

Sample General Education Models

Overall Guidelines

The basic aim in the models was to incorporate the following structural elements:

1. Reduce the credit count in the current GSP from 66 to a number closer to 40;
2. Encourage the development of inter- and multi-disciplinary areas (and by extension, inter- and multi-disciplinary courses; see Appendix A). The distribution areas would be thematically defined and “open” to participation from faculty members regardless of departmental designations;
3. Distribute learning outcomes for general education within each of the areas;
4. Include a progressive element (course tiering) that allows for discreet assessment points.

Common Themes

In each of the models, the distribution areas are defined by theme rather than academic discipline (note that the distribution themes used here were derived from a canvas of some other general education programs; they are meant to be illustrative and are not definitive to each model; see Appendix B for links to the source programs). Defining the areas thematically has a number of advantages for our students, our faculty, and the university as a whole:

1. Departments and faculty within the departments will be able to interact and collaborate more readily;
2. Students will be able to see and appreciate more readily the interrelationships among and within the academic disciplines;
3. Departmental resources (e.g., faculty assignments and course schedule slots) that are currently being directed towards intro level general education sections can be reallocated to more advanced courses that are central to the discipline;
4. Faculty members from departments currently excluded from the general education program will be able to participate more readily in general education than is currently the case.

In each of the models, working groups would need to be organized on an interdisciplinary basis to define the vision, mission, and learning outcomes for each of the distribution areas (similar to that which was used when Area F was being organized under the current program) once those areas are defined.

Each of the models incorporates a tiering structure providing an opportunity for discreet assessment points. In the case of Models 2 and 3, the tiering is more clearly defined since they include requirements for upper level courses. But in all three, assessment

could occur either before or after the foundation level, before or after the distribution level, and at the capstone level.

In each of the models, the capstone seminar would be structured such that it integrated the learning outcomes of the general education program with that of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary major.

Each of the models would include a lab course to meet the science requirement.

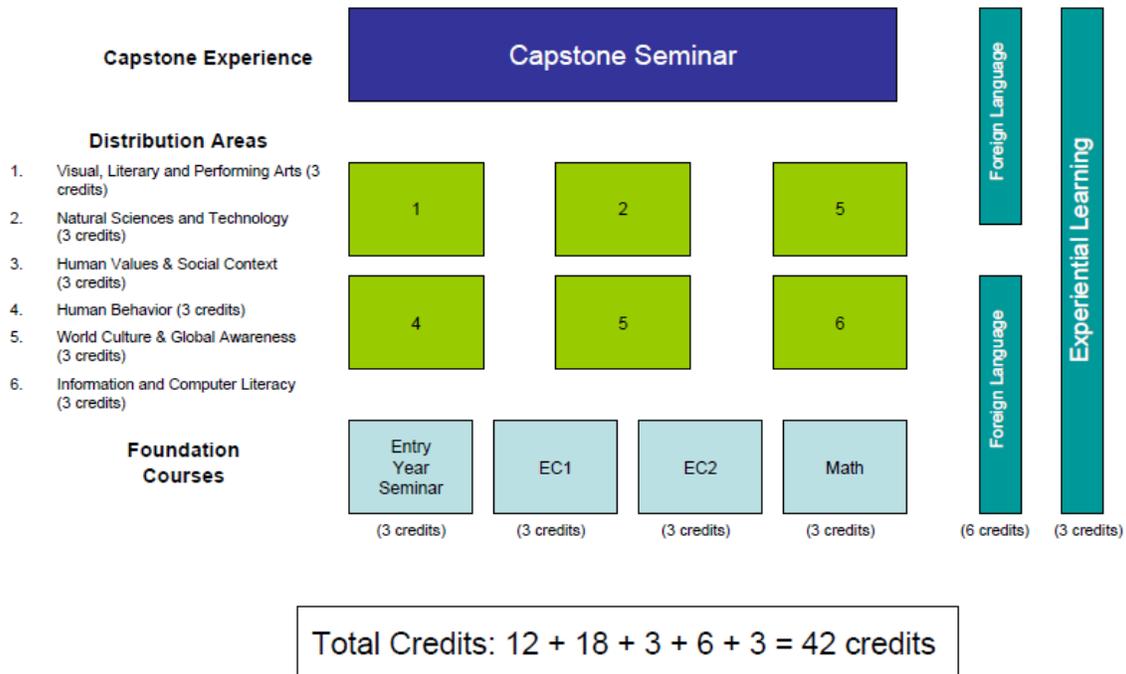
Model 1 includes an explicit language requirement. A language requirement could be built into Models 2 and 3 in that whichever area the languages are embedded, the credit cap in that area could be relaxed for students taking 6 credits of language (for instance, the cap could be raised to 9 credits in that area so that students could take at least one other course in that area and thereby get that broader sampling of courses the distribution models are designed to deliver).

Model 1 is the only model that specifically incorporates an experiential learning component (some sort of hands-on course), but experiential learning would be a part of Models 2 and 3. One way to accomplish that, for instance, would be to embed the experiential learning type courses within the distribution areas and require students to take at least one course of that type in their distribution credit allotment (see Appendix C for sample planning sheets).

Similarly, learning outcomes like quantitative literacy or spoken and written communication would be embedded in the distribution area courses via writing intensive, math intensive, or oral presentation courses. As with the definitional aspects of the distribution areas, working groups could be assembled to develop the necessary criteria for courses seeking these designations. The same would be the case with the NJ/NY Metro signature part of our general education program, with community-based courses embedded throughout the distribution areas. In all of these cases, students would be required to take courses fulfilling each of these learning outcomes.

Each of the models could also accommodate the Learning Communities/First Year Experience Program design as well.

Model 1

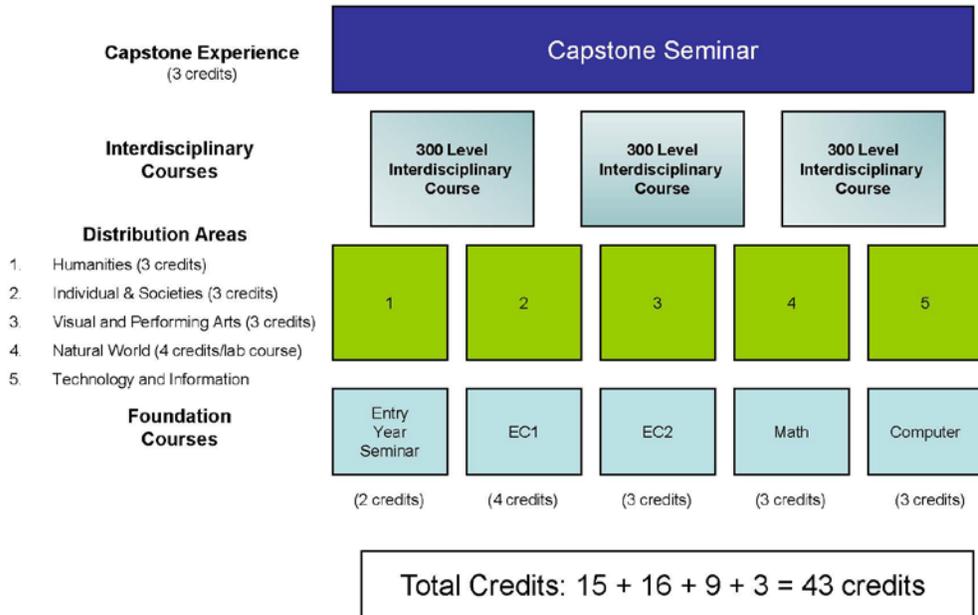


This model includes 12 credits of Foundation Courses. The Entry Year Seminar would be a revamped or retooled version of Orientation to College, Computer as a Tool, and the FYE type courses we have now (in terms of learning goals and design, if not content).

The number of distribution areas matches those of the current program but substantially reduces the number of credits required in each area. The grouping here, however, is more thematically defined and thematically consistent than that of the current program. Because the areas are thematically defined, faculty members would be able to offer courses in any of the areas. In this regard, the model is similar to that used in the current Area F (Quantitative), the only area in the current program that does not restrict courses to specific departments.

Note that this model also includes 6 credits of foreign language requirements as all university graduation requirements independent of the core curriculum, and a 3 credit experiential learning course (e.g., a hands-on art or music course, or perhaps a fitness course, or a service learning course). It could incorporate a lab requirement as well.

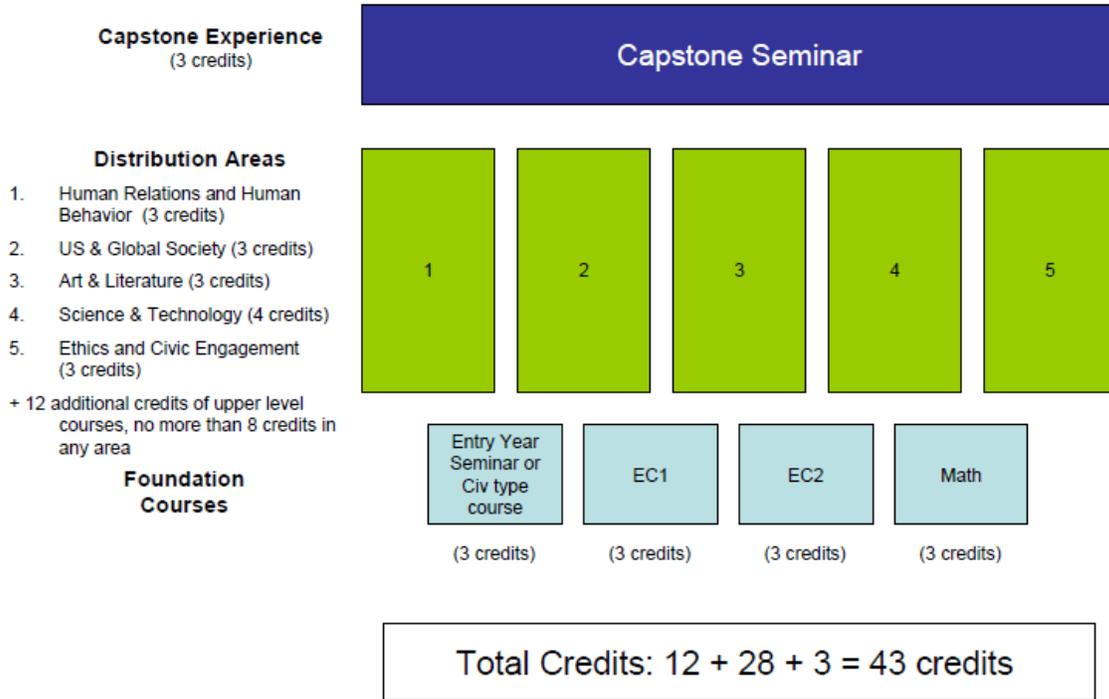
Model 2



As with the previous model, this one also includes Foundations Courses, with the entry year seminar structured along lines described in Model 1 above, but offered as a 2-credit rather than a 3-credit course.

The distribution areas are reduced from the six in the current program to five, and it adds a laboratory requirement (hence the 4-credit “Natural World” allotment). The model also introduces a requirement to take upper level credits. The entry level courses would be 100 level, the distribution area courses 200 (and have prerequisites attached to them) and the interdisciplinary courses would be 300 level. This would provide an opportunity to formalize some criteria for 100, 200, 300, 400 level courses, at least within the General Education part of our program. Currently, no university policy exists and we could now put forward some general education specific definitions that could then be used to model a university-wide or at least a college wide policy.

Model 3



This model includes 12 credits of Foundation Courses that correspond pretty closely to those of the current program. Note, however, that there is a trade off between an FYE-type seminar and a streamlined single semester version of our current two semester Civilizations courses. Also, unlike the previous two models, this one does not include a specific language or experiential learning component. However each of these could be included by embedding them within one or more of the areas.

The main change from the current program is in the distribution areas where we reduce both the total number of areas (from 6 to 5) and the credit requirements from 6 credits in each plus an additional 3 credits in four of the areas, to 3 credits in each and an additional 3 credits in four of the areas. As was the case with the previous two models, the areas are thematically defined and faculty members would be free to offer a course in any area as long as the course met the learning outcomes for that area. And as with the previous model, it includes a requirement for upper level courses.

Appendix A:

Sample Area Distribution Definitions/Nomenclature

Defining the distribution areas for our new General Education Curriculum is the next step in the process. The following examples are meant to aid discussion about and development of those area definitions. The first seven were developed by the General Studies Coordinating Committee. The next page contains links to some of the programs that provided the nomenclature for the areas in the models.

The Body and the Mind

These courses foster inquiry into and understandings of the body/mind relationship from various perspectives including: the historical, biological, chemical, psychological, physiological, medical, philosophical, and artistic. They may explore specific histories or theories of embodied, cognitive, affective, and imaginative practices, as well as ideas about and representations of bodies and minds across a range of social, cultural, and disciplinary divides.

Local and Global Perspectives

These courses explore and analyze diverse economic, political, social, cultural, philosophical, ethical, gender, environmental, and structural issues that affect policies, system concepts, and methodologies related to the local region and the world. These courses ask students to face and examine the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century and to cultivate emotional and intellectual bases for reflection and critical thinking as well as practical and theoretical avenues to engage in active citizenship and research. Courses may explore the study of language, religion, nation and national identity, ethnicity, race and class relations, prejudice, peace and non-violence, poverty, war, terrorism, local resources, and population dynamics.

Narratives in Context

These courses examine historical, theoretical, and artistic narratives and the wider contexts in which they circulate, with an emphasis on identity formation, cultural systems, and social relations. Students will analyze the formal dimensions and content of these narratives as well as the social, cultural, epistemological, institutional, and ideological conditions under which they are constructed, encountered, and contested.

Theory and Practice

Courses in this area explore the various disciplinary, discursive, and material contexts in which a theory or concept significant for its historical or contemporary influence or currency (e.g. evolution, empiricism, Marxism, the unconscious, stoicism, sabermetrics, originality, empire, thermodynamics, utilitarianism, relativity, realism, semiotics,

genetics, game theory, chaos theory, interdisciplinary learning etc.) has operated and/or currently operates. Theoretical models might derive from technical, philosophical, religious, economic, psychological, artistic, social, cultural, educational, mathematical, or scientific fields of inquiry. Questions at the heart of these courses might include: How do ideas that originate within one field of knowledge and experience make their way over to others and what are the epistemological, ethical, or historical implications of these transmigrations? How are theoretical paradigms tested, applied, or made concretely manifest? How does practice inform theoretical knowledge or the validity of that knowledge? Are all theories susceptible to or measurable by their practical applications?

Visual Culture

It is a common understanding that our culture is visually oriented. Unlike the very earliest cultures that privileged the oral and the near past, the printed word, this cultural reassessment counts on the growing role of technologies of sight to mediate what had always been embodied experience. Visual Culture represents an interdisciplinary approach to a deracinated landscape of human experience that is offered, questioned and sometimes reclaimed through the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. It concerns itself with our world as it is experienced visually as well as re-envisioned through the growing technologies of sight and communication. Drawings, movies, television, newspapers, photographs, furniture, utensils, gardens, books, dance, paintings, buildings, medical imaging, science visualization, artifacts, landscape, sculptures, toys, advertising, jewelry, apparel, graphs, maps, websites, and even dreams fall within its domain.

The Information Society

The Information Society courses explore and analyze diverse economic, societal, cultural, philosophical, ethical, gender, sociological, and structural issues that impact policies, system concepts and methodologies related to both information technology and communication technology. Issues and topics include information literacy, policy making/regulation, cyber governance, intellectual property, employment, evolution of virtual communities, digital libraries, digital media, e-commerce, e-communication, security concerns, cyber analysis/cyber forensics, online healthcare, the digital divide, and class structure.

Power and Diversity

These courses explore the concept of power and power relations in relation to a diversity of human identities and experiences including race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, age, and disability. Power and diversity courses may explore institutionalized and systemic power, i.e. criminal justice, politics, government, media, economics, or medical systems; power dynamics, i.e. racism, sexism, homophobia, or xenophobia; and cultural representations of power and diversity in literature, history, philosophy, or visual arts.

General Education Area Distribution Models

School	Areas	Credits	Notes
Temple	Quantitative Literacy	3	
	Arts	3 or 4	
	Race and Diversity	3	
	Human Behavior	3	
	Science & Technology	3	
	US Society	3	
	World Society	3	
Roanoke	Humanities & Arts	6	Within each area, courses focus on one of three perspectives: natural world, western world, or global. Students take credits to satisfy each area
	Social Sciences	6	
	Natural Sciences & Math	9	
Umass-Dartmouth	Cultural and Artistic Literacy	9	Variation depends on department requirements for major
	Ethics & Social Responsibility	varies	
	Global Awareness	3	
	Diversity	3	
	Information & Computer Literacy	6+	
	Math	3	
	Natural Science & Technology	3	
	Writing Skills	9	
	Oral Skills	varies	
	Eastern Michigan	Effective Communication	
Quantitative Reasoning		3	
Perspectives on a Diverse World		6	
Knowledge of the Disciplines		24	
Learning Beyond the Classroom		6	
U Delaware	Discovery Learning Experience	3	Discovery-based and Experiential learning that involves instructional experiences that are out-of-class and beyond typical curriculum courses.
U Maine	Science	6 to 8	Includes lab
	Human Values & Social Context	18	
	Writing Competency	9	
	Ethics	3	
U Wisconsin-	Ethnic Studies	3	The other requirements are pretty standard distribution ones
Green Bay	World Culture	3	
U Washington-	Visual, Literary, Performing Arts		
Tacoma	Individual & Societies		
	Natural World		

Appendix C: Sample Planning Sheets

Sample Planning Sheet Model 1					
Academic Foundations (12 credits)					
Course	Semester Taken				
Seminar					
EC1					
EC2					
Math					
Distribution Areas (18 total credits)					
3 credits in each area, course selection must include each specialty					
Specialty Area	General Area	Writing Intensive (3 credits)	Math Intensive (3 credits)	Oral Presentation (3 credits)	Community Engagement (3 credits)
Arts					
Human Values					
World Culture					
Science & Technology					
Computer Literacy					
Human Behavior					
Capstone Course (3 credits)					
Course	Semester Taken				
Capstone					
Language (6 credits)					
Language	Semester Taken				
Lang 1					
Lang 2					
Experiential Learning					
Course	Semester Taken				

Sample Planning Sheet Model 2

Academic Foundations (12 credits)						
Course	Semester Taken					
Seminar						
EC1						
EC2						
Math						
Distribution Areas (22 total credits)						
3 credits in each area, course selection must include each specialty						
No more than 8 credits in each area						
Specialty Area	Inter- disciplinary (9 credits)	Writing Intensive (3 credits)	Math Intensive (3 credits)	Oral Presentation (3 credits)	Community Engagement (3 credits)	Experiential Learning (3 credits)
Humanities						
Individuals & Societies						
Arts						
Natural World						
Computer & Information Literacy						
Capstone Course (3 credits):						
Course	Semester Taken					
Capstone						

Sample Planning Sheet Model 3

Academic Foundations (12 credits)

Course	Semester Taken	
Seminar/Civ		
EC1		
EC2		
Math		

Distribution Areas (28 total credits)

At least 3 credits in each area, no more than 8 credits in any one area

Course selection must include each specialty

Specialty Area	General Area (12 upper level credits)	Writing Intensive (3 credits)	Math Intensive (3 credits)	Oral Presentation (3 credits)	Community Engagement (3 credits)	Experiential Learning (3 credits)
Human Relations						
US & Global Society						
Art & Literature						
Science & Technology						
Ethics & Civic Engagement						

Capstone Course (3 credits)

Course	Semester Taken	