

Provost's recommendation for Chancellor's action on "Integrative Capstone and Assessment Proposal," memorandum of October 26, 2004 from UAA Governance Office, with attachment:

November 1, 2004

Based on the discussion and review of the proposal that took place at the Council of Deans and Directors on Wednesday, October 27 and my discussion with the Undergraduate Academic Board at their meeting on Friday, October 29th I am pleased to recommend your approval of the referenced Faculty Senate action, with the conditions for implementation suggested following this paragraph. As context for this recommendation, the proposal now presented is the product of a multi-year process of review and development led by the GER Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate's Undergraduate Academic Board. The review was undertaken at the request of then Provost Dan Johnson in response to recommendations made in the Northwest Association's 2000 Accreditation Report and involved the participation and contributions of faculty throughout UAA. In this context I should emphasize that the overall concept of a capstone-like component of the GER's has already been approved by Chancellor Gorsuch, who on April 23, 2003 formalized Senate Resolution 4a that provided for "an upper division integrative component [of the GER] of not less than 3 credits [. . .]." The current capstone proposal is simply intended to implement that previous Resolution.

My suggestions for details of implementation are as follows:

1. The five colleges and the School of Engineering should be allowed to review and consider the proposal through their relevant curriculum committees and deans' offices, with such review(s) to be completed no later than December 15, 2004.
2. Simultaneously those curriculum committees and then the deans' offices should review the proposed capstone courses developed under contract by their faculty this past summer, the review(s) to be completed no later than January 15, 2005. The reviews should include full consideration of the budgetary and other administrative aspects of offering the courses in question.
3. Following up on a conversation last spring with Professor Dan Kline, chair of the GER Subcommittee through spring, 2004, the Senate, UAB, or GER Subcommittee should review the proposal with an eye to appropriate revision of what is likely an inadvertent omission in the capstone proposal. Specifically, while "Knowledge integration" is the very first (and presumably most essential) of the five "Integrative Capstone Goals, Outcomes & Criteria" articulated in section 5.0 of the proposal, there is in fact no specific requirement that any capstone course attend to that integration, since the "Skills Demonstration and Assessment Requirement" as articulated in section 6.0 of the proposal requires that capstone courses incorporate only "four of the previous five instructional goals." I would suggest that "Knowledge integration" be obligatory, and then to provide the flexibility desired, three of the remaining four skills be required; however, there may well be other approaches possible for addressing this issue.

4. Regarding the current capstone proposal as only the “first fruit” of our institutional GER review, we should request continued and less constrained review of our GER’s with the possibility of making more thorough and far reaching changes and taking greater advantage of the GER’s potential as symbols of our institutional identity.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss these complicated issues.