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A Study of General Education Curricula in Selected Small Colleges

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A STUDY OF GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULA IN SELECTED SMALL COLLEGES

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

Given the distinctiveness of small colleges, the primary purpose of this study was to gain a more complete understanding of general education curricula of selected small colleges in terms of the colleges' stated *goals,* their *process* of *developing* and *modifying,* and the *structure* and *content* of their present general education curricula. A second purpose was to propose a model for developing general education curricula.

Three research methods were employed: a review of related literature, an analysis of written institutional documents, and campus interviews. Two groups of small colleges, with enrollments of less than 2000, participated. Data from the first group of ten colleges, identified as exemplary based on a national survey, were collected from catalogs, mission statements, and responses to questions. Data from the second group, four Midwestern liberal arts colleges, were gathered from institutional documents and interviews. The intention of the study was not to compare the two groups, nor to contrast approaches to general education in small versus large institutions, but to combine the various data to develop a fuller understanding of current practices.

The data showed several common goals: developing student's learning skills and intellectual curiosity, increasing students' knowledge of the liberal arts, and preparing them for service to society. Other stated goals were to provide students with broad academic exposure, encourage their aesthetic appreciations, and develop their values and acceptance of cultural diversity.

The study revealed many similarities in the structure and content of

general education and in the total number of required general education credits. All but two curricula studied have a restricted distribution type of general education structure. Coursework in advanced learning skills, the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences is required by all of the institutions studied.

Publishing a new catalog or preparing for an accreditation visit may prompt a general education review. A bottom-up process of revision is common: suggestions are initiated by faculty and/or academic departments; recommendations go to the college's Curriculum Committee; and final approval is granted by the full faculty.

The model focuses on three significant areas in general education and reflects a consistency in the data.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Much of the recent attention focused on higher education reflects a concern about general education. During the 1960s and 1970s, the growth in professional education resulted in an attitude that general education courses were those classes one had "to get out of the way" before taking courses directed towards a particular vocation. Students often would pick and choose a smattering of courses from various academic disciplines to acquire the necessary credits for graduation. Beginning in the late 1970s, this distribution system of general education resulted in a wave of criticism.

A 1977 report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching entitled Missions of the College Curriculum focused on the general education component of the undergraduate curriculum and bluntly called it "a disaster area." Harvard University's 1977 Report on the Core Curriculum addressed the weaknesses of its general education curriculum. The series of reports and studies continued during the 1980s, as William Bennett's To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education, Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind, E. D. Hirsch's Cultural Literacy, and Ernest L. Boyer's College: The Undergraduate Experience in America added to the chorus of concern.

Consequently, many institutions of higher learning have reviewed the goals and significance of their general education programs. This revival of interest in the general education part of the college curriculum has resulted in widespread reform efforts. The movement to strengthen undergraduate general education curricula has resulted in increased requirements and a

renewed emphasis on the development of fundamental skills, especially in communication and critical thinking. Some institutions have created new curricular frameworks, such as a core curriculum or an integrated studies program. Jerry Gaff (1988) indicates that all types of institutions of higher learning have been affected by this reform movement during the past decade.

However, most of the recent discussion of general education reform makes no specific mention of the nearly one fourth of all postsecondary institutions that have enrollments of 2000 or less. It should be recognized that there are many real differences between large and small institutions of higher education. The small college often must deal with some real limitations. A smaller campus may likely have budget and facility limitations, as well as fewer academic programs.

The limited personnel of the small college is a major factor in general education. A smaller faculty means that in a small college senior faculty members are likely to teach more broadly in their academic areas. This would include teaching both lower division courses and general education courses. While much of the general education teaching load in larger institutions is often carried by graduate teaching assistants and beginning faculty members, faculty members in the small college most likely see undergraduate teaching, rather than research, graduate students, or administrative involvements, as their first professional priority. Therefore, small colleges often expect their general education faculty to become more experienced, stable, and influential in shaping general education curriculum than tends to be the case of large research universities.

Faculty members in the small college are also less academically isolated. The smallness of a college often results in faculty members knowing and teaching more students outside their academic areas through general

education courses; it also encourages them to work more closely with professors in other departments. For example, in smaller colleges the entire faculty often serves the function of the Faculty Senate found in larger institutions.

Although small colleges may have limited faculty, majors, courses, and activities, their smallness often gives general education a position of greater prominence. Some small colleges see undergraduate study in the liberal arts as their specialty. Such a sense of self is not likely to be the driving purpose of larger institutions, especially comprehensive or research universities. Many small colleges, especially private liberal arts colleges, have traditionally been perceived as successfully balancing liberal education with technical competence. They also are often believed to better nurture students' development of values and interpersonal skills because of their strong sense of purpose and community. This shared sense of mission can bring together a more homogeneous faculty and student body than might be found in a larger institution.

Although small colleges often imitate the trends of larger institutions, their size is likely to be a significant factor in general education curricula. Since they usually have fewer academic majors and courses, small colleges have fewer courses to include in a wide distribution of general education options, such as is commonly found in larger institutions. Thus, the limitations imposed by smallness often force a greater focus on the goals, structure, and content of general education curricula. The liberal arts tradition and clear sense of mission found in many small colleges may illustrate the kind of commitment to general education that has recently become the focus of concern and reform in larger institutions. Therefore, it is

recognized that the uniqueness of small colleges impacts their general education curricula.

Purpose of the Study

Given the distinctiveness of small colleges, the primary purpose of this study is to gain a more complete understanding of general education curricula of selected, small colleges in terms of: the colleges' stated *goals* of general education; their *process* of *developing* and *modifying* general education curricula; and the *structure* and *content* of their present general education curricula. A second purpose is to create a proposed model for developing general education curriculum in small colleges. This proposed model will be based on the integration and analysis of the data obtained from three distinct sources as enumerated in the following paragraph.

Methodology of the Study

Three methods of examining the general education curricula of small colleges will be used in this study:

1. A review of the literature on general education.
2. An analysis of current general education practices as indicated in the catalogs of selected exemplary small colleges.
3. Catalogs and written materials from four small colleges in the Midwest, combined with on-site interviews and observations of the current practices in general education in these four colleges. These interviews and observations are intended to

provide a more in-depth understanding of actual general education practices in small colleges.

Information gleaned from the on-site observations and interviews is intended to supplement the data gathered from the written documents and the review of the literature. Thus, the data gathered by each of these three methods is intended to contribute a fuller understanding of the current status of general education in selected small colleges.

Consequently, there is no intention in the methodology of comparing the exemplary group of small colleges with the area group of small colleges. Neither is it the intention of this study to compare the general education curricula of small colleges with general education in a more comprehensive sense. Also, this methodology is not intended to compare the general education curricula of small colleges with that of larger institutions.

Significance of the Study

Ninety-five percent of all four-year colleges require some form of general education (Boyer, 1987). Over the past decade there have been various efforts to strengthen this component of the undergraduate curriculum. However, very little research on general education reform has been specifically directed to small colleges with enrollments of 2000 or less. This study is significant as an addition to the minimal amount of literature on the general education curricula in small colleges. It also provides a model for small colleges to use in reviewing their general education programs.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to the following:

1. Four midwestern, four-year undergraduate private and public institutions in two states, which have noncompetitive or slightly competitive enrollments of between 680 and 1100.
2. Data gathered from written documents and interviews with the chief academic officer and three full-time faculty, who teach general education courses, in each of these four participating area colleges.
3. Ten exemplary colleges from different states across the nation which have reputations for excellence in their liberal arts curricula and have moderately to very competitive enrollments of between 700 and 2000. The exemplary colleges were determined by having been named in a national survey as having high-quality undergraduate academic programs.
4. Data gathered from written documents and responses to questions received from the exemplary colleges.

Definitions

The following definitions were used for this study:

General education: General education is the "breadth" component of the undergraduate curriculum, which usually comprises from one third to one half of a student's program of study for a baccalaureate degree. It consists of required coursework in several subject areas which provide a particular college's common learning experience of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

General education is complementary to, but different in emphasis and approach from, special training for a job, for a profession, or for scholarship in a particular field of knowledge. In this paper, the term "general education" is preferred over "liberal education" because it is most often utilized in college catalogs in reference to the coursework under consideration; however, in citing the literature, the terminology will vary with the citation.

Liberal education: Although commonly used as a synonym for general education, educational purists note a definitional difference. In its strictest sense, liberal education refers to any education that liberates the human spirit and mind, but it has specifically been tied to the common academic heritage of earlier European universities which emphasized the humanizing effects of the liberal arts and other scholarly disciplines.

Small colleges: Small colleges are four-year colleges with enrollments of less than 2000, that have required general education or liberal-arts components in their curricula, but do not grant graduate degrees.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

> General education should become the very center of intellectual life for both beginning and experienced members of the academic community--a common ground of inquiry that binds us together in shared commitment to social and personal values and the role of higher education in cultivating them (Spear, 1989, p. 390).

Discussion of the liberal arts as an educational ideal can be traced to the ancient Greeks and the European Renaissance. From these time-honored beginnings evolved the kind of education that would elevate the human spirit and express the values of Western civilization. An image of an educated person was thus created. These early influences have shaped the concepts and practices related to American higher education from colonial times to the present. The many different, and occasionally conflicting, definitions and purposes attributed to general education are largely a consequence of its historical evolution.

The History of General Education

The Evolution of General Education

In New England, the American colonists founded Harvard College for the purpose of providing the church with literate clergymen and the community with capable leadership. However, as the colonial population grew and colonial communities diversified, colleges were expected to train graduates for other vocations. By the end of the eighteenth century, only 20

percent of all college graduates were bound for the clergy (Miller, 1988). However, in Virginia, the College of William and Mary was established for the education of aristocrats and civic leaders. As the first college in America to have a Royal Charter, some would argue that it re-created the Cambridge/Oxford model, transplanting the views of liberal learning to this continent.

The prescribed curriculum of these first American colleges followed the European university model, which emphasized the medieval tradition of the liberal arts. This basic curriculum usually consisted of courses in logic, religion, rhetoric, mathematics, classical languages, and philosophy. Students in colonial colleges had very little choice in their curriculum. As the college clientele expanded, however, so did the curriculum. Occupational and applied education were added to accommodate the widening vocational interests of students.

For example, as early as 1756 classical studies constituted only one-third of the curriculum at the College of Philadelphia. Although all students were required to improve their skills in oral and written English as part of applied education, much of the curriculum was directed to occupational learning in such areas as agriculture, surveying, and navigation. Similarly, Jefferson's proposed curriculum for the University of Virginia allowed students to select from eight fields of study, each one having its own prescribed course of study (Johnson & Moen, 1980).

The move towards vocational specialization in the college curriculum was somewhat forestalled by the Yale Report of 1828, which articulated a strong defense for the classical curriculum. The Yale faculty argued that all liberally educated persons should be acquainted with certain branches of knowledge which would provide a common foundation for all professions

and vocations. The Report did not reject the need for additional studies that would prepare students for particular specializations, but believed that these courses should follow the completion of a liberal arts curriculum designed to train the mind and prepare citizens (Miller, 1988).

As American society changed, colleges have continually been expected to respond to the changing demands and needs of the students enrolled in them. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the classical curriculum was challenged even more by diversity, and the goals of higher education were expanded to prepare different people for many different walks of life. The question posed by Herbert Spencer's 1859 essay, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", became the focus of much curricular debate (Kliebard, 1988). After the Civil War, science and industry assumed a growing role in society, which resulted in a more utilitarian curriculum. The aristocratic image of a liberal education devised for those who had the wealth and leisure to attend college was replaced by a new image that better reflected the times.

This reshaping of the curriculum of American higher education away from the liberal arts was influenced by several specific developments in the late nineteenth century. In 1862 the Morrill Act provided federal funds for the establishment of a Land Grant College in every state. In these institutions the teaching of occupational skills would be emphasized more than the study of the liberal arts. During this same time, German universities were revising their undergraduate curricula to include more technical and professional subjects. As this German influence came to the United States, it also brought the idea of scientific research as a valued part of academe. One of the results of this new stress on research was the fragmentation of the university curriculum into specialized academic departments.

Another significant factor that weakened the liberal arts emphasis in American colleges was the introduction of the elective system at Harvard University. When Charles Eliot became president of Harvard in 1869, he established a system of undergraduate study that allowed individual students to determine their own course of study. This system of free choice of courses fit well with the mood of progress in a democratic society and replaced the earlier curriculum which had been more tightly structured (Miller, 1988).

The Emergence of General Education

The earliest known use of the term, "general education," is in an 1829 article written by A. S. Packard of Bowdoin College, in which he defended the common classical curriculum as a necessary foundation for all professions (Johnson & Moen, 1980). Other terms such as "general training," "general studies," and "general culture" frequently appear in the literature of higher education at the turn of this century. Although there were differences regarding the specifics of the subject matter referred to in these terms, there was a consensus that something in the area of common learning was missing in the educational practice of the time (Thomas, 1962). This renewed interest in general education began to develop at the end of the nineteenth century because of perceived abuses of the free elective system, which was seen by critics as allowing students to receive an undergraduate degree without completing a balanced program of study. From this reform movement came two significant influences in general education. The first innovation was the "distribution" requirement system which was introduced in 1909 by Harvard president A. Lawrence Lowell. This created an undergraduate curriculum that was more prescriptive in that it required students to select courses from particular subject areas outside their major.

This distributional scheme was further developed in the 1920s by Rober' Morris Ogden at Cornell, who reorganized the undergraduate curriculum to restore "general training" in response to the threat of vocationalism. The required general education courses in this program focused on five different academic divisions and constituted half of a student's undergraduate program. At about the same time, a similar curriculum was developed at Reed College. Although the distribution plan did give assurance of greater breadth of coursework, as compared with the free elective system, it often obliged non-majors to take courses that were designed for those who planned to concentrate in a given field of study (Thomas, 1962).

This criticism lead to the survey course, the second addition to general education during this period. The invention of the survey course is credited to President Alexander Meiklejohn of Amherst College in 1914. The rationale for the survey course was to provide students with an introductory overview of an academic discipline (Levine, 1978). Although survey courses have been criticized for being too superficial, they have continued to be a part of many general education programs.

"The decade from 1920 to 1930 was one of the most important in the history of higher education in America" (Thomas, 1962, p. 69). During this time several well-known general education programs were created. Some of the developments initiated at this time have continued to the present; whereas, others were experimental programs that were temporary, but long lasting in their influence. One of the curricular innovations that has had an unbroken history is Columbia University's Contemporary Civiliza..on course begun in 1919. The distinctive feature of the Columbia course is that it was constructed around actual problems in contemporary society, beginning with

issues of war surrounding World War I. It was a course required of all freshmen and taught by faculty from various academic areas: history, philosophy, economics and government. The enthusiasm for this course among the Columbia faculty led to the development of a similarly designed second year course which dealt with the philosophical-historical tradition of Western Europe (Levine, 1978).

Another curricular invention that has continued is the Honors Program begun at Swarthmore in 1921; it presented an alternative to both the free elective and the distribution systems. Developed under the leadership of President Frank Aydelotte, the Honors Program allowed highly qualified students to individually explore and research topics in depth. Levine (1978) notes that this program contributed much towards creating Swarthmore's reputation for academic excellence. By World War II, honors programs were adopted at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia.

Some of the proposals for curricular change in general education went far beyond the planning of a single course or alternative program. For example, Alexander Meiklejohn's ideas and work in developing the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin combined components of the classical liberal arts curriculum with an emphasis on helping students learn to deal with the activities of contemporary living. Meiklejohn's Experimental College began operation in 1927. In addition to its integrated curriculum and specially recruited faculty, new forms of instruction were implemented. These included small group meetings for informal talks and questions, individual student conferences and a pervasive emphasis upon writing. The Experimental College ended in 1932 as a result of a combination of factors: the college had been branded radical by rumor and the local press, there was a predominance of out-of-state students, and the faculty were

reluctant to support a program initiated by an outsider, Meiklejohn (Miller, 1988). Even though the Experimental College died, many of Meiklejohn's ideas about undergraduate curriculum have persisted and have been periodically resurrected.

In the late 1920s, another effort to reestablish a strong emphasis on the liberal arts was begun at the University of Chicago. The Chicago College Program, also known as "the College" and the "Hutchins College," was begun in 1928 under the leadership of President Ernest Burton and Dean C. S. Boucher. It was further developed and popularized in the 1930s and 1940s by the charisma of Chancellor Robert Maynard Hutchins. The Chicago College provided a self-contained undergraduate college that operated without interference from vocationalism. It provided a four-year curriculum in general education which lead to a bachelor's degree. Although the curriculum underwent continual change over the years, there were several key elements that were unique in this approach to general education. These include the admission of students who had completed their junior year of high school, a common curriculum, comprehensive examinations, interdisciplinary courses, and a college faculty distinct from that of the graduate school (Ward, 1989).

By the 1950s the Chicago College had become very different and isolated from the rest of the university and was criticized by graduate schools that demanded disciplinary training as well as general education. Declining enrollment and the departure of Hutchins added further pressure to dismantle the Chicago College (Ward, 1989). However, the prestige of this experiment at the University of Chicago had captured much attention and parts of the Chicago plan have been replicated in various colleges across the country. For example, the University of Minnesota, under the leadership of

Lotus Delta Coffman, created its own General College in 1932, borrowing ideas from the Chicago College. These included courses without credits and comprehensive examinations. Another example is St. Johns College (Annapolis, Maryland, and Sante Fe, New Mexico), which adopted its Great Books program in 1937, a direct descendant of the Chicago plan (Miller, 1988).

Another phase of reform in the history of general education occurred after World War II, when many colleges were reassessing their undergraduate programs as they related to a democratic society. In 1945 Harvard College published a report based on two years of research by a specially appointed committee devoted to the study of general education. This report was entitled "General Education in a Free Society" and informally called the "Redbook." This 267-page report offered a theory of general education that identified it as distinctly different from education for specialization. General education, as defined by the committee, is "education for an informed and responsible life in our society [that] has chiefly to do with . . . the question of common standards and common purposes" (quoted in Miller, 1988, p.135).

The "Redbook" presented a clear rationale for general education as a means of developing the whole person, affectively as well as intellectually. It also recommended the subjects that high school students should take in preparation for college. The specific general education program encouraged by the "Redbook" was in sharp contrast with the earlier Harvard distribution system. It required that all students take specific courses in the humanities and social studies and provided fewer options in the natural sciences. The committee also recommended that English composition be a requirement for all students. Administration of this general education plan was to the responsibility of a new Committee on General Education chaired by the dean of the faculty (Levine, 1978).

Miller (1988) notes that the new Harvard curriculum tried to balance three forces: tradition, change and specialization. Although it had its problems and critics, the "Redbook" was widely read and the subsequent Harvard program has become a legend in American higher education. Ironically, the Harvard faculty initially rejected the proposals, yet variations of the Harvard plan were adopted all across the country. Support for the "Redbook" also included an enthusiastic endorsement by President Truman's Commission on Higher Education for Democracy (Boyer & Levine, 1981). Consequently, the goals of general education found a nome in all institutions of higher education, including those that were research-oriented. "Harvard's program was popularly identified as general education by many academics" (Miller, 1988, p. 139).

The Aims and Purposes of General Education

Influences of Social Forces

A careful look at the development of liberal and general education involves more than recognizing the various curricula changes that emerged, such as required cores, distribution programs, and alternative colleges. Close scrutiny of the changes in general education reveals a variety of social forces which have stimulated curricular responses. Rothblatt (1988) notes that the changes in general education during the twentieth century have often been in the form of "correctives" whose aim has been "to mitigate the effects of some perceived national flaw or personal failing, to avert a catastrophe or to promote a cause" (p. 24). Because society is in constant flux, no antidote offered by a particular approach to general education lasted very long. As new diagnoses of the ills of society have appeared, so have new correctives.

Ernest Boyer and Arthur Levine, in their 1981 Carnegie Foundation Essay entitled, A Quest for Common Learning: The Aims of General Education, refer to general education as the "spare room" of American higher education. As such, general education has been variously filled with whatever society sees as most needed at a given time. They identify three specific time periods in the twentieth century when interest and attention on general education have been revived. Each general education revival reflected the events of the time and resulted in reforms or correctives in response.

The first revival occurred during the 1920s, at the end of World War I, when the nation was looking for a time of quiet and healing. The reforms during this period included the introduction of Alexander Meiklejohn's survey course and the development of various well known experimental colleges. Required freshman interdisciplinary courses such as Columbia's "Contemporary Civilization" became common in campuses all over the country. John Dewey's ideas of Progressivism in teaching, as well as his emphasis on civic responsibility, gained acceptance. These efforts combined to "do battle with those academic bugaboos vocationalism, overspecialization, and the elective curriculum" (Boyer & Levine, 1981, p. 15). However, this revived interest in reforming general education quickly declined with the beginning of the Great Depression, which caused college enrollments to decline. Americans became more focused on their need for jobs.

The second general education revival of this century also came after a world war. Boyer and Levine (1981) note that World War II had a very sobering effect on many academics. Germany had long been looked to as a center of scholarship, yet had given birth to the barbarism and atrocities of Nazism. Other concerns were focused on the Cold War struggle between the

Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the awesome threat of the atomic bomb. In response to these concerns and dangers, the rallying cry was for the ideals of democracy to be reaffirmed. Consequently, general education programs, most of which were patterned after the Harvard "Redbook," were designed to train citizens for public responsibility and also assist veterans and immigrants into American life.

The second renewed emphasis in general education ended abruptly with the launching of the Soviet space satellite Sputnik in 1957. This event shocked America and was interpreted as an indication of Soviet superiority in science and technology. The response was to quickly create a much greater educational emphasis on science. Programs for the gifted were also given new support, and in some cases these students were allowed to by-pass general education requirements in an attempt to more quickly have the scientists needed to compete with the Soviets.

During this time, one notable voice which tried to draw attention to the continued need for general education was that of Daniel Bell at Columbia University. His 1966 report entitled The Reforming of General Education compared the Columbia curriculum with those at the University of Chicago and at Harvard. On the basis of his findings, he proposed a new general education program for Columbia that stressed coherence and emphasized study in the humanities and history. His recommendations were opposed by many at Columbia, especially those from the natural sciences and students. Consequently, his proposals were not adopted (Levine, 1988).

Writing in 1981, Boyer and Levine note the increase in scholarly articles dealing with general education in the 1970s and see the 1980s as the third revival of general education in this century. This time general education is called upon to correct several social ills. For example, the

Watergate trauma highlighted the need for moral and ethical training. Another concern is the need to move away from the self-absorption of the 1970s and encourage students to gain a global perspective. The decline in academic performance and growth of remedial education at the college level has led to a new general education emphasis in the basic skills of language and mathematics.

Based on two major studies conducted by the Carnegie Foundation, Boyer and Levine (1981) studied the literature of each of the three general education revivals. An analysis of this literature showed the historical purposes of general education during each era. Of the fifty various purposes of general education identified, fourteen were noted as part of the first revival, twenty-one as part of the second, and fifteen as part of the third. A comparison of the three groups of stated goals revealed a common pattern of promoting social integration and combating social disintegration. Boyer and Levine (1981) summarize their findings and conclude:

> We were also impressed by the continuity from revival to revival. All three general education movements seem to have appeared at times when a common set of values was promoted--the preservation of democracy, the sharing of citizen responsibility, the commitment to ethical and moral behavior, the enhancement of global perspectives, and the integration of diverse groups into the larger society. They also sought to eliminate a common set of perceived ills--overspecialization, free electives, vocationalism, unethical conduct, selfishness, and anti-democratic behavior. The three revivals moved in the direction of community, and away from fragmentation. The emphasis appeared consistently to be on shared values, shared

> heritage, shared responsibilities, shared governance, and a shared world vision. (p. 58)

Influences of Educational Philosophy

In addition to the various social forces that have altered the aims and purposes of general education, changes in the goals of general education have also come from educational leaders and various schools of educational philosophy. Educational philosophers have not always seen eye to eye on the aims of American higher education. The colonial consensus that the primary purpose of college was to prepare church and civic leaders has long since been replaced with wide disagreement regarding the role and responsibilities of institutions of higher learning. The thinking and influence of various educational philosophers have impacted the changes both in higher education as a whole and general education in particular. Levine (1978) identifies seven key contributors to the philosophy of the modern university: John Cardinal Newman, John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Thorstein Veblen, Abraham Flexner, Robert Hutchins, and Clark Kerr. Each offers a particular vision of the aims of higher education in America and the role of the undergraduate curriculum in achieving these goals.

Other discussions of the philosophical underpinnings of higher education and general education group various leaders together into several schools of thought in educational philosophy. For example, Jerry Gaff (1988a) sees the debate about general education curricula as essentially springing from the differences of four distinctive philosophies of general education.

The first approach is referred to by Gaff as idealism; it embodies the views of John Henry (Cardinal) Newman, who saw the function of the university to prepare students for life through the study of the liberal arts,

especially religion and literature. Interpreters of this philosophy of general education primarily emphasize the study of the humanities and add some additional coursework in science and technology as approached by the non-scientist. Vocational studies and research would not be given a significant role in the university.

Progressivism is another school of educational philosophy that has impacted thinking about general education. The views of Alfred North Whitehead and John Dewey largely shaped this perspective. Whitehead did not differentiate between general and specialized knowledge and argued that education should be useful and relevant to everyday life. Dewey's philosophy was student centered and emphasized the scientific method of inquiry as a way of approaching the problems of life. The progressive curriculum is practical in that it allows students to determine the direction of their education. Instructors serve primarily as guides who aid students in developing modes of thought and learning skills.

Levine (1988) notes that another of the progressives, William Heard Kilpatrick, was responsible for the development of the progressive curricula in the experimental colleges, such as Bennington where he served as a consultant. Kilpatrick is also recognized as the originator of the project method of teaching as an effective way to stimulate student growth. Another influence of the progressives can be seen in the measurement movement. Like Dewey and Kilpatrick, Edward L. Thorndike was at Teachers College of Columbia University in the 1920s and 1930s. Thorndike was influenced by Dewey's emphasis on science and contributed greatly to the development and use of achievement and intelligence tests as a means of measuring learning progress and potential (Miller, 1988).

A third philosophical perspective in general education is closely identified with the views and influence of Robert Maynard Hutchins. This school of thought as applied to college general education curricula is identified by Gaff (1988a) as essentialism and by Levine (1978) as perennialism. Based on the assumption that people are all alike and have the same educational needs, Hutchins proposed that a core of knowledge be taught to all undergraduates as a means of training their intellects. This goal could best be accomplished by a prescribed study of the greatest books of the Western world. Although the creation of "the College" at the University of Chicago was one academic experiment based on this view of studying the classics, the "Great Books" program, a curriculum consisting of the required study of 120 great books, at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a more complete implementation of Hutchins' philosophy.

A leading contemporary proponent of this philosophy of general education is identified by Gaff (1988a) as Ernest Boyer, who, with his co-authors Martin Kaplan (1977) and Arthur Levine (1981), support the idea of a common core curriculum for all undergraduates. The curriculum proposed by Boyer and Levine (1981) advocates an interdisciplinary thematic approach to subjects common to all people. Also supporting the notion that general education should concentrate on an essential core of knowledge are E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987) and Allan Bloom (1987).

The fourth philosophy of general education, as identified by Gaff (1988a), is pragmatism. Pragmatism is often seen as a uniquely American philosophy; some have associated it with the realities of the American frontier experience of the late nineteenth century as described by Frederick Jackson Turner, who wrote of how American institutions were so adept at

adjusting to changing times. Miller (1988) also sees pragmatism as being influenced by the growth of Darwinism, which encouraged the development of science and technology as a new frontier. The philosophy of pragmatism asserted that the future of society could be changed and, therefore, contributed to a general revolt against the formalism that pervaded Western culture at the turn of the century. Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George S. Counts are mentioned by Miller (1988) as contributors to the development of American pragmatism.

However, Gaff (1988) notes that it is in Clark Kerr that this philosophical perspective is personified. As "the philosopher of the modern university" Kerr's concept of institutions of higher education differs considerably from other perspectives. While Newman, Hutchins and other educational philosophers view the ideal general education program as a unified course of study for all students, Kerr champions diversity. He sees the university as a multiversity, a place of academic pluralism and complexity. By embodying vocationalism, research, and classical studies, the multiversity offers learning opportunities for everyone, making his a very pragmatic approach to contemporary American higher education. As chairman of the Carnegie Commission and Council of Higher Education, Kerr encouraged a renewed emphasis on preparing teachers of general education at the undergraduate level.

The varied views of the idealists, progressivists, essentialists, and pragmatists, both past and present, continue to influence today's perspectives and practices of general education. In spite of their many differences, there is a strong consensus that supports general education as part of the undergraduate curriculum. Gaff (1988a) summarizes those goals in general education that are accepted by all perspectives:

In its broadest terms, general education:

- is rooted in the liberal tradition and involves study of the basic liberal arts and sciences;
- stresses breadth and provides students with familiarity with various branches of human understanding as well as the methodologies and languages particular to different bodies of knowledge;
- strives to foster integration, synthesis, and connectedness of knowledge rather than discrete bits of specialized information;
- encourages the understanding and appreciation of one's heritage as well as respect for other peoples and cultures;
- includes an examination of values--both those relevant to current controversial issues and those implicit in a discipline's methodology;
- prizes a common educational experience for at least part of the college years;
- requires the mastery of the linguistic, analytic, critical, and computational skills necessary for lifelong learning; and
- fosters the development of personal qualities, such as tolerance of ambiguity, empathy for persons with different values, and an expanded view of self. (pp. 7-8)

The Structure and Content of General Education

Influence of Vocationalism

With the exception of the 1828 Yale Report, most of the significant influences in American higher education during the nineteenth century

tended to erode the liberal arts tradition. The utilitarian nature of the American people and the expansion of the nation demanded a greater emphasis on vocationalism. This trend was assisted by the Morrill Act of 1862 and the growth of research oriented graduate schools, such as the one opened by Johns Hopkins in 1876. As has been noted, there were attempts to return to the liberal arts tradition during the early years of the twentieth century and again following World War II.

By the 1960s, however, the influence of the 1945 Harvard "Redbook" had greatly declined. Through its financial assistance to veterans during the 1950s, the federal government created new educational opportunities for many. This democratization of higher education continued during the 1960s, when the traditional liberal arts education was confronted by other new social objectives. As access to colleges and universities widened, the numbers and diversity of students changed drastically. Academic programs that were designed for smaller, homogeneous student bodies no longer met the needs of large, complex public institutions. Most students wanted an academic program that would lead to a good paying job and desired to choose their own courses of study. The student protests of the 1960s led to the relaxation or abandonment of many requirements. Consequently, general education became poorly defined, and its curriculum became greatly diluted (McInnes, 1982).

The growth of professional education between 1968 and 1977 is significant. McInnes (1982) notes that in 1968 liberal academic subjects constituted 51% of the undergraduate curriculum and vocational disciplines accounted for 49%, but by 1977 this distribution was reversed. Only 42% of the curriculum was academic and 58% was professional. Professional practitioners, who often influenced professional access, contributed to the

dominance of vocationalism. The popularity of professional education has continued as new professions and semi-professions have gained acceptance. For example, in 1980 business was the major of nearly 25% of the graduates in the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities, which traditionally have had a strong liberal arts focus.

In addition to the continued tension between career education and liberal education, the wide array of institutions of higher learning has forced new thinking about general education. Higher education has become more complicated due to the growth of community colleges, technical schools and external degree programs. The diversity of students has greatly increased, with larger numbers of women, ethnic minorities, older adults, part-time, poorly prepared and handicapped students enrolled in colleges and universities of all types. Because of the varied cultural backgrounds of students, a greater interest in non-Western cultures has developed. Each of these changes has had a significant impact on general education curricula. Since no single program of general education is adequate to meet the needs of such complexity in higher education, many different approaches to general education were developed (Gaff, 1980).

Types of Structure in General Education Curricula

Boyer (1988) reports that 95% of colleges and universities have some form of general education as shown by a 1985 Carnegie Survey of General Education. However, there are many differences in both the structure and the content of general education curricula. The three main organizational patterns for general education curricula can be placed on a continuum ranging from students having no choice to having complete choice of courses. Levine (1978) reports that a 1976 Carnegie Study of college catalogs

revealed that 10% of all institutions have the most restrictive type of general education curriculum, which is often referred to as a common core. This is a configuration of courses required for all students, which frequently are interdisciplinary. At the opposite end of the continuum is the form of general education curriculum known as free electives. This approach allows students to choose any or no general educational coursework. This is used by only a few schools, about 6% according to the 1976 Carnegie Study.

Between the core curricula and the free elective curricula is a third type of general education: the distribution requirement curricula. It is the most common form of general education, used by approximately 84% of colleges and universities. This type of general education curriculum is designed to insure that students take a minimum number of courses or credits in specified academic areas. The degree of structure given to distribution requirements can vary considerably. Some colleges have tightly prescribed distribution requirements that provide students with a limited number of choices in each designated area. At the other end of the spectrum are those institutions that take a "smorgasbord" approach to distribution requirements. They require few, if any, specified courses, which allows students to freely choose from the available courses in each required area. For example, Cheney (1989) reports that at one Midwestern university students choose from almost 900 different courses to meet the general education requirements.

Not only were most students given more choices through the distribution system, the total number of required general education credits was reduced during the 1960s and 1970s. Levine (1978) relates the findings of a 1976 study that indicated that between 1967 and 1974 the mean proportion of general education requirements in four-year degree programs declined from 43.1% to 33.5%. Although this decrease can be largely attributed to the growth

of careerism and the response to the social changes of the time, Gaff (1980) notes that faculty influence also contributed to the reduction of general education requirements.

Many faculty members were more interested in advancing the specialties of their own departments than developing general education courses for nonmajors. A common attitude on the part of both students and faculty was to "get general education out of the way," as if this part of the undergraduate curriculum were an impediment "to *particular* education, or *real* education, or *good* education or *important* education" (Wee, 1987, p. 454). While academe continued to give considerable lip service to the merits of general education, the working position of many faculty members was that general education was a traditional ideal to be tolerated.

Content Areas in General Education Curricula

Although general education programs vary from college to college, there are three general content areas in general education: advanced learning skills, field distribution subjects, and general understanding courses. Advanced learning skills include those tools that students need to be successful in college. English composition is the most common general education subject and is required in about 90% of institutions (Suniewick & El-Khawas, 1985). Other courses in this category are oral communication, mathematics, foreign language, and physical education. The three broad areas that are usually included in the field distribution area are the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. General understanding courses are intended to provide students with a broader learning experience. Study of the fine arts and religion are the most common courses in this content area.

In 1984 a comprehensive survey of institutions of various types and sizes was conducted by the Higher Education Panel and funded by the National Science Foundation, the U. S. Department of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The findings of this study are discussed by Nancy Suniewick and Elaine El-Khawas (1985) in a report entitled General Education Requirements in the Humanities. It shows that an average of 45 semester hours of general education were required out of a total of 125 hours needed for graduation. Thus, about a third of the total graduation credits involved general education. However, many doctoral universities required fewer general education credits, about one-quarter or less. The study also shows that in 1984-85 an average of three credit hours more in general education were required as compared with 1979-80.

The 1985 report by Suniewick and El-Khawas also included information regarding the minimum number of credit hours required in twelve academic areas. Of the three types of institutions included in the study (doctorate, comprehensive, and baccalaureate) it was noted that baccalaureate colleges differed from the other types by having more uniformity in their general education requirements. Also, as a group, they more commonly required coursework in literature, world civilization, mathematics and the arts. Eighty-eight percent of baccalaureate colleges required all students to take English composition, with five credits as the average number required. Coursework in the social sciences was required of all students in over 86% of the baccalaureate institutions surveyed, with an average of eight required credits. Students were required to take an average of seven credits in the natural sciences and physical sciences area in 71% of the baccalaureate colleges. Fifty percent of these schools required all students to study mathematics, with four credits as the average requirement (p. 8).

The above findings were similar to those from a 1985 Carnegie Foundation Survey of General Education as reported in Change. This survey of chief academic officers at 1,310 four-year institutions indicated that 60% of them were reviewing and revising their basic educational requirements. About 30% of this group of administrators also indicated that the broad divisional requirements in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences have increased since 1970. Physical education and foreign language requirements in the surveyed institutions decreased by more than one-fifth. Requirements in computer literacy had grown significantly during this fifteen year period ("General Education," 1985).

Reforms During the 1980s

The increase in general education requirements noted in the report of the 1985 Carnegie survey reflects some of the concerns about general education that precipitated the third revival of general education in this century. One of the first voices in this regard can be found in a 1975 collection of critical commentaries published from a 1973 national conference held at Rockefeller University, New York City. In his introduction to this collection, editor Sidney Hook speaks of the "curricular chaos that prevails in our colleges today" and notes that "students themselves are beginning to reject the curricular pablum and jello they are being offered." He appeals to all institutions of higher education to engage in self-assessment of their educational goals and practices (p. xi-xiii).

Although earlier literature in the 1970s noted the neglect of the general education component in the undergraduate curriculum, both Zingg (1987) and Gaff (1988b) identify the beginnings of the third significant reform movement in general education with the year 1977 and the publication of

Missions of the College Curriculum by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This report bluntly labeled general education a "disaster area" and declared that "No curricular concept is as central to the endeavors of the American college as general education, and none is so exasperatingly beyond the reach of general consensus and understanding" (p. 164).

Numerous recommendations for improving general education were made in the 1977 Carnegie report. These included requiring students to develop greater competence in the common learning skills subjects, especially English composition and mathematics. The report denounced the fragmentation of general education as a result of too many distribution options, saying, "It may well be that a little bit of distribution, well planned and presented, is a good and useful thing but that a lot of it left to chance and whim is useless or worse" (p. 172). It not only called for fewer choices within the areas of distribution requirements but suggested that introduction courses for nonmajors in the various subject fields be developed.

The report also made a strong appeal for integrative learning experiences that would enable students to overcome the incoherence of the distribution components in the general education curriculum. The use of integrated themes, which would draw from various subject areas, was advocated as a means of accomplishing this goal. The timing of general education was also clearly addressed. Rather than expect students to complete their general education courses during the first two years of college, the 1977 Carnegie report recommended that general education courses be taken throughout the four years of an undergraduate curriculum. The advanced learning skills and most of the distribution courses would be taken during the first two years of college, and the integration courses would be taken in the

last two years, when students would have sufficient background in the different subject areas to make them meaningful.

In addition to the Carnegie report, two other 1977 reports assaulted the undergraduate curriculum. Harvard University's Task Force on the Core Curriculum recommended graduation requirements based on the Task Force's definition of the essentials of an educated person. This resulted in the modification of Harvard's wide distribution system to require that all students take ten courses in five broad areas. Ernest L. Boyer, the United States Commissioner for Education, and his assistant, Martin Kaplan, authored the third major 1977 report that addressed general education. Their report, entitled Educating for Survival, reflected an essentialistic perspective and called for a core curriculum which would be based on common themes and concerns and emphasize human interdependence.

Although much of the concern in the reform movement was focused on large universities where the wide distribution approach to general education had resulted in a noncurriculum, George A. Schurr (1979) specifically warns small liberal arts colleges not to fall into the university-college model. Because small colleges can never successfully match the variety and specialization of the university, to try to do so endangers their survival. Rather, Schurr urges liberal arts colleges to reestablish their major strength, liberal education. He emphatically states, "Any liberal arts college worth its salt must get serious about liberal learning or go out of business" (p. 336).

Melvin L. Vulgamore (1981) also addresses the role of small liberal arts and church-related colleges in an age of proliferating knowledge and technological change. He sees these colleges as having a distinctive and unapologetic role in higher education today. Not only do these small colleges

usually have strong traditions in liberal education, they also provide greater opportunities for affective education and education for leadership. Their smaller numbers and more intimate atmosphere allow for a dimension of depth in affective education. The ethical issues of our time, such as Watergate, show that "technical study and research may not be divorced from the themes of good and evil, of personal suffering or personal happiness, of motives and commitment" (p. 149).

Vulgamore further notes that many of the entries in the annals of *Who's Who* attest to the impact of liberal arts colleges in shaping leadership, because "leaders emerge more readily in an environment that deals with them personally, that nurtures their inchoate, immature experience into self-confidence and action" (p. 150). In these respects, the small, liberal arts colleges are to be envied.

Since 1977, there has been much activity on behalf of general education. In 1979 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies criticized the poor state of general education in the nation's educational system. A 1980 study by the Commission on the Humanities declared that study of the humanities was fragmented and losing its influence in the curriculum to vocationalism. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published two major reports in 1981, Higher Learning in the Nation's Service and A Quest for Common Learning. Both reports called for greater commonality in the learning experience of American undergraduates as the means of getting general education out of its "disaster area." In A Quest for Common Learning, Ernest Boyer and Arthur Levine identified six broad themes that should be emphasized in general education: "shared use of symbols," "shared membership in groups and

institutions," "shared producing and consuming," "shared relationship with nature," "shared sense of time" and "shared values and beliefs."

Another series of reports and studies on general education appeared in the mid-1980s. The first was To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education, written by former Secretary of Education William Bennett when he headed the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1984. The main theme of this report is that colleges and universities are failing to give students an adequate education in the humanities. This, along with overspecialization and narrow departmentalism, has resulted in serious decay in American higher education. Bennett called on college and university administrators to evaluate the essentials of a good education and suggested the implementation of a core curriculum which emphasized study of the culture of Western civilization.

A report entitled Integrity in the College Curriculum published by the Association of American Colleges (AAC) in 1985, added to the chorus calling for reform. The report blames careerism and a "misguided marketplace philosophy" for blinding "institutions and students to the ephemeral nature of much that is contained within the new majors." It also attacks faculty curriculum committees for their "chronic paralysis" and accuses faculties in general of being self-indulgent. Legislators and governing boards are charged with neglecting "their true mission." Like others, the AAC report recommends a minimum required curriculum centering on nine essential learning experiences (such as critical analysis, historical consciousness, and values) as the means of bringing coherence to undergraduate education.

The third mid-1980s report, Involvement in Learning, was published by a study group of the National Institute of Education. Unlike the Bennett

and AAC reports, which looked primarily at the content in the undergraduate curriculum, this report focused more on the need for student involvement in the learning process and assessment of learning. It calls for the reallocation of resources to improve undergraduate teaching and greater institutional accountability as ways of improving student retention and academic quality. Zingg (1987) comments on the similarities of these three reports, which all appeared within a year of each other. Their consensus on many key issues in undergraduate education is remarkable. The wide public awareness of changes occurring in higher education is indicated by a March 10, 1985, article in the New York Times, "Wave of Curriculum Change Sweeping American Colleges." Without specifically mentioning any of the studies named above, writer Edward Fiske reported that:

> hundreds of colleges, including nearly every major liberal arts institution, have stepped up the number of mandated courses, redesigned their general education programs and proclaimed that graduates must now possess skills ranging from mathematical proficiency to computer literacy. Hundreds more are in the process of doing so. (p. 1)

Ten years after the initial wave of alarming reports on the state of American higher education, another trio of pleas for change emerged. The Closing of the American Mind by Allan Bloom and Cultural Literacy by E. D. Hirsch were the first of these three works to be published in 1987. What is most remarkable about these works is the size of their audience. Both of these books were on the New York Times nonfiction best-seller list for months. Bloom decries moral relativism and is unhappy with the diversity of undergraduate curricula. He claims that, in the name of openness, American minds have become closed to the virtues of democracy. Hirsch is

more optimistic, but calls for a return to more traditional educational ideals and practices. He insists that a body of shared learning about American culture is indispensable to a strong society.

The third 1987 study was another work by Ernest Boyer entitled College: The Undergraduate Experience in America. Supported by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, this comprehensive assessment reflects the full spectrum of baccalaureate education. The findings, which were compiled from three years of interviews and surveys, again argue for renewal in American colleges and universities. One of the key issues addressed by Boyer is fragmented and specialized curriculum that restricts the vision of the student. He refers to general education as the "neglected stepchild" of the undergraduate experience and denounces curricula that allow students to "pick and choose their way to graduation." In a 1985 Carnegie survey of 1000 chief academic officers, over half indicated that their commitment to general education had increased during the past years. Although that trend was encouraging, Boyer indicates that "curriculum tinkering rather than genuine reform was occurring." He emphatically states that "General education is not a single set of courses. It is a program with a clear objective, one that can be achieved in a variety of ways" (p. 101). Similar to the recommendations in the 1981 Boyer and Levine report, Boyer remains committed to an integrated core as the academic framework for general education.

In spite of their many differences, Paul J. Zingg (1987) notes three characteristics shared by the wave of studies during the 1980s reform movement. First, the reports reflect faculty control over the curriculum. Campus politics has exerted greater influence over curricular content than has fundamental new thinking about the definition of an educated person.

Second, the reforms emphasize smaller classes that are discussion oriented, interdisciplinary teaching and content, and common learning experiences for all students. The third area of consensus is the tendency toward more structure. This includes both reducing an institution's general education offerings and restricting student's elective options.

Curricular Trends in General Education

Recent literature on general education reveals a number of noteworthy trends in both the structure and the content of the general education curricula. In his review of the reform in general education at the end of the 1980s, Jerry Gaff (1989) identifies thirteen substantive trends of change in the curriculum (p. 15). Much in the other recent literature on changes in general education curricula supports Gaff's list of trends.

1. Higher standards and more requirements. According to Gaff, higher standards and more requirements is the most common trend. Research reported by Boyer (1988), Locke (1989), and others concur with the significance of this change. For example, Locke notes that the total number of required general education courses has increased 4.5 percentage points during the last fifteen years. Boyer reports similar findings and indicates that computer literacy, mathematics, and the arts have made the greatest gains.

2. Tighter curriculum structure. Many curricular review committees have been disturbed by the fragmentation of their school's baccalaureate programs. Consequently, various plans to bring greater coherence into general education have been developed. In many institutions this has involved moving away from the loose distribution requirements and towards a more common learning experience for all undergraduates. In other colleges and universities, this "tighter curriculum structure," as Gaff labels it,

has resulted in the total reform of general education or the entire undergraduate program.

One well known example is the "50 Hours" plan developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities under the leadership of Lynne Cheney (1989). This comprehensive plan calls for a core curriculum of 50 semester hours which includes 18 hours of study in cultures and civilizations as well as the study of a foreign language, mathematics and both the natural and the social sciences. Rather than a prototype, the "50 Hour" plan is a model that may be altered to the mission and needs of a particular college to "encourage coherent and substantive learning in essential areas of knowledge" (p. 8.). The Cheney report also gives curriculum profiles from a number of colleges, such as Brooklyn College, Columbia, and North Texas State University, that have implemented this type of core curriculum.

Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, has recently designed a new curriculum that was implemented in 1983 and has come to be known as the Hamline Plan. This plan stresses interdisciplinary connectedness, formal reasoning, intercultural understanding, and speaking and writing skills. A one-semester Freshman Seminar designed to introduce the Hamline way of teaching and learning is required of all new students. This seminar is no larger than 16 students who meet twice a week to discuss various topics. Other requirements in the Hamline Plan include a course in computer literacy, real workplace experience, and an independent study course or project. Jerry Gaff, the director of curriculum development at the Association of American Colleges, served as a consultant and worked closely with the Hamline faculty in creating this new curriculum. Reporting on the success of the Hamline Plan, Carter (1989) notes that enrollment has increased

significantly due to positive response to the program by Hamline students and the wide recognition that the plan has received.

In spite of the growing emphasis on developing a more coherent general education structure, some recent reports indicate that this trend is not as widespread as some might have assumed. After analyzing six recent studies of general education practices, Locke (1989) concludes that the impression that there is a uniformity to the distribution systems, which account for 93 percent of general education programs, is misleading, due to the many variations between distribution systems. The basic finding of the 1986 AAC study is cited by Zemsky (1989) as, "In common sense terms, there is a notable absence of structure and coherence in college and university curricula. Our analyses indicate a continued fragmentation of an educational experience that ought to be greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 7). Irvin (1990) notes that large public universities tend to have the least amount of structure in their general education curricula, due to their size and diversity. He suggests that general education programs at smaller, single-purpose, or liberal arts colleges are likely to have more curricular coherence primarily because faculty consensus is often greater and more resources are directed towards general education.

3. Fundamental skills. The third trend noted by Gaff (1989) is that greater attention is being given to the fundamental skills. "Writing, speaking, logical or critical thinking, foreign language, mathematics, and academic computing are increasingly emphasized in curricula today" (p. 15). This is consistent with other literature. Locke (1989) notes that in 1967, 90% of institutions required coursework in reading and writing, but by 1974 only 72% had such requirements. In 1989 this had increased, and 85.5% of colleges and universities required at least six credits in communication skills.

Two major thrusts can be noted in the improvement of writing skills. First is the widespread development of writing laboratories, as indicated by over half of the institutions participating in the study reported by Suniewick and El-Khawas (1985). The other emphasis is what has come to commonly be called "writing across the curriculum," a plan which requires quality written assignments in every course in the undergraduate curriculum. Pioneered by the Bay Area Writing Program at the University of California, Berkeley, this program is now required in four out of ten institutions (Suniewick and El-Khawas, 1985). Faculty members in all disciplines are usually given special workshops which teach them how to design appropriate writing assignments. Often each academic department develops its own guidelines and standards for evaluating writing competence. Besides this major approach to improving student writing, three other indicators of a greater emphasis in writing are a language sequence that extends throughout all four years, such as at the University of Texas, the use of writing assessment and placement of entering freshman, and the use of graduation proficiency requirements.

Recent emphasis in the fundamental skills has resulted in an increased number of colleges, about 30 percent more in 1985 than in 1970, requiring coursework in mathematics (Boyer, 1988; "General Education," 1985; and Suniewick and El-Khawas,1985). Although this is a significant change, Cheney (1989) reports that 41 percent of the graduates from American colleges and universities have studied no mathematics in their general education program. Zemsky (1989) expresses a similar concern saying, "undergraduate exposure to the natural sciences and mathematics is dangerously low" (p. 36). He notes that the 1986 AAC study showed that natural sciences and mathematics accounted for less than 20 percent of required graduation credits at most of the institutions.

Computer literacy has widely come to be seen as a fundamental skill. A 1985 Carnegie Foundation Survey of General Education shows rapid growth in computer literacy requirements over the last fifteen years ("General Education," 1985). In a society of increasing information richness, the need to educate students to manage this flow of information is obvious. Furthermore, it is projected that in the future there will be more "information" jobs than "production" jobs (Cleveland, 1985). Carlson (1988) expresses a common theme in the literature when he notes that liberal arts colleges, along with the rest of world, must recognize that educated people in all professions use the computer as a tool in their daily work.

David S. Saxon, former Chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley (1982) recognizes another positive effect in the growth of computer literacy: interaction between the study of science and the study of the liberal arts, which for too long have been considered separate. Although the importance of computer literacy is widely endorsed, there is less consensus on what should be taught or how it should be taught. According to D. J. Smith and M. W. Sage (1983), there are three broad categories that should be included when defining computer literacy: technological awareness, routine computer applications, and problem solving with the computer.

Another way that computers have impacted general education is in teaching. Recognizing a reluctance on the part of many in higher education to use technology in teaching, David Reisman (1986) comments:

> Computers and machines are beginning to have their place in the teaching of more and more subjects, and some faculty are likely to worry about their use and possible narrowing effects. However, the machines that most endanger our teaching and learning today are not personal computers, but machines

> involved in television, in long-distance direct dialing, in the jet plane. (p. 148)

New communication and information processing systems have revolutionized modern society; therefore, argue Smith and Sage (1982), new technologies are likely to differ from earlier educational fads and permanently change the curriculum in most schools. Another valid point is made by Burstyn (1986), who notes that education is also being challenged by adult learners who are returning to college campuses in an effort to learn new technological skills.

Gaff (1989) includes critical thinking as one of the fundamental skills that is currently gaining more emphasis in general education. If more complex patterns of thinking are to be developed in students, instructors must supply the context and provide the necessary guidance. Woditsch, Schlesinger, and Giardina (1987) believe that effective teaching in the liberal arts is an effective means of accomplishing this goal. They cite a 1981 report that shows that at AT&T, at the beginning of their careers, humanities and social science majors were superior in the administrative skills of organizing, planning, decision making and creativity. Another point of view is presented by Lauer (1990) who suggests that there is a lack of evidence to support the assumption that the liberal arts foster critical thinking. She accuses humanities advocates of using the critical thinking argument to preserve their own academic turf and suggests that more attention be given to learning that develops "more competence in office politics, interpersonal and intragroup competition, and such mundane matters as budgeting of time, setting of goals, and division of labor" (p. B3).

4. Liberal arts subject matter. The recent wave of curricular reform in general education has stressed anew the importance of the liberal arts and

sciences. The liberal arts represent the most generic and useful knowledge, methods, and perspectives devised by human minds. It has become more widely recognized that this kind of education is needed to prepare students to face the unknown problems and career changes of the future. There is also a growing awareness that the manner in which the liberal arts are taught should deal with life's fundamental issues and address the special needs of the non-major (Gaff, 1982).

5. The freshman year. The freshman experience (required freshman seminar classes) is not a new idea. Levine (1978) reports that a 1976 catalog study showed that seven percent of four-year arts and sciences colleges and nine percent of two-year arts and sciences colleges have freshman seminars. Often the instructor of each seminar group also serve as the faculty advisor to the members of that group. Because different students need different kinds of introductions to college, some institutions have developed a variety of seminar themes and groups to provide for those who need special assistance. As a result of the revived interest in general education in the 1980s, freshman seminars have gained new attention and are identified by Gaff (1989) as a current curriculum trend. The new freshman-year programs give greater attention to the intellectual and personal development of students than did earlier ones. Because of these reasons, and particularly because of the sense of community that results in the seminar setting, Zingg (1987) considers a collegiate seminar program as a mark of a high quality general education curriculum.

6. Global studies. & 7. Gender and ethnic studies. The complexities of living in a pluralistic society and a globally interdependent world are another consideration that has become important to general education curricula in the 1980s. Gaff (1989) includes global studies, and gender and ethnic studies in

his list of curriculum trends. Although American higher education has now been racially integrated for decades, racial and ethnic tensions continue to be a major concern both on college campuses and in American society. Traditionally, this nation's colleges and universities have provided upward social mobility to new immigrant groups and those of the underclass. Chandler (1990) encourages institutions of higher learning to be aggressive leaders in developing greater multicultural and multiracial acceptance and understanding. The University of Minnesota seemingly has done just that. In May of 1985 they set a national precedent as the first state university to adopt a U.S. Cultural Pluralism Requirement. This decision requires all undergraduates to complete at least two courses which have as their primary focus Afro-American, American Indian, Asian American, and/or Chicano cultures (Zita, 1988).

As colleges and universities have been revising their general education curricula, many have included course requirements that would counter the predominant Western world and white middle class views. According to Gaff (1988), global studies includes three distinct parts: knowledge, affect and language. Students need to learn about other countries and cultures as well as current global issues. This goal is accomplished primarily by courses and academic programs. However, factual information alone does not create a sense of stewardship towards the earth's resources and the well-being of its peoples. That attitude is probably best developed through direct involvement with another culture. An example is the requirement at Goshen College in Indiana, which has a required trimester of interdisciplinary study and service in a foreign culture, preferably in a non-Western country (Gaff, 1988).

There has been growth in foreign language emphasis. About half of all four-year institutions have foreign language requirements for all

undergraduates, according to a 1984 survey of general education (Suniewick and El-Khawas, 1985). This requirement is significantly more common in private institutions as compared with public institutions. The goal of redesigning general education curricula to create an understanding of ethnic and global perspectives can best be served when these views are incorporated, or mainstreamed, into courses throughout the entire undergraduate curriculum (Gaff, 1988).

8. Integration of knowledge. Integration of knowledge is another of the thirteen general education curriculum trends identified by Gaff in 1989. It is based on the recognition that the struggle between liberal and professional education has created a false dichotomy. Instead of debating the roles of education for life versus education for a career, it should be recognized that both are vital to the undergraduate curriculum, and greater effort should be directed towards integrating the two.

Other ways to integrate professional and liberal education are suggested by McInnes (1982), who indicates that a closer working relationship between the faculties of the professional and arts colleges will allow students to better synthesize their undergraduate experience. Another recommendation is incorporating the teaching of ethics and values throughout professional education, rather than just adding such courses to the curriculum. McInnes believes that the integrating concept should extend beyond the classroom to residential forms of living and particularly to extra-curricular activities. In order to encourage students to develop an orientation towards assisting others, he proposes that all students complete a service to society type of requirement that would "synthesize the demands of their profession and the instinct of being human" (p. 217).

Another plan for integrating the undergraduate curriculum is suggested by Warren B. Martin (1982), who suggests a trilinear curriculum consisting of 40 credits of general education, 40 credits of vocational education and 40 credits of integrative education. The third theme, integrative education, would be cross-disciplinary and show the interconnectedness of the other two parts. The integrative studies would be a part of the last two years of the college curriculum, be theme oriented, and use the seminar format. Based on successful small-scale examples, Martin maintains that the proper implementation of this three track program could greatly enrich and transform the total college experience.

Eva C. Galambos (1986) and John A. Beineke (1988) each express similar concerns regarding the collaboration between general education and teacher education. Both call for a more rigorous general education as a means of strengthening teacher preparation. Beineke notes that there is considerable public support for teachers to have a strong knowledge base in the liberal arts. He cites the findings of a 1987 *Phi Delta Kappan* Gallup poll in which 72% of the population said that prospective teachers should have a bachelors degree in the liberal arts before entering a teacher-training program. A concern expressed by Galambos is the need for elementary teachers to have more coursework in English and mathematics, since most of the teaching time in the early grades is spent on language arts and arithmetic. However, as college students these teachers usually complete much more coursework in the social sciences. She also mentions a very practical reason for a sound foundation in general education: it will better prepare teachers for passing teacher certification tests.

Arthur Chickering (1986) argues that "the aims of liberal education and the kinds of competence and personal characteristics required for effective

work are highly congruent" (p. 174). To accomplish this, Chickering believes that colleges and universities should give greater attention to various areas of adult development, such as adult cognitive styles, advising programs, teaching practices, and the institutional environment.

The importance of the non-curricular dimensions of general education is expressed by several writers on integration. Mason (1987) regards the integration of general education with the campus environment as an organizational imperative for contemporary general education programs. He states, "If liberal education is a rite of passage through a set of courses and nothing more, it will remain ghettoized within the institution. If it is an honest and serious commitment, it must be a part of the ethos of the college or university that adopts it" (p. 465). Nichols (1980), Gaff (1982) and Boyer (1987) join Mason in recommending that resident hall programs, vacation offerings, student organizations, and other special campus events be coordinated with the general education program. This will amplify the impact of general education as well as promote a holistic environment for students' personal and intellectual growth. There is a wide body of knowledge to document the power of the "hidden curriculum" in shaping the undergraduate experience. This includes both the informal contacts between students and faculty as well as the influence of student peer groups (Gaff, 1982). Although large institutions are often thought of as impersonal and bureaucratic, Nichols (1980) notes that small colleges are often afflicted with the same problems. Regardless of size, the small group opportunities of extracurricular activities, student organizations and other campus events should all be harnessed to help serve the ends of general education.

9. Moral reflection. Another curriculum trend identified by Gaff (1989) is "moral reflection," which is seen in courses that emphasize "values

through the study of different cultures, controversial issues, and the implications of science and technology" (p. 15). William. Theodore deBary (1975) of Columbia University notes that "traditional values, which many think is the function of general education to propagate, are losing ground. Secularism and social change have undone conventional pieties, and in default of any consensus on religious values, 'humanism' serves for many as the least common denominator of secular faith" (p. 21). deBary expresses further concern about the heavy reliance of "questioning for questioning's sake, or perhaps for discussion's sake, without regard to whether it produced any answers" and suggests, that taken to an extreme, skepticism itself can become a religion (pp. 22, 23).

Boyer and Levine (1981) suggest that one of the six integrated core areas in general education be "shared values and beliefs." They explain that it is the role of general education to acquaint students with the roles that political ideologies and, particularly religion, have played in shaping individuals and societies throughout history. This part of the general education program should also help students recognize their own belief systems, and enable them to separate "facts" from "beliefs." There are other possible ways to develop this emphasis. One example is adding a required ethics course to the curriculum. An alternative that was in vogue in the 1970s was "values clarification" or a study of the "stages of moral development." Another option can be seen in the trilinear curriculum outlined by Martin (1982). This plan has the development of character as one of its major goals and includes a strong emphasis on moral and ethical priorities in the upper-division integrative studies.

10. Extension through all four years. Another curriculum trend in general education in the 1980s is the extension of general education courses

throughout the four years of the undergraduate program. Many of the curriculum models, such as Martin (1982), Boyer (1987) and Cheney (1989), that have emerged from the 1980s reform movement have thoughtfully sequenced general education courses beyond the first two years of college. This directly counters the earlier notion that general education courses are those that students "get out of the way" as soon as possible in their baccalaureate study in order to concentrate on the areas of specialization.

11. Faculty development. Gaff's list of curriculum trends in general education in the 1980s also includes faculty development. Because a general education curriculum is only as strong as the courses and instruction that implement it, there is a growing awareness that the development of faculty teaching skills is an important part of improving general education

12. Administration. Another trend is in the administration of general education. There is also a greater recognition that there needs to be a "central authority" over the general education component of the curriculum, such as a director or dean who oversees a faculty general education committee.

13. Assessment. A final trend, which continues to be increasingly emphasized, is the assessment of student learning in general education.

Because these last three trends are also key components in the process of review and revision of general education curricula, more specific information from the literature about each of them is discussed below.

Review and Revision of General Education Curricula

Role of the Faculty

Faculty play a vital role in reforming general education, both in the process of review and revision as well as in the implementation of changes.

Without effective classroom teaching, there is little chance that an institution's general education goals will be achieved. "Good, student-oriented teaching is the heart of general education because it fosters the love of learning that will enable the student to make a university of life" (Feldman, 1988, p. 26). The need to make teaching relevant to students' lives is also recognized by Chandler (1990), who believes that students can be intellectually aroused in all subject areas by skillful teaching and well-designed courses.

Spear (1989) notes that the literature of the 1980s reform movement rarely gives sustained attention to reforming pedagogy, which she considers to be the most challenging component of reform. She explains why so little attention has been given to general education teaching, "curriculum debates engage us intellectually; and for all the passion they generate, we can still hold them at arm's length. But pedagogical questions grab us at gut level, and real critiques of our teaching threaten our very selves" (p. 399).

The large numbers of students commonly found in introductory courses is one of the major hindrances to effective general education teaching. The size of these classes limits the amount of class discussion, encourages use of the lecture method, and usually results in students who are passive learners (Belknap & Kuhns, 1977). Therefore, limiting class size must be a consideration if faculty are expected to use greater variety in their teaching methods and engage students in more active types of learning. A related concern is the nature of the introductory course itself. Coleman (1986) suggests that introductory courses often cover so much academic ground that students are overwhelmed. She argues that a course that has less breadth can introduce students to an academic discipline more effectively. The 1988 AAC report, A New Vitality in General Education, notes that introductory courses

are often the only formal study that a nonmajor will have in a given academic area. Therefore, general education courses should be taught differently from those designed to introduce students to a major. A general education approach would give special attention to helping students understand the relevance of a particular subject area and teach them how to continue learning in that discipline on their own.

Many faculty who teach general education courses are specialists who are prepared by graduate programs in the content and research of very specific academic areas. Usually they are hired primarily to teach in their specialty and required to teach general education as a secondary responsibility. This can result in a general education faculty who only give their general education classes the leftovers of their attention and commitment. Others who teach general education are often graduate assistants, new professionals, or part time teachers. They can also contribute to poor teaching in general education courses because of their inexperience or temporary status. Another difficulty is that teaching general education courses lacks the academic status of teaching in a particular major and contributes little towards advancement in one's academic discipline (Gaff, 1988; Irvin, 1989).

One response to the need for improved teaching in general education is to have a separate general education faculty consisting of members from a sampling of disciplines. This plan, proposed by Irvin (1989) and others, would theoretically result in a general education faculty who would be primarily committed to the courses they teach and to the goals of general education. Irvin notes that smaller institutions often have a high percentage of their faculty already involved in teaching general education; therefore, teachers of general education courses in these colleges are less likely to be perceived as second-class citizens in academe.

Faculty development provides an understanding of how to adjust planning and teaching to the goals and purposes of general education courses. This understanding can be gained through seminars, workshops, retreats, and the use of publications and consultants. Gaff (1988a) notes that the growing awareness of the need for faculty development is generating many new materials and leaders in this area. The study of pedagogical methods that keep students actively involved in learning, the use of electronic media, and the fostering of out of class learning are ways to improve learning in general education (Association of American Colleges, 1988). It should also be noted that faculty development programs can be created by using the staff and resources already available on most campuses. Special attention needs to be given to faculty development when changes in general education curricula are being implemented. The value and importance of a well planned program for faculty development cannot be underestimated as a means of enabling faculty to use their talents most effectively.

Systematic advising of students is important in helping them to fit together the best possible set of general education courses to meet their individual needs and interests. Spear (1989) goes a step further by suggesting that each student, with the assistance of an advisor, complete a specific, yearly curriculum plan showing the rationale for the courses being taken, beyond the fact that they are required. Good faculty advising can assist a student in gaining the best possible general education that an institution offers (Feldman, 1988).

Although the general education reform movement of the 1980s captured wide attention, Gaff (1988b) reports that between 10 and 40 percent of the institutions of higher education have been untouched by curricular reforms in general education. This lack of involvement in the reform

movement could be accounted for in several different ways. For example, some colleges may not be engaged in the issues, or problems within an institution may have disrupted a reform effort. Another possibility is that a particular general education program may be satisfactorily achieving the purposes of a school, making reform unnecessary. Gaff also notes that many of the reform efforts made by colleges and universities have been limited. Often there have only been piecemeal or superficial changes rather than substantive reform. For these institutions, Gaff expresses his desire for the advent of a second wave of reform that would continue to generate more improvement in general education, both in breadth of involvement and depth of change. Regardless of an institution's past involvement in general education curricula reform, however, there is a need for ongoing curriculum review and revision. "The continual quest is the goal to be sought, not the final word. The job is *never* done" (Gaff 1988b; p. 9).

Role of Institutional Leadership

The development of an effective general education program requires the support of both an institution's president and its chief academic officer. Skillful administrators who support reform are needed to provide faculty with released time, special compensation and guidance. The 1988 AAC report notes that academic administrators, who may be tempted to be autocratic, must not forget that "their function is not just to manage but to inspire" (p. 56).

To provide more organization and specific leadership to general education, new administrative positions, such as a dean, director or coordinator, are being created. The responsibilities of the position include supervising general education committees, coordinating the program around

a common philosophy, and evaluating progress. Above all, this person is a general education advocate for the whole institution. Irvin (1990) states that without such leadership, "general education is condemned to be battered by the tides of special interests that flood the university" (p. 375).

Role of the Curriculum Committee

Colleges and universities usually have a curriculum committee whose responsibility it is to authorize new courses and programs. These committees often consist of departmental representatives whose greatest concern is protecting their department's academic turf. As a result, they are seldom innovative in making systematic curricular reforms, according to the 1985 Association of American Colleges' report Integrity in the College Curriculum. This report challenges presidents and deans to get the curriculum committee actively engaged in assessing both the curriculum and the quality of teaching that supports it. If the administration of a college provides the necessary encouragement and reinforcement of good teaching, "the curriculum committee can become the most exciting and challenging committee on campus" (p. 10).

One of the lessons from the past that should be recognized as higher education prepares for the year 2000, according to Arthur Levine (1990), is that large-scale social change has a substantial impact on curriculum. He sees today's demographic, economic, geographical, and technological changes a major period of change. Demography continues to influence college planning as the number of high school graduates declines and the number of adult and minority students increases. Like other times of great change, the present period of change tends to leave all social institutions behind, making

a time of catch up necessary. Although the financing of higher education has become a dominant issue, it must not be allowed to crowd out other concerns.

Cycle of Review and Revision

Because a general education curriculum is likely to require change over time, a college needs to periodically and intentionally review and update its general education. A 1984 survey of chief academic officers revealed that the average academic department or program was evaluated every five years. Very few were never evaluated, and in 22 percent of the institutions programs were evaluated every year. These evaluations were most often carried out by administrators; faculty were the next most involved, and outside consultants the third most common evaluators. It was also noted that small, private colleges conducted evaluations slightly more frequently than other institutions studied, and they used external consultants less frequently (McFerron, Lynch, Bowker & Knepp, 1988).

A number of curriculum models have developed in higher education over the last few decades. One of the best known is the Tyler Model, proposed by Ralph Tyler in 1949, which contributed much to emphasizing the use of specific educational objectives in curriculum planning. Another model discussed by Smith and Clements (1984) is the Systems Approach, which was developed in the 1970s. It contains three major components: curriculum goals and activities, learning activities, and evaluation. The strength of this model is that it is an open system, one in which the outcomes serve as the basis for a reconsideration of the earlier goals. Smith and Clements suggest that a weakness of this model is its lack of attention to student needs in determining curricular goals. A more recent model, the Humanistic Model, suggests that curriculum planning be based on individual student needs.

Rather than starting with curriculum change, reform in general education should begin with a serious discussion of what is meant by an educated person. This consideration should lead to the goals of a general education program that will have implications for the whole campus. Mission statements are the broad goals that an institution is attempting to accomplish. These statements are another important factor in establishing the goals and objectives of a general education curriculum.

Recognition of Student Needs

The needs of students must also be a primary consideration in reviewing and revising a general education program. Too often the aims of the department or institution, or the intellectual interests and professional aspirations of faculty members have taken priority over what is best for students and society as a whole (Spear, 1989). A new curriculum planning model which is based on needs is proposed by Smith and Clements (1984). This plan begins by establishing societal need for an academic program, which is then translated into goals and objectives, making needs assessment an important part of curriculum planning. In determining academic needs, information needs to be gathered from a college's internal public: departments, administrators, faculty, and students. However, Smith and Clements contend that data from a college's external public, such as accrediting agencies, board of trustees, other colleges, and government agencies, should also have a major influence in determining the college curriculum. Because the needs identified by a college's internal public are often selfish and self-serving, Smith and Clements believe that the needs of the external public must take priority.

As has already been noted, there are various types of general education curriculum plans, each with its advantages and disadvantages. Because there is no one right approach to general education, each institution must determine what type best meets its needs and goals. The rigidity of a core curriculum is seen by Spear (1989) as a "reductive approach" to general education that misrepresents the complexities of teaching and learning and ignores the pluralistic context in which students operate. She also rejects the broad distribution systems as another over simplified solution to general education; it avoids the difficult questions involved in determining priorities in general education. Referring to the faculty psychology of Hutchins, she says, "we still talk about liberal education as if a little dab of history will develop the `historical faculty,' a smidgen of art for the `artistic faculty,' and a dollop of foreign language for the `cultural faculty' " (p. 395). Spear suggests that student needs and community values be given priority over curriculum content in determining the overriding goals and plan for a general education program.

Coordination of General Education with Campus Culture

If a college is to have a vital general education program, it needs to have a supportive campus environment. "Like corporations that have discovered the power of the corporate culture, colleges that aspire to have a strong general-education core must have all other parts of the culture reinforcing the central values of general education" (Gaff, 1988b; p. 9). This reinforcement should be evident in such areas as promotional materials, admissions considerations, orientation activities, faculty advising, residential life, and campus events. Without reform in these ancillary areas, even the

most ideal content and teaching in general education is limited in its long term effects.

If noncurricular considerations are incorporated into the goals and planning of a college's general education program, this should be reflected in the evaluation of the program. This is perhaps best accomplished through longitudinal studies and representative measures that show the affective impact of the undergraduate experience, as suggested by the research of Winter, McClelland and Stewart (1981).

Faculty cooperation is critical in the implementation of changes in a general education curriculum. In order to insure that there will be a minimum of resistance to such changes, faculty support and involvement must be a vital part of the entire review and revision process. Usually faculty members, in representative committees, develop recommendations for change through research, discussion and debate. Final decisions regarding changes in general education are then made by a vote by all faculty members. If the faculty are involved in the decision making process at every stage of the reform process, beginning with determining goals and objectives, gaining their final approval will be less of a problem (Smith & Clement, 1984).

Assessment

A few decades ago the term assessment was used in reference to testing and evaluation. Today, however, it has a broader meaning and usually refers to a multiplicity of procedures that provide feedback and can be used for improvement. Driven largely by state legislatures and accrediting agencies, assessment is being used to determine how effectively students are being educated. Assessment must be built into curriculum-reform efforts from the start. Because of basic differences among institutions and the intended uses of

assessment data, there can be no single standard or prototype program, but there are common issues that need to be considered in planning and implementing any assessment program.

Halpern (1987, p. 110-111) offers several useful guidelines to consider when planning an assessment program. First, multiple and varied measures are always more desirable than a single standardized examination, a point that is also made by Feldman (1988) and Forrest (1990). Halpern also believes that faculty support and involvement in all aspects of an assessment program are essential components to success, since external and top-down pressures often meet with skepticism and resistance. While outcomes assessment can be useful in program decision making, Halpern emphasizes that it is an inappropriate basis for making retention and tenure decisions about faculty. It is also recommended that assessment measures be used that will reflect the educational gains during the college years, as opposed to exit-only data. She cautions against a fragmented approach to assessment and encourages the development of a comprehensive assessment program that looks at campuswide effectiveness. Because of the professional time and materials involved, an institution must be prepared to cover the extra costs of an outcomes assessment plan through additional funding.

Assessment basically serves three purposes: to make learning expectations more explicit, to enhance the learning process by obtaining entry level information about students, and to measure their growth in learning over time. Astin (1987) notes that there is "a wide body of literature showing that the outcomes level of competence of a graduating class is highly dependent on its entering level of competency" (p. 95). Therefore, both entry and exit levels of competency must be assessed in determining the institutional impact of a particular level of learning. This approach is not

restricted to pretest-posttest use of standardized tests, but can include other indicators of student progress as shown by evaluative feedback that is already part of the teaching-learning process. Examples could include student writings in composition or jury reports in music (Astin, 1987).

Speaking of future challenges of the undergraduate curriculum, Levine (1990) predicts that there will be a shift of emphasis from teaching to learning, which will transform baccalaureate education. This change will give greater support to the growing emphasis on the assessment of learning. The current economic and fiscal problems that many campuses have experienced, as a result of the political context, have also encouraged the outcomes assessment movement. However, Resnick and Goulden (1987) offer a reminder that assessment can do more than make an institution accountable to public bodies, it can provide the first step towards academic renewal. "Assessment is the driving force with any realistic, systematic plan for institutional progress and development. Such an undertaking requires clear goals and objectives, a means of determining how closely the institution approximates the goals stated, and a strategy for closing the gaps that may be identified" (Krueger & Heisserer, p. 45).

Many in the outcomes assessment movement indicate that institutions are likely to gain more from an assessment plan that is developed within an institution, because standardized tests are written too generally and may have little relevance to the curriculum of a particular school. Farmer (1989) encourages college and university faculty to become involved in developing their own assessment plan, because their active participation in the assessment process usually brings greater gain to their students.

Some states are mandating basic skills testing and encouraging comprehensive universities to provide remedial programs for students who

do not pass the tests. Such is the situation in Texas, where a 1987 bill requires the testing of students in reading, writing and mathematics. Students are not allowed to enroll in upper division classes until minimum standards have been met in all of the test areas (Farmer, 1989).

Although assessment is useful in developing effective remedial and advising programs, a primary goal of testing should be the improvement of teaching as it relates to student learning. Therefore, one of the most important methods of evaluating student learning is the assessment practices used in the classroom, because no standardized test or state level exam is so directly tied with the teaching-learning process (Farmer, 1989). Another use of classroom tests is suggested by Astin (1987). This involves administering the final test at the beginning of a course as a pretest, and then giving it again at the end of that course. This will provide specific information about the learning gained in that course.

There are two standardized tests that are designed specifically to assess general education, according to Curray and Hager (1987): the ACT College Outcomes Measurement Program (COMP) and the Test of General Education (TGE). Their comparison of the usefulness of these two tests points out two major faults in using the ACT COMP. First, it is geared to testing how a person will function as an adult and does not measure specific content areas. Therefore, it is not a good measure of what is being taught and is of little value as a means of identifying areas in the curriculum that need strengthening. The second problem with the ACT COMP is that, since each question measures three intellectual skills, the type of questions that can be asked is limited. Curry and Hager conclude that the TGE does a better job of isolating intellectual skills; they prefer it over the ACT COMP.

Other methods of assessment, aside from the use of standardized tests, are becoming more widely used. For example, institutional surveys and other indicators of institutional functioning can provide useful data as part of a comprehensive assessment plan (Turnbull, 1985). Portfolio-assisted assessment of general education is one way that colleges have found to respond to the dissatisfaction related to depending on standardized tests. By tracking students over time, faculty are better able to transfer the findings of their assessment into improved instruction. Another of the benefits of this assessment plan is heightened cooperation among the faculty.

Portfolios are folders or binders of a student's work that are collected and analyzed by faculty members who judge them according to a standard that they develop. A recent publication by the American Association for Higher Education (Forrest, 1990) describes the stages of development needed to implement this program, as well as gives examples of the portfolio systems in operation at several colleges. Although this approach to assessment requires training and faculty time, which must be compensated, overall the plan is cost effective. Portfolio-assisted assessment holds great potential for improving general education and deserves careful consideration as part of a multiple-assessment program.

Theodore Lockwood (1978), is skeptical of the role of faculty in the general education reform movement. He sees the development of core curricula and other prescriptive efforts to emphasize the liberal arts in the undergraduate curriculum as "a defensive reaction to public criticisms and the academy's own uncertainties" (p. 2). With regard to the development of integrated learning in general education, he sees the overspecialization of college faculty as being so great that a true interdisciplinary approach in

general education is virtually impossible, since most faculty members have no experience outside their own department.

One of the few specific examples in the literature of a small college that has recently made major changes in its general education program is at Mount Saint Mary's College, a small liberal arts college in Maryland. Campbell (1983) describes that college's faculty involvement and the stages involved in reviving a core curriculum that had been discontinued in the 1970s. After agreeing that there was a need for change, the mission statement was revised and a new core curriculum developed through discussion and amendments. The plan that was adopted by the faculty allowed a degree of choice for the students within the core requirements. A later addition to this curriculum has been an interdisciplinary seminar which is a capstone course that integrates the values and traditions of the humanities. Unlike Lockwood's perspective, the Campbell report indicates that many positive benefits were derived from the faculty working together in this process.

Referring to the example of Mount Saint Mary's College, Arthur Levine (1989) encourages continued general education reform and concludes:

> Every college and university in the United States has the ability to offer a first-class general [education] program. Mount Saint Mary's shows what it takes:
>
> - vision;
> - leadership;
> - time and planning;
> - broad faculty involvement and ownership;
> - rewards and incentives that favor general education.
>
> It is an example well worth following--for our students, our society, our future, and even our institutional self-interest. (p. 4)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

General Method

As noted earlier, two groups of small colleges participated in this study. Data gathered from each of these groups of nonrelated colleges was not intended as a comparison between the two groups. Rather, information from each group shed a different light on the study of general education curricula as a whole. (A list of both groups of participating colleges is provided in Appendix A.)

1. Exemplary Colleges. Given the difficulties involved in determining a group of small colleges that are generally recognized as having exemplary general education programs, it was decided to rely on expert opinion. The ten small colleges that were identified as exemplary were taken from a list compiled from a national survey of 662 American college presidents who were asked to indicate the nation's best colleges for undergraduate study ("Exclusive National Survey," 1983).

This particular survey was chosen for several reasons. First, it gave particular emphasis to both nationally and regionally known small, liberal arts colleges. Second, its sole focus was on the quality of the undergraduate curriculum, an emphasis that is closely related to the purpose of this study. This differed from other surveys conducted by U. S. News & World Report, such as the comprehensive 1989 report which also measured student selectivity, faculty quality, financial resources, and student retention ("America's Best Colleges," 1989). Because of this survey's focus on undergraduate study, the report noted that "top educators picked some old

favorites--but also some, surprising less famous schools" were listed. The report also states that the participating college presidents ranked very few public institutions among the top undergraduate programs. Larger class sizes, more graduate students serving as instructors, and less selective admissions standards were reasons given by the educators for the predominance of private schools on the lists. Third, these lists were based completely on the perceptions of college presidents, a group that would generally be recognized as experts in higher education. This methodology differs from other surveys. For example, the 1989 U. S. News & World Report college report combined many sources of data including such diverse sources as interviews with high school guidance counselors and a college's per-student library budget.

All institutions on the listings of the survey's best undergraduate programs were considered as exemplary. However, those that had enrollments over 2000 or had a graduate program were eliminated from the exemplary group in order to meet the criteria for smallness as identified in this study. This was done by using information from the American Council on Education index, 1989-90 Accredited Institutions of Higher Education. This source was also used to verify that the current enrollment of the participating colleges met the established criteria. Thus, 15 colleges remained for consideration as possible participants for this study. All of the 15 were private institutions and were located in 11 different states.

In September 1990, letters were sent to the presidents of each of the 15 colleges stating the purpose of this study and requesting their participation (see Appendix B). Colleges were asked to send a copy of their current college catalogs, mission statements, and information about the processes used in revising their general education curricula. After two weeks, follow up telephone calls were made to those colleges that had not responded.

There were five colleges that declined to participate, each from a different state. The only recognizable pattern among those colleges that declined participation was in the written replies received from four of them. The most common reason these colleges gave for not participating was that they receive so many requests to participate in surveys and studies that they have developed a policy against such participation unless the results are directly beneficial to them. One college made no response. The ten participating exemplary colleges are located in eight states. All of them are private liberal arts institutions, and five of them are church-affiliated. An analysis of the college catalogs, mission statements, and responses to questions received from these ten institutions provided the data for the exemplary group.

2. Area Colleges. The other group of colleges studied consisted of four Midwestern, four-year institutions. These colleges were included in the study as a source of in-depth information, particularly on the review and revision process of general education curricula. College catalogs and on-site interviews were the sources of data considered in the analysis of the general education curricula of these small colleges.

These four colleges were selected by the researcher for several reasons. First, like the exemplary group, none of the selected area institutions had a graduate program or an enrollment of more than 2000.
Second, geographic accessibility was necessary to allow for the on-site observations and interviews. Third, it was necessary that the identified area colleges be willing to participate in the study, this included making the necessary arrangements for a campus visit and interviews.

In September 1990, letters were also sent to the presidents of four colleges in North and South Dakota requesting their participation in this

study (See Appendix C). The requested participation involved the study of the college catalog and mission statement, as well as interviews with three general education faculty members and the chief academic officer. The faculty members who were interviewed were selected either by the president or the chief academic officer in their respective colleges. One of the colleges initially contacted declined to participate because its curriculum had changed from a liberal arts to a technology focus. Another college was then contacted and agreed to participate. Two of the four participating area colleges were private, church-affiliated institutions, and the other two were public institutions.

The presidents of each of the four area colleges supported the purpose of this study and delegated the details of their college's participation to their respective chief academic officers. Calls were made to each college's academic dean or vice president to make arrangements for the on-site visits and interviews. Copies of the questions that were used as a basis for the interviews with general education faculty members and with the chief academic officer were sent to each interviewee in advance (see Appendices D and E). On-site visits and interviews were made to the participating area colleges in October and November 1990. Each interview followed the general structure of the prepared questions, lasted from 30 to 45 minutes, and was audio tape recorded.

Analysis of Data

In analyzing the data from both the exemplary group of colleges and the area participants, it was not the intention of this study to compare the two groups. As mentioned earlier, this study integrated data from the review of literature, with the institutional documents from both groups of colleges, and

the campus interviews in order to gain a fuller picture of the current practices of the general education curricula of small colleges. In the analysis, particular attention was given to three aspects of their general education programs: the stated goals of general education as indicated in their college mission statements and other documents; the processes of developing and modifying their general education curricula; and the structure and content of their present general education programs as defined in current college catalogs. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of these findings. Based on the combined information from the two groups of analyzed data and the literature reviewed, a proposed model for general education curriculum development in small colleges has been developed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Having evolved through various stages during the last 75 years, general education has become one of the most common features of American higher education. Its value and its importance have become widely accepted. All of the faculty members interviewed in this study agreed that general education is vital to the undergraduate curriculum. One interviewee stated, "our institution as a whole is committed to the idea and the majority of our faculty has high regard for general education." Another commented that general education is the "most important point of this college, and the most important part of any student's college experience."

Several of the faculty responses suggested why general education is of such importance as part of the undergraduate curriculum: "It is important for self-understanding and builds self-worth; it enables us to work with people better;" "We see it as a core of knowledge that is important to everyone;" "General education courses support all of the other classes that the student takes;" and "Because of the broad exposure in general education, some students find what they like and select it as a major."

While there may be broad agreement regarding the overall value of general education, there is less concurrence as to its particular aims and purposes. Because the particular goals for general education vary from college to college, the curricula that give specific structure and content to those aims also differ. A college's general education is thus a significant part of its particular identity as an institution of higher learning. As one faculty member stated, "Our general education program is what makes us, us."

Similarly, colleges use different approaches to periodically review and revise general education curricula.

This study was undertaken to gain an understanding of each of these three aspects of the general education curricula in the selected small colleges: aims and purposes; structure and content; and review and revision. These three areas were suggested by analysis of the literature on general education. They were also strongly apparent in the data yielded by study of the exemplary colleges and of the area colleges. From this understanding, a proposed model for general education curriculum development in a small college was created.

Note: 1. The data presented below are reported in a direct manner. There is no intention of representing that they imply statistical significance. Rather, the tables are presented for the convenience of the reader.

2. There is no intention to generalize beyond the institutions studied.

Aims and Purposes of General Education

Institutional Aims and Purposes

Ideally, the goals of an institution should flow from a clear sense of mission. This common vision is usually stated in an institutional mission statement. A close scrutiny of the mission statements, as expressed in the current catalogs of the colleges studied, revealed the following commonalities.

Table 1 lists fourteen goals identified, in a variety of similar expressions, as those which appear most frequently in the mission statements of the colleges studied. Among the exemplary group of colleges, the goals that appeared most frequently are those aimed at developing students' intellectual

curiosity, providing them with a knowledge of the liberal arts, and preparing them for service to society. Four other goals are also common within the exemplary group. These include helping students to develop moral values, encouraging their religious beliefs, fostering their personal growth, and assisting them in their vocational preparation.

Table 1

Goals as Indicated in College Mission Statements

Goals	Exemplary Colleges n=10	Area Colleges n=4
	f	f
Appreciate cultural diversity	6	1
Develop communication skills	2	2
Develop intellectual curiosity	9	4
Develop interpersonal skills	2	1
Develop leadership ability	3	2
Develop moral values	7	4
Develop thinking skills	6	2
Develop total being	4	2
Encourage religious beliefs	7	2
Enhance vocational preparation	7	4
Foster personal growth	7	4
Increase knowledge of liberal arts	9	3
Prepare for service to society	9	4
Understand cultural heritage	4	2

Four goals, as indicated in their institutional mission statements, are fully shared by the selected area colleges: developing students' intellectual curiosity, developing their moral values, fostering their personal growth, and assisting them in their vocational preparation. Providing students with a

knowledge of the liberal arts was also a common goal with most of the area colleges.

Although there is general consistency between the stated goals of the two groups, there are two significant exceptions. These goals are considerably more common among the participating group of exemplary colleges than among the selected area colleges: appreciating cultural diversity and preparing students for service to society.

Aims and Purposes of General Education Programs

Because a college's mission statement expresses the objectives of the institution as a whole, it may make only general reference to the skills and content of the general education component of the curriculum. Since general education focuses on general competence and knowledge, rather than on the technical specialization of a major, specific aims and purposes for general education are not easily defined. However, in an attempt to more clearly delineate the aims and purposes of their general education programs, six of the colleges studied (three from the exemplary group and three from the area colleges) provide a specific statement of general education objectives. In each of the respective six catalogs, these statements serve as a preface to a more detailed description of the college's general education program and requirements. The following aims and purposes are indicated in these general education purpose statements.

Table 2 is an analysis of the six specific catalog statements of general education objectives. The three most frequently stated goals are to provide students with a broad academic exposure, encourage their aesthetic appreciations, and develop their values and acceptance of cultural diversity. Four basic academic skills are identified as specific goals in half of these

purpose statements: skills in written communication, in oral communication, in computation, and in critical reading and inquiry. Half of the purpose statements also show that a sense of social responsibility and content knowledge in history, natural science and social science are common goals in these colleges.

Table 2

Stated Objectives of General Education Curricula

Objective	f n=6
Aesthetic perception	4
Breadth of academic experience	5
Career exploration	1
Critical reading and inquiry skills	3
Faith enrichment	1
Historical perception	3
Natural science perception	3
Personal wellness	2
Quantitative and computational skills	3
Significance of work	1
Skills in oral communication	2
Skills in written communication	3
Social-behavioral perception	3
Social responsibility	3
Wholeness of knowledge perception	2
Values and cultural diversity	4

Achievement of General Education Aims and Purposes

Some reference to assessing the achievement of general education aims and purposes is mentioned in ten of the fourteen college catalogs studied. A required level of writing proficiency, either by examination or by course grades, is identified in the catalogs of seven of the exemplary group of colleges

and by three of the selected area schools. Proven proficiency in mathematics is required in four colleges, two from each group. One area college also requires a certain level of competence in reading. Six of the exemplary colleges require foreign language proficiency for graduation; two of them have this stipulation for their Bachelor of Arts degree, but not for their Bachelor of Science degree. Another means of assessing general education achievement is through the use of a general standardized examination. None of the catalogs of the participating exemplary colleges make reference to the use of tests to assess general education; however, two area colleges require students to take the ACT College Outcome Measures Program (COMP) test to help evaluate the effectiveness of their general education programs.

In the interviews at area colleges, faculty members were asked about their perceptions of the degree to which the aims and purposes of their general education program are realized. They indicated that a lot of the goals in general education are in the affective domain, making them difficult to assess. However, most faculty members in all four colleges believed that, although there is a recognized gap between the real and the ideal, their general education goals are realistic and are generally met by a majority of their students.

One faculty member indicated that achieving the goals of general education today is more difficult than in the past because more students are less prepared for college. Another, commenting on a possible time lapse between taking required general education courses and realizing general education curriculum goals, said, "In some respects general education is our [undergraduate curriculum] castor oil; it might not be so palatable going down, but somewhere later on it will be beneficial. For example, if the

students become better problem solvers and communicators, our goals have been achieved."

Structure and Content of Selected General Education Curricula

As was discussed in Chapter 2, there is considerable variety in both the structure and the content of the general education component in the undergraduate curricula in American colleges and universities. The analysis of the current college catalogs of the participating schools revealed significant differences in the amount of structure given to the various general education curricula. There also were differences in the number of required hours of credit in the various areas of academic content within each college's general education curriculum.

Structure of General Education Curricula in Selected Colleges

Of the fourteen college catalogs analyzed in this study, all but two had the distribution requirement type of general education structure. One of the exemplary colleges labels the catalog description of its general education curriculum as a "Liberal Arts Core Curriculum." However, this curriculum is not fully structured, since it provides students with several options in both the social sciences and the natural sciences; none of its courses is interdisciplinary. Because the content of this curriculum is similar to the content of the curricula of the colleges with distribution requirements, it is included in this study.

Another of the exemplary schools has two general education programs. In addition to a distribution curriculum for the majority of its students, an integrated curriculum program is available annually to 60 students.

Although this program consists primarily of a required interdisciplinary core of courses, it also contains a distribution component in the social sciences and natural sciences. Since the distribution curriculum was the required program for the majority of students at this institution, the integrated curriculum option was not analyzed in detail for the purposes of this study.

The second college, of those included in this study, that did not have a distribution requirement curriculum has a free elective curriculum. Documents from this institution defend its elective freedom by indicating that there is no consensus among the faculty that a structured core of general education is intellectually desirable. Also, such freedom allows students to study their majors in greater depth. Students are expected to work out a plan with their advisors which includes courses that develop both diversity and an academic major. Since this college's curriculum has no general education requirements, it is excluded from the analysis that follows.

Content of General Education Curricula in Selected Colleges

Although the content of general education varies from college to college, some subjects are required in most general education programs. The content of general education curricula can be broadly divided into three categories. The first is advanced learning skills, which include English composition, mathematics, foreign language, physical education and computer science. The field distribution category involves courses that meet the requirements in the humanities/fine arts, natural sciences and social sciences. An analysis of the content of the general education curricula as indicated in the current catalogs of nine exemplary colleges and the four area colleges revealed the following.

Note:

Figures provided on this and all subsequent tables as averages are not intended to imply statistical comparison or analysis. They are simple arithmatic averages reported solely to clarify reporting of the data.

Table 3

Requirements in Advanced Learning Skills

Skill Area	Exemplary Group			Area Colleges		
	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.
Eng. Composition	0	9*	5.4	0	4*	5.8
Computer	2	0	4	2	1	3
Foreign Language	6	0	11.3	0	0	0
Mathematics	5	3*	3.4	3	1*	3
Oral Comm.	2	5	2.7	1	2	3

* Specific required course determined by placement scores.

Table 3 shows that all nine of the exemplary colleges and all four of the area schools have required coursework in various skill areas. The table further shows whether the required courses are specified or are part of a distribution system. The average number of required semester hours of credit in a each skill area is also shown. All of the colleges in both groups have specific general education requirements in English composition. Four of the exemplary group and three of the area colleges give incoming freshmen an English placement test to determine which composition course they must take. Two colleges in this group, and one of the area colleges use students' ACT/SAT test scores to determine English placement. Students whose test scores are below standard, as indicated by either type of measurement, are

required to complete a remedial English program prior to enrolling in a standard course in English composition. There are two common approaches to remedial study in basic English skills: a developmental English course or tutorial and/or computer assistance in a college's Writing Lab. Students with above average test scores have the opportunity to enroll in an honors or advanced composition course in three exemplary colleges and two area schools.

Five of the exemplary colleges and three of the area schools require more than one composition course. This is usually a sequence of two courses; however, some institutions that are on the quarter system have a three course sequence. Two of the exemplary colleges which require one composition course, also require students to take at least two other courses that are specifically identified as writing intensive. English proficiency, as determined either by passing an exam or by having a grade of "C" or better in the required composition course(s), is a graduation requirement in five of the exemplary colleges and three of the area schools. In the interviews with general education faculty, four faculty members cited their college's emphasis on writing proficiency as a strength in their general education programs. Faculty members in the one area school that requires only one composition course identified the limited coursework in composition as a weakness in their general education program. All of the area colleges indicated that in recent years they have given particular emphasis to developing Writing Across the Curriculum. This emphasis has often been aided by grant money which was used to bring in outside consultants who conducted special training sessions for the full faculty. There was a strong consensus among the faculty interviewed that students are now doing more and better writing as a result of this specialized training.

Four of the exemplary colleges and one area school require students to take a Freshman Seminar in their first semester. These courses are usually interdisciplinary in nature and are built around a particular topic. Written and oral communication, as well as reading skills, are also emphasized in the Freshman Seminars. Another expressed purpose of the seminar courses is as an academic orientation for new students; thus, enrollment in each section is likely to be small. One college has a limit of fifteen students, which allows faculty members to provide considerable individualized attention. One Chief Academic Officer interviewed believes that the Freshman Seminar is an important factor in the retention of students.

Seven colleges, five exemplary and two area, require all students to take a designated course in oral communication. The course that is mostly commonly required is one that focuses on public speaking. Three colleges, two exemplary and one area, require students to complete one selected communications course which is chosen from a list of several options, which may include such courses as interpersonal communication and oral interpretation of literature.

One college in the exemplary group requires all students to take a computer course. A second member of this group requires either a mathematics or a computer course, while yet another includes both mathematics and computer courses as options in the natural science distribution. Three of the four area colleges require a computer course as a general education requirement. General education faculty members in two of the area colleges cited the computer literacy requirement as one of the strengths of their general education program. However, the chair of the math department in one of these schools indicated that presently more students are

coming to college with computer skills than was true when the course was added, making this requirement less significant than in the past.

Only one of the thirteen catalogs analyzed makes no mention of mathematics or computational skills in the general education portion of its curricula. All four of the area colleges require coursework in mathematics. Four exemplary colleges place mathematics within the natural science distribution of general education courses. Two of these colleges, however, specifically indicate that one choice in natural science must be in mathematics. In one exemplary college and in two area institutions, mathematics is identified as a separate component in the general education curriculum, and students must complete one approved mathematics course.

Placement testing in mathematics is done by three area colleges and three members of the exemplary group. Three colleges, two area and one exemplary, use SAT/ACT scores as part of their evaluation. Students whose test results indicate a deficiency in mathematics are directed to either courses that are designed to develop basic skills in mathematics or to tutorial assistance in the college's learning center. After the prescribed level of mathematics proficiency is attained, students are then permitted to take the mathematics courses that are specified as general education requirements. One area college and one exemplary college have policies that exempt students from the mathematics general education requirement if they have very high scores in the mathematics placement test or exceptional ACT scores in mathematics with a strong mathematics background in high school. Interviews at three area colleges revealed that changes in mathematics requirements have been a recent focus in general education curriculum revision.

Six of the nine exemplary colleges require study of a foreign language or proven proficiency in a foreign language for graduation. In three of these colleges the foreign language requirement is only for those in a Bachelor of Arts degree program. The language requirement applies to all graduates in the other three schools. None of the area colleges has a foreign language requirement. Foreign language credits in other colleges can variously be applied to the distribution requirements in the humanities or in cultural awareness.

Table 4

Requirements in Humanities/Fine Arts

Content Area	Exemplary Group			Area Colleges		
	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.
Creative/Performing Arts	7	2	5.1	2	2	3
History	4	3	4.9	2	1	2.7
Literature	7	2	4.2	2	2	3.5
Philosophy/Religion	8	1	4.7	2	1	2.3

Table 4 indicates that the general education curriculum structure in all thirteen colleges analyzed requires coursework in the humanities and fine arts. The table also shows the number of colleges that specify coursework and the number that use a distribution structure in each area. The average number of required credits in each content area is also given. Nine schools followed the distribution plan in which a student must complete a certain number of credits from a list of acceptable general education courses in the various areas of the humanities and fine arts. This options plan often carries

with it the stipulation that the courses chosen must be from two or three different areas. All colleges in both groups require study of the creative/performing arts and literature. All catalogs analyzed, except that of one area college, indicate a course requirement in the area of religion and philosophy.

Two colleges in each group require specific courses in the humanities to be taken by all students. The specific courses in this content area required by the two area colleges consist of an interdisciplinary three course sequence. This integrated approach to the study of the humanities was identified by faculty members in these colleges as a strength in their general education curricula. In one of these colleges, the sequence involves the study of art, literature and music; in the other it also includes history, philosophy and religion.

History is included as a distribution option in either the social studies or a general humanities content category by two of the exemplary colleges and two area schools. Two of the exemplary schools and one of the area schools have no required study of history. Seven colleges in the exemplary group and one of the area schools identify history as a separate category. Four in the exemplary group use the distribution approach and offer students choices of American, European, Ancient, Asian and other historical studies. The other three colleges specify the courses in history which students must take; two specify study in the history of Western Civilization and the other specifies the study of American history. Two of the three area colleges which require history use the distribution plan and the other specifies the study of Western Civilization. Faculty members interviewed in three of the area colleges would like to see more required coursework in the area of history and the humanities.

One exemplary college that has specified coursework in the humanities/fine arts requires a course in art and music appreciation and another in philosophy. It also requires nine credits in religion, the greatest number of any school studied. The specific religion/philosophy course required by an area school is one that is a part of its humanities sequence.

Table 5

Other General Education Requirements

Content Area	Exemplary Group			Area Colleges		
	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.	Require Distrib. Courses	Require Specific Courses	Average Required Sem. Hrs.
Cultural Diversity	3	0	5	1	0	3
Natural Sciences	8	1	8.3	1	3	7.3
Social Sciences	8	1	10.6	2	2	6.3
Health/Phys. Ed.	3	4	2.5	2	2	2.5

Table 5 shows primary areas of study included in several other content areas in the general education curricula of the participating colleges. It indicates the number of schools in each group which use the distribution structure and those that require all students to take specific courses in a given area. It further identifies the average number of semester hours of credit required by schools with requirements in each area.

All thirteen colleges studied require substantial coursework in both the natural sciences and the social sciences. All but one college in the exemplary group requires more than one course of natural science. In each of these schools students choose from courses in various areas of the natural sciences; however, in four colleges the choices made must include at least two different

areas of science. One college stipulates that both courses should be from the same area. Five members of this group also stipulate that a specified number of the required natural science credits be in a laboratory science.

The natural science requirements in the area colleges vary somewhat. One school requires a single laboratory science course; another requires a life science course and a course in physical science. The other two area colleges give students the option of taking a sequence of courses in the same laboratory science or a specified non-laboratory sequence in three different areas of the natural sciences. In the interviews with several area general education faculty members, a laboratory science requirement was seen as a strength and its absence as a weakness in their respective general education curricula.

With one exception, the exemplary colleges use the distribution requirement structure in the social sciences. The number of required social science courses ranges from one to four, with three being the most common. Five colleges require that the social science courses selected by students be in at least two different areas. Various academic areas are included in the distribution structures. Each distribution structure included psychology. Sociology, political science, and economics were also common. A few of the distribution structures also include courses in anthropology, history, geography, and linguistics. One college in the exemplary group requires all students to take a specified psychology course, as well as a second specified social science course in either sociology or anthropology.

The social science structure in half of the area colleges includes specific course(s) that all students must take. One college requires general psychology and another requires three specific courses in economics, sociology and political science. The other two area colleges require that the two social

science courses taken be in two different areas. Faculty comments support the requirement of specified social science courses, especially general psychology.

Three exemplary colleges and one area school require all students to study in the area of cultural awareness. All but one of these schools require one cultural awareness course, with the other requiring two courses. In each of these schools, students select courses from an approved list of classes that include a wide variety of studies of American ethnic groups as well as African, Latin American and Asian cultures. The area college that has the cultural awareness requirement includes the study of a foreign language as an option. Faculty members interviewed in two other area colleges indicated the lack of a requirement in the study of non-Western cultures as a weakness in their curriculum.

Courses in health and physical education are required in most of the colleges studied. These courses include study in health, physical fitness, recreational skills, and a wide variety of physical activities. Seven of the exemplary colleges require credits in this area. Three of these schools use a distribution structure, while four specify at least one required course for all students, usually in health or fitness. In addition to the one specified course, many of these schools also require students to take one or two physical activity courses. All of the area colleges require coursework in health and/or physical education. Two of the schools specify particular course(s) to be taken, and two of the schools do not. Both of the prescriptive schools require courses in physical fitness, and one of them requires an additional course in health.

Two other general education course requirements, each found in a single institution, are not indicated on Table 5. One of the exemplary colleges requires two seminar credits which can be earned by attending and

participating in regular seminars conducted on campus. An interdisciplinary course on the impact of technology on society is a required general education course in one of the area colleges. This course is used as a capstone to that college's general education curriculum and was viewed as a major strength by the faculty interviewed at that site.

Table 6

Summary of Total Required General Education Credits

Content Area	Exemplary Average Required Sem. Hrs.	Area Average Required Sem. Hrs.
Skills (Eng. Comp., Oral Comm., Mathematics)	11.5	11.8
Humanities/Fine Arts	18.9	11.5
Social Sciences	10.6	6.3
Natural Sciences	8.3	7.3
Average Minimum Required General Education Credits (excluding foreign language)	43.8	42
Average Total Credits Required for Graduation	129.2	126.8

Table 6 shows a summary of the average total required credits in the major general education content areas. With the exception of the learning skills area, the exemplary group generally requires more semester hours in each of the categories listed. The greatest difference between the two groups is in the area of Humanities/Fine Arts, in which the exemplary colleges commonly require about seven more semester hours of coursework. The table shows that the two groups differ little in the average total of semester hours credit required in general education. However, it should be noted that the range of the average general education credits required by the nine exemplary colleges is from 36 to 57 with a median of 44, whereas the range of the four area colleges is from 40 to 44 with a median of 42. Although five of

the exemplary group require more general education credits than the average of 41 credits required by the area colleges, the three exemplary colleges which require fewer than 40 credits lower the average credits required by the exemplary group to 43.8. Also, two of the exemplary colleges have physical education courses as a graduation requirement but do not list those credits as part of the general education program; whereas, all of the area colleges consider physical education as part of their general education curricula.

In the five exemplary colleges that require foreign language proficiency for graduation, additional general education credits are required. This varies from four to twelve credits, depending on what a student needs to attain the required proficiency level in a selected foreign language. The two groups of colleges vary little in the average total credits required for graduation: 129.2 for the exemplary group and 126.8 for the area colleges. The average total number of credits required for graduation within the exemplary group ranges from 120 to 152 and in the area colleges from 125 to 128.

Two additional observations can be noted in comparing the content of the general education curricula of the two groups of colleges studied. First, the exemplary colleges generally require more coursework in the humanities and social sciences, which is in keeping with their philosophy as private colleges. Second, the area colleges seem to have more learning skills requirements, which probably reflects an enrollment policy that is less selective than those of the exemplary colleges. Given the different locations and philosophies of the participating colleges, they show a general consistency in the content of their general education programs.

Review and Revision

Written documentation obtained from five of the exemplary colleges and the interviews conducted at all four area colleges provide the basis for this analysis of the process used to review and revise general education curricula. This data will show a greater influence from the area colleges due to the in-depth information gleaned from four interviews on each of the four area campuses. The frequency with which the participating colleges review their general education curricula varies considerably. For example, a letter from the president of one exemplary college states, "[name] seldom modifies its general education curriculum." However, the Chief Academic Officer at an area college indicated that the general education curriculum at that school is constantly being reviewed and revised. The publication of a new college catalog every two years prompts curricular review in two other area colleges. Some institutions see their periodic accreditation reviews as an incentive to curricular review and revision, while yet other colleges review their general education only when there is a perceived need.

Process of Revision

Although there are wide differences in the frequency with which general education curricula are reviewed, there is considerably more consistency in the process used to conduct the revision of general education curricula. Each of the nine colleges which contributed information about its revision process has a generally bottom-up approach to curriculum review and revision. The process usually begins with suggestions for change which are generated by individual faculty members who bring their ideas to meetings of their academic departments or divisions. The approved

recommendations from that level are then carried to the college Curriculum Committee, also called the Academic Council or the Curriculum and Educational Policies Committee, for further consideration.

Membership on the Curriculum Committee consists of representatives from each academic division in the college. In two of the area colleges each academic area elects a representative to the Curriculum Committee for a term of one or two years; representation on the Curriculum Committee at the other two area schools is an ex-officio responsibility of the division chairpersons. Besides the representatives from the academic areas, the other member common to all of the Curriculum Committees is the Chief Academic Officer, who may or may not have voting privileges, depending on the school. The Curriculum Committees of some area colleges also include the head librarian, the registrar, and student representatives who are appointed by their Student Associations. These members are given voting privileges in some schools, but in others they are considered primarily as resource persons.

The frequency of change in membership on the Curriculum Committee varies with the institution. One area school indicated that there had been no change in divisional chairpersons for fifteen years, giving the committee great stability. However, even in the schools where elected representatives brought more frequent change in the composition of the Curriculum Committee, none of the Chief Academic Officers indicated that a special orientation was provided for new members. This was not perceived as necessary because new faculty members usually were not members of the Curriculum Committee. Furthermore, by the time faculty joined the committee, they were assumed to be generally aware of the policies for curriculum review and revision by the experience gained in being involved in departmental meetings.

Also, faculty members at a small college learn much from the informal channels of disseminating information about making changes in curriculum, which makes a formal orientation unnecessary. The faculty members interviewed seemed very satisfied with the representative membership on their curriculum committees. One veteran committee member commented that there was a lot of curriculum discussion done on the local golf course, where several of the divisional chairpersons often played together. Without exception, the faculty members and the Chief Academic Officers interviewed believed that the ideas of faculty members were given serious consideration both by their respective academic committees and curriculum committees.

If the Curriculum Committee accepts a recommendation for change brought to it by one of its representatives, the matter is then referred to the full faculty, which then votes on whether or not to approve the change. Many changes can then be implemented with no further approval required. However, major curriculum changes, such as adding or deleting an academic program, are taken by the Chief Academic Officer to the State Board of Higher Education for state institutions or to a private college's Board of Regents for final approval.

Influences that Shape Revision

There are a wide number of influences that serve as stimuli for curriculum change in general education. The interviews at the area colleges highlighted both internal and external promptings for review and revision of their general education curricula. One of the external factors is the academic preparation students bring with them to college. Some faculty members mentioned that more unprepared students are attending college now than in the past. This has necessitated many of the remedial skill programs in

writing and mathematics. Also, the changing demands of society, particularly in the workplace, have resulted in curricular revisions such as the addition of computer literacy as a basic skill area.

Both of the state colleges that participated in this study are being required to change from a quarter system to a semester system, forcing them to review and revise their curricula. Budgetary restrictions also bring change. For example, one state college has reluctantly dropped its laboratory science requirement due to budget cuts. Consultants brought in to assist in the review and revision of a college's general education curriculum can also effect change. All of the area colleges made reference to help gleaned in this manner in such areas as the humanities, mathematics and writing. Another form of outside influence is current professional literature on general education curricula. One Chief Academic Officer made specific reference to the influence of the 1987 study of the Carnegie Foundation as reported by Ernest L. Boyer.

Internal stimuli have a more specific and personal effect on the shape of general education curricula. Administrative leadership was mentioned as a significant influence in three of the area schools. A college President's philosophy regarding the importance and design of general education leaves an indelible imprint on that college's general education emphasis. Interviews with faculty members and Chief Academic Officers at two colleges, which now have presidents who are stronger general education advocates than were their predecessors, credit recent curricular improvements in general education to the influence of their new presidential leadership.

The support and leadership of a college's Chief Academic Officer is another major influence in the process of review and revision of an institution's general education curriculum. Faculty members in one college

spoke highly of the support and assistance of their Chief Academic Officer in helping to facilitate a major rethinking of their general education program. As a result of this leadership, the faculty has come to see their general education curriculum as an integrated program with common goals, rather than a mere collection of courses from various departments. At another area college, faculty members noted that each Chief Academic Officer usually has a philosophy of general education. When there are frequent changes in that position, the general education curriculum is weakened because major curricular changes are implemented, but they are not in operation long enough for their effectiveness to be determined. Faculty members are frustrated by such rapid change and the resulting lack of stability.

Not only do new college presidents and academic officers generate change in general education programs, new faculty members also bring a variety of ideas and points of view. One Chief Academic Officer indicated that his institution frequently hires young professors who have recently completed graduate school and bring with them fresh ideas from academe. Because small colleges are sometimes professional stepping stones for these young faculty members, there tends to be a continuing input of new ideas as professors come and go.

Types of Review and Revision

As indicated above, general education curricula vary in the degree to which they are structured. Correspondingly, the review and revision process tends to vary in its focus. A college which has a tightly structured general education curriculum reviews the program as a whole, or as one Chief Academic Officer stated, "we deal with general education as a package." This type of review and revision of a general education curriculum is a complex

process, because every change that is made must fit into the goals of the integrated whole. Therefore, when one change is made, it often results in other revisions as well.

General education programs that are primarily of the distribution type are revised quite differently. Rather than looking at the general education curriculum as a whole, these schools evaluate specific courses in light of established general education criteria. Information received from one of the exemplary colleges and from one of the area colleges includes forms that faculty members are to complete if they want a new course to be accepted for general education credit. In responding to the questions on these forms instructors are asked to identify the proposed course's goals and explain how they fit into the college's general education objectives. Some of these objectives include an emphasis on writing, on critical analysis, and on developing methods of inquiry.

Revision of this type of general education curriculum consists of the Curriculum Committee carefully evaluating these course proposals to see if they meet the criteria of a particular distribution area. If the course is accepted, it is then added to the list of course options from which students may choose in order to fulfill the distribution requirements in a given academic area. Interviews at the area college which has this revision system revealed that properly written proposals are rarely refused. One faculty member indicated that there is no follow-up to insure that a newly added course is taught as it was proposed, and saw this as a weakness in their review and revision system.

Implementation of Curriculum Changes

Implementing approved changes in a college's general education curriculum was not seen as difficult by those interviewed at the area colleges. Minor changes are often put into practice soon after final approval is given. However, most course changes are implemented with the publication of a new college catalog. The information gathered about review and revision of general education suggests that there usually is no special inservice training for faculty prior to implementing curriculum changes in general education. Faculty interviews suggested that there was no perceived need for inservice training because curricula changes were usually minor and often rare. Two of the area colleges have made only minor changes in the past ten years.

Teaching General Education Courses

Most of the faculty members interviewed felt that different teaching strategies should be used in teaching general education courses from those commonly used in teaching upper division courses in a particular academic major. Faculty members described their approach to teaching general education as "being more from a practical point of view"; as "emphasizing the overall picture rather than the technical details"; and as "more explanation than exploration." Some general education instructors see themselves as apologists for their disciplines and feel that it is important for students to gain an understanding of their discipline's philosophy. The danger of watering down an academic area for the sake of general education is a concern expressed by one faculty member. Another faculty member commented that graduate school does a poor job of preparing one to teach general education courses because it attempts to make one into too much of a specialist.

According to the information gathered for this study, there usually is no general orientation for new faculty into the teaching strategies used in general education courses. What assistance might be given is usually provided by individual academic departments. The chair of one English department indicated that new composition instructors are oriented by the chair and blended into the team of composition faculty members who teach from a common syllabus and use a common text. Another department chair saw inservice for new general education teachers as unnecessary and "high schoolish," because he hires only faculty members who are fully prepared for their teaching assignments.

Recommendations for the Review and Revision of General Education

Based on their experience, all four of the Chief Academic Officers interviewed offered advice about the process of reviewing and revising general education curricula. The strongest theme running through all of their comments was to make changes slowly, one at a time. One said, "don't hurry the process; allow time for the faculty to communicate." Another cautioned, "don't make big changes until you know what you're doing isn't working." A major point emphasized by one administrator was that there is no perfect general education program. Therefore, instead of seeking for "the" general education program, an institution should develop "a" general education curriculum in keeping with its aims and objectives.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

From the creation of the first colonial colleges to the variety of colleges and universities in the 1990s, general education has been an important part of American higher education, both in theory and in practice. Many internal and external forces have brought changes to general education curricula over the years. During the past few decades, the growth in professional education and the democratization of American higher education have greatly impacted general education curricula. Many institutions responded to these pressures during the 1960s and 70s by allowing a multitude of general education choices in a distribution system, or "smorgasbord" approach, to general education. The lack of coherence and structure in this type of general education curricula led to dissatisfaction among many in higher education and initiated a wave of studies and reform efforts in the 1980s.

Very few of the voices in the discussions of general education during the 1980s came from small colleges with enrollments of 2000 or less. Recognizing that the smaller size and the liberal arts traditions in many of these institutions have a pronounced effect on general education curricula, there was an apparent lack of information regarding the current practices in general education curricula in small colleges. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to gain a more complete understanding of general education curricula of selected, small colleges in terms of: the colleges' stated *goals* of general education; the *processes* of developing and *modifying* general education curricula; and the *structure* and *content* of their present general education curricula. A second purpose was to develop a model for general

education curriculum development based on the synthesis of the information gathered.

In addition to the review of related literature, two other research methods were employed in compiling the data used in this study: analysis of written institutional documents, and campus interviews. Two groups of small colleges, with enrollments of less than 2000, participated in this study of general education curricula. The first group was identified by the researcher as exemplary, as indicated in the findings of a national survey. Data were collected from the catalogs, mission statements, and responses to questions from the ten colleges in this group. The second group consisted of four Midwestern, undergraduate institutions. Information from these participating area colleges was gathered through the analysis of their college catalogs and mission statements. Also, the researcher conducted interviews with the chief academic officer and three general education faculty members on each area campus.

Conclusion

Data collected from the mission statements of each of the colleges in two groups showed several common goals and objectives in general education. These included developing student's learning skills and intellectual curiosity, increasing students' knowledge of the liberal arts, and preparing them for service to society. Six of the colleges studied, three from each group, have specific statements identifying the aims and purposes of their general education programs. The three most frequently stated goals for these general education programs were to provide students with a broad

academic exposure, encourage their aesthetic appreciations, and develop their values and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Study of the structure and content of the general education curricula of the participating colleges, as reflected in their current catalogs, reveals many consistencies. Of the fourteen colleges studied, all but two have a limited distribution type of general education structure in their curricula. One school has two general education programs: a distribution system which involves most students on campus, and an optional interdisciplinary integrated studies program. The other college that did not have a distribution system has a free elective curriculum.

Coursework in advanced learning skills, the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences is required by all of the institutions studied. There is little difference between the two groups in the total number of general education credits required for graduation, 43.8 for the exemplary group and 42 for the area group. Two differences in the general education curricula between the two groups are noted, however. The exemplary group commonly requires more credit hours in the humanities and fine arts. Also, the study of a foreign language is required in six of the exemplary colleges, but not by any of the area schools.

The study shows that there is considerable difference in the frequency with which small colleges review their general education curricula. The publication of each new college catalog or the preparation for periodic accreditation visits often establishes a cycle of curriculum review. A bottom-up process is usually used to revise the general education curricula in the participating colleges. Suggestions for changes in the general education curricula are most often initiated by faculty in their individual academic departments. Recommendations are then carried to the college's Curriculum

Committee for further consideration. Approval at that level usually brings the proposed change to the full faculty for final approval, although major curricular changes may need further approval by the institution's governing board. Interviews with the chief academic officers and the general education faculty members in the area colleges revealed that this process is viewed as effective and efficient in revising general education curricula.

Model of General Education Curriculum

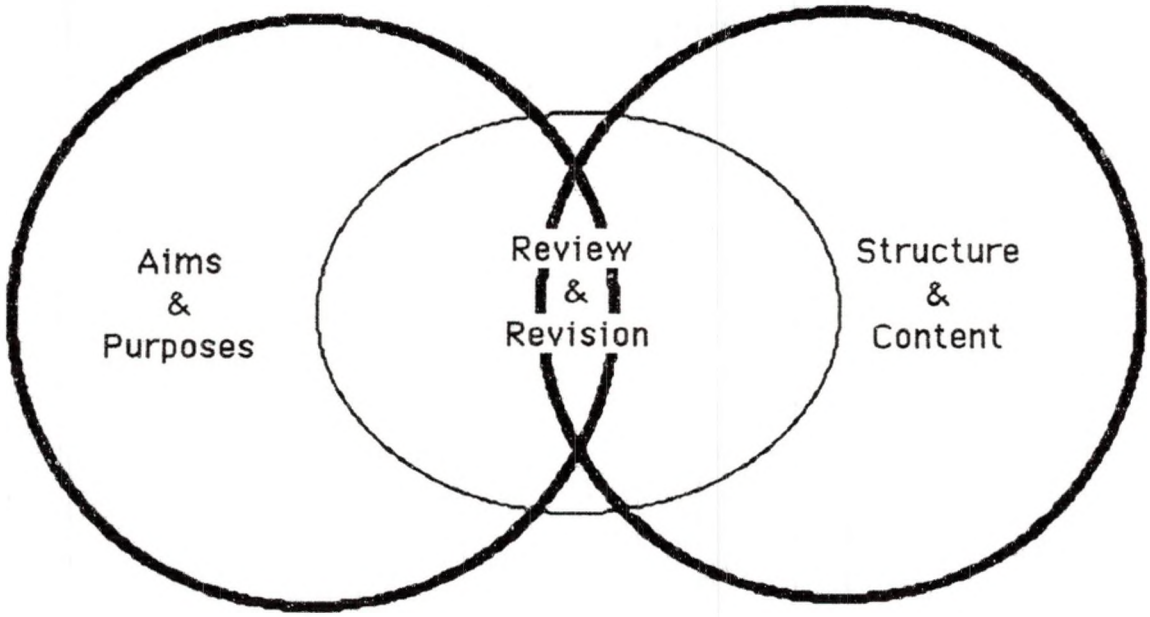
Based on the findings from the written documents, interviews and observations of the participating colleges, as well as the review of related literature, the following model for developing general education curricula is proposed. While there is no particular general education curriculum that is right for all small colleges, these three components represent the significant areas of consideration in general education: aims and purposes, content and structure, and review and revision. These components were recognized in the literature. They were also found independently to apply in each of the other two categories researched: exemplary colleges and area colleges. The proposed general education curriculum model reflects a general consistency found in all of the data gathered.

This model can be useful in at least five different ways. First, it illustrates the significance of aims and purposes in general education curricula. This is important because of the tendency of many in higher education to think of general education as a mere collection of required courses that students must take in order to move on to professional studies or graduation. Second, it shows the vital relationship between the aims and purposes and the content and structure. This tie acknowledges that changes

in the content and structure involve more than mere course tinkering. Third, by graphically representing the three components of a general education curriculum, the model provides a useful visual aid in discussing the practical aspects of general education curricula with other professionals. Fourth, the model reflects the recognition that there is no one ideal general education curriculum. Given the diversities in general education programs, the model focuses only on the major components and is flexible enough to serve as a general construct for the general education curricula of many different institutions.

Illustration 1

Proposed Model of General Education Curriculum



Finally, the model illustrates that the process of review and revision is of major importance in a general education curriculum. Although less visible

than the other two components of the model, the process of review and revision is the unifying, central life force of a strong general education curriculum. This process of program evaluation has two primary functions: an ongoing, systematic review of a college's general education curricular aims and purposes; and the implementation of appropriate revisions in the structure and content of the curriculum in response to the recognized needs for change.

In each of the three components in the above model, there are essential elements that constitute the basics of a general education program. Each component can be strengthened by adding other qualities which are recognized in this study as marks of excellence in a general education program. These are summarized as follows:

Aims & Purposes: This component is defined as the broad goals of a college's general education curriculum; it also indicates an institution's definition of an educated person.

Basic Elements:

* indicated in the college's stated mission
* based on the needs of the college's students
* correlated with the college's general education structure and content
* supported and implemented by the college's faculty.

Marks of Excellence:

* statement of specific goals for the college's general education program
* specific efforts to coordinate co-curricular and campus activities with general education goals

* integration of the goals of general education with the needs of professional education.

Structure & Content: The specific plan and coursework that all students are required to complete in order that the goals of a college's general education program might be achieved.

Basic Elements:

* emphasis on advanced learning skills with provision for remediation for those students who need assistance
* coursework in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences
* a minimum of 40 required semester hours spread throughout the four years of a baccalaureate degree
* sufficient structure to give coherence to an institution's general education goals.

Marks of Excellence:

* integration of writing and critical thinking skills throughout the curriculum
* required proficiency levels in fundamental skills
* interdisciplinary emphasis, such as in a freshman seminar or a capstone course
* emphasis on cultural diversity and a global perspective
* emphasis on education for character and service to society.

Review & Revision: The heart of this proposed curriculum model is program evaluation. This involves a systematic process of reviewing a college's general education curriculum and making appropriate revisions in response to recognized needs for change.

Basic Elements:

* established cycle of review and revision of general education curriculum
* faculty involvement and support of evaluation process
* established policy for recommending, approving and implementing changes in general education
* representative curriculum committee committed to the college's goals of general education
* support of college president and chief academic officer
* outcomes assessment plan aimed at improving instruction.

Marks of Excellence:

* general education director who oversees the program and coordinates the evaluation process
* multi-faceted assessment plan
* faculty development plan for orienting new general education faculty and implementing program changes.

Further Observations

What follows is the considered opinion of the researcher based on the study.

1. A college's small size does not preclude the possibility of a strong general education program. Rather, smallness is often an advantage because it gives general education a place of greater visibility and priority in the undergraduate curriculum, it involves a majority of the faculty, and it makes review and revision faster and less complex. Small colleges would be well

advised to feel less threatened by larger institutions and recognize their inherent advantages of community, flexibility, and efficiency.

2. Despite the many recent winds of curricular change, small colleges have usually maintained their traditional commitments to a liberal arts emphasis. They tend to be more influenced by practicality and less impacted by the various fads in general education. While curricular changes may be made infrequently, this does not necessarily imply resistance to change. Rather, when a significant need for change is recognized, such as adding a computer literacy requirement or a greater emphasis on writing, appropriate curricular revisions are made.

3. Very little in the reform movement of the 1980s has impacted small colleges. This is largely because much of what was called for by the various studies, such as a more prescriptive curricular structure, an emphasis on essential skills, and more attention given to values, were already part of the general education curricula in many small colleges. However, some of the trends identified by Gaff are recognized as present concerns in small colleges. For example, one area college is beginning a Freshman Seminar and another area school has recently given greater emphasis to integrated learning which culminates in a meaningful capstone course. The need for a greater emphasis on cultural pluralism and more of an awareness of a global perspective were also expressed

Although only one interviewee made specific reference to one of the major studies in the 1980s, Boyer's, the researcher was not left with the impression that the area small colleges are unaware or out of touch with the concerns about general education that have recently been highlighted.

4. While there are many influences that shape a small college's general education program, the most significant seems to be the leadership of an

institution's president and chief academic officer. Since faculty in a small college tend to wear several hats, such as teaching in more than one academic discipline and serving on several committees, the college administrators play a vital role in providing the resources and coordinating curricular changes in general education. Although faculty have a significant role in suggesting and implementing change, the vision of the president and chief academic officer is the greatest impetus in the general education program of a small college.

Recommendations

This study has examined the general education curricula of selected small colleges. It has provided data from college's written documents, and interviews regarding the aims and purposes, structure and content, and review and revision of a general education program. A model illustrating the basic components of a general education curriculum has been proposed. The basic elements and additional marks of excellence in each component of the model have been noted.

Further research is recommended in several areas related to the general education programs in small colleges. Because a general education curriculum can be no stronger than the quality of instruction that implements it, additional information is needed regarding the most effective methods of teaching general education courses. Research regarding students' perspectives, both as students and as alumni, on the general education component of their undergraduate curriculum would be another valuable addition to this research. The growing emphasis on outcomes assessment in general education will also be an important research consideration in the

future. Such a study could provide more specific guidelines for assessing the overall effectiveness of a general education program.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

EXEMPLARY GROUP

Alma College
Alma, MI

Amherst College
Amherst, MA

Asbury College
Wilmore, KY

Bethany College
Lindsborg, KS

Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, PA

Hillsdale College
Hillsdale, MI

Marymount Manhatten College
New York, NY

Pomona College
Claremont, CA

Transylvania University
Lexington, KY

William Jewell College
Liberty, MO

AREA COLLEGES

Dakota Wesleyan University
Mitchell, SD

Jamestown College
Jamestown, ND

Mayville State University
Mayville, ND

Valley City State University
Valley City, ND

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO EXEMPLARY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

September 11, 1990

Dear President _____:

I am requesting your participation in a research project which will assist me in meeting the dissertation requirements for my doctoral degree at the University of North Dakota. My research topic is "A Study of General Education Curricula in Selected Small Colleges."

_____ College's reputation for excellence in the liberal arts, and its enrollment of less than 2000, make it an ideal participant in this project. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of the general education curricula in a number of exemplary small colleges, and then compare this data with the general education curricula of several small colleges in the Midwest. Your assistance in this research project would involve:

1. Sending me your college's current mission statement and catalog for analysis.
2. Providing written responses to the following research questions regarding the general education program at your college:
   a. What are your stated goals for general education?
   b. What processes are used to develop and modify your general education curriculum?
   c. What is the present structure and content of your general education curriculum?

Other useful documentation regarding your general education program during the past five years would include:

*Program review documents
*Program planning documents
*Institutional review documents
*Institutional planning documents
*Curriculum committee minutes pertaining to general education
*Administrative anecdotal records pertaining to general education

This data will be treated confidentially. The completed study will maintain the anonymity of each participating college.

Your willingness to participate in this study is greatly desired. I would appreciate your assistance in gathering the data mentioned above, and will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this research project. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lavonne F. Larson

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO AREA COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

September 11, 1990

Dear President _____:

I am requesting your participation in a research project which will assist me in meeting the dissertation requirements for my doctoral degree at the University of North Dakota. My research topic is "A Study of General Education Curricula in Selected Small Colleges." The purpose of my study is to gather information about the general education curricula of a number of small colleges which have national reputations in the liberal arts, and then compare this data with the general education curricula of several small colleges in the Midwest. I believe that _____ University could make a valuable contribution to this study.

Your assistance in this research project would involve:

1. Sending me your current mission statement and catalog for analysis.
2. Providing written responses to the following research questions regarding the general education program at your college:
   a. What are your stated goals for general education?
   b. What processes are used to develop and modify your general education curriculum?
   c. What is the present structure and content of your general education curriculum?
3. Arranging for on campus interviews with your chief academic officer and three full-time faculty, who teach general education courses. (I plan to use the Tuesdays in October and November for on-site visits.)

Other useful documentation regarding your general education program during the past five years would include:

*Program review documents
*Program planning documents
*Institutional review documents
*Institutional planning documents
*Curriculum committee minutes pertaining to general education
*Administrative anecdotal records pertaining to general education

All data will be treated confidentially. The completed study will maintain the anonymity of each participating college.

Your willingness to participate in this study is greatly desired. I would appreciate your assistance in gathering the data and arranging for the interviews mentioned above and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lavonne F. Larson

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION FACULTY

QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION FACULTY

1. Describe your role in teaching in the general education program. How long have you been teaching general education courses at this college? Do you teach in other areas of the college curriculum?

2. Describe the nature and effectiveness of the inservice training or other special preparation you have received for teaching in the general education program.

3. What are your views regarding the value of general education in the undergraduate curriculum?

4. What do you see as the strengths of your present general education program? What changes would you like to see made in the general education curriculum?

5. What involvement have you had in reviewing and revising the general education curriculum? To what extent are faculty member's suggestions used in revising the general education curriculum? What changes would you like to see made in the review and revision process?

6. Describe the nature of your working relationship with others who teach general education courses.

7. How do your teaching strategies in general education courses differ from those used in other courses that you teach?

8. What are students' perceptions of your general education program?

9. How closely do you believe your students come to achieving the stated goals of your general education program?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS

QUESTIONS FOR CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

1. Does your institution review your general education program on a cyclical basis or is it done primarily at the time of accreditation review? At what state in the review-revision process is your institution in now?

2. Describe your institution's process for review and/or revision of your general education goals and curriculum. What committee or group is primarily responsible for conducting this review process? How is this group chosen? What training is given to those who carry out this review?

3. Whose approval is required before recommendations can be implemented? What inservice training is given to general education faculty to apprise them of changes in the general education goals or curriculum?

4. What major factors have helped the most in your efforts to reform general education? What have been the major obstacles to the improvement of general education?

5. What ideas, writings, persons, meetings or other external resources have been of the greatest help in strengthening general education in your institution?

6. How would you say faculty attitudes regarding general education have changed over the last five years? of students? of the administration?

7. On the basis of your experience, what advice would you give others who may be involved with beginning an effort to reform general education?

8. Some general education programs are designed to develop various skills. Are specific skills an explicit part of your program? If so, which skills have been given the most attention in your most recent general education review?

9. Does your general education program contain requirements for interdisciplinary or other integrative study? If yes, explain briefly.

10. What are the long term goals of your general education program?

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