

**General Education Considerations      Dorothy Pisarski      January 20, 2017**

1. I believe in an entry-level experience such as the FYS and a general education capstone experience. Due to my limited experience with the FYS, I took time during JTerm to speak with approximately 40 undergrad students on campus about their FYS experience. It appears there are two main problems with the current FYS:

a. students describe very broad differences in the workload and difficulty of the FYS classes. For example, some related stories of the FYS being the easiest and fun class of their first semester while others said it was their most difficult, most stress-inducing, and/or most time-consuming class.

b. students provided very different descriptions of what they thought the purpose of the FYS is. Answers ranged from “how to write according to Drake standards” to “how to make friends across campus” to “how service learning can make me a global citizen”

I also read the Drake documents from the 1990s which I shared with the committee. Intrigued by the idea of a gen ed capstone, I searched numerous college and university websites and found an abundance of gen ed capstone experiences. I communicated with my former Dean of General Education at St Francis University in Loretto, PA, Martha O’Brien. She spoke with conviction about the need for a gen ed capstone and various forms that could take. I considered this in relation to the Wabash study and how much more we need to connect learning and assessment.

Therefore, my first recommendation regardless of the model that is chosen is that we create a stronger model of FYS and also introduce a general education capstone, which students can complete the last semester of enrollment, which may or may not be simultaneous with their major capstone project.

2. Assessing the four proposed models, I do not see one choice that I am comfortable with as-is, however I do have a preference for the model that will require the least amount of editing.

a. Integrated Core does not match the way Drake curriculum is approached.

b. The Majors/Minors model is not a match considering the current numbers of double majors and major(s)/minor(s) undertaken.

c. The RGEC Model has the most potential for successful implementation. I suggest pursuing necessary edits to conform to the learning outcomes we presented to Senate.

3. Given the general education change that we are proposing, I suggest also making a simultaneous recommendation for an investigation of workload across the units. Small units with limited faculty numbers teaching classes that require constant mentoring for project-based learning will not be able to provide proactive advising as RGEC suggests.