr. Nunan advised that the Senate rely on the common sense of the Gen-Ed Committee to determine what counts as international. Scott Peeples (English), echoing Mr. Long’s point, said that we are writing up not just a list of requirements in the Gen-Ed Proposal, but also a set of symbols. Goal IV.1 is symbolic of the importance of gaining an international perspective on life and of the College’s commitment to ensuring that students learn about the world beyond the USA.

Tim Carens (English) suggested that the word “contemporary” be added to p. 13 to take care of the issue raised by Mr. Phillips. Mr. Hopkins then asked if it was the intention of the ad hoc Committee on Gen Ed that Goal IV.1 focus on the contemporary world. Mr. Pothering responded that it was. Then we should keep the goal, Mr. Hopkins said, and make clear that the focus be on the contemporary world. John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) agreed with and underscored Mr. Hopkins’ idea.
However, Frank Morris (at-large) objected to limiting the focus to the contemporary, pointing out that an understanding of current events usually requires understanding the past. For example, one couldn’t understand the Middle East by looking solely at the present. An understanding of the region’s history is also needed. Mr. McNerney underlined Mr. Nunan’s point that we need to have faith in the Gen-Ed Committee to use common sense in selecting courses that match the spirit and intent of the goal. He, too, stressed the importance of providing students with an international perspective.

Mr. Gavidia suggested that it would be good to go beyond the study of a single foreign country, and that the goal needs to be broader and more international. Trish Ward (at-large) noted that instructors may design courses that cover more than one foreign country. Mr. Carens observed, too, that the words “one or more countries” in both the Defining Characteristics and the Approval Criteria address Mr. Gavidia’s concern and allow for courses that are internationally broader in their coverage.

At this point, the Senate voted on Ms. Cormack’s motion to strike p. 13, which failed.

Mr. Wilder moved to extend debate on p. 13 by fifteen minutes. The motion received a second and passed.

Mr. Young observed that with the removal of Requirement #2 the document makes no comment on double-counting. He wondered if the purpose of Requirement #2 had been in part to comment on double-counting. Mr. Pothering responded that the idea was to make sure that every student should take a foreign language course at the College, not to comment on double-counting.

Mr. Phillips said that the Senate needs to clarify whether the intent of Goal IV.1 is to focus on the contemporary world. In response, Mr. Wilder asked for unanimous consent to insert the word “Modern” in the title of the goal, but unanimous consent was not granted. He then moved to insert the word in the title and the motion was seconded.

Mr. Krasnoff observed that the term “modern” can be regarded as a historical period that goes back one hundred years. Mr. Morris argued that the title of the goal shouldn’t be changed at all, and that it was important to keep a historical perspective open for understanding the present. Mr. Nunan thought that the key was to keep the focus on the present without excluding historical perspectives; and he thought Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment accomplished this.

Mr. McGee asked if the intent of the motion was also to change p. 36 as well as p. 13. Mr. Wilder answered that that was his intent.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) agreed with Mr. Morris that nothing more needed to be changed, and that a proper analysis of events in the present often required some historical analysis.
Rohn England (Mathematics) said that if the aim is to understand the present, then the word “contemporary” would be better. It stressed the present, but would still allow for the use of history. Frank Cossa (Theatre) agreed with the view that “Modern” is a problematic term, and noted that for scholars in some fields the modern period is already over.

Doryjane Birrer (English) stated that if Mr. Wilder’s motion fails, she will move to insert the word “Contemporary” in Goal IV.1. Mr. Hopkins then asked if Mr. Wilder would allow the word “Contemporary” to replace the word “Modern” in his proposed amendment, and Mr. Wilder said that he would. Mr. Hopkins asked for unanimous consent to replace the word “Modern” in Mr. Wilder’s motion with the word “Contemporary.” Unanimous consent was granted.

The Senate voted on the motion to insert the word “Contemporary” in the title of Goal IV.1 so that it would read “Knowledge of Contemporary International and Global Contexts.” The motion passed.

Ms. Winfield asked for unanimous consent to strike the phase “that country’s” from Defining Characteristic #1 on p. 13, and unanimous consent was granted.

Mr. Long asked why literature is prized in the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria of Goal IV.1. Literature is part of the larger category of “culture,” which is also listed on p. 13, yet literature is singled out from that larger category. Why single out literature and not other aspects of culture, such as sports or cuisine?

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. Speaker Kelly announced that further debate on p. 13 would resume at the next meeting devoted to the Gen-Ed Proposal, scheduled for January 15 of the next term. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 6 November 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the sixth special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the minutes of the October 2, 2007 meeting were approved. Debate on the second part of Richard Nunan’s proposed amendment, which was pending from the previous meeting, resumed. Mr. Nunan (at-large) moved to table his amendment so that a new amendment from the History Department could be proposed—an amendment, he said, that would “change the landscape of Goal III.1” on p. 9 of the Gen-Ed Proposal. The motion to table, after receiving a second, passed.

George Hopkins (History) then proposed the History Department’s two-part amendment, which was seconded. The amendment would change the number of historical eras to be covered in Goal III.1 from four to two. Accordingly, the amendment called for the terms “pre-modern and modern” to replace the terms “ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern” in both Defining Characteristic #1 and Approval Criterion #1. Mr. Hopkins explained that as a result of the previous discussion in the Senate, the chair and Senators of the History Dept. in consultation with other faculty drafted the amendment to address concerns raised in the preceding Senate meeting. The History Dept. held onto the aim of providing students with a broad overview of history, but was willing to scale back the amount of coverage. He added that the History Dept. faculty did not want to endorse a date as a dividing line between the pre-modern and modern periods because such a date would be arbitrary. Overall, the amendment, while retaining the aim of providing a deep historical perspective, provides more flexibility and more easily allows other departments to propose courses that would meet the goal.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) observed that the proposed amendment did not call for a change in the requirements of p. 9. The old language remains, he noted. He asked for unanimous consent that the language in Requirement #2 be changed in accordance with the proposed new language for Defining Characteristic #1 and Approval Criterion #1.

Scott Peeples (English) asked for unanimous consent that the language in Requirement #2 specify that students take one course in the pre-modern era and one in the modern era. Unanimous consent was granted.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) stated that he would like additional language in the text of p. 9 that would make clear that a substantial amount of historical time must be covered in each required history course. Such language would provide guidance for the Gen-Ed Committee in approving proposed courses.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) asked if his course in the History of Computing, which would span both the pre-modern and modern periods, would count. Mr. Hopkins surmised that if most of the material presented in the course fell in the modern period, it would
probably count toward the requirement for the modern period. Do you think that is fair, asked Mr. Hopkins? Mr. Boetje thought that it was.

Todd McNerney (Theatre) spoke in favor of the History Department’s amendment, noting that it seriously took into account the concerns raised in the previous meeting’s discussion. He urged that the Senate pass the amendment and then take up the concerns that Mr. Wilder had just raised. Paul Young (Mathematics), however, was not totally happy with the use of the definite article before the two periods (“the pre-modern and modern eras”) and asked for unanimous consent to change to the indefinite article “a pre-modern era and a modern era”), but unanimous consent was not obtained. Meg Cormack (at-large) suggested that the indefinite article only be used with the term pre-modern and that the definite article remain with the term modern. She asked for unanimous consent to approve change, but it was not granted. Patricia Ward (at-large) suggested that “the” be removed altogether before the phrase “pre-modern and modern eras,” but again unanimous consent was not obtained.

Mr. Nunan next remarked that the amendment goes a long way to honoring the spirit of a goal-driven Gen-Ed curriculum, and noted that the change offered by the amendment would do the same thing for the history goal as previous amendments had done for the science goal. He urged Senators to vote for the amendment, if they wanted a goal-driven Gen-Ed system.

The Senate voted on the History Department’s proposed amendment, which passed.

Mr. Wilder then proposed that the following sentence be added to the Approval Criteria of p. 9: “Approved courses will cover substantial historical developments and periods within the pre-modern and modern eras, rather than specific episodes.” If passed, this statement would constitute Approval Criterion #6 in the Approval Criteria.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) said that the “rather” clause at the end of the sentence was not needed, and asked for unanimous consent to delete it, but unanimous consent was not granted. He then moved to delete the clause. His motion was seconded and debate on his amendment ensued. Thomas Ross (Psychology) argued that the clause serves as a kind of guarantee that larger stretches of historical time will be covered in each course, and said that, though it might be a little redundant, it would provide guidance to the Gen-Ed Committee. The Senate then voted on Huddlestun’s amendment, which failed.

Tim Carens (English) then asked for unanimous consent to strike the words “historical developments and” from the amendment. Unanimous consent was not granted. He then moved to strike the words. The motion was seconded and voted on, but did not pass.

Mr. Nunan then asked for unanimous consent to have Mr. Wilder’s proposed sentence replace Approval Criterion #5, in the event that Mr. Wilder’s amendment passes. Unanimous consent was granted.

Mr. Young next moved to alter the language of the first part of Mr. Wilder’s amendment, so that it read “Approved courses will be defined by their coverage of . . . ” The motion was seconded. Norris Preyer (Physics) asked what the rationale for the change was. Mr. Young
answered, saying that he was “literalist”: if a course failed to cover an appropriate span of time it would not meet the criteria for approval. Doryjane Birrer (English) said that the added language seemed redundant. The Senate voted on the motion, which failed.

Next, Jim Newhard (Classics) asked for unanimous consent to change the word “episodes” to “events,” but unanimous consent was not granted. He then made a motion to make the change, and the motion was seconded. His rationale for the change was that the term “episode” was not as clear as the term “event.” An event, he said, is quite specific, but an episode can be long. The Senate vote on the motion, which failed.

Mr. Carens then asked for unanimous consent to replace the first four words of the amendment (“Approved courses will cover”) with the word “Cover” in order to make proposed Approval Criterion #5 grammatically parallel to the other Approval Criteria. Unanimous consent was given.

Mr. Phillips next asked for unanimous consent to change the word “Cover” to “Survey,” but it was not granted. Since time for debate on p. 9 was running out, George Hopkins moved to extend debate by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded and passed. Mr. Phillips then moved that the word “Cover” be changed to “Survey. After his motion was seconded, he explained that the word “survey” suggests the idea of broad coverage, which accords with the aim of the history goal. Ms. Cormack responded that “survey” also suggest superficial coverage and a lack of depth. The Senate vote and the motion failed.

Michael Gomez (Hispanic Studies) then asked for unanimous consent to change “Cover” to “Consider,” but unanimous consent was not given. Mr. Young then moved that the word “only” be inserted in front of the word “specific” so that the last clause of Mr. Wilder’s amendment would read “rather than only specific episodes.” The motion was seconded. The Senate then voted and the motion passed.

Mr. Huddlestun then wondered how the terms “substantial” and “specific” would be defined with respect to various occurrences in history. Does the Roman Empire, for example, cover a “substantial” period? Mr. Carens then moved to change “specific episodes” to “a specific episode.” The motion, after receiving a second, failed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s amendment, which passed.

Mr. Nunan then moved to put before the Senate the second part of his amendment that had been tabled (the first part was voted down in the previous meeting). The amendment sought to reduce the number of analytic “aspects” that courses satisfying the history goal would have to cover. More specifically, it proposed to change Defining Criteria #1 and Approval #1 by replacing the word “and” with the term “and/or” so that they would each read, “Develop knowledge of the history of human civilizations [. . .] through the study of the political, social, cultural, and/or intellectual aspects of. . . .” His motion to take off the table received a second and passed. Mr. Nunan said that, given the changes that had already been made to p. 9, he now felt less pressed about this part of his amendment; still, he was concerned that all four aspects wouldn’t be covered in courses in a serious manner, and said that he knows how
difficult the task is from teaching Honors Western Civilization. He was therefore skeptical that the job could be done properly in less intensive courses. He added that to provide the Gen-Ed Committee with guidance we need discussion in the Senate about this issue. In the same way that the Senate discussed the science goal and the difficulties of covering all the criteria, the Senate needs to talk about what counts as coverage of an “aspect” to help guide future Gen-Ed Committees.

Mr. Hopkins responded, saying that for analysis you can separate the intellectual, the political, the social, and cultural, but in the real world they are all intertwined, and that you need some discussion of all of them, though the emphasis on each will vary. He added that he wouldn’t want to legislate the particular mix or degree of emphasis for each aspect.

Mr. McNerney pointed out that by adding “and/or” a course could meet the Approval Criteria by covering only one of the analytic aspects. Reiterating Mr. Hopkins point that the various aspects are intertwined with each other, he said that you couldn’t talk about one without talking about the others. Ms. Cormack added that though we can’t legislate the degree of coverage of each aspect, we can assume a good-faith effort that they will all be covered.

The Senate then voted on the second part of Mr. Nunan’s first amendment, which failed.

Mr. Nunan then moved that his second amendment be approved. This amendment would delete both Defining Characteristic #2 (“Acquire knowledge of leading theories of historical change advanced by historians to evaluate developments in past civilizations, societies, and cultures”) and Approval Criteria #2 (“Give students knowledge of leading theories of historical change advanced by historians to evaluate developments in past civilizations, societies, and cultures”). Mr. Nunan added that the History Department sees this as a friendly amendment.

Mr. McNerney asked those in the History Dept. if such was the case, and Bill Olejniczak (guest and chair of the History Dept.) responded that it was.

Scott Peeples (English) said that he would like to keep both Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2 in the document. He thought it was fine to remove the words “advanced by historians,” but thought that Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2 were key to differentiating college-level history courses from high-school level ones, and that it was important for students to learn about disagreements in the historical scholarship. Mr. Krasnoff replied that he agrees with the spirit of Mr. Peeples’ remarks, but not the language in Defining Characteristic #2 and Approval Criteria #2, which focuses on the theory of why history changes. That, he said, is a narrow topic, which is not appropriate for the document. He also thought that the sort of issues that Mr. Peeples mentioned would still be addressed in many history courses.

Thomas Ross (Psychology) thought that the Senate needed to be careful about removing language from p. 9 that would prevent students from learning the methodologies used by historians. For this reason, he was reluctant to support the amendment. In response, Mr. Hopkins noted that other parts of the Gen-Ed document dealt with such methodologies. Mr.
Parsons added that, given Mr. Hopkins’ statement, Mr. Ross’ concern was addressed by the document as a whole.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Nunan’s second amendment, which passed.

Mr. Nunan then mentioned an issue concerning AP credits. He observed that the College has a general practice of accepting AP credits that apply to Gen-Ed requirements, but that the language in the Gen-Ed Proposal may exclude some AP courses as counting toward the new Gen-Ed requirements. We need, he said, to talk about this issue more broadly at some point.

Next, the Senate turned its attention to p. 10 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, concerning Goal III.2: Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Achievements.

Mr. Wilder opened discussion on p. 10 by proposing a series of amendments (four in total) on behalf of the Philosophy Department. He said amendments one, three, and four mainly involved word-smithing and were intended to improve the clarity of the document. The first amendment proposed to do the following: first, to alter the Goal statement with the insertion of the words “Traditions and” so that it would read: “Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Traditions and Achievements”; and second, to revise the relevant sections of Goal III.2 accordingly by inserting the phrase “traditions and” in the introductory line of Defining Characteristic 2, in Defining Characteristic 2b, 2c, and 2d, in Requirement 3, in Approval Criterion 1, in the introductory line of Approval Criterion 2, and in Approval Criteria 2b, 2c, and 2d.

The motion to amend received a second. Mr. Wilder then explained that the rationale for the proposed changes is similar to the one made with respect to the discussion of such terms as “episodes” and “events.” “Achievements” suggest single events or artifacts, and thus a narrowing of subject matter. “Traditions” imply greater historical and intellectual breadth. Students need, he said, to look at broader traditions, and not just singular events.

Evan Parry (Theatre) responded that he didn’t understand the word “achievements” in the way Mr. Wilder defined it. Susan Kattwinkel (guest) observed that the term “traditions” would preclude courses that treat achievements or events that are happening now. Mr. Huddleston remarked that he is not sure what “achievements” mean, but wouldn’t have that problem with “traditions.” Frank Cossa (Art History) said that he likes the use of “traditions” because cultural and artistic “failures” can be just as interesting as achievements. The word “traditions’ broadens the possible subject matter.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s first amendment, which passed.

Mr. Wilder next proposed the second amendment, which would delete Requirement #3. This requirement states the following: “Students must complete at least one course that is devoted to the study of achievements in visual or performing arts, or that combines the study of any form of artistic achievement with the creation of that art form. Such courses will be tagged so that students may identify them.” The motion to amend was seconded.
Mr. Wilder explained that while he likes the idea that art courses can satisfy this Gen-Ed requirement, which they can’t in our current Gen-Ed system, he sees as problematic the requirement that “at least one” art course must be taken to meet the goal, which thus singles out art courses for special treatment. He also said that the amendment would add more flexibility to the Gen-Ed system.

Mr. Parry responded that on the surface the amendment seems to give preferential treatment to the arts, but he liked the language in the document because the arts need protection both in the academy and in society in general. The arts, he continued, are especially under attack (even more than science) by government (in the form of reduced funding). We have many students who have had no experience of the arts because of cuts in government funding, no aesthetic experience, no knowledge of the arts. And developing such aesthetic experience, he stressed, is crucial to their development of human beings.

Ms. Kattwinkel noted that in focus groups conducted two years ago, in which one-half of the faculty participated, all saw the arts as important. This requirement, she said, is something that faculty members want. She added that the requirement does not privilege a subject matter, but a process, a way of thinking and approaching the world, just as, say, science offers a way of approaching the world. Moreover, the current proposal is weaker in this area than earlier forms of the proposal. The current proposal does not include a course devoted solely to the creation of art; consequently, most courses in studio art won’t qualify for the goal unless they are changed to include some attention to the theory of artistic creation. She also noted that the requirement would not create a burden on the School of the Arts. She noted that in courses where students create art, though they do not become experts, they experience something special. It is important, she stressed, for students to experience the process of creation. Most liberal arts schools recognize this and that is why they typically require such a course (seventeen of twenty-five COPLAC schools require such a course).

Mr. McNerney spoke against the proposed amendment. He pointed out that the Senate has given worth to all other areas of human endeavor covered in the Gen-Ed Proposal; therefore, to approve the proposed amendment would be saying that art is not important. He reiterated Mr. Parry’s point that the arts are under attack—in the form of censorship, reduced funding, and so on—and emphasized that we need to show our students that art is of value and that it is an important part of their education.

Mr. Parson said that he was not persuaded by the arguments presented so far. He didn’t agree with the notion that because art constitutes a different process of production, it should receive special treatment. He was not persuaded by the argument that because art may have had a special place in the liberal arts tradition, it should continue to be treated in a special way. Our thinking on all sorts of disciplines and aspects of education has evolved over time, and will continue to. With regard to the argument that the arts are under attack, he noted that the same could be said of other areas of inquiry. And the notion that because art has been cut back in high schools and under-funded could be said of other disciplines as well. Finally, he concluded that passing the amendment would ultimately not change things much because students will continue to take art courses; we don’t need to force students to take them.
Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) said that he was an example of a student who didn’t want to take any art courses and thought they were a waste of time. But part of education, he continued, is taking courses you aren’t familiar with and making discoveries. His favorite courses, it turned out, were in music. It’s important, he said, that we have students experience the arts. He was persuaded that the arts aren’t properly valued and that we need to take a stand for them.

Mr. Krasnoff said that he was neutral on the issue, but that Mr. McNerney’s “speech” was not valid. We do support and value the arts at the College, he insisted. But he said that his colleagues in the Philosophy Dept. were agitated by the special favor created for art. While he did think that the arts do provide a different way of thinking, he didn’t like certain kinds of courses to receive special protection, which ends up discouraging professors from upgrading their teaching. He added, however, that while he’s worried about a policy of protectionism, he isn’t overly worried about it, yet leans toward Mr. Parson’s view.

Mr. Parry said that he agreed with Mr. Parson on the problem of reduced funding for the arts in secondary schools, and with Ms. Kattwinkel on the notion that art offers a different way of thinking. He elaborated on his earlier point that students need to develop a more sophisticated sense of aesthetics, which only comes with exposure to sophisticated art forms. He then commented on the issue of teaching the ethical dimensions of cultural achievements, as outlined in Defining Characteristic 2.d and Approval Criteria 2.d. He explained how a course in acting moves students toward this objective. Such a course helps students to think like and be another person. He said that such experiences broaden students tremendously, often making them more tolerant. Courses of this kind offer an important way of learning ethics.

Mr. McNerney, after apologizing for his earlier impassioned remarks, said that while it is true that the approval of Mr. Wilder’s second amendment won’t have much of a practical effect on the School of the Arts, it is important keep the present language in the document, which validates art as a special mode of thinking and underscores the value of studying that mode. Such validation also has implications for the inclusion of other disciplines, such as English, which offer courses that are engaged in the study of the arts.

Mr. Huddlestun mentioned that he had been an art major in college and noted that though many students say that they can’t make art, taking an art course often turns out to be a vital experience, which makes them more well-rounded human beings.

Addressing the issue that Requirement #3 constituted a kind of protectionism for art courses, Mr. Overby argued that such was not the case. Don’t we make students take science courses to meet the science goal, and social science courses to meet the social science goal, etc.? Voting against the amendment is simply giving art its fair due; it’s not protectionism. Art has value and enriches everyone, and Mr. Overby gave the example of a Nobel-Prize winning chemist who wrote a play. But students won’t take art courses, he added, unless they are required to take them.

A Senator moved to extend debate by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded and passed.
Mr. Young said that he didn’t see Requirement #3 as protectionism for a school. He also thought that some in the Senate were losing sight of Goal III.2: Requirement #3 is not about protecting a school, but about achieving the goal.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) declared himself “a computer geek,” but said that there is another aspect of his identity that is centered on music. Art, he said, “forces you to put yourself out there.” It can be transformative for an individual. The possibility of such experiences needs to happen for students.

Frank Cossa (Art History) said that he is divided on the amendment. On the one hand, he doesn’t want students to be in his classes if they don’t want to be there. On the other hand, students and the public in general need to be educated about art. To illustrate the latter point, he mentioned examples of certain countries condemning modern art and of museums closing down exhibits because of reactions to one part of them.

Mr. Nunan said that he was not comfortable with all the talk about art as special and different. They are, but so are other disciplines. With respect to the idea that other departments could offer courses that met Requirement #3, he said that language in the document did not support that contention. He added that he sought flexibility and favored not constraining students and not putting up more requirements and hurdles.

In response to Mr. Nunan, Conseula Francis (English) spoke against the amendment and argued that the current language in the document should remain because it allows departments outside the School of the Arts to offer courses that could meet the goal. She gave the example of her English course on the Black Arts Movement, explaining that course asks students to produce art in the tradition of the movement. She saw her course—or a version of it—as satisfying Goal III.2. Expanding on this point, Ms. Kattwinkel said that some film classes taught in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and courses in computer graphics in the School of Science and Mathematics could very well satisfy Requirement #3. She thought that a number of schools would be involved in this part of the Gen-Ed goal.

Mr. Parson responded that passage of Mr. Wilder’s amendment does not preclude such courses as the one Ms. Francis mentioned from satisfying the goal. He added that he was still not persuaded by the claims stemming from the view that art is special, different. Yes, art does offer a different way of thinking, but every discipline could make the claim that it is different and offers its own way of thinking. He concluded that as currently worded, Requirement #3 amounts to protectionism.

Doryjane Birrer (English) remarked that there is something ineffable in the creative process. In other disciplines that deal with cultural achievements, the mode is discursive (argument is central), but the creative process is different in this regard and constitutes a fundamentally different mode of inquiry.

Ms. Cormack said that she was never forced as a student to take an art course, and that the discussion in that direction narrows the Gen-Ed system. Glen Lesses (guest) reiterated the point that each discipline can claim that its mode of investigation is unique. Thus he didn’t
find the argument about uniqueness compelling. He also said that arts are not under more attack than other disciplines, and therefore shouldn’t be singled out for special protection.

Ms. Francis responded that she did not read Goal III.2—and Requirement #3 specifically—as giving special protection for the School of the Arts. It is only asking students to learn a special way of thinking and of investigating the world. In that respect, it is no different than the science goal. It is disingenuous to see the goal as protectionist.

Mr. Huddlestun called the question, which succeeded. The Senate then voted on the second amendment to p. 10 proposed by Mr. Wilder. The amendment failed.

Mr. Wilder, before proposing on behalf the Philosophy Dept. a third amendment to p. 10, thanked his fellow Senators for the thoughtfulness and quality of the preceding debate. He then proposed the third amendment, which would alter Defining Characteristic 2.c and Approval Criterion 2.c, by replacing the current language—which reads, “Cultural, historical and/or philosophical dimensions that influence and are influenced by these achievements”—with the following language: “Techniques appropriate to the study of the arts and humanities.”

The proposed amendment was seconded. Mr. Wilder then explained that the rationale for the change was to allow more courses to qualify for Goal III.2. The words “influence” and “influenced” in the current wording indicate that courses should use an historical approach, thus potentially excluding other approaches. The amendment thus seeks to make sure that courses not historical in nature qualify.

David Gentry (at-large) spoke in favor of the amendment, noting that if the amendment passes the word “humanities” would be included in the Gen-Ed document. He pointed out that nowhere else in the document does the word appear, and was concerned that students could graduate from the College without ever taking a course in the humanities. Mr. Parry said that he, too, supported the amendment and liked the added breadth it gave to the goal.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Wilder’s third proposed amendment to p. 10, and it passed.

Mr. Wilder, again on behalf of the Philosophy Dept., proposed the fourth amendment to p. 10, which would insert the word “intellectual” in Defining Characteristic 2.d and Approval Criteria 2.d so that both would read as follows: “Social, historical, intellectual impact and/or ethical dimensions of the traditions and achievements and the way they are interpreted and valued.” The aim of the amendment, he explained, was to make sure that the criteria for courses satisfying the goal are not interpreted too narrowly by excluding courses that focus on the intellectual impact of artistic and cultural traditions and achievements. He added that the main significance of such traditions and achievements is often intellectual.

The Senate voted on Mr. Wilder’s proposed fourth amendment, which passed.

Mr. Young then asked a question about Defining Characteristic #2, wondering whether the intent was that all four items listed under it (a, b, c, and d) should be covered or just two. Bob
Mignone (guest) said that the intent was not all four, but more than one. Mr. Young responded that he would therefore like to see a change. Steve Jaumé (Geology) suggested that the words “two of the following” could be added at the end of the line of Defining Characteristic #2. Mr. Young wondered whether the four courses required to satisfy the goal should cover all areas. Ms. Kattwinkel responded that the Gen-Ed Committee was not eager to impose that level of logistical control. Mr. Mignone added that the word “multiple” means “at least two.” Mr. Young said that his colleagues weren’t quite understanding his question.

Moving to a different topic, Mr. Nunan commented on Requirement #5, which states that “Coursework satisfying this requirement may not be double-counted with the courses used to satisfy the human history requirement (Goal III.1a) unless it is above the 100 level. Mr. Nunan observed that the presence of Requirement #5 implies that AP history courses cannot be used to fulfill the history requirement, since students who exempt 100-level history courses because of AP test results would still be required to take more advanced history courses to meet the human history requirement. This raises a more general question that the Gen-Ed Proposal never addresses directly: will appropriate AP and IB courses enable students to waive some of the Gen-Ed requirements, as has always been the case in the past? Requirement #5, he said, seems to suggest that the answer is “no,” at least for AP history courses. He reminded the Senate that at some point it needs to discuss the general policy it should adopt about AP and IB courses with respect to the new Gen-Ed program.

Mr. Krasnoff added that there is another problem. Because the history requirement is flexible, if a student takes a high-level history course it will count for many goals. Such multiple, even excessive counting poses a potential problem.

Next, Ms. Cormack moved that Requirement #2 be modified by changing the word three to two: “Students must complete these courses in at least three different departments or programs.” The motion received a second.

It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting. Speaker Kelly announced that discussion of Ms. Cormack’s motion would begin at the start of the next Faculty Senate meeting devoted to the Gen-Ed Proposal, set for 27 November 2007. The Senate adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 30 October 2007

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, October 30, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the fifth special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order. Next, the September 25, 2007 minutes were approved with one correction. The Speaker then announced that the Gen-Ed Faculty Senate meeting that had been scheduled for November 20 was moved to November 27.

Debate on the motion made by Scott Peeples (English) in the previous meeting resumed. That motion called for Approval Criterion #2 of p. 8 of the Gen-Ed Proposal (Goal II. 3 Interdisciplinary Analysis and Creative Problem-solving) to be deleted.

Meg Cormack (at-large) said that she supported the motion on the grounds that keeping Approval Criterion #2 would discourage the creation of upper-level interdisciplinary courses. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) stated that he supported the motion because it would bring the Approval Criteria for the interdisciplinary course for Goal II.3 on p. 8 in line with the interdisciplinary science course required on p. 6.

George Pothering (guest and chair of the ad hoc Committee on Gen-Ed) reiterated a point he made with respect to Goal II.3 in the last meeting in response to a claim that history was inherently interdisciplinary. He said that if a course borrows some knowledge from another discipline (as history courses often do), it is not necessarily interdisciplinary; to be so, there must be a strong “grounding” in the other discipline (i.e., fundamental principles, ways of thinking, methodologies must be taught and utilized). Ms. Cormack did not entirely agree and offered a qualification to Mr. Pothering’s view, saying that in her interpretation of the Approval Criteria, to qualify as interdisciplinary a course need not provide a grounding in another discipline, but could assume such a grounding and build upon it.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) highlighted the clause in Approval Criterion #1 that says “explore a topic from the perspective of more than one academic discipline.” He said he read that language as rigorously insisting on providing knowledge of the discipline.

At this point the Senate voted on Mr. Peeples’ proposed amendment, and it passed.

Richard Nunan (at-large) next called attention to what was Approval Criterion #3—now #2 given the success of the preceding motion—and the phrase “to demonstrate advancement through integration.” He said he was not sure how a future Gen-Ed Committee would interpret the phrase, and moved to delete Approval Criterion #2 (formerly #3). The motion was seconded and debate ensued.

Ms. Cormack said that she could only meet this criterion by giving students a test at the start of the course and measuring their progress from that point. She thought this was awkward and supported Mr. Nunan’s motion. Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) wondered whether the
focus of Approval Criterion #2 was on the word “demonstrate” or the word “integration.” He thought that the focus on “integration”—using two disciplines to look at a topic and integrating their approaches—was reasonable. He added that he did not think that Approval Criterion #2 was intended to emphasize assessment. Mr. Nunan responded that he was still unclear about what the phrase “advancement through integration” meant. Did it mean assessment or something else? Mr. Krasnoff suggested that the language in the latter part of the sentence (“students should demonstrate that their understanding of a topic has been enriched by the integration of different disciplinary insights”), which repeated the word “integration,” offered clearer guidance.

Kay Smith (guest) then gave some examples of how some scholars understand the concept of “advancement through integration.” She said that the objective was doable and that guidelines exist. Mr. Wilder responded that while the examples provided help, they are directed at teachers. But the language in the Approval Criteria is directed at students.

Rohn England (Mathematics) said that he was against the proposed amendment, and that he favored the idea suggested by Mr. Krasnoff. He thus suggested a replacement of the Approval Criterion #2, if Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment passed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Nunan’s amendment to delete Approval Criterion #2, which failed.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to change the language in Approval Criterion #2 from

“Course should require students to demonstrate advancement through integration: students should demonstrate that their understanding of a topic has been enriched by the integration of different disciplinary insights,”

To

“Courses should enrich students’ understanding of a topic through integration of different disciplinary insights.”

At the same time, he moved that the wording of Approval Criterion #3 be changed from

“Course should develop students’ critical awareness: students should demonstrate reflectiveness about the choices, opportunities, compromises, and limitations involved in using an interdisciplinary approach to the topic being studied”

To

“Courses should develop students’ critical awareness of the choices, opportunities, compromises, and limitations involved in using an interdisciplinary approach to the topic being studied.”
The motion received a second and debate ensued. Ms. Cormack said there was some redundancy, but overall thought the changes were good. Steve Jaumé (Geology) also thought that Approval Criterion #3 created some redundancy and that in amended Criterion #2 the idea of integration was lost from the original wording. Overall, he thought that not much was gained by the amendment, and something was lost. Speaking in favor of the amendment and the need for Approval Criterion #3, Mr. Peeples commented on some key differences between #3 and #2, noting that #3, rather than just specifying that different disciplinary approaches be used to explore a topic, requires some thought about interdisciplinarity itself.

A senator moved to extend debate by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Nunan said that he agreed with the comments about redundancy, but observed that if the proposed amendment is voted down, then the Senate will be stuck with language in the Approval Criteria that no one is happy with.

Jennifer McStotts (at-large) asked for unanimous consent to replace the word “enrich” in Approval Criterion #2 with “advance” in order to recapture some of the meaning of the original document that was lost in the amendment. Unanimous consent was given.

Jack Parson (Political Science) then spoke in favor of Mr. Krasnoff’s amendment, noting that there are key differences among the Approval Criteria. The first asks students to explore a topic using different disciplinary approaches, the third asks students to reflect on what each approach can and can’t do, and the second asks students to understand how integrating disciplines advances knowledge. Jim Newhard (Classics) agreed with Mr. Parson, noting that students learn about and reflect on different theories in different disciplines (#3), but also apply (#1) each theory to a new data set not typical in the discipline, which is where the “integration of different disciplinary insights” (#2) takes place.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Krasnoff’s proposed amendment to change the wording of Approval Criteria #2 and #3, and it passed.

The Senate next moved to p. 9 (Goal III.1 Knowledge of Human History) of the Gen-Ed Proposal.

Bill Olejniczak (guest and Chair of the History Department) began discussion of p. 9 by stating that the History Department was aware of some amendments about to be proposed, and that he was pleased by the generally positive discourse and friendly discussion. He noted that if there is an impression among some faculty that the History Dept. is “turf oriented,” that is a mistake. The History Dept. has no desire to exclude others from involvement in Goal III.1. The Dept. and others concerned with the history goal have thought about the best way to reach student-learning objectives. He added that because the Gen-Ed approach is goal focused, the Dept. acknowledges that its current Gen-Ed courses (HIST101—104) will have to conform to the agreed-upon goals and be revised. Mr. Olejniczak also said that his department supported one of the amendments (the 2nd) that Mr. Nunan would be proposing.
Mr. Olejniczak then addressed the issue of the four categories or “aspects” of analysis in Goal III.1—the political, social, cultural, and intellectual—and argued that they are not too difficult to cover and not overly comprehensive in their scope, and that they all fit together to form a whole. He argued, too, that students need a comprehensive chronological framework, and need to look at the deep past, even before civilizations began. With such a framework students will be able to understand the concept of development. A long time-frame will allow students to see what changes and what doesn’t, and to compare civilizations. Ultimately, this approach allows students to understand the present better. He added that history courses are often narrow in their focus, giving students a fragmentary view of history: events are seen as episodic and unconnected to each other. Students need a sense of deep time and long view of history in order to see and understand the interconnections among historical events.

Mr. Nunan then proposed an amendment to p. 9, Goal III.1. He moved that in Defining Criteria #1 the phrase “and/or” replace the word “and” in the list of historical aspects and periods to be studied, thus making the sentence read as follows: “Develop knowledge of the history of human civilizations, societies, and cultures and an awareness of historical experience through the study of the political, social, cultural, and/or intellectual aspects of ancient, medieval, early modern, and/or modern eras.” The proposed amendment called for the same thing to be done in Approval Criteria #1 so that it would read as follows: “Develop students’ knowledge of the history of human civilizations, societies, and cultures and an awareness of historical experience through the study of the political, social, cultural, and/or intellectual aspects of selected eras of human history.” Further, the amendment sought to modify Requirement #2 by reducing the number of historical periods that the required courses would have to cover: “Students must select two courses that, together, cover at least two of the all four eras of history (ancient, medieval, early modern and modern). Courses will be tagged to indicate which eras they cover.”

The motion received a second and Mr. Nunan proceeded to explain the rationale for the motion. However, he first thanked Mr. Olejniczak for his comments. He also suggested that it would be good to ask whether we are really focused on a goal-driven program or still holding onto a distributive one. It would be good to debate that issue, he said, and at the very least to discuss what counts as a goal-driven curriculum. Specifically regarding his proposed amendment, he said that while Mr. Olejniczak’s remarks were helpful, he was not persuaded by the emphasis on the grand sweep of history and the claim that students need to study such large tracts of time. Such a view might have made sense when the Gen-Ed history requirement focused on just Western Civilization, but now we are talking about world history and multiple civilizations and historical traditions. He thought, too, that the learning objectives mentioned by Mr. Olejniczak could be achieved by studying shorter historical periods. Moreover, he observed that as currently written, the goal poses a big staffing commitment to teach the required courses, the rationale for which he didn’t find convincing. Finally, Mr. Nunan noted that only a few courses—HIST101-104—would really satisfy the goal, and in that respect p. 9 didn’t seem to be goal driven.

Mr. Parson also thanked Mr. Olejniczak for his comments. He then asked whether the history courses that satisfy the current Gen-Ed requirement for history—HIST 101-104—would be modified were the Gen-Ed Proposal to pass. Mr. Olejniczak said they would. Mr. Parson then
said that just as he was not persuaded in the discussions on the science goal that comprehensiveness was a key aim for student learning, he was not persuaded by the same argument with respect to the history goal. He was more persuaded by the view that students needed to learn historical methodologies, which do not necessarily depend on the study of long historical time periods. The study of long time periods, he added, precludes one from doing some interesting types of historical inquiry.

Ms. Cormack said that she heard that the History Dept. itself was divided on the history goal and that some members supported Mr. Nunan’s amendment.

Susan Kattwinkel (guest) said that she is a historian of drama and feels that she would be able to offer courses that qualify for the goal, and has confidence in the judgment of the Gen-Ed Committee that it would be open and not exclude other departments. She added that her main concern with the proposed amendment was that students would seek courses dealing only with modern history.

Darryl Phillips (at-large) agreed with Mr. Olejniczak’s emphasis on the importance of a long historical perspective, but was troubled by the historical categories or periods. The classical age, he said, by itself falls into a long time perspective, from 1500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E.; but this won’t count because it doesn’t cover the medieval and early modern periods. So in that respect, Goal III.1, as currently written, is too restrictive. He therefore favored Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment.

George Hopkins (History) said, in reaction to Ms. Kattwinkel’s remarks, that he was glad that she saw the goal as including some of her courses. In response to some earlier comments, he said that all departments, including History, would have to re-tool their courses to meet the goals of the new Gen-Ed curriculum. He added that most students don’t have much knowledge of history, that they need a deep time perspective to make full sense of historical knowledge, and that if Mr. Nunan’s amendment passes, a student might take two history courses on different topics—in ancient Chinese history, say, and medieval European history—but that the knowledge gained from them would be disconnected from each other.

Mr. Wilder said that he was surprised by Ms. Kattwinkel’s view because he didn’t see that the wording on p. 9 would include the course she mentioned. Her course, he observed, focuses on the cultural but not other areas listed in the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria (e.g., the political and social). However, Mr. Nunan’s amendment would make Goal III.1 more inclusive. He then suggested that the Senate divide the question and vote separately on the part of the amendment dealing with historical “eras” and the part dealing with the analytical historical “aspects.” He said, too, that he wished to hear from other departments, especially about whether they thought their courses would satisfy the Approval Criteria.

Mr. Huddlestun highlighted the use of “must” on p. 9 and saw it as likely to exclude courses from other departments from meeting the standard to satisfy the goal. Only the History Dept., he said, offers courses that would satisfy all Approval Criteria.
Jason Coy (at large) responded that the Approval Criteria precluded narrowly focused courses, which usually are upper level. Underscoring Mr. Hopkins’ point, he said that courses with a broad focus are needed to give students a general grounding in history and to prevent a fragmentary understanding of history. He said that he saw Ms. Kattwinkel’s course as counting because it would cover a broad swathe of time, but a course, say, in the history of Elizabethan Theatre would not. Mr. Krasnoff replied that the example given by Mr. Coy was not representative, and said that the requirement of teaching theories of historical change as stated in the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria set a very high bar for survey courses in other departments to meet. Mr. Coy responded that Mr. Nunan’s second amendment, to be proposed later, would take care of that issue.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) said that he would love to see a course on the history of computing and didn’t see a problem with it covering the four areas of history.

Rosemary Brana-Shute (History) moved to extend debate by thirty minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Phillips said that it would be helpful to hear some explanation of where the four periods came from (how, why they were chosen) and to know whether they were supposed to apply to all civilizations or just Western civilization.

Jeffery Diamond (guest) responded, saying that students need to know how history works as a discipline and to understand that it provides theories and methodologies for looking at the world. History, as an academic discipline, doesn’t just focus on a theme or topic. It offers ways of analyzing a society or period. He also pointed out that the four categories of analysis mentioned on p. 9—the political, social, cultural, and intellectual—have evolved in historical scholarship over time, and that we limit our historical knowledge if we get rid of one. He added that students need to look at, but also go beyond classical history to study the other periods (medieval, early modern, etc.) in order to see what changes from one to the other. To reduce the required eras to be covered from four to two would “butcher” the history goal and prevent students from acquiring the long, comprehensive historical perspective they need.

Mr. Olejniczak pointed out that it would not be accurate to imply that the periods stated on p. 9 apply only to the West. Historians, he noted, use the categories of ancient, early modern, and modern in studying Chinese history, though he granted that the term “medieval” is problematic for Asian history.

Tim Carens (English) said that he was “on the fence” with regard to Mr. Nunan’s amendment, but it did seem to him that to allow courses outside the History Dept. to satisfy Goal III.1, some modification of the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria was needed. He suggested that perhaps two broad historical periods should be covered, rather than four.

Mr. Huddlestun (Religious Studies) said that as a historian he had no problem with what was said about historical methodology, but wondered what courses would count toward the goal apart from those already offered by the History Dept.
In response to earlier comments that questioned the objective of comprehensiveness, Ms. Brana-Shute said that we can teach world history and provide students with a general knowledge of the world. While we don’t try to cover every detail, we can teach students to discern major patterns. Doing so provides students with a sense of coherence that stems from a broad historical narrative. Such coherence is what the history goal seeks to provide and what is vitally needed. She added that students also need to learn how to read primary sources, to read critically, and to know what questions to ask about a document. Finally, she mentioned that no one in the History Dept. was formally trained in world history. Faculty in other departments, she suggested, could also train themselves to teach courses that would satisfy the new Gen-Ed history goal.

Returning to the question of how appropriate the designated historical periods are for world history, Mr. Parson stated that he thought they applied only to the West and were somewhat arbitrary. He remarked, too, that on the one hand members of the History Dept. stress the laudable desire to include the participation of other departments, yet on the other hand they insist on such specific criteria that allows only History Dept. courses to meet the goal. Approval Criterion #3, he added, sets a high threshold for other departments to reach.

Ms. Cormack, addressing the concept of historical periods, said that the medieval period does not exist in Africa, China, and some other parts of the world. In that respect, the scheme of periodization stated on p. 9 reflects a bias toward European history. At this point, Ms. Cormack, acting on Mr. Wilder’s earlier suggestion, formally moved to divide the question and to vote on the issue of “eras” separately from the issue of “aspects.” After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Carens asked if the historians would be comfortable with utilizing two broad historical periods, say, a pre-1500 period and post-1500 period (or some other date could be used that historians might see as more appropriate), and requiring students to take a course that covered a large span of time in each period. Would such an arrangement meet the objective of exposing students to the broad sweep of history? Mr. Nunan said that the word “cover” means breadth and that some historical sweep can be assumed in the goal, as it is already worded. He advised the Senate to trust the Gen-Ed Committee to understand this, and said that in this sense some courses mentioned by Ms. Kattwinkel and others would count, but would not if all four periods or eras were required. Gerry Gonsalves (Management and Entrepreneurship) said that we live in a global world and that students need a broad view of the world. He also said that he favored the idea mentioned by Mr. Carens. Mr. Krasnoff stressed that sticking with the four eras did not allow for much inclusiveness, but that Mr. Carens’s idea offered a compromise. He added that the four required eras leads lock-step to the current four Gen-Ed courses now taught by the History Dept. (HIST 101-104), and that such a situation is inconsistent with other positive things happening throughout the Gen-Ed Proposal. Further, he thought that Goal III.1, as currently written, would not serve the History Dept. well, as it would force the Dept. to rely heavily on adjuncts and force its faculty to teach the same old courses.

From the perspective of art history, David Kowal (Art History) observed that the four periods mentioned on p. 9 didn’t work at all for non-Western art and only worked partially for
Western art. Most art history courses, he pointed out, wouldn’t satisfy the Approval Criteria of the goal, and to make them meet those criteria, the Art History Department would have to revert to an old, out-moded, and ineffective way of teaching by offering courses that cover large sweeps of time. Such courses, he explained, end up going covering too much too fast and being superficial. Ms. Cormack agreed that such courses often end up being superficial, but said that they could be done. She also suggested that it might be a good idea to replace the four eras with two: pre-modern and modern.

With regard to an earlier comment about the History Dept. being inconsistent (advocating inclusiveness, but denying it in the requirements of the goal), Mr. Coy noted that the History Dept. invited other departments to provide input and that it was charged by the Gen-Ed Committee to come up with the best form of history education for the Gen-Ed program. And what it has concluded is that a long and broad sweep of history would provide students with a coherent and comprehensive form of education in history. He strongly urged the Senate to oppose the amendment, suggesting that if it were to pass, students would end up with large gaps in their knowledge of history.

Mr. Diamond re-iterated the argument that if the amendment were successful, then students would not gain an understanding of change over time or have the framework for understanding certain cross-cultural contexts. He added that the insertion of “and/or” as called for the amendment would allow students to go to the easiest, most familiar courses.

Ms. Brana-Shute moved to extend debate by fifteen minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

To Mr. Diamond’s remarks, Mr. Nunan responded that his amendment doesn’t say that students can take two courses in one area. To imply that it does mischaracterizes it. Mr. Wilder added that while he appreciates the point about the sweep of history, the insistence on it takes him back to the current Gen-Ed history courses (HIST 101-104). Mr. Peeples, picking up on a suggestion made earlier, asked those in the History Dept. if they would support the date 1500 as a dividing line for a two-period scheme.

Mr. Boetje remarked that a course such as the History of Computing could go from ancient to modern times. It’s not just HIST 101-104, he said, that can cover such time spans. Picking up on this thought, Mr. Pothering said that he thought the Gen-Ed Proposal opened up the possibility of other kinds of courses now going on in other departments that could, with some modification, satisfy the criteria of Goal III.1. Mr. McNerney, speaking against the amendment, pointed out that students now can’t take HIST 101 and 104, but will be able to in the proposed new system. It thus provides, along with a broad view of history, some flexibility. Mr. Diamond reiterated his point that if the amendment passes, students could choose to take courses that cover the early modern and modern periods (and probably “would flock” to courses covering the modern era), and in so doing the desired broad historical overview would be lost. Tim Carmichael (History), speaking against the proposed amendment, underlined the need for students to have a long view of history to see what changes over time and to understand how change happens. Mark Long (Political Science) acknowledged that providing a long view of history was important, but said that a two-period
scheme would be more useful historical. He objected, however, to designating the year 1500 as the dividing point for such a scheme, claiming that 1500 is a Western date. In response, Mr. Coy said that he appreciated the idea of the two-period scheme, but preferred the current proposal and thought that the year 1500 was arbitrary and in some respects offered less flexibility (courses would have to start or end at 1500). He added that perhaps the terms “pre-modern” and “modern” could work, but thought the four-eras design was better because it offered more flexibility and insured that students would study the broad sweep of history. Ms. Brana-Shute underscored the argument that a broad historical narrative provides coherence, allowing students to see how discrete historical events fit into larger patterns. Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) mused that if “history repeats itself,” then one era should cover all the others too. Perhaps more seriously, he asked how much ancient or modern history should be taught. At this point, Speaker Kelly asked the Senate not to repeat arguments.

Ms. Cormack then moved to remand the issue to a committee to work out a solution to the problems the Senate had been discussing. The motion was seconded. Mr. Phillips asked if such an amendment was in order with a motion before the Senate. The Speaker ruled that Ms. Cormack’s motion, as he understood it, was in order, and said that he would facilitate the formation of a committee if it passed. The Senate then voted on the motion, but it failed.

Mr. Krasnoff moved to extend debate by eight minutes. The motion was seconded and passed. He then said that he voted against the motion to postpone debate on Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment because the options were clear, and that there were three: the first option is to stay with the four eras to be covered as the Gen-Ed Proposal currently stipulates; the second is to allow any two of the four eras to be covered as Mr. Nunan’s amendment proposes; the third is to devise some kind of two-part period scheme (such as pre-and post 1500 periods, or pre-modern and modern periods) as some Senators suggested. He then called the question, which, after receiving a second, passed.

The Senate then voted on the part of Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment that would change the number of historical eras to be covered from four to two. The amendment failed.

The Senate then began debate on the second part of Mr. Nunan’s amendment concerning how many “aspects” should be covered in courses that satisfy Goal III.1. One senator opened discussion by asking how such courses as History of the Theater or the History of Computing, which some Senators had claimed earlier would satisfy the history requirement, would cover all the analytic aspects (political, social, cultural, and intellectual) specified on p. 9.

Ms. Kattwinkel responded that in a course on the history of the theater students learn about the political views that plays express, the intellectual and philosophical views that underpin various plays or that the plays speak to, and the social place of actors. Such a course, she said, would cover all the aspects mentioned on p. 9. Doryjane Birrer (English) said that the same applies to literature generally. Some people perceive literary art as aesthetic objects detached from the world, but in fact they are embedded in the social, political, and intellectual environment in which they were created.
Paul Young (Mathematics) noticed a difference in meaning between Defining Characteristic #1 and Approval Criterion #1, specifically in the way “and” was linked to the word “must” in the Defining Characteristics but not the Approval Criteria. He suggested that perhaps the use of “and/or” as called for by Mr. Nunan’s amendment would be useful here.

It was now 7 p.m., the end of the scheduled meeting, and the Senate adjourned. Speaker Kelly said that debate on the second part of Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment would resume at the next Senate meeting.

   Respectfully submitted,

   Terence Bowers
   Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 23 October 2007

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday October 23, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the fourth special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, he announced that his decision to allow a motion to table p. 6 of the Gen-Ed Proposal (Goal II. Scientific Reasoning and Analysis, and Goal III.1 Knowledge of the Natural World), which the Senate passed at the end of the last meeting, was not in order. After researching the issue with Parliamentarian Brian McGee and other faculty colleagues, he ruled that a paragraph (i.e., page) of a document that is being examined seriatim cannot be laid on the table. To do so, the Senate must suspend the rules, which requires a two-thirds vote, and then move to lay a part of the document on the table. The speaker thus declared that the motion to table p. 6 as invalid, and said that if there were no objections, the Senate would resume its discussion of p. 6. No objections were made.

Tim Callahan (Geology) then proposed an amendment to p. 6 that Jack Parson (Political Science) and some other faculty had crafted and circulated before the meeting. After the motion was seconded, Mr. Callahan pointed out just how the amendment changed p. 6. In Defining Characteristic #5 and Approval Criterion #5, the amendment added the words “within and outside of scientific disciplines,” so that both lines read as follows: “integrative and synergistic nature of scientific knowledge within and outside of scientific disciplines.” The amendment also added the following statement at the bottom of p. 6: “One of the three approved courses must be defined by an interdisciplinary approach involving the relationship of scientific knowledge to societal needs, cultural values and/or creative expression.”

Meg Cormack (at-large) thought the wording of the added sentence could be improved and asked for unanimous consent to substitute the phrase “to societal needs, cultural values and/or creative expression” with the phrase “knowledge of human culture and society.” She then read a definition of the word “culture” provided by an anthropologist. Denis Keyes (at-large) asked why it was necessary to include the word “human.” Unanimous consent was not granted. Ms. Cormack then made a formal motion to amend Mr. Callahan’s amendment.

Jerry Boetje (Computer Science) said that he would like to include in p. 6 the definition of “culture” that Ms. Cormack read. The Speaker responded that the Senate would first have to deal with Ms. Cormack’s amendment; then his suggestion could be addressed. Jack Parsons (Political Science) said that he would be happy to include the definition and thought that it would provide guidance for others in the future.

The Senate then voted on Ms. Cormack’s motion, and it passed. Mr. Boetje then moved to amend Mr. Callahan’s motion by adding the definition of “culture” read by Ms. Cormack. His motion was seconded, and the Parliamentarian then re-read the definition. Doryjane Birrer noticed that the word “man” was in the definition and asked for unanimous consent to use non-sexist wording. Maureen Hays (Sociology/Anthropology) voiced some concern about this suggestion and said that the definition is a direct quote from the anthropologist.
Edward Tyler, and that it would be useful to include the attribution and awkward to alter the quotation. Unanimous consent was thus not granted. Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) said that adding the definition was not needed and not appropriate for this kind of document.

George Hopkins (History) moved to extend debate on p. 6 by fifteen minutes. The motion, after being seconded, passed.

John Huddleston (Religious Studies) agreed with Mr. Krasnoff and pointed out that after defining “culture,” the Senate would need to define “society,” and that such elaborations were unneeded. Jason Overby (Biochemistry/Chemistry) joked that the next step would be to attach the dictionary to the document. The Senate then voted on Mr. Boetje’s motion, which failed.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) said that he had looked at a number of existing courses—such as The History of Science and Technology—to see if they accorded with the language of the proposed amendment, and wondered if the scientists in the Senate thought they were appropriate courses for Goals II.1/III.1. Bob Mignone (guest) wished to respond to Mr. Wilder’s question and to give his overall opinion on the amendment. He began by thanking those who put the amendment together, but said he opposed it. He thought the amendment would end up excluding courses and creating confusion, and didn’t see a need for it. He thought that the amendment would include the courses that Mr. Wilder mentioned, but would exclude a number of science courses and thus be restrictive. Richard Nunan (at-large) said he was surprised by Mr. Mignone’s interpretation of the proposed amendment. He saw the amendment as being expansive in that it included courses that are not typically in science departments as well as those that are (such as the History of Chemistry).

Darryl Phillips (at-large) said that Mr. Wilder’s question—asking scientists whether certain courses counted toward a science focused goal—revealed a fundamental issue, which is that we are trying to make a goal-driven Gen-Ed model match our current distributive model. He thought that now would be a good time to ask whether we aren’t better suited to our present distributive model of Gen Ed. Let’s stick with what we have, he urged. Let’s let scientists settle their portion of the curriculum and trust our colleagues in each discipline to teach their sections of the curriculum. If we can’t decide on what courses count toward Gen Ed, we will hurt the quality of our courses. He added that the new proposed Gen-Ed scheme would increase our bureaucracy, and that the Gen-Ed Committee would become a battleground of endless arguing. It would be better to stay with our current system and modify incrementally, rather than make radical, sweeping changes.

Mr. Parson responded that such comments would be more appropriate after the amendment process was completed. He added that he doesn’t see the amendment as ensuring that the third science course would necessarily come from departments outside the sciences. The point of the amendment is to connect science and society. The courses that will satisfy this requirement can come from science departments. This amendment, he stressed, is important and is line with the white paper that the School of Science and Mathematics gave to the Gen-Ed Committee.
Paul Young (Mathematics) said that the proposed amendment seemed not to be aligned with the original rationale. Jim Deavor (guest) next urged the Senate to defeat the proposed amendment. He agreed with Bob Mignone that it dictates what courses must be taught and is too restrictive. It would be better to suggest what courses may be taught.

Mitchell Colgan (guest), one of the persons who helped draft the proposed amendment, spoke of how the committee tried to define the third required course for Goals II.1/III.1. He first reminded the Senate that at the last meeting there was general agreement that students needed more exposure to science, that our present system of science education needed to be reformed, and that science courses aren’t currently meeting the needs of students. He added that the Senate had desired some assurance that the third course would be different from the other two. The proposed amendment specifies how it is different. He said, too, that we needed to trust each other, and that most of the negative comments stemmed from a lack of trust between those in science and those in other disciplines. He expressed confidence in the faculty’s ability to work together, and emphasized that the amendment helps us do that and will provide for courses that explain how science intersects with social and cultural issues. He thought that the amendment, far from being restrictive, as some had suggested, was just the opposite.

At this point, a Senator called the question. The motion was seconded and then passed.

Scott Peeples (English) moved to extend debate on p. 6 for fifteen minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Callahan’s proposed amendment, and it passed.

Mr. Nunan then proposed an amendment to the amendment that passed. He moved to modify the last sentence on p. 6 in the following way: “The third (non-lab) course must be defined by an interdisciplinary approach involving the relationship of scientific knowledge to culture and society.” He explained that the purpose of his amendment was to address the problem of increasingly complex “combinatorial logistics” stemming from the course-tagging required by the Defining Characteristics of the Goal. He said that there are four content criteria that students must meet to satisfy the Goals of p. 6—(1) “The origin and evolution of the Universe,” (2) “The origin and evolution of the Earth,” (3) “The nature of the physical world,” (4) “The nature of the biosphere and how it evolves over time”—as well as two process criteria (“The processes of inquiry in science” and “The integrative and synergistic nature of scientific knowledge”). The newly passed amendment increases this complexity because it adds another content criterion that must be met by one of three required science courses. Mr. Nunan provided a chart that diagrammed the problem of combinatorial logistics, and stressed his worry over the complex scheduling and planning problems that students would be facing to meet the science goal. He explained that his amendment, which specifically designates the third course as the one that meets the science—society/culture criterion, would help reduce this complexity.

Mr. Boetje remarked that the term “third course” suggests a sequence, but noted that we are not dealing with a sequence of courses. He also said that the issue of combinatorial logistics
would be easy to solve, especially with the aid of the appropriate software, which already exists. Mr. Young wondered what was meant by the phrase “non-lab course.” Nothing in the document, he said, stipulates that one has to take a non-lab course. Mr. Deavor asked if the amendment meant that current lab courses would not satisfy the third-course requirement.

Mr. Nunan replied that that was correct: he was assuming that non-lab courses would satisfy the third-course requirement. He said that students are required to take two lab courses and that because their content is pure science they would not count toward the third-course requirement, in which the interrelationships between science and society/culture are explored. He said, however, that the word “third” is not crucial for his amendment. It can be removed.

Ms. Cormack responded that she could imagine a science course with a lab that yet explores a content area outside of the sciences. She said that she would not want to see such a course excluded from meeting the goal on p. 6. Mr. Mignone again voiced his concern that things were becoming more restrictive—for now labs were being shut out. He thought we were headed in the wrong direction.

Mr. Nunan responded that the intent of his amendment was not to exclude science courses, but to address a logistical problem. In response to one of Mr. Boetje’s earlier comments, he said it’s not that simple to say we can rely on computers to solve the problem. The issue is complexity and the solution is to reduce the complexity in the Gen-Ed requirements. Students, he added, don’t plan out their courses four years in advance and don’t use sophisticated software to do their course planning.

Mr. Boetje moved to extend debate on p. 6 by twenty minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed. He then said that by cutting out lab courses as a way of satisfying the third-science course requirement, we are cutting out possibilities. Many faculty, he added, will be coming up with new courses, and some of these may satisfy the requirement and yet also have labs.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment, which failed.

Mr. Krasnoff announced that he would like to propose an amendment to change Goal II.3 on p. 8 (Interdisciplinary Analysis and Creative Problem-Solving) and require two interdisciplinary courses, thus increasing the required credit hours from three to six, and reduce the number of credit hours for the science requirement from eleven to eight. The rationale for this change, he suggested, in part stems from the fact that the Senate has allowed that science content can be taught in two courses and that a third course should be interdisciplinary.

At this point Speaker Kelly ruled that such a motion was out of order because it would mean treating the Gen-Ed Proposal out of sequence, thus violating the procedure of viewing the document in seriatim.

Mr. Overby then moved to overrule the Speaker’s decision. The motion was seconded and debate on it ensued. Mr. Nunan said he was not sure that Mr. Krasnoff’s motion was
appropriate because we haven’t arrived at p. 8 of the document and we don’t know how people will view it until they have seen how pp. 6-7 have been modified. Mr. Overby responded that this was a “bell-weather moment” because it went to the issue of whether the Senate really wanted a third science course. Jennifer McStotts (at-large) in part agreed, but advised Senators not to overrule the Speaker because the issue in question is one that would be more appropriate to look at in the end, when all pages would be considered together. Mr. Boetje echoed her comment and said that the issue is turning into a global one, and that this is not the point for such a discussion. Let’s wait until the end, he advised, when we know what the whole document looks like. He urged the Senate to support the Speaker’s ruling. Mr. Krasnoff asked if his motion would be accepted when the Senate reached p. 8, and the Speaker said that it would.

The Senate voted on the motion to overturn the Speaker’s ruling. The motion failed.

Discussion of p. 6 resumed. Mr. Wilder mentioned some other kinds of science courses, such as those in physical anthropology and in neuro-science (often in Psychology Departments). In many schools with goal-driven Gen-Ed programs, he noted, such courses, which are very good science courses, satisfy the science requirement. He asked how they would fit into the new Gen-Ed system, and whether they would be excluded if they didn’t have a lab.

Mr. Mignone replied that he didn’t see why such courses would be excluded, and thought the Gen-Ed Committee would accept them. Mr. Parson was also not concerned that they would be excluded.

At this point, the Senate was ready to move to p. 7 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, but before discussion of that page began, Jon Hakkila (guest) announced that he had enjoyed the discussions on the science and math goals in the Senate. He felt that the discussions had opened up an important dialogue on campus that had not heretofore existed, and was confident that it would continue to be fruitful and bring faculty together. He concluded by thanking all who had participated in the discussions.

Mr. Phillips began discussion of p. 7 (Goal II.2 Social and Cultural Analysis) by commenting on the fact that Goal II.2 has no required courses. If one key aim of the new Gen-Ed Proposal, he said, is to make things clearer, then p. 7, which states a goal with no courses required to meet that goal, makes things less clear. He urged the Senate to clean up parts of the Gen-Ed document like p. 7 and to make the Gen-Ed requirements clear to students. Mr. Pothering (guest and chair of the ad hoc Committee on Gen Ed) replied that the point of p. 7 is to highlight that there is such a thing as social and cultural analysis, which will be specified in detail in the next section. Rohn England (Mathematics) remarked that what exists on p. 7 may not clearly apply or correspond to what follows in the next sections of the document once those sections are amended. In response to Mr. England’s concern, Todd McNerney (at large) said that the Senate could always return to p. 7 and amend it to accord with other parts of the document. Mr. England replied that it was odd to be voting on something that applies to sections that haven’t been approved.
Mr. Overby suggested that it would be better to deal with p. 7 after the Senate’s discussion of Goal III. He thus made a motion to suspend the rules and to move p. 7 and examine it after the Senate completed its discussion of the document through p. 12. After being seconded, the motion passed.

The Senate next turned its attention to p. 8 concerning Goal II.3: Interdisciplinary Analysis and Creative Problem-Solving. Mr. Parson began discussion by proposing an amendment. In light of the changes made to p. 6, which now requires that students take an interdisciplinary course that involves science, he argued that it was appropriate to change the requirement for Goal II.3. He thus proposed that the Requirement be changed to read as follows: “Students will not be required to complete additional coursework to fulfill this goal, which will be accomplished through coursework required to satisfy goals II.1 / III.1.” His proposed amendment also would replace language in the Approval Criteria with the statement “None required.”

Mr. Pothering spoke against the amendment, arguing that if the new science requirement doesn’t survive the entire amendment process, then we will have to return to p. 8 to put back the language that Mr. Parson’s amendment seeks to remove. If we leave the existing language in, he added, then nothing it lost. Moreover, if, say, in five or six years the science requirement is changed, the interdisciplinary requirement won’t be lost with it and will remain in the Gen-Ed requirements. Mr. Parson responded, saying that since we agree that the new third course requirement in the sciences must be interdisciplinary, then the language on p. 8 is redundant and potentially confusing to students. It is logical, he thought to remove the redundancy. Also, if the science requirements were to change, we can at the same time make the appropriate changes to retain an interdisciplinary course requirement.

Ms. Cormack expressed her support for the motion, but Mr. Peeples, though agreeing with Mr. Parson in principle, thought it was better to leave in the redundancy about an interdisciplinary requirement as a safe-guard to insure that it won’t be lost if the science requirements were to change.

Mr. Overby agreed with Mr. Peeples, and added that the existing language on p. 8 sends a message to students about the importance of interdisciplinary courses. He thought that the interdisciplinary course requirement was already far too low. Rather than one interdisciplinary course, he would like to see five or six required. He also observed that the amendment locked students into taking an interdisciplinary course involving science, thus discouraging students from taking other kinds of interdisciplinary courses.

Evan Parry (Theatre) agreed with Mr. Overby. He added that p. 8 also encouraged collaboration among departments to create and offer interdisciplinary courses. He said that he would like to see more interdisciplinary courses.

Paul Young (Mathematics) desired a little more clarification on what the motion would do, and said that he saw a potential problem in the fact that the interdisciplinary course is required on p. 6, but much of the language specifying the interdisciplinary goal is on p. 8.
Krasnoff remarked that two separate issues had emerged, one about redundancy in the document, the other about whether there should be more interdisciplinary courses.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment, which failed.

Ms. Cormack then made a motion to move the discussion of p. 8 till p. 18 had been discussed. The motion received a second, but did not pass.

Mr. Krasnoff next suggested the idea of changing the interdisciplinary requirement from three to six hours. Mr. Overby spoke in favor of the idea. It’s important, he added, to show how knowledge of all areas interconnects. He reiterated his desire to see four or five interdisciplinary courses. Mr. Nunan reminded the Senate that increasing the interdisciplinary-course requirement would exacerbate the problem of combinatorial logistics that he had discussed earlier in the evening. He urged the Senate to be realistic about this problem. George Hopkins (History) said he liked the idea of increasing the interdisciplinary-course requirement, but was also concerned about feasibility. However, despite this problem, he said that he would like to see one more interdisciplinary course required.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to increase the interdisciplinary course requirement from one to two. The motion was seconded.

Maureen Hagood (Elementary and Early Childhood Education) asked why the Gen-Ed Committee had decided on only one interdisciplinary course, and not more. Mr. Pothering responded that up to the formulation of the Gen-Ed Proposal there had been none, and that the Committee thought it was wise to begin modestly, especially given some complaints voiced earlier in the process that too many hours were being added to the Gen–Ed requirements. Ms. Hagood added that if the interdisciplinary goal is a serious one, the Senate should devise requirements to help students really reach the goal. She also suggested that the phrase “two courses” was a little vague and asked for unanimous consent to change it to “six hours,” but unanimous consent was not obtained.

Ms. Cormack suggested that the Senate might want to talk about the Approval Criteria before adding courses.

Mr. Overby stressed that because the third science will count as the interdisciplinary course requirement, students won’t have much choice in terms of the kind of interdisciplinary course they may take. Now is the time, he said, to give them more choice and to send a signal about the importance of interdisciplinary learning. Mr. Parry wondered if Goal II.3 would require substantive involvement of different disciplines and interaction among departments; and Steve Jaumé (Geology) wondered whether the new interdisciplinary science course added to p. 6 would fit the “Approval Criteria” for interdisciplinary courses as specified on p. 8. In response to these questions, Mr. Mignone said that the Senate now seems to be saying that two faculty members will be expected to teach an interdisciplinary course for it to meet the “Approval Criteria.” If that is the case, then that is a high standard and the new science course wouldn’t count as an interdisciplinary course.
Mr. Peeples thought that if the Senate is going to add another required interdisciplinary course, then it should relax the Approval Criteria. To expect every interdisciplinary course to be team-taught would be too taxing on resources and end up discouraging the practice of team-teaching.

Mr. Hopkins moved to extend debate by fifteen minutes. The motion passed, after being seconded. Mr. Hopkins then pointed out that one person can teach an interdisciplinary course and pointed to the example of Introduction to American Studies, an interdisciplinary course regularly taught by one faculty member. Mr. Krasnoff thought that the notion that two faculty would be required to teach an interdisciplinary course was a “straw man,” and was certain that the Gen-Ed Committee did not intend all interdisciplinary courses to be team taught. George Pothering (chair of the Gen-Ed Committee) confirmed this point. But Mr. Krasnoff added that he did not see a problem in relaxing the standards in the Approval Criteria to make that intention clear.

Edith Ellis (Health and Human Performance) asked for unanimous consent to insert the words “at least” in the amendment to the Requirement: “All students must complete at least two approved courses.” But unanimous consent was not obtained.

Tim Carens (English) noted that the problematic phrase in the Approval Criteria seemed to be “disciplinary grounding” found in #2. To relax the standard for interdisciplinary courses, he suggested that that phrase be changed or removed. Mr. Parry stated that wanted to retain the possibility of teach-teaching, which, he thought, would greatly benefit students and offer exciting teaching and learning opportunities.

Garrett Mitchner questioned how firm and useful the definition of interdisciplinarity was. He suggested that some disciplines—such as history, which takes knowledge from other disciplines (e.g., economics and sociology)—are by nature interdisciplinary. In that respect, nearly all courses from such departments would be interdisciplinary. In response, Mr. Pothering said that though a number of history courses might make use of knowledge from economics and sociology, that is different from providing students a grounding in those disciplines. Unless such courses do that, they are not really interdisciplinary.

At this point, the Senate voted on Mr. Krasnoff motion to increase the number of required interdisciplinary course from one to two. The motion passed.

Mr. Wilder then returned to the issue of the language in the Approval Criteria of p. 8. He pointed out that the Approval Criteria on p. 6 for the interdisciplinary science course was different from the Approval Criteria for all interdisciplinary courses on p. 8, and said that this difference could create problems. One solution, he suggested, was to drop all the Approval Criteria on p. 8, except #1, which would still need some modification.

Mr. Overby argued against this suggestion. He thought it would be better to have clear and strong language in the text about what constitutes an interdisciplinary course. Mr. Krasnoff said that he agreed in principle with Mr. Overby, but he also agreed with Mr. Wilder on practical grounds. He added that we needed to trust the Gen-Ed Committee to insist on and
select courses that are strongly interdisciplinary. Mr. McNerney agreed with Mr. Overby and said that he would like to see the criteria on p. 8 applied to the third science course on p. 6. Mr. England argued that keeping the existing Approval Criteria provided good, needed guidance. He noted the use of words such as “must” and “should” in the current language of the Approval Criteria.

Mr. Peeples then moved to delete Approval Criterion #2, arguing that the criteria needed to be simplified. He added that he saw a significant distinction between the ideas expressed in Approval Criterion #1 ("to explore a topic from the perspective of more than one academic discipline") and those expressed in Approval Criterion #3 ("to demonstrate advancement through integration"), and thus thought that they needed to stay in the document; but he urged the Senate to remove Approval Criterion #2, which contains the phrase “disciplinary grounding” and suggested a much higher standard for what would count as an interdisciplinary course.

Mr. Nunan was also concerned about the language in Approval Criterion #3 and thought that the term “to demonstrate” might need to be revised.

Mr. McNerney moved to extend debate by 15 minutes. His motion, after receiving a second, passed. It was now 7 p.m., the scheduled end of the meeting, and the Senate adjourned. Debate on Mr. Peeples’ motion was scheduled to resume at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers,
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 2 October 2007

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday October 2, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the third special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order, the Senate approved the minutes of the September 18, 2007 meeting. Speaker Kelly then announced that in the revised Gen-Ed agenda he switched the order of the last two items from how they had been listed at the start of the term. Debate and a vote on the entire Gen-Ed Curriculum, he said, will now take place before the Proposal on the Gen-Ed Standing Committee is debated (earlier these two items were listed in the opposite order).

Discussion resumed of Calvin Blackwell’s proposed amendment (pending from the previous meeting) to cut the required science courses from three to two. George Hopkins (History) began the discussion by reading the following statement:

I was disappointed with the tone and content of much (not all) of our debate/discussion last time.

Proponents of the proposal to increase the science requirement by three hours do NOT persuade colleagues when they respond to legitimate questions and concerns by sighing loudly, rolling their eyes, and then adopting a condescending tone in their answer. They alienate potential supporters and undermine their own cause. Others who demonstrate a strong feeling of disdain (intentional or not) toward those with the audacity to question the proposal or its impact on the total hours required for GenEd likewise make opposition to their proposal more likely.

These unprofessional and un-collegial comments bring, not surprisingly, similar responses from some skeptics or opponents of the proposal. I'm sure that I've also contributed to this on occasion.

Sometimes the debate seemed to echo C.P. Snow's assertion that the gulf between what he called "The Two Cultures"--the sciences and the humanities--is too vast to be bridged. I also think part of the problem is that there is not enough real contact between faculty in the different schools. Yesterday I had an interesting and useful conversation with two colleagues in the sciences. That's something that does not happen often enough around here.

The level of debate we've been having on both sides does little to advance our need to seriously examine the proposal. We need to treat each other with the respect and collegiality we all have a right to expect from each other. Disagreements on an issue need to stay focused on the issue, not descend to ad hominem attacks.

But I am not just making a simple plea for civility. It's also a call to step back and
consider the proposal—and criticisms of it—on their merits. It's the message, not the messenger, that we should focus on.

I know colleagues in the sciences have worked hard on this proposal. I remain undecided about the proposal. So I invite my colleagues in the sciences to persuade me and others why a third course is needed, how many of these third courses could be made interdisciplinary and connect with colleagues in other schools, and how they be could be doubled-counted [or even triple-counted] to minimize their impact on the overall hours required for GenEd. Critics need to really hear what supporters are saying—and vice versa. In the end, we need to make a decision. When we make it, let's be proud of the result—and the way we got there.

Norris Preyer (Physics/Astronomy), speaking against Mr. Blackwell’s amendment, said that the extra three-hour course is likely to be interdisciplinary. The list of such courses mentioned by Dean Noonan in the last Senate meeting was an invitation to others not in science departments to teach them. Faculty in the School of Science and Mathematics (SSM) won’t be able to teach all the courses. The extra three hours can also be seen as meeting the interdisciplinary course requirement.

Jack Parson (Political Science) said that he and some of his colleagues have not been persuaded by the argument that because scientific knowledge is constantly expanding, another required science course is needed. All disciplines can make that claim, he said. Nor has he been persuaded by the argument that students need an understanding of all areas of natural science. No set of undergraduate courses in any discipline, he said, can aspire to comprehensiveness. He found more persuasive the idea of a third required course that linked science and social behavior. Mr. Parson then read a statement from last year’s Gen-Ed Proposal that stressed the importance of connecting science to other disciplines and explaining the relationship between science and other areas of life. He also said that the view that science just deals with “facts” and “will lead us to the light” is inaccurate. Facts will always be contested, and the connection between science and other areas of life is highly contested. The current proposal, he pointed out, does not speak to this crucial aspect of the issue. On a more practical level, Mr. Parson added that faculty lines that might otherwise go to any number of worthy programs will now go to the First Year Experience and to SSM to staff the added science course. The development of other programs will thus be cut off or curtailed. This is something we need to talk about, he stressed. Given these concerns, Mr. Parson said that he was reluctant to vote against the amendment. If it fails, he announced that he would propose his own amendment to address his concerns.

Mitchell Colgan (guest) spoke about the schism that had developed between the sciences and the humanities. He said that our current Gen-Ed system allows for no interdisciplinary activity among the sciences, let alone between the sciences and the humanities. It is a very constrained system. Members of SSM sat down to think about what students need to learn to attain scientific literacy and came up with a plan to improve the current system, which doesn’t work. Were the amendment to pass, however, we would be left with what we already have and no likelihood of improving it, for the possibility of implementing the kind of amendment that Mr. Parsons has suggested for the third science course would vanish (because there would
be no third course to amend). Mr. Colgan added that the proposed science goal causes more work for SSM. The effort on the part of SSM in developing the goal has not been a frivolous endeavor. He asked that the Senate vote against the amendment and invited the Senate to work with SSM.

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) moved to extend time by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Todd McNerney (at large) said that at the last meeting he expressed his concern about adding more hours to Gen Ed. Since then he did some research and found that the scholarly society of his discipline recommends that 50% to 70% of a student’s credit hours be devoted to Gen Ed. Based on this research, Mr. McNerney now sees the possibility of extending the number of Gen-Ed hours and thinks there is room for expansion.

Mr. Wilder thanked Mr. Norris and Mr. Colgan for their offers to work with the faculty of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), but was still concerned about the language in the document before the Senate. For example, it doesn’t say anything about a requirement that the extra science course be integrative or interdisciplinary. He would be more comfortable if the document were revised. Also, he didn’t agree that if the amendment passes the two remaining courses would look like our current courses. We aren’t necessarily left with the status quo.

Mr. Colgan replied that we can’t fulfill the stated goal with two courses. It simply can’t be done, he insisted. Therefore the amendment weakens the Gen-Ed science requirement and shuts the door on productive modifications. If the amendment passes, another third course—however conceived—won’t happen.

Idee Winfield (Sociology) asked if it would be possible to construct new courses with required labs that were interdisciplinary and that would involve other departments. Jason Overby (Biochemistry/Chemistry) responded that Harvard has done this, which has eliminated introductory biology, but it requires large courses. Jim Newhard (Classics) thought that such courses could be done and gave the example of a course combining classics and archaeology.

Frank Morris (at large) spoke against the amendment. He thought that a total of 11 hours devoted to science was fine, especially in light of the new ideas that have been mentioned.

Richard Nunan (at large) wanted to re-address the issue of a goal-driven model vs. a distribution model. The Gen-Ed Committee wants to promote a goal-driven model, but the details may not favor such a system. We tend, he argued, to circle the disciplinary wagons. While he was glad that such was not the case tonight, he doubts the changed attitude will last. He was also concerned about how the Gen-Ed Committee “consults” with “experts.” When he proposed his amendment to add more flexibility into the science requirement, Jaap Hillenius (at large) said that the “Defining Characteristics” were broad, which meant that covering them in three or even two courses would be easy. Other faculty in SSM, however, have said that reducing the number of required science courses from three to two would make
it difficult or impossible to meet all the learning objectives spelled out in the “Defining Characteristics.” These are contradictory views, Mr. Nunan pointed out. He said he would like to hear which view other science faculty see as more probable. If we keep the third course, he continued, what would count as satisfying it? Would, for example, a current course in Religious Studies dealing with the relationship between science and religion count? He was concerned that only scientists would be allowed to teach these courses. Meg Cormack (at large) said that the course mentioned by Mr. Nunan had been approved by the Faculty Senate, and she assumed that faculty in the humanities would be able to teach it.

Scott Peeples (English) moved to extend debate by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Jaap Hillenius (at large) said that he could see certain courses from the Department of Psychology and the Department of Anthropology as qualifying for the science requirement. SSM didn’t have a monopoly on science courses. Other departments not in SSM would be involved in teaching science. Steve Jaumé (Geology) said that he would love to have colleagues from other departments collaborate with him in teaching some of his courses. He also noted that such collaboration is in keeping with the language in “Defining Characteristic” #5: “integrative and synergistic.”

Evan Parry (Theatre) said that he was “torn” over the amendment. While he was in sympathy with his colleagues in SSM to serve our students better by reforming the science component of our current Gen-Ed system, his concern was that students would not be adequately exposed to knowledge in other areas, especially experiential knowledge. Students also need that kind of knowledge in the arts, he stressed. So broadening students’ exposure to the sciences may shrink their exposure to other academic areas. There is also, he added, the issue of resources. These, too, will be made less available for certain disciplines.

Bob Mignone (guest) said that if you look at the entire Gen-Ed Proposal, it is an attempt to provide a “holistic” education to students. If you limit the science requirement, “you open up a Pandora’s Box” in that the Senate, after approving the goals, is denying the means to reach those goals. If the amendment passes, the College won’t be able to meet the learning objectives as spelled out in the “Defining Characteristics.” We thus need to see the Gen-Ed Proposal as a holistic educational package and not chip at it here and there.

Mr. Peeples (English) said that he remained “on the fence” over the amendment for the reasons explained by Evan Parry. He said that he also shared Mr. Wilder’s concern about the absence of language in the Goal II.1/III.1 that would ensure that the added required science course would be interdisciplinary. However, he was generally persuaded by the arguments of Mr. Preyer and Mr. Colgan and was leaning toward voting to keep the third course. He hoped that the Senate could address Mr. Wilder’s concern with another amendment, but thought that it was healthier to reject the amendment to cut the required science courses from two to three. Mr. Hopkins (History) underscored Mr. Peeples’ view and urged that the amendment be rejected.
Mr. Parson remarked that there seemed to be a genuine desire to provide students with an integrative learning experience, but stressed that if we agree to keep the third science course, then we also agree that the faculty takes collective ownership of it, that it won’t just be something that scientists teach, and that we will need to correct the language in the document, specifically in the following sections: “Defining Characteristics” and “Approval Criteria.” He then read a two-part amendment that he would propose if the amendment to cut the required science courses from three to two failed. His amendment, he underlined, would officially require the third course to be integrative and interdisciplinary:

Two amendments to Goal III.1 Knowledge of the Natural World.

1. Amend the Defining Characteristics by adding at the end of clause 5 under “knowledge of the natural world” the phrase “and/or its application to individual and social behavior.”

2. Amend Approval Criteria by adding a third section to read:

   “At least half of the content of any non-laboratory course must be defined by the social, political and/or cultural processes through which scientific knowledge becomes effective in individual and social behavior.”

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) stated that he would like to speak against Mr. Peeples’ view. He was not convinced that the problems and concerns that Mr. Peeples mentioned would be fixed later. Also, referring to Mr. Mignone’s point, he said that he was not sure that he was bound by an earlier Senate vote on the Gen-Ed goals. Then returning to a point made earlier by Mr. Nunan concerning the various “Defining Characteristics” of the goal, he thought that achieving #4 and #5 were doable, but was not sure that the courses that have been mentioned would meet #1, #2, and #3. Lastly, he said that he thought that one science course and one lab were enough for students.

At this point the Senate voted on Mr. Blackwell’s motion to reduce the number of required science courses from three to two. The motion failed.

Mr. McNerney moved to extend the debate on page 6 of the Proposal by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Parson then moved that the “Defining Characteristics” and “Approval Criteria” be altered and officially proposed the two-part amendment recorded above. In explaining the rationale for the amendment, he said that it was clear from earlier comments in the meeting—especially those made by Mr. Colgan—that there was a willingness to make the added science course interdisciplinary. But he reiterated that it was crucial that the language in the document reflect that attitude and make clear the link between science and social/cultural issues.

David Gentry (at large) asked if the third interdisciplinary course could be a lab course. Norine Noonan (Dean of SSM) said “no.” Such a course was not envisioned as a lab. George Pothering (guest and Chair of the ad hoc Committee on Gen Ed) asked Mr. Parson if his
amendment referred to courses that did not have an affiliated lab. Mr. Parson said that that was correct. Agnes Ayme-Southgate (Biology) suggested that the course in Mr. Parsons proposed amendment be defined as “a course that does not have a required lab.” Mr. Nunan said that he assumed that the third course was not intended to be a regular science lab course.

Paul Young (Mathematics) asked for a clarification. He thought that Requirement #1 should include the phrase “at least” and read “at least three approved courses” and “at least two approved labs.” He also said that he didn’t see that there was a non-lab course required, and wanted to be sure that if a student took three courses with three labs, the student would be officially regarded as having met Requirement #1. Ms. Noonan replied that the key word is not “required,” but “approved.” She added that the Gen-Ed Committee is the body that will approve courses, and that she wouldn’t presuppose the outcome of the approval process. Mr. Pothering added as a point of information that the courses would go to the Gen-Ed Committee for approval first and then ultimately go to the Senate for approval.

John Huddlestun (Religious Studies) proposed an amendment to Mr. Parson’s amendment, suggesting that any required science courses count as an interdisciplinary science course so long as it met the criterion that one half of its content included. He moved that the wording in the proposed amendment be changed from “At least half of the content of any non-laboratory course must . . .” to “At least half of the content of one of the three courses must . . .” The proposed amendment to the amendment was seconded and debate on it ensued.

Mr. Overby thought that the cumbersome bureaucratic complications were being created. Mr. Preyer pointed out that Mr. Parson’s amendment would allow, say, physics and history to count as an interdisciplinary course, but not physics and biology. The amendment cuts out interdisciplinary courses within the sciences. In response, Ms. Winfield asked why a lab couldn’t be interdisciplinary within the sciences.

Mr. Nunan moved to extend the debate by 15 minutes. After receiving, a second the motion passed.

Mr. Hillenius argued that Mr. Parson’s amendment would result in chaos because it would lead to excessive micro-management. He said that he understood the sentiment behind the amendment, but suggested that what was needed was a broad menu of courses, rather than a proliferation of committee decisions about which courses have the right interdisciplinary mix. Mr. Krasnoff responded that the if the third science course is going to be different, then language in the document has to explain its difference. Gerry Gonsavles (Marketing & Supply Chain Management) suggested that adding the word “approved” to Mr. Huddlestun’s amendment might help solve some of problems raised by Senators and make the language of the amendment consistent with the rest of the Gen-Ed document. The Speaker asked for unanimous consent to insert the word “approved,” but unanimous consent was not granted.

At this point, Mr. Peeples called the question. The motion was seconded and passed. The Senate voted on Mr. Huddlestun’s motion to amend Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment and the motion passed.
Debate on Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment resumed.

Mr. Nunan warned that if any of the three courses can potentially satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement that is being proposed in Mr. Parson’s amendment, then bureaucratic chaos will ensue. Nevertheless, he said he favored Mr. Parson’s amendment and voted against the earlier proposed amendment to cut the science requirement from three to two courses because the third course was promised to be interdisciplinary, which he thought constituted a significant contribution to Gen Ed.

Michael Gomez (Hispanic Studies) thought the language in the proposed amendment was too specific and left out the relation of the different disciplines within science. He moved that the Senate add language at the end of the last sentence of the amendment to address this issue. He suggested adding the phrase “and its relation to other disciplines in science.” His motion was seconded, and later Ms. Cormack proposed to substitute “and/or” for “and,” but unanimous consent was not granted.

Mr. Overby said he was in favor of adding an interdisciplinary requirement to the science goal, but that it should not exclude interdisciplinary relationships among the sciences. Sorinel Oprisan (Physics/Astronomy) echoed Mr. Overby’s point and stressed the importance of the interdisciplinary dynamic within science. Garrett Mitchner (guest) observed that the language in the proposed amendment seemed to limit interdisciplinary connections only to those between science and the humanities.

In response, Ms. Winfield stated that the purpose of the Mr. Parson’s amendment is to build bridges between the sciences and areas outside the sciences. Jon Hakkila (guest) favored adding an interdisciplinary requirement in this section of the document, but was also nervous about excluding the sciences. Carol Ann Davis (English) asked whether the other two required science courses couldn’t be interdisciplinary science courses. Mr. Parson said that he was uncomfortable with Mr. Gomez’ motion to alter his proposed amendment because the intention of his amendment was to make sure that three of the required eleven hours be devoted to investigating the links between the sciences and the humanities and social sciences. He reiterated the question of why the other two science courses couldn’t focus on interconnections within the sciences.

Mr. McNerney moved to extend debate by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Pete Calcagno (Economics) speaking in favor of Mr. Gomez’ motion urged that students be given maximum choice in choosing the kind of interdisciplinary course they wished to take. He thought that the language of the Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment should be as broad as possible.

Mr. Peeples said that since it is possible the other two required science courses could focus on interdisciplinary relationships among the sciences, he thought Mr. Gomez’s proposed amendment was unnecessary, and stressed that it was essential to keep a provision in place that maintained the link between the sciences and the social sciences/humanities.
Mr. Nunan expressed his worry that if Mr. Gomez’s proposed amendment passed, others would follow that would gut the intent of Mr. Parson’s amendment.

Carol Toris (Psychology) was confused about the language of Mr. Gomez’ proposed amendment and specifically wanted clarification on the term “other disciplines.” What are the “other disciplines”? Those in psychology do scientific research on social behavior, so where does psychology fall? Mr. Gomez replied that his intent was to broaden choice, so he wanted the language to be a little vague to increase inclusiveness.

Y. Henry Xie (Marketing & Supply Chain Management) complained that the Senate proceedings had become a “circus.” He remarked on the distinction between policy issues and operational matters, and said that the Senate should concern itself with policy.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Gomez’ proposed amendment, which would add the phrase “and its relation to other disciplines in science” to the end of statement #1 in Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment. Mr. Gomez’s proposed amendment failed.

Discussion of Mr. Parson’s proposed amendment resumed. Mr. Young spoke against it, arguing that it would hurt science majors, who might take many science courses, yet still wouldn’t qualify to graduate if they hadn’t taken the interdisciplinary science course. Mr. Mitchner thought that the Senate shouldn’t be discussing the amendment until reaching page 8 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, where Goal II.3—Interdisciplinary Analysis and Creative Problem Solving—is articulated.

Mr. Hopkins, speaking in favor of the amendment, gave an example of how science and politics intersects. He mentioned his research into the controversies surrounding the history of black lung disease among miners. The science on black disease was contested; it was a political issue with important political implications. Courses that explore the kind of synergy between science, history, and politics are what the proposed amendment is all about. While it’s good to have interdisciplinary courses within the sciences, that is not the point of the amendment.

James Williams (library) also supported the proposed amendment because it would enable students to see how the sciences intersected with other disciplines. Mr. Overby argued that the wording of the proposed amendment was more restrictive than many realized. For example, the amendment seemed to exclude art as a possible area of interdisciplinary relevance. And if one wished to develop a course that linked art and science, who would decide if they go together? The guidelines seem to make things overly restrictive and bureaucratic.

Mr. Hopkins moved to extend the debate by 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Krasnoff in part agreed with Mr. Overby and said that if we approve this amendment, then we should perhaps get rid of the interdisciplinary goal on page 8, which, he thought, was micro-specific. But because the Senate decided that a third required science which would be
different from other two was needed, then the Senate was obliged to spell out how it is different.

Mr. Hillenius, Mr. Mignone, and Jerry Boetje agreed with Mr. Overby that the amendment was too restrictive. Mr. Mignone reminded the Senate that the Gen-Ed Committee would be determining what courses would count toward the science requirements, not science faculty. And to lessen anxieties over the science-humanities divide, Mr. Boetje added that conversations between the sciences and humanities would build on tonight’s dialogue.

In response, Mr. Wilder reminded the Senate that the amendment constituted an attempt to distinguish the third course from the other two. He said that he was sold on upping the number of science credit hours from eight to eleven on the promise that the third course would be different; but if the amendment fails, then we would be left with more of what we already have. He added that the hypothetical student mentioned by Mr. Young—the student who took a number of different science courses, yet who would not be eligible to graduate if the amendment passed—needs the very course that the amendment provides for precisely because it would force that student to examine the relationship between science and society.

Tim Carmichael (History) said that he didn’t see the language in the amendment as restrictive. It struck him as fairly broad because it dealt with general categories.

Mr. Colgan said that he would like to see a smaller committee work on the amendment to bridge the gap between the different views articulated in the Senate tonight. That would be a more serious way of dealing with the amendment.

At this point, the idea of tabling the amendment came up. Brian McGee, the Parliamentarian, said that the Senate couldn’t table the amendment now, but that a committee could be appointed if the proposed amendment were defeated. Mr. Hakkila supported the idea of forming a committee to sort out differences on how the third course would be defined, and appealed to the members of the Senate who were divided over the issue to work together.

At this point Mr. Krasnoff called the question. The motion received a second and passed. The Senate voted on Mr. Parson’s amendment, which failed.

Mr. Krasnoff then moved to table page 6 of the Proposal. The motion passed. The Speaker said he would form a committee to work on a new amendment that would explain the nature of the third science course.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers,
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 25 Sept. 2007

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, September 25, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the second special meeting of the term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order and announced that the minutes of the previous meeting, which had recently been circulated electronically, would be approved at the next meeting (Oct. 2) to give Senators ample time to review them.

The Speaker then asked for and received unanimous consent on two small matters in wording in sections of the proposal on Gen Ed covered in the last meeting: these were to delete “Read and” in Goal II.1 of #3 of the “Defining Characteristics” as had been done in #3 of the “Approval Criteria,” and to eliminate the split infinitive in #3 of the “Defining Characteristics” (i.e., change “to clearly present” to “to present clearly”).

Next the Speaker asked that the Senate consider using an electronic system to cast votes in order to speed up the voting process. To institute such a system would require official approval by the Senate, and to approve the system for immediate use would require that the motion on the floor (to approve pages 4 to 18 of the Gen-Ed Proposal) be tabled so that a motion on electronic voting could be made.

Parliamentarian Brain McGee provided a brief demonstration of how the system works, and asked the Senate to cast a test vote. He noted that the bar graph that displays the vote tallies will not be shown while voting is occurring, but only after votes have been cast. The Speaker will declare when voting is closed, though Senators can move to hold the voting period open longer. The Speaker then thanked Reid Wiseman for suggesting the electronic voting idea and the Physics and Astronomy Department (especially Jon Hakkila and Sorinel Oprisan) for providing the equipment.

Mr. Wiseman (guest) then asked if it was possible to use an electronic clicker to cast two votes by clicking it twice. The Parliamentarian said “no.” Phil Dustan (Biology) asked if the system could be use for determining a quorum, and the Parliamentarian said it could. Mr. Dustan next asked if there was a way of verifying if one’s clicker was working and if the votes that the Senators had just cast all registered. The Speaker said that the only way to verify this would be to ask for a show of hands and then match that total with the number of electronic votes shown on the display.

Tom Heeney (Communication) then made the following motion: “Mr. Speaker, I move to lay the motion concerning the General Education Curriculum on the table.” The motion was seconded and approved. Mr. Heeney next made the following motion:

Mr. Speaker, I move that electronic voting be permitted in meetings of the College of Charleston Faculty Senate when suitable voting equipment can be made available to Senators and, further, that the presiding officer be given the authority to order
electronic voting in all cases when the presiding officer is in doubt on a voice vote or a vote by show of hands.

The motion was seconded and discussion ensued. Rohn England (Mathematics) noticed that no mention of the display bar or graph of the voting was in the motion; the Speaker asked for and received unanimous consent to include in the motion the use of the display bar, specifying that when the Senate votes, it be shown after all votes have been cast.

Mr. Wilder (Philosophy), while not objecting to the electronic voting method, remarked that something important would be lost if it were implemented. Senators won’t be able to see how their colleagues vote. The public nature of casting a vote is significant. It ensures a measure of publicity and integrity in the behavior of Senators. Jack Parson (Political Science) asked whether the Senate could ask for public votes. Speaker Kelly said that he would be happy to require a show of hands or a roll call, if requested by a Senator. Can we do both, asked Mr. Dustan? The Speaker said that it would not be a problem and that with the Senate’s unanimous consent both could be done. Mr. England then wondered whether doing both wouldn’t defeat the original purpose of using the electronic voting system, which was to save time. The Speaker responded that he wouldn’t count hands. The show of hands would allow Senators to know how their colleagues voted. The actual counting of votes would be done quickly by the electronic voting system. Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) observed that perhaps in the future the electronic voting system could be set up in way that would not only display the aggregate vote of the Senate, but also show and record how each Senator voted.

At this point a vote on the motion to adopt an electronic voting system was taken and the motion passed.

Mr. Heeney then moved to take the main motion (regarding the Gen-Ed proposal) off the table. After being seconded, the motion passed.

Discussion resumed of Richard Nunan’s motion on p. 6 of the Gen-Ed proposal pending from the previous meeting. Before reminding Senators of the particulars of his motion, Mr. Nunan (at large) commented on the nature of the discussion in the previous Senate meeting. He said that a number of comments toward the end of the meeting didn’t speak to the proposed amendment, and that others he perceived as ad hominem attacks directed at him. He thought it was important to explain how all this came about. Mr. Nunan noted that starting with the debate on the difference between the terms “to master” and “to understand,” there seemed to be a good deal of skepticism about the seriousness of the Philosophy Department’s first proposed amendment. The department’s next proposed amendment went “down in flames” because it was perceived as just “special pleading” on behalf of the department. Comments on that proposed amendment had the affect of creating the unfortunate impression that the Philosophy Department was engaging in special pleading in proposing its various amendments. Mr. Nunan wished to point out that the logical fallacy known as “special pleading”—which is pleading for a cause for which one has no justification, and which merely constitutes an attempt to carve out an exception from a general rule—is not the same as pleading a case for oneself for which there is justification. Mr. Nunan also thought that there had been some problems in the development of the Gen-Ed proposals in that some
powerful constituencies had gotten the ear of the Gen-Ed Committee. The result was that the Committee brought out its proposals without a broader discussion that fully involved others. He said that only now are we seeing the proposals, that in earlier discussions the Mathematics Department didn’t seem to be listening to the Philosophy Department, nor was the Gen-Ed Committee really listening to the Philosophy Department. The same thing was going on with respect to the science proposals. For example, the white paper on the math and science proposals did not circulate outside of School of Science and Mathematics (SSM). It was a product of that school and of no one else.

Norine Noonan (Dean of SSM) responded that the science proposal was in the Gen-Ed Proposals a year ago, “since day one” of the Gen-Ed review process. It was there for all to see. As for the white paper, she said that SSM wasn’t asked to provide such a document for the Senate or the faculty.

Mr. Nunan in turn responded that the fact that the white paper was made available to the Gen-Ed Committee does not mitigate the fact that we haven’t had a discussion about it. As for the rationale for his amendment, he said that it spoke to the issue of breadth. Comprehensiveness, he argued, was neither an appropriate nor a realistic goal for Gen Ed. We want students to be exposed to plenty of content, but comprehensiveness is not really achievable. Ten years ago, during the prior Gen-Ed debate, the argument was made that to cover all the bases for biology students would need to take three biology courses. That argument was unconvincing then and arguments about the need for comprehensive coverage of the sciences are unconvincing now. Moreover, the three sciences courses may not be able to cover all areas of the goal, and all the combinatorial logistics haven’t been thought through.

Todd McNerney (at large) moved to extend debate by 15 minutes. The motion received a second and passed.

Calvin Blackwell (Economics) agreed with Mr. Nunan that the “Defining Characteristics” for the science goal are overly broad and too content driven. He thought that “Defining Characteristics” #4 and #5 were fine, but that the other three were too specific. More flexibility, he stressed, was needed.

Jason Overby (Biochemistry/Chemistry) then said that in science courses, “we don’t sit around and talk about our feelings.” In science courses, it’s all about the content, about learning, building upon, and synthesizing specific blocks of knowledge. He stressed that students must have an understanding of content to achieve scientific literacy, and that the nature of science is content driven. Jon Hakkila (guest) noted that since the last Gen-Ed meeting, new scientific ideas have already emerged. Science moves extremely fast and we need to teach our students to keep up. They need to have an overarching understanding of science, and have some understanding of key scientific developments (from knowledge of dark matter to that of the human genome project). Our current structure is outdated: students get a good understanding of techniques, but don’t acquire a deep or broad enough knowledge of science. While we can’t teach all areas of science to students, we can cover a minimum, which experts must determine. Though the science faculty tried to stay within the two-course
requirement, it was too constrictive. The defining characteristics that have been laid out in the proposal are the minimum.

Mr. Dustan spoke on “Defining Characteristic” #3 concerning the biosphere, remarking that the biosphere is a crucial area of scientific concern and goes to our understanding of global warming, hurricanes, and floods. We need to understand it and to teach our students about it, about how science works, and about the difference between “knowledge based on facts and knowledge based on beliefs.”

Mr. Krasnoff had no objection to such views, but noted that Mr. Blackwell, say, could make the same argument about his discipline economics, that each discipline could make a case that students need to know how it works. Perhaps it is more useful, he suggested, to see how we compare to other institutions with respect to the science requirement. He thought that the current requirement of two courses and two labs was already a little high.

Gerry Boetje (Computer Science) responded that science is today “under siege,” that there is a coordinated attempt to suppress it, and that this attack upon it makes it different from other disciplines. He pointed out by way of example that Fox News isn’t attacking economics, but that science is under attack. He stressed that students need to understand how science functions and interacts as a whole. Such knowledge is needed to defend science today.

Doryjane Birrer (English) said that literature, the creative arts, and some other disciplines are also under attack, and that more reasons and evidence are needed to explain why science should be singled out as exceptional. Some reasons, she added, aren’t that compelling. For instance, the fact-vs.-belief distinction is important for other disciplines as well as science. We can all come up, she continued, with our ideal number of classes that we feel students should take in our respective disciplines, but we also all have to compromise.

Mr. Wilder moved that the debate be extended for 15 minutes. After being seconded, the motion passed.

Mr. Hakkila remarked that the sciences are different in the number of hours of labs it requires. He noted, too, that the College is under the average number of credit hours for sciences, and that more credit hours are needed because of the variety of content in the sciences. We are talking, he added, about many disciplines, and students need to know something about them and be able to synthesize knowledge from each.

Mr. McNerney said that he appreciated the spirit of helping students that SSM faculty brought to the Gen-Ed reform project. However, he noted that there are other places in the proposal where credit hours are being added, and was concerned. He wondered specifically about the two-lab requirement and observed that the added course increased the science requirement by 40%. Mr. Overby responded by stating that labs show students how science works; they allow students to experience how science is done as they learn the process of conducting experiments, testing hypotheses, and collecting data. Mr. McNerney observed that many disciplines require “doing” those disciplines and experiencing how they work, and that the extra course is still a big increase.
Mr. Wilder, focusing specifically on part A of Mr. Nunan’s proposed amendment, said that numerous comments speak in favor of the amendment. To satisfy the science goal of the proposal, courses would have to be taught superficially. Narrowing and deepening the focus—rather than seeking comprehensiveness—would reach the goal desired by science faculty.

Darryl Phillips (at large) said that he was in favor of increasing the number of required science credits. After looking at a few of our peer institutions, he saw that an 11-hour science requirement was not unusual. Indeed, it appeared to be mainstream. He was concerned, however, about the desired level of specificity. Mr. Hakkila’s argument about the fast pace of change in science is an argument for less specificity, not more. He asked, too, that if we want greater comprehensiveness (and thus more credit hours) for one part of Gen Ed, then shouldn’t we want it for all? For his part, he would like all students to read the Iliad and the Odyssey and the Aeneid and a number of Shakespeare’s plays, rather than just one or two of those works. He concluded that he thought the content of Mr. Nunan’s amendment was good.

Jaap Hillenius (at large) pointed out that if one looks at the language of the “Defining Characteristics,” they are not that specific. Most introductory science courses will cover #4 and #5 in the second group (under “Knowledge of the natural world”) and at least one other characteristic. The “Defining Characteristics” are, he stressed, very general.

Meg Cormack (at large) stated that she thinks students should know all areas listed in the “Defining Characteristics.” Mr. Wiseman said that students are already privileged, and that it’s no great burden to require them to take another three credit hours in science. Mr. Dustan stressed that students need to know why the earth is reaching its limits, and that they must learn about the nature of the physical world. Peter Calcagno (Economics) said that while everyone seems to agree learning about science is important, the issue is depth vs. breadth. Is it wrong, he asked, if a student takes three biology classes and focuses intensely on one science rather than two or three? The important thing is that the student is learning a lot about science.

At this point Jack parsons moved that the debate be extended 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

In response to Mr. Calcagno, a Senator responded that breadth was necessary, and that students needed to know how disciplines overlap and interact with each other. Such knowledge is crucial for understanding how science functions in the modern world.

Gary Harrison (Mathematics) agreed with much that had been said about the importance of science, and thought that that it was more important to keep characteristic #4 than to keep #2 and #3. Ms. Noonan observed that there is always a trade off in the choice between breadth and depth. The way she and the Gen-Ed Committee have tried to deal with this is with the five “Defining Characteristics,” which are all fairly broad, but all sufficiently important that they need to be covered in some way. Two courses could not adequately cover them all. The lab issue is an administrative convenience, but labs are integrated with lectures to a maximum extent. She noted, too, that #4 and #5 of the “Defining Characteristics” are crucial.
Cramming students with “factoids” is ineffective, but showing how science works as a process of inquiry is crucial. Posing hypotheses, testing them, changing one’s mind based on evidence—these are all central to the process of scientific inquiry. The five areas of knowledge, she concluded, “can’t be parsed and separated.” To do so would not move students forward in science education.

Mr. Blackwell moved to call the question. His motion was seconded and **passed**.

Mr. Nunan’s motion to modify the “Defining Characteristics” of Goal II.1/III.1 **failed**.

Mr. Nunan had announced the proposal of two other amendments, but said that he was withdrawing the first one. He then proposed to eliminate Requirement #3, which states that the “first course taken in the sequence be taken with an approved lab.” His rationale was that the requirement is unenforceable, and that we shouldn’t be in the business of forcing students to wait to start their science courses till they’ve had a lab. He also noted that the requirement would exclude interdisciplinary courses, which are generally taught by folks outside SSM.

Mr. McNerney asked why the requirement was unenforceable. We have other requirements in place that are enforced. What makes this one unenforceable? Mr. Young asked why Requirement #3 was there in the first place. George Pothering (guest and Chair of the Gen-Ed Committee) said that Requirement #3 was there to address items #4 and #5 in the “Defining Characteristics,” which are about the nature of scientific inquiry. Lab work, he continued, is where scientific processes take place, and students need an appreciation of those processes. Mr. Hakkila said that students need to “get their hands dirty” in the lab early on, and then later they will learn about the synergistic dynamic among the different areas of science.

Mark Long (Political Science) asked whether, under Requirement #3, a student who took a science course without a lab would have to take three more science courses. Mr. Pothering said that that was not the intent of the requirement. Mr. Nunan noted that the purpose of his amendment is to root the problem identified in Mr. Long’s question. Mr. Heeney wondered about transfer credits and how well the new science requirements will deal with that issue.

Mr. Young asked what was meant by “The first course taken in the sequence.” Why couldn’t students take three science courses at once? He didn’t see a clear rationale for the language of sequencing in the requirement. Ms. Noonan said the reason is precisely the one mentioned earlier about how labs give students hands-on experience in understanding the process of science. The lab requirement puts the **process** of scientific inquiry first.

With time running out for debate, Mr. Parson moved to extend the debate by 15 minutes. After being seconded, the motion **passed**.

Mr. Wiseman remarked that there was nothing “sacrosanct” about lab experience. Einstein, he observed, was “a terrible lab man.” Margaret Hagood (Elementary & Early Childhood Education) re-posed the question asked earlier by Mr. Long, since no answer by those against the amendment was provided: would a student who took a science course without a lab have to take three more science courses? George Hopkins (History) suggested that the issue could
be solved by inserting the word “normally” in Requirement #3: “The first course taken in the sequence must normally be taken with an approved lab.”

At this point, Mr. Blackwell remarked that the Requirements of Goal II.1/III.1 seem to imply that what students learn in High School counts for nothing, to which several senators answered (without being recognized by the Speaker) that it didn’t. Mr. Blackwell asked why students have to take a lab course in this institution, if they’ve already had one in High School.

Mr. Wilder also raised a question about the phrase “taken in the sequence.” Nothing in the document, he pointed out, speaks to a sequence. There is thus no need to put the lab first if there is no clear sequence. Pete Calcagno (Economics) noted that labs are currently prerequisites for certain courses. Therefore the language in Requirement #3 is not really necessary. Mr. Dustan reiterated that that the reason the labs are meant to be taken first is so that students are exposed from the start to the tools of science.

After a little more discussion, the Senate voted on Mr. Nunan’s motion to strike Requirement #3. The proposed amendment passed.

Mr. Blackwell next proposed his own amendment. He first prefaced his proposal by stressing the importance of science, noting that he agrees with earlier comments made by various Senators that Americans don’t know enough science. But the Gen-Ed curriculum, he continued, has to do a lot of things. If you add more course requirements in one area, you have to think about what you are taking out of another area. If you learn more about science, you learn less about something else. What is the trade off? What are the costs of adding another science-course requirement? Mr. Blackwell then identified three costs. The first cost is that we reduce the potential number of minors. A second cost is that students are provided less opportunity to pursue their own goals. We need, he said, to leave some room for students to pursue their personal aims. (He gave an example of one of his advisees seeking to go to law school, who could prepare effectively for the LSAT by taking a philosophy course. But taking such electives might be harder if Gen-Ed requirements are increased.) A third cost is that we limit students’ choice and sovereignty. Adding more required courses says to students that the courses they wish to take aren’t the right ones, and that only we know which are right. Mr. Blackwell then moved that Requirement #1 be changed, so that students are required to take two, not three, courses. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Hakkila responded by saying that having students minor in something is not the goal of the College; it’s to make sure that students are broadly educated. Further, if Gen Ed—making sure that students take different kinds of courses covering different areas of knowledge—constitutes a kind of disrespect toward students, then why are we concerned about Gen Ed at all? Mr. Wiseman added that if we are going to talk about costs, we must also talk about benefits.

At this point a motion was made, seconded, and passed to extend debate by fifteen minutes.
Mr. Overby said that though he is against the proposed amendment, he agreed with much of what Mr. Blackwell said, and pointed out that currently Chemistry and Biochemistry majors must take a minimum of 129 credit hours to graduate. He added that he hoped Mr. Blackwell’s concerns come up when other sections of the Gen-Ed proposal are discussed.

One Senator then asked what makes science so different that students have to take labs in it, but not in other disciplines. Ms. Noonan responded that those in the sciences would be delighted if other disciplines required students to take labs. The goal with labs, she reminded, is to introduce students to the process of scientific inquiry. She added that efforts were made to reduce the number of required courses, but that it was not possible to do that and reach the stated objectives. The Gen-Ed proposal, she reminded everyone, is goal-based, and if the amendment passes, the objectives in the proposal could not be met.

Mr. Calcagno warned about credit-hour creep. If the Senate thinks adding three hours of science credit hours is important, it will have to think carefully about adding more hours elsewhere. Mr. McNerney was also concerned about the growing number of credit hours, and pointed out that on p. 26 of the Gen-Ed proposal the credit hours are undercounted. Under Foreign Language, 0-3 hours are listed, but it should be 0-12. He noted, too, that the proposal adds six hours in the “intercultural perspective” category, three in the category of “interdisciplinary/creative thinking,” three in science, and three in the First Year Experience, totaling 15 extra hours.

Mr. Young stated that people seem to be reading things into the proposal that he doesn’t see. He said it’s not certain that there is an extra three-hour science course because it’s not clear how many credit hours the third course must be or that science departments will teach it. He said, too, that we are expecting students to do a lot of double counting, and that many courses could meet goals that are not in their discipline. Therefore he thought that three-course requirement was fine.

Mr. Hakkila said that the schools of the College were asked to identify learning goals, and that you have to take each proposal on its own merits, and then look at the whole entity.

Scott Peeples (English) then asked what courses might be offered that non-science majors could take. Ms. Noonan replied by reading a list of courses, which included the Natural History of South Carolina, Biodiversity, Scientific Influence on Theology, the Politics of Water, the Physics of Sound and Music, Physics and Film, and Intelligent Life in the Universe. These are three-credit courses, she added, and lab based.

Mr. Krasnoff said he wished to make two points. First, referring back to Mr. Blackwell’s remarks prefacing his proposed amendment, he thought that it was the responsible thing to do to take up the issue of costs, and that we need to think about how an extra science course will affect others. Second, he reported that he looked at elite institutions and found that a number of them require fewer than three science courses. These institutions include Harvard, Carlton, Williams, Swarthmore, and William and Mary.
Jack parson moved that debate be extended 15 minutes. After receiving a second, the motion passed.

Mr. Nunan said that he felt ambivalent about Mr. Blackwell’s amendment. He thinks it is valuable that students learn more science, but was worried about Mr. Blackwell’s concern that we are creating something that is too cumbersome for students. He noted, too, that his earlier proposed amendments were designed to allow for flexibility so that the possibility of what Paul Young suggested (i.e., that departments outside the sciences would teach some of the courses that would count for the third course) could actually happen.

Maureen Hays (Sociology), responding to Mr. Krasnoff’s point about how some elite institutions require fewer science courses, pointed out that “we are not an elite institution.” She also reminded the Senate that Darryl Phillips had looked at a number of our peer institutions and found the proposed 11-hour science requirement to be in line with their science requirements. She added that we are a public liberal arts college and thus have a mission to provide a liberal arts education to the public of South Carolina.

It was now 7 PM, the end of the scheduled meeting time, and the meeting was adjourned. Discussion of Mr. Blackwell’s amendment is set to resume at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers,
Faculty Secretary
Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 18 Sept. 2007

In the first of a series of special meetings this term dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education, the Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, September 18, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium.

Speaker Joe Kelly called the meeting to order and entertained a motion to limit the debate on each paragraph of the General-Education Proposals to 30 minutes. Trish Ward (at large) offered the following motion, which was seconded by Meg Cormack (Religious Studies):

Mr. Speaker, I move that, for any main motion considered by paragraph at a special meeting of the Faculty Senate occurring between the present time and January 31, 2008, no paragraph or subdivision of such a main motion shall be debated for more than 30 minutes, except that the Senate by majority vote may extend debate for that paragraph or subdivision only beyond the original limit of 30 minutes and for a number of minutes to be specified in the motion to extend debate.

The motion could not be debated, but some points of order were raised. Richard Nunan (at large) asked what in this context constituted a paragraph. The Speaker answered that a paragraph equaled one page of the document. Another Senator asked if time was automatically extended when discussion on an amendment of a paragraph was in progress. The Speaker answered “no.” Calvin Blackwell (Economics) asked what the consequences would be if the motion failed. Would the Senate just proceed as it had last spring? The Speaker said that that was correct, except that the Senate would not vote on each section of the proposal for approval (after the amendment process the Senate will vote on the entire document).

The motion to limit debate passed.

George Pothering, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education, then moved that pages 4 to 18 (the first Gen-Ed Proposal) be adopted. The Speaker then officially declared that the Senate would consider the motion seriatim, i.e., paragraph by paragraph (or page by page), starting with page 4 of the proposal. The Speaker then reminded Senators of the time-limit rule and said that each Senator could only speak twice per paragraph (or per amendment) and for no more than five minutes. He also advised Senators that the proposal before them should not be seen as a struggle between the Senate and the Ad Hoc Committee on Gen Ed. The Committee had done its job. Their proposals were now in the hands of the Senate.

Discussion of Page 4, Goal I.3: Foreign Language

Mr. Blackwell moved to strike requirement 2 of Goal I.3, which states that all students must take one foreign language course at the College, even if they have passed a test demonstrating competency at the 202 level. After the motion was seconded, Mr. Blackwell explained that the requirement does not accord with the “Defining Characteristics,” which lays out what students must be able to do to meet the foreign language goal. If students have already
demonstrated that they have met the goal, why should they still have to take a foreign language course? Such a requirement penalizes students already competent in a foreign language for choosing to attend the College of Charleston.

The amendment to delete requirement 2 passed.

Frank Morris (at large) offered as a friendly amendment that the word “department” in requirement #1 be changed to “program” because the term “program” was a little broader. The Speaker declared that no friendly amendments were allowed, but that such a motion could be approved by “unanimous consent.” The Senate then gave unanimous consent to Mr. Morris’s suggested change.

Todd McNerney (at large) and Jack Parsons (Political Science) wondered about the purpose of item # 2 under “Approval Criteria.” Mr. Pothering noted that it no longer serves any purpose given the approval of Mr. Blackwell’s earlier amendment. Mr. Blackwell moved that approval criterion #2 be deleted. The motion was seconded and the amendment to delete approval criterion #2 passed.

Norine Noonan (Dean of SSM) remarked that since there was only one requirement and one approval criterion, there was no need to number them. Her suggestion to delete the numbers in each section was approved by unanimous consent.

Discussion of Page 5, Goal II.1: Mathematical Reasoning and Analysis

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) presented on behalf of the Philosophy Department the first of two amendments. The first amendment proposed to modify the “Defining Characteristics” and “Approval Criteria.” It would change the first statement in both sections from

(1) Master some of the theoretical underpinnings of an area of mathematics relevant to society at large, and demonstrate an understanding of abstract mathematical objects separate from any particular application.

to

Understand some of the theoretical underpinnings of an area of mathematics and develop an appreciation of abstract mathematical objects; mathematical reasoning and analysis encompass more than practical applications.

The amendment would also replace the word “and” with the word “or” in #2 and #3 of the “Defining Characteristics” and the “Approval Criteria”:

(2) Engage in mathematical modeling of varied phenomena (i.e., applying the abstractions described above to concrete problems in a variety of disciplines), along with the quantitative, symbolic, or computational methods necessary to answer questions, understand the significance of the results, and judge their reasonableness.
(3) Read and comprehend mathematical arguments, formulas, or graphical representations, and use these to present clearly and justify effectively mathematical conclusions and results.

After the motion was seconded, Mr. Wilder explained the rationale for the changes: first, the amendment makes clear that mathematics is an abstract enterprise, an idea that is slightly contradicted by the phrase “relevant to society at large” used in the original version. Second, to insist that math courses at once be theoretically oriented and yet also be “relevant to society at large” and have practical value is overly restrictive. Some courses might not qualify as meeting the goal, if both theoretical and practical criteria are required. Third, the current language (e.g., “master,” “demonstrate an understanding”) is too ambitious and unrealistic. We need more modest and flexible characteristics that courses can more easily cover.

Arguing against the amendment, Bob Mignone (guest) said that we should be setting a higher standard than what we currently have. He also said that to “understand” constitutes a passive kind of learning, but that to “master” something requires active learning. For example, one can understand how to play a piano, but that doesn’t mean one can play the piano. To master the piano, however, means that you know how to play it and requires a higher level of learning. He also argued that we should put in place a complete set of goals, not something you can select or pick at. The amendment would weaken the comprehensive nature of this part of the Gen-Ed proposal. We don’t want to be “breaking this thing into pieces.” He also objected to removing the term “college-level” from the document, saying we don’t want “remedial courses.” On a conciliatory note, Mr. Mignone said that he did approve of removing the split infinitive from the original document, changing “to clearly present” to “to present clearly.”

Paul Young (Mathematics) argued that the term “appreciation” goes against the fundamental goal. Mathematics involves critical reasoning. To appreciate mathematical objects is not the same thing as being able to engage in mathematical reasoning.

Gary Harrison (Mathematics), responding to the amendment’s proposal to substitute “or” for “and,” said that much of the thrust of modern mathematics is to combine analytical arguments and graphical representations; so the use of “and,” rather than “or,” is important.

Mr. Nunan noted that in other sections of the Gen-Ed Proposal you don’t find language this strong (terms such as “master”). He urged that we be more realistic, and noted that it is hard to evaluate mastery. It would be “more prudent not to go there.” The disjunctive approach (i.e., using “or,” rather than “and”) will make it easier for courses to meet the approval criteria and will be easier to for students to meet their Gen-Ed requirements and easier for planning and advising. To this last point, Mr. Mignone retorted that if advising is the highest priority, then the Advising Center would devise our Gen-Ed curriculum.

On the issue of the difficulty of evaluating mastery, Mr. Young remarked that it was just the opposite of what Mr. Nunan asserted: mastery is easy to assess; assessing how well one appreciates something is harder.
Jerry Boetje (Computer Science), returning to the “and”-vs.-“or” issue, said that we need to combine quantitative, symbolic, and computational methods because these are all of a piece now and can’t easily be separated. Mr. Wilder then asked whether some areas of mathematics aren’t always quantitative. If so, then that would suggest that quantitative, symbolic, and computational methods don’t always go together.

Glenn Lesses (guest) pointed out that the amendment isn’t about advising, but about giving flexibility to students to meet the requirements. Ms. Noonan, arguing for the conjunctive view, said that in a biology course, she doesn’t expect that students know either statistical analysis or graphical representation, but both. They go together and can’t be divided. Mr. Blackwell asked whether in a class one could discuss graphical representational alone without one of the other areas. He thought that they all go together.

Returning the issue of mastery vs. understanding, Evan Parry (Theatre) suggested that more consideration be given to the idea of understanding, and that we should ask if it is strong enough and how one sufficiently demonstrates understanding. Mr. Boetje thought that mastery indicated not only that you learned the knowledge, but also that you could put it to use. He thought that in computer science at least it was important that students could put what they had learned to good use.

Edith Ellis (PE & Health) suggested an amendment to Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment that would replace the word “appreciation” with the word “competency.” She moved that in item #1 of the “Defining Characteristics” and “Approval Criteria” that the phrase “develop an appreciation of” be replaced with “develop competency in the use of.” This amendment to the original amendment was seconded and was then approved by a vote.

Mr. Wilder, revisiting to the “and”-vs.-“or” issue, observed that the “conjunctive” approach would exclude some symbolic logic courses, which currently count toward the math Gen-Ed requirement.

As the 30-minute debate limit was approaching, Todd McNERney moved that the debate be extended by 15 minutes. After being seconded, the motion passed. Jason Overby (Biochemistry/Chemistry), commenting on the term “master,” said we are creating students who are “Jacks of all trades,” but not masters of any. He thought the distinction between “master” and understanding was crucial.

John Hakkila (guest), addressing the “and”-vs.-“or” issue, remarked that in every Physics and Astronomy course there is some form of mathematics used. The disjunctive approach (i.e., the use of “or”) would suggest that all such courses would satisfy the mathematics requirement. By this reasoning, a course that requires some reading would also satisfy the English requirement.

Jack Parson moved that the Senate divide the amendment, that the “master”-vs.-“understand” issue be treated separately from the “and”-vs.-“or” issue. The motion was seconded and approved.
Mr. Lesses argued that “understand” and “master” mean different things to different people, and that the Gen-Ed Standing Committee will ultimately be making the decision. Mr. Young next re-iterated his earlier point that in terms of this specific Gen-Ed goal, mastery accomplishes the goal; understanding does not. Carol Toris (Psychology) spoke in favor of the language of mastery, arguing that it is important that students experience some mastery of some things. Richard Nunan responded that the current wording makes the mathematics goal appropriate for a math major, but not for general education. He also reminded the Senate that the amendment clears up the distinction between theoretical and applied knowledge of mathematics.

At this point, the question was called and seconded. The motion to call the question failed. After a little more discussion, Jack Parson then moved to extend the time-limit for debate. After the motion was seconded, it was voted on and failed. This meant that the entirety of Mr. Wilder’s original amendment failed. Mr. Nunan pointed out that other amendments dealing with Goal II.1 would not be voted on at all, and that the Senate should have been aware of this when they voted for the motion to limit debate to thirty minutes per page. Mr. Wilder then commented that he thought that many Senators didn’t realize what exactly they had just voted on. After a number of Senators confirmed Mr. Wilder’s assessment, Mr. Wilder moved that the Senate re-consider the time-limit for discussion of Goal II.1. His motion was seconded and then passed. Mr. Wilder then moved to extend the debate on Goal II.1 by 15 minutes. The motion was seconded and then passed. Debate resumed.

George Hopkins (History) argued that we would expect a person in a major to “master” material in the major, but not a non-major. To expect mastery by non-majors is unrealistic. Mr. Mignone pointed out that the language in the goal says “master some” things in the discipline, not all. He saw this as a doable, realistic goal. Mr. Boetje commented that mastery at the Gen-Ed level is different from what is expected by major. At the Gen-Ed level mastery means that you could do something with the knowledge learned and do more than just spout back what’s been taught. Mr. Lesses re-iterated that understanding means different things to different people. Plato, for example, had a very high standard for his definition of understanding. Ms. Cormack asked at what grade a student is deemed to have achieved mastery. Does an A signify mastery, a B, a C?

At this point Mr. Blackwell called the question, which was seconded. His motion passed and a vote was taken on the amendment: The first part of Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment, which was to change the wording of “Defining Characteristic” #1 and #1 of the “Approval Criteria,” failed.

The Senate now focused its attention on the second part of the amendment, which concerned items #2 and #3 of both the “Defining Characteristic” and “Approval Criteria.” At this point, Reid Wiseman noted that the phrase “Read and comprehend” in item #3 of the “Approval Criteria” was superfluous: to comprehend mathematical argument implies the ability to read them. His suggested change to strike “Read and” was accepted by unanimous consent.

Mr. Mignone thought the proposed changes to items #2 and #3 were of even greater consequence than the earlier proposed change to item #1, and emphasized the importance of
not changing the wording. He also thought that the original language does not exclude or diminish the importance of symbolic/mathematical logic. Mr. Lesses responded that he appreciated Mr. Mignone’s comments, especially in light of the fact that mathematical logic has historically been taught at the College by both the Math and Philosophy Departments. He hoped that the Senate would respect the fact that the Philosophy department has taught this branch of mathematics and will continue to teach it, and that those courses the Philosophy Department has taught in mathematical/symbolic logic will continue to count toward the Gen-Ed mathematical reasoning goal. Mr. Mignone said that he never wanted to exclude Philosophy.

Darryl Phillips (at large) commented that part of the bigger problem is that the Gen-Ed Proposal is breaking a system that didn’t need to be fixed. Now we’re in the position of trying to make the Gen-Ed Proposals conform to and look like the system we have now. Mr. Hakkila responded that just because something has always been is not a reason to continue it.

A vote was taken on the second part of Mr. Wilder’s proposed amendment and the amendment was defeated.

The Senate now considered a second amendment from the Philosophy Department, which Mr. Wilder formally proposed, and which was seconded. The amendment proposed to add a sentence in requirement #1, so that the entire requirement would read,

> All students must complete two approved courses in mathematical reasoning and analysis. Coursework in formal logic (a branch of mathematics) enables students to develop valuable mathematical reasoning skills.

Mr. Wilder explained that the added sentence was included in last year’s Gen-Ed report and in its rationale, that it was helpful to retrieve the sentence, and that it makes explicit that formal logic is a branch of mathematics. Mr. Mignone responded that he agreed with Mr. Wilder that formal logic is a branch of mathematics, but did think that this Gen-Ed document is an appropriate place for “product placement” or for advertising certain subjects.

Idee Winfield (Sociology) moved that the new sentence proposed by Mr. Wilder’s amendment be moved from the “Requirement” section to “Approval Criteria” in item #1. The motion was seconded.

At this point, Mr. Wilder moved to extend the debate time by 15 minutes. The motion was seconded, and the Speaker reminded the Senate that if the motion fails, then the Senate would move to the next page of the Gen-Ed Proposal. The motion passed.

Ms. Noonan commented that she was troubled by the amendment because it seemed to privileging a set of courses over others. All courses will have to meet the “Approval Criteria” and some courses in mathematics will have to be revised to meet them, but we shouldn’t privilege any set of courses in advance. Mr. Wilder responded that the courses in question aren’t tied to a single department. Moreover, one key function of the amendment was to send a message to future Gen-Ed Committees that symbolic logic is a part of mathematics. The
amendment will be helpful to future members of the Committee. Mr. Mignone replied that if a course meets the “Approval Criteria,” it will qualify; therefore the amendment isn’t necessary. He also reminded Senators that courses in other departments (e.g., Physics/Astronomy) might also qualify for the math goal, but they aren’t being privileged. Mr. Young added that the proposal doesn’t list every sub-branch of mathematics. So why should symbolic logic receive special treatment?

The Senate then voted on Ms. Winfield’s proposed amendment and the amendment failed. Mr. Nunan then called the question on Mr. Wilder’s amendment, which was seconded. His motion to call the question passed and the Senate voted on Mr. Wilder’s amendment: the amendment to add a sentence on symbolic logic into the first requirement failed.

Mr. Nunan then withdrew an amendment on Goal II.1 that he had planned to make a motion on because it was contingent upon the Senate approving the first amendment proposed by the Philosophy Department.

Discussion of Page 6, Goal II.1/Goal III.1: Scientific Reasoning and Analysis/Knowledge of the Natural World

With 25 minutes left in the meeting, Mr. Blackwell asked what would happen with respect to the time limit for page 6 of the Proposal, if the meeting were to end in mid-discussion. The Speaker said that the remaining time would be carried over to the next meeting.

Mr. Nunan then proposed his amendment, which consisted of three parts: A, B, and C. He asked that part B—which would modify “Requirement” #2 by inserting the words “at least” (“Coursework must be done in at least two different departments”—be approved by unanimous consent, since those words should have been in the Gen-Ed Proposal, but were inadvertently omitted in a transcription error. The Senate approved the insertion of the words in the document by unanimous consent.

Mr. Nunan then moved that the other two parts of the amendment be adopted. Part A would change the first line of second group of “Defining Characteristics” under the heading “Knowledge of the natural world” as follows:

Students should acquire the following areas of knowledge of at least some of the natural world following:

Part C of the amendment would eliminate “Requirement” #4.

4) Students must select three approved courses and two approved labs that, either separately or in combination, cover all five areas of knowledge designated under “knowledge of the natural world.” Courses will be tagged to indicate the topics they cover.

The motion was seconded and Mr. Nunan explained the key reason for the proposed changes is flexibility. As currently configured, Goal II.1/III.1 on page 6 is too restrictive in terms of what
students can do. For example, if a student takes a physics course, then that might cover only one of the required “areas of knowledge,” and the student might have to take more than three courses to cover all the areas. Mr. Nunan argued that students need to have more flexibility. Ms. Noonan responded that each science course will have to be vetted and re-introduced to meet the new Gen-Ed goal and its defining characteristics. Faculty in the SSM understand this and believe that the goals can be met and that flexibility is already in place. Moreover, she said that she was troubled by the tenor of the debate, which suggested that students are incapable of reaching a higher standard. If we want to be a “first-rate” institution, she argued, then we need to set higher expectations. Mr. Nunan said that he “took issue with every point” made by Ms. Noonan. He does not assume that courses will remain identical to what they are now or that they won’t undergo some change. He said that the attempt to cover comprehensively the areas of scientific knowledge in just three courses was unrealistic, and rejected the claim that there was an effort to “dumb down” standards. The issue is flexibility and the problems that stem from imposing a rigid system on students.

Mr. Mignone commented on how the SSM worked with the Gen Ed Committee on the science goals. He said that SSM embraced a spirit of change, that it came up with a list of goals and realized that an extra course was needed to achieve those goals. There was no attempt to get another course for any other reason. Mr. Hakkila added that the current science portion of Gen Ed is inadequate; so SSM had to come up with a set of goals and then match it with an appropriate structure. He noted that there was much disagreement among SSM faculty because many did not want to increase the required number of science credit hours for students. Some SSM faculty were reluctant to take on another Gen Ed science course, but there was also an acknowledgement that the current system isn’t adequate and doesn’t provide a good science education for our students. It is also outdated: science has changed a lot, and we need to change our Gen Ed system to keep up with the changes in science. Phil Dustan (Biology) wished to reinforce Mr. Hakkila’s last point and brought up the example of the theory of natural selection, noting that South Carolina ranks near the bottom in terms of how well the public understands this theory.

At this point, 7 PM was fast approaching and the meeting was adjourned. Discussion of Mr. Nunan’s amendment is set to resume at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers,
Faculty Secretary