



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Office of Associate Provost
for Academic and Faculty Affairs

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TO: Rick McGee

FROM: Janna Vice

DATE: March 13, 2009

SUBJECT: CAA Agenda Item: Proposal for an Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies

The attached proposal for an Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies is the result of collaboration among a Faculty Senate subcommittee (chaired by Dr. John Taylor), an Associate Degree Work Group, and the Associate/Assistant Deans.

The proposed degree is designed to provide students who are required to enter the University with “undeclared majors” an option of entering a two-year program and identifying with an individual college. Particularly for at-risk students who have development needs or PCC deficiencies, this degree could be a first step toward success. The two-year degree can then ladder to a four-year program in a student’s chosen field of study.

A document showing the other Kentucky public institutions’ general studies/liberal two-year degree requirements is attached. If approved by CAA, this proposal will go to Faculty Senate, the Provost Council, the President, and the Board of Regents. The proposal must also be posted on CPE’s website.

When the degree is approved, it will reside in University Programs. Students in the program will be jointly advised by the University’s Advising Office and the academic college in which the student is earning the emphasis, which is similar to the General Studies (B.A.).



EKU Associate of General Studies

The Associate in General Studies degree provides students, especially adult learners, the opportunity to pursue a flexible degree program to meet their unique interests, career goals, and academic needs. Reflecting ECU's commitment to a liberal arts education, the degree allows students to concentrate in an area of interest while selecting from a wide variety of courses to meet personal, educational, or career goals. This degree is designed for students who want to advance in their careers, change careers, pursue a lifelong interest beyond their careers, or use the degree as a pathway to a baccalaureate degree.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Associate of General Studies degree has become more attractive with the growth of business and industry in the area and with the increase of minimum educational requirements for employment or promotion. In addition to those students wishing to enhance their employability, other students will find the program offers numerous opportunities to seek a degree for their own personal satisfaction. The degree allows students to gain confidence in their abilities by earning a degree at the associate level prior to enrolling in a baccalaureate program. The associate degree provides opportunities for students who wish to consolidate previously earned credits to complete their first degree.

Serving students from a varied background of college readiness, this degree provides students a defined path to success in earning one or more degrees. Upon successful completion of ECU's Associate of General Studies degree, the student will have met all General Education requirements, which will apply toward a four-year program at ECU or any other regional Kentucky institution.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program requirements for the Associate of General Studies are:

1. Complete a minimum of 60 semester credit hours of prescribed and elective college credit.
2. Earn a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on all college-level work taken at ECU. In addition, transfer students must earn a minimum GPA of 2.0 on the combined transfer work and ECU work.
3. Complete at least 24 semester hours at ECU.
4. Complete an orientation course if the student begins as a freshman or transfers to ECU with fewer than 24 credit hours
5. Complete 48 semester hours of general education requirements as shown below:
 - Block 1. Communication (9 hours)
 - Block 2. Mathematics (3 hours)
 - Block 3. Arts and Humanities (6 hours)
 - Block 4. Natural Sciences (6 hours)
 - Block 5. Social and Behavioral Sciences (9 hours)
 - Block 6. Wellness (3 hours)
 - Block 7. Breadth of Knowledge (6 hours)
 - Block 8. Depth of Knowledge (6 hours)
6. Complete a 12-hour emphasis with an overall 2.0 GPA within an individual college outside of the General Education Requirement. (Students will be considered a member of the college in which they have completed their emphasis.

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Associate of General Studies

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The Associate in General Studies is intended to be a first degree and is not appropriate for a concurrent or secondary degree.

Associate Degree Work Group: Onda Bennett, Rich Boyle, Steve Byrn, Alex Combs, Lindsey Cross, Tina Davis, Claire Good, Charles Hickox, E.J. Keeley, Gary Kuhnhenh, Cindy Peck, Benton Shirey, Anne Shordike, Bill St Pierre, John Taylor, Liz Throop, Janna Vice, Cari Wallace, and Kate Williams.



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TO: Associate Degree in General Studies Work Group

FROM: Janna Vice

DATE: March 25, 2009

SUBJECT: AA in General Studies—Follow-up Questions and Issues

As some of you may know, I withdrew the AA in General Studies proposal at CAA last week. Although the proposal would have likely passed, a number of questions needed to be resolved; and the most practical place for that discussion is the Work Group.

The questions arose primarily from the deans and are not limited just to factors regarding the AA degree. Some of the same issues apply to the BA in General Studies. The questions are listed below. For now, we need to focus on the AA if we hope to get it approved by CPE this semester while we have strong representation in Frankfort.

Associate Degree

1. Where is the most practical place to house the degree? What are the implications for listing the degree under University Programs in the *Catalog* yet offering it in each college?

University Programs and the five academic colleges will have shared responsibility for the degree. The definition of “shared” will continue to be defined as the degree is implemented. The Work Group recognized that coordination and oversight would be needed to implement the degree and programmatic issues that result.

2. How can the departments get credit for the degree if the 12-hour emphasis is in one department? How can the college get credit?

If programs choose to articulate a “concentration” for which students can be advised to declare, the transcript can reflect that concentration and the department can receive credit.



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3. What is the appropriate name for the degree? The proposal suggests the diploma would state the Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies in the respective college (e.g., Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies in Education). However, one dean expressed concern that the title may overstate the knowledge 12 hours would provide in any one college.

The degree will be called an Associate of General Studies (AGS) and not state the affiliation of the college. Students, however, will be required to identify with a college.

4. Will we offer only an associate of arts? Health Sciences offers no “arts” degrees and would prefer an AS for their students.

The name of the degree will be Associate of General Studies (AGS). The Registrar reports that this name is used by other schools as well.

The Registrar’s research shows:

Associate of Arts = encompasses a liberal arts and sciences background, with emphasis on the humanities. This generally feeds well into a bachelor program.

Sometimes the AA is considered the equivalent to the first two years of a bachelor’s degree and, in theory, should feed directly into four year programs.

Associate of Science = gives a liberal arts and sciences background, but has an emphasis on math and science.

Obviously feeds well into a BS degree (which normally has a much higher requirement in the physical, biological and/or mathematical sciences).

These programs are knowledge specific, being related to a particular profession, and often not considered to be the equivalent to the first two years of a bachelor’s degree. From several sources found through quick web surfing I find the AS is generally considered to be more career oriented.

And just as an FYI....A.A.S. degrees commonly offered in nursing, medical assisting, and other medical professional fields.

5. Should the required 12 hours read “approved”?
Yes, the word “approved 12-hour” will be added to No. 6 in the degree requirements. For new students this “approval” will be to help advise and guide them into a meaningful concentration. For students who have stopped out and are returning or are transferring, this “approval” may mean that an advisor has reviewed the courses they have already taken and verifies the student is meeting the requirements of the degree.

An added clarification about the 12-hour emphasis: Unlike the BA/GS, the 12-hour emphasis can include courses they selected from General Education. The degree requirements will be revised to reflect this change.

6. Although the deans tend to favor having these students associated with their respective colleges, what will be the advising impact on the colleges?



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This discussion as to how better to serve these students must be continued regardless the decision about this degree.

7. Should this degree be mandated for students who are currently undeclared by “force” rather than by “choice”? Or should we be even stricter by including those students with one developmental deficiency?

The Work Group’s recommendation is to require students who have more than one college-readiness (developmental) deficiency to enter the AGS program until they have demonstrated they are ready for the baccalaureate program (successfully completed developmental courses).

8. Should the degree requirements clarify that while the degree is designed to ladder to a four-year program, students will have to meet all admissions criteria for any given program they choose?

Yes, common catalog wording to this effect will be added to the degree text.

9. Questions you may have? None were raised

General Studies Degree

Questions for the GS Degree parallel most of the questions pertaining to the AA. We will address these at a later meeting.

