**History and Development of General Education at SEU**

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Before 1970 SEU had a rigid core requiring 12 hours of religion and philosophy, 12 hours in English, 9 hours in social sciences (including history), 6- 8 hours in Math and Science, and 12 hours of foreign languages, with a total of 132 credit hours required to graduate. In 1968-70 the total hours for graduation were dropped to 120, where it is today.

In the 1970s, a curriculum was adopted that swept away most general education requirements. Students were to take Freshman Studies (a freshman humanities seminar) and had an English proficiency requirement. Beyond this, only the major was required and the student was simply encouraged to explore courses outside the major. This wide-open curriculum fit the ethic of the late 1960s and 1970s. It was soon felt, however, that few students explored deeply outside their major, and that they were not really liberally educated. A few years later,the general education requirement, Research and Critical Missions, was added, which was a senior thesis course and precursor to Capstone. Students thus had a freshman requirement and a senior requirement, but no general education courses in between to prepare them for the senior thesis. Thus the drop/failure rate was initially very high for Research and Critical Missions.

In response to this problem SEU adopted Model Q, a broad cafeteria-style distribution requirement for general education in the 1980-82 catalogues. In this model were general “areas of exploration,” such as **Values-6 hours** (with 13 Philosophy and Religious Studies courses to choose from) and **Global Perspectives**-**6 hours** (where, for example, a Shakespeare class and a British Literature course could fulfill the requirement). **U.S. Society-6 hours** was fulfilled by a wide variety of social science and history courses. **Communications-6** **hours** and **Science and Technology—6 hours** rounded out the specified areas. This model was popular with faculty and students, but concerns were raised by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SEU’s regional accreditation body). With such a wide variety of courses meeting general education requirements, SEU was not really able to show that all graduates knew and could do the things promised in the SEU mission statement.

St. Edward's University had been evaluating its general education curriculum for several years in the late 1980s. At the recommendation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the University sent a team to a Lilly Foundation workshop in 1988 to determine the extent to which the curriculum achieved the goals of our Mission Statement. The team identified the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and made recommendations for continuing the process of general education review.

Shortly thereafter, a faculty curriculum committee spent a year developing a rationale and objectives for a new general education curriculum based on the St. Edward’s University Mission Statement. This curriculum would include the new Cultural Foundations Program, which was developed while St. Edward’s faculty were participating in the AAC&U “Engaging Cultural Legacies Program.” In September 1989, the Academic Council accepted these recommendations and faculty committees were formed to design a new curriculum incorporating these objectives. Committees were created across the university to create the classes that would comprise the new general education curriculum.

In December of 1990, the Cultural Foundations Committee was convened and tasked with incorporating the following areas into the new curriculum.

1. World Cultures - Global issues, Current Culture Politics, Government

and Geography.

2. World Civilization

3. Historical Development of the U.S. and Current U.S. History

4. Understanding and Appreciating the Arts

5. Literature

6. Multicultural Issues

The specific charge given to the committee was as follows:

The committee on Cultural Foundations is charged with generally defining a set of courses (or perhaps options within a set of courses) which will help students understand their own culture and gain a perspective of how their culture relates to others. While this is a daunting task within the fifteen credit hour restriction set by the Council, seven major parts of this component have been identified. This committee should integrate these parts so that our students develop a balanced understanding and appreciation for their own and other cultures. There is a strong interdisciplinary assumption in this component. Discrete, discipline specific courses are NOT envisioned.

### The Cultural Foundations committee met in January and February of 1991 and

recommended six courses to the general faculty. These courses were

subsequently accepted by the Academic Council and the Board and were

listed as Cultural Foundations requirements in the ‘91-92 catalog. Core faculty groups were formed for each course to develop master syllabi and design and participate in faculty development workshops. Because the Cultural Foundations courses were interdisciplinary, a considerable amount of faculty development was required in order to prepare faculty to teach the new courses. This faculty development effort required extensive administrative support. The first sections were offered in the spring of 1992 when four sections of *The American Experience* were offered enrolling 126 students for 378 student credit hours. In the fall of 1992 all four of the courses being reviewed were offered enrolling 283 students for 849 student credit hours.

With the creation of these courses for the 1991-92 catalogue, and the establishment of general education courses in writing, ethics, languages, science, mathematics, and presentational speaking, SEU had completed a move from distribution requirements to a core curriculum for general education. That curriculum specified where each student would accomplish specific goals articulated in the mission statement. The revised general education requirements consisted of 57 credit hours spanning all four years. Within the 57 hour requirement was the 18-hour requirement in Cultural Foundations. The purpose of these six required courses, as stated in the charge, was to help students develop a balanced understanding and appreciation for their own and other cultures. The courses were multidisciplinary, with CULF *1320 The American Experience* and CULF 2321 *American Dilemmas* examining American society from a multicultural perspective. CULF *3330 Identity of the West* investigated the development of Western Civilization. And the sequence was completed in CULF 3331 *Contemporary World Issues*, where non-Western societies and related global issues were explored. CULF 1318 *Literature and the Human Experience* and CULF 1319 *Understanding and Appreciating the Arts* completed the six courses, and, with their aesthetic focus, provided students with a true liberal arts foundation. The original course descriptions are included below in Appendix A.

The curriculum revisions of the early 1990s were quickly and smoothly implemented and multiple sections of each course were offered every semester. The change did require more faculty and changed patterns of enrollment in a number of courses. Some faculty members now taught fewer electives in the major and instead taught sections of Cultural Foundations courses. Appendix B provides an overview of the General Education curriculum from this time until 2007, when CULF 3330 and 3331 were revised as part of the SACS reaccreditation process. Other changes in this time period include the conversion of the Research and Critical Missions class to the Capstone Course in the early 1990s, which involved removing the team-teaching and cross-grading components of the class, but keeping the “civic” research focus on a current controversial issue (generally) outside the student’s major. Capstone itself was later revised to include a Civic Engagement component in 2005 or 2006. Other initiatives in this period included a Writing Across the Curriculum effort in the mid-1990s, a Moral Reasoning Across the Curriculum initiative in 2000-2002, and the establishment of the learning community of 3 linked general education courses known as the Cluster (which was discontinued after 2007). Another revision in this period included addressing student difficulties in the Capstone course by making American Dilemmas a prerequisite and preparatory course for Capstone by instituting the American Dilemmas paper in CULF 2321. Numerous other revisions and pilot projects involving general education courses were in process as well, but fall beyond the scope of this brief narrative.

**Creation of University Programs:**

In 1994, University Programs was created as an administrative entity to run the Freshman Studies, Cultural Foundations, Honors, and Capstone Programs, and Marianne Hopper, then Dean of the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences was the UNPG Director. Shortly after the arrival of University President George Martin in 1999, SEU embarked on 10-year strategic plan to double the size of the university. In 2005, due to this rapid growth, University Programs was given a status similar to that of a School. Marianne Hopper became the Dean, and began hiring an interdisciplinary faculty to teach and administer the courses in these programs.

**Global Understanding QEP:** In 2007, St. Edward’s University submitted a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as part of its decennial reaffirmation of accreditation process. The QEP emphasized Global Understanding and was enthusiastically endorsed by SACS; the first year of the plan was fully implemented in AY 07-08. To achieve the goal of increased global understanding on the part of all traditional undergraduates, the QEP called for St. Edward’s faculty to significantly redesign/reconfigure the two courses in the general education requirement (CULF 3330 and CULF 3331) that specifically focus on international/global issues. The new course descriptions are in the AY 07-08 bulletin and appear below as Appendix C.

**General Education Advisory Committee:** Also in 2007, in the fall, the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) was created by the Faculty Senate to facilitate communication, increase understanding, and foster collegiality among all members of the faculty, those who teach general education classes and those who do not. The goal of the committee is to ensure that decisions made regarding general education are supportive of, and are decisions supported by, all academic areas. GEAC was created in response to faculty concerns that faculty participation in and understanding of St. Edward’s general education curriculum had been declining in recent years despite the fact that this curriculum, designed in 1989 and developed by the faculty over the past several decades, had been recognized and awarded by numerous outside agencies, such as the Association for General and Liberal Studies, the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and the Irvine Foundation.

**General Education Course Directors Committee:** In May of 2009, GEAC issued recommendations that the course directors and faculty of mission course classes (Freshmen Studies, CULF and Capstone) examine their student learning objectives to clarify expectations, and to better support overarching goals of the general education program. Another recommendation suggested that the same faculty should identify the sequence of learning outcomes that students accomplish across their 4 years of study and identify where their courses fit within that developmental sequence. In response to these recommendations, Dean Marianne Hopper of University Programs asked Dr. Bob Strong to convene a committee of these faculty, who met for the first time in the spring of 2010. The committee, which quickly grew to include other general education course directors, soon embarked on what became known as the Vertical Integration Project, completed in Fall 2012, and being readied for dissemination to various audiences in spring of 2013. This is a comprehensive mapping and analysis of the general education curriculum, focusing on where and how particular skills and content is sequenced and developed over the 4 years.

**Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility:** In Fall 2010, the Dean of University Programs (Marianne Hopper) encouraged Associate Dean Bob Strong and the Course Directors Committee (CDC) to submit an application to the AAC&U Shared Futures: General Education for a Global Century Project, focused on developing general education curricula that support the Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility initiative (www.aacu.org/SharedFutures/global\_century/). With contributions from several of the course directors on the CDC, the application was accepted by the AAC&U organization, and a curriculum review task force was formed, chaired by Richard Kopec, Christie Sample Wilson, and Mity Myhr. The group first developed a global learning inventory, which was largely completed in March 2011. That data was used to formulate plans to modify general education to meet both the goals of the AAC&U initiative as well as the 2015 strategic plan developed by the university. As part of the AAC&U requirements, the group developed five action plans to address five areas of concern considered to be crucial to the success of the project. These centered on Faculty Development, Coordination and Communication, Global Learning, Scientific Literacy, and Quantitative Literacy. The former two plans have been provided to the provost for further consideration. The committee is now working on pilot projects implementing the latter two literacies. The committee has also been participating in a related AAC&U project to develop a Global Learning Rubric for use by both our institution and others across the country. The action plans are in various stages of implementation. A grant request to the NSF is being developed to help fund the implementation of the scientific and quantitative literacies, and a progress report was due to the AAC&U at the end of February 2012.

APPENDICES:

# Appendix A: Original Cultural Foundations Curriculum Course Descriptions

CULF 1318 - Literature and Human Experience

Students will read, discuss, and write about an ethnically and/or culturally

diverse selection of fiction, poetry, drama, and belles lettres. They will

learn the characteristics of these major literary genres and become

familiar with some of the cultural conventions that both shape and are

shaped by works of literature. Students will be expected to become familiar with the various terms of literary criticism used in the analysis of poetry and fiction. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, as well as write several short papers. (To be reviewed along with the literature major in 07-08)

CULF 1319 - Understanding and Appreciating the Arts

This course will introduce students to a wide range of artistic expression,

including the visual, performing, and cinematic arts. Through

a variety of readings, lectures, and discussions, and by attending plays, exhibits, and films, students are exposed to the breadth and depth of the arts, from aesthetic principles and arts vocabulary to the role of criticism. This course explores the relationship of various art forms to each other, placing them in a historical and cultural context. Students also study one art form in depth, focusing on the immediate creative experience, while developing critical criteria for viewing and appreciating all art. (To be reviewed along with the art major in 07-08 )

CULF 1320 - The American Experience

American experience has varied with the gender, race, ethnic status and

social class of the participant. The purpose of this course is to examine

this diversity in experience throughout the country's history. The course

places individual and group experience within the social, economic, and

political context of various eras, exploring group differences in

experience and perspective as well as the ideals and values that define

American civic culture. The overall goal of this course is to develop an

historical understanding of the problems and strengths inherent in our

pluralistic society. (A sample syllabus appears in Appendix E)

CULF 2321 - American Dilemmas

This course uses the principles and methods of economics, sociology,

and political science to analyze current social problems. It is

complementary to "The American Experience" in that it continues the theme of social pluralism and consideration of social and political ideals as it

explores the problems and issues our society faces in the present. Class

discussions and assignments are structured to encourage students to

address the meaning of individual and public responsibility as well as to

define the common good. The importance of conflicting values in defining

social problems and their solutions is included. (A sample syllabus appears in Appendix F)

CULF 3330 - The Identity of the West

The course deals with major developments in the history of the West which

have made Western culture influential in the world. The course prepares students to deal with problems of conflict and confluence with non-Western

or third-world cultures in the 19th and 20th centuries. Special emphasis

is placed on the Age of Exploration and Neo-colonialism in order to better

prepare students for the next course in the sequence of Cultural

Foundations courses. Anthropological perspectives are integrated where

appropriate. (A sample syllabus appears in Appendix G)

CULF 3331 - Contemporary World Issues

The course includes an overview of crucial global issues. Each section will focus on critical issues affecting at least one non-western region (the Near East, the Far East, Africa or Latin American).Students analyze issues in cultural

context and use the disciplines of history, political science, sociology, and economics for an in-depth analysis. Each student will produce an analytic

paper. (A sample syllabus appears in Appendix H)

**Appendix B: Overview of the 1990-91 General Education Curriculum Revision**

**Curriculum Design**

The curriculum at St. Edward's University is heavily influenced by the institution's mission statement. In particular, the mission statement commits us to a balanced education which stresses critical and creative thinking, moral reasoning, communicating, problem solving and assuming social responsibility. We believe that the skills, knowledge and understanding our graduates derive from this education will enable them to make long-lasting contributions to a rapidly changing world. They will leave St. Edward's as productive, independent and open-minded members of society, committed to using their education to solve problems and improve the quality of human life. There are two general components of a St. Edward's education: a broad study of the liberal arts and an in-depth study of a major discipline selected by the student.

**General Education**

The general education component consists of 57 credit hours spanning all four years. At the core of this component is a series of courses, several of them interdisciplinary, called Cultural Foundations.

In the **freshman year**, students reflect upon their identity and their relationship to the rest of society in Freshman Studies. In this course, freshmen choose a section of Introduction to the Liberal Arts (FSTY 1310) which is linked to a writing class (FSTY 0307, 0308, 1311, or 1313 depending upon their English placement or transfer credits). Writing classes use small groups and workshop approaches to reflect upon and write about issues introduced in FSTY 1310. Students who have not transferred in college writing credit will complete a second writing course in their first year. In addition, College Mathematics, Computational Skills, and Oral Communication are recommended for freshmen.

In the **sophomore year**, students study American history and culture from two different perspectives. In the American Experience, they investigate American history from the viewpoint of racial and ethnic pluralism. In American Dilemmas, they employ the methods of economics, political science and other social sciences as they investigate the problems facing American society and as they formulate solutions to those problems. The sophomore year is an appropriate time to study the natural sciences, first in depth in a science of the student's choice and then in breadth in Science in Perspective.

In the **junior year**, students explore western civilization in the Identity of the West. They then investigate at least two contemporary cultures in separate modules of a course entitled Contemporary World Issues. These modules reflect the faculty's broad knowledge of a variety of cultures, ranging from the Far East to Western Europe to Latin America. Concurrent with these studies of cultures, students examine moral reasoning in a general ethics course or in an ethics course which is applied to their major area of study.

In addition to the courses already mentioned, each St. Edward's student is required to take at least six credit hours in a foreign language, three credit hours in philosophy and/or religious studies, and a minimum of one literature course and one course in the arts.

The general education curriculum culminates in the **Capstone Course**, taken after completion of 75 hours, in which students are required to investigate a controversial issue in society, analyze the different sides of that issue, propose a resolution to it, and communicate the results of the investigation both orally and in a major paper.

**General Policies**

1. Students entering St. Edward's University as first-semester freshmen must take **all starred courses** at St. Edward's. Transfer students must take at St. Edward's **each starred course** for which they have not completed substitute course(s) prior to their initial registration at St. Edward's. (For a list of transfer courses that satisfy the general education requirement, see page 12.)

2. Any general education course that is required for a major or minor may be used to satisfy both the major or minor requirement and the general education requirement.

3. Each of the following courses must be taken for a letter grade if used to satisfy a general education requirement: (1) the two English composition courses; (2) oral communication; (3) mathematics; (4) computational skills; (5) ethics; (6) Cultural Foundations (CULF) 1320, 2321, 3330, and 3331; and (7) Capstone Course 4360. Other General Education courses may be taken pass/no pass under the rules given on page 11.

**To fulfill the general education requirement, a minimum grade of C is required for English composition, mathematics, and computational skills.**

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Rhetoric and Composition I and II 6 hrs

College Mathematics 3 hrs

Computational Skills 3 hrs

Oral Communication 3 hrs

Foreign Language 6 hrs

21 hrs

CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

CULF 1318 Literature and Human Experience 3 hrs

CULF 1319 Understanding & Appreciating the Arts 3 hrs

CULF 1320 The American Experience 3 hrs

CULF 2321 American Dilemmas 3 hrs

CULF 3330 Identity of the West 3 hrs

CULF 3331 Contemporary World Issues 3 hrs

18 hrs

FOUNDATIONS FOR VALUES AND DECISIONS

FSTY 1310 Introduction to the Liberal Arts 3 hrs

Ethics 3 hrs

Religious Studies/Philosophy 3 hrs

SCIE 2320 Science in Perspective 3 hrs

Science in Depth 3 hrs

15 hrs

The Capstone Course 3 hrs

Total 57 hrs

The reasoning and communication skills and the understanding of society which these general studies develop are reinforced in each student's in-depth study of a major discipline.

Appendix C:

1. **CULF 3330 History and Evolution of Global Processes: Global Economics, Global Politics, and Cultural Issues in a Global Society.** This course focuses on the history of global economics, global politics, and cultural processes from the 16th to the 21st centuries. It will explore the evolution of their interrelationships in an increasingly interdependent world. Students must demonstrate an understanding of these issues in order to successfully complete the course. Students will have on- and/or off-campus curricular and co-curricular experiences that contribute to global understanding. These experiences will be documented on the students’ co-curricular transcripts.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO) #1**

Each section’s instructor will develop rubrics for evaluating short papers and/or exams on common reading assignments and a course project that evaluates a student’s ability to analyze differences and similarities of cultures in a historical and evolutionary context. [*Course Projects may include Research Papers, Portfolios, Multi-media Presentations, and Exams, or some combination of these.*]

During AY 07-08 each faculty member teaching CULF 3330 designed a final project and developed a rubric(s) for the project. The rubrics were all collected and discussed as part of the process of developing a list of acceptable rubrics for the course. See **Appendix B** for a sample rubric for CULF 3330 students understanding of the history and evolution of global processes.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO) #2**

Entries on the student’s Co-curricular Transcripts, plus instructor developed rubrics for evaluating entries in students’ reflective journals. [*NOTE: Every student will be required to participate in a minimum of two (2) co-curricular activities, with encouragement (e.g., extra-credit awards) to participate in as many as possible.*]