

SAMPLE, ABRIDGED INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE
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INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE OF GOOD STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROGRAM OF GENERAL STUDIES AND CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: 1978-2002

Trends in the Liberal Arts Core: A Vision for the 21st Century was originally a three-year, \$ 310,000 research grant awarded by the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), Department of Education, to the American Academy for Liberal Education. The project is designed to investigate the trends and innovations in undergraduate, liberal arts, general education in over 80 colleges and universities. *Trends* spans more than 25 years of these changes - from 1977 to the present. The Association for Core Texts and Courses has extended this study, in a second phase, to 36 new institutions.... Good University is a participant in the study....

In Carnegie classification, Good State University is a Doctoral Intensive institution, of over 18,000 total students, of which 10,000 are undergraduates. Good University is a part of the Midwest State system of education. Founded in 1918, Good U has grown over time so that our records indicate that the university offers as many as nine different, lettered baccalaureates in six baccalaureate granting colleges.... Some time between 1998 and 2000 the University College appears to have taken on responsibilities for coordinating the Core Curriculum, for in the 2000 website the following statement appears which did not appear in the 1998 catalog: "The College coordinates the University Core Curriculum, the liberal arts component required of all State undergraduate degrees"....

The College of Sciences and Humanities (CSH) offers two degrees, the B.S. and B.A. It has about twenty departments and four programs; it apparently offered 34 majors in 1998. Graduation in the CSH required 126 semester credits. The Bachelor of Science conforms to the figures in the paragraph above, but the CSH carries an extra general education requirement for Bachelor of Arts graduates. The CHS B.A. requires 14 hours, two-years, of foreign language. It appears that the first year of foreign language, 8 credits, may be applied to distribution courses within the rest of the University Core. Hence, we arrive at a count of 15 Foundation Course credits, 24 Distribution Course credits, and 6 Foreign Language credits for a total of 45 credits or 36% of the entire baccalaureate curriculum.... Good University students must take, in their junior year, the Writing Competency Exam which, if failed, will require them to take an additional course in composition -- a strength in the program that our totals do not reflect.....

HISTORY OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES AT GOOD UNIVERSITY, 1978-2002 AND BEYOND.

The credits and structure of the University Core Curriculum are the result of a reform, under a quarter system, which first appears in our 1986 catalog. At the time the curriculum was known as the Program of General Studies and had two basic

subcategories: Core and Distribution. Subsequently renamed as the University Core Curriculum in 1998, the categories of the Core were also renamed as Foundation Courses and Distribution Courses. The 1986 reform was very thorough but it is possible, to trace the lineaments of the earlier 1978-1982 program in the replacement program. The reform of 1986 was continued in 1990 by the adoption of a semester system that did result in the reduction of percentage of credits devoted to the Program of General Studies (more below). Perhaps, far more interestingly, the 1986 reform represents a transformation from *general* education to *liberal* education for every student in the University....

1978. Based on a survey of 66 institutions, we can say that the 1978 Program of General Studies was one of the most complicated general education programs in our database.... [An analysis of the programs of 1978 and 1982 follows.]

By **1986** the 1978 program had been completely reformed. Perhaps it is not difficult to understand why, if, indeed, institutions can take only so much complexity in undergraduate education. The reforms took a structural framework of *Core Requirements, Distribution Requirements*, and, for B.A.'s, *Foreign Language*

The new program looked to be a liberal arts curriculum, even if it still declared itself in the catalog to be a “general education” program. Indeed, in an argument which stretches back to ancient Greece, the claim by the catalog that its new Program of General Studies attended to the “preparation for roles that people share as human beings and as members of family and community groups” was a liberal arts, not a general education, assertion.

The structure and offerings of the curriculum tended, on the whole, to bear out the claim. The Core Requirements used 20 hours of four-credit, quarter courses. English Composition 1 & 2, 103 and 104, brought over from the old program, began in short essays and progressed to research. These had to be completed by the end of the sophomore year. In addition, the Writing Competency exam, mentioned above, was taken by the end of the junior year. Mathematics and Its Applications, 105, a course above the level of basic algebra, took up mathematical modeling, problem solving, geometrical concepts, and applications to the physical and social sciences. History 150, Western Civilization could not help but look at community groups as it examined the heritage of turning points, issues, and cultural growth while focusing these upon the crises of the 19th and 20th Century that confronted the Western World. “Principles and practice of effective oral communication” and the preparation of “message[s]” with a concern for delivery shaped the final course, Speech 210, Fundamentals of Public Speaking. If not in the form or with the materials found in the ancient liberal arts, these did present their topics and typical concern....

The Distribution program occupied 60 quarter hours. This category was divided into four subcategories: *Sciences; Social Sciences; Humanities and Fine Arts; and International/Global Studies*. Science required three courses (per year), one each from three sub-subcategories: Physical, Earth, and Life Sciences. The offerings were limited and, essentially, scaled between almost complete scientific naiveté and interest in majoring. There were few labs; if other institutional site visits are indicative, this lack

probably points to a resource problem, for even Biology 111, Principles of Biology – a course required of majors, did not list a lab....

Some of the courses that helped to constitute various options in the old program made their way into this new one...

.... We have already pointed to the *liberalizing* of the curriculum, but there was also a far better delineation of choice – *as rational process of decision-making*. In this sense, the new program was a clarification of decisions that had to be made to construct a baccalaureate -- actually, a further liberalizing in terms of choice....

As we mentioned above, the University College was instituted around 1990 and, at the time, provided advising, tutoring “focused on primary academic skills and the general studies curriculum,” career advising, and technological support -- apparently run out of the Learning Center. Three academic programs, most directed toward either boosting skills or guiding the student who could not make a choice of majors, also engaged the college. In essence, the college was a large, helping hand with respect to the PGS....

1994 and 1998 saw only very modest changes in the Program of General Studies.... In the 1998 catalog, we see that the Core’s Western Civilization had changed to The West in the World, which still attended to the development of Western Civilization, but added interactions of people’s around with the West to a consideration of that development.

GOOD UNIVERSITY’S GENERAL EDUCATION CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIPSE/AALE DATABASE OF 65 OTHER UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OFFERING FOUR-YEAR DEGREES

Here, we concentrate on placing Good’s University Core programs within the wider contexts of *Trends’* study of 66 institutions. With that comparison in mind, we may suggest what the core requirements look like as a whole and in part....

Records of all institutions show, on average, that they devote 41% of their total B.A. credits to gen ed. Over time, this figure has risen from an average of 37.8% in 1978. In 2002, Research Intensive Universities, on average, devoted.....

In our FIPSE survey of 80 institutions, there are 10 Carnegie class Research Intensive Universities. In 2002 about one half of those doctoral institution records show general education programs of three or fewer categories; one half show four or more. Whether we take the University Core Curriculum with or without the Foreign Language requirement, Good University’s program falls into the first group. In terms of the total number of categories and subcategories within its general education program, Good’s requirements were as articulated as the average doctoral institution general education 2002 program.....

We may say that in its total number of credits, in broad architecture, in its differentiation, and in its concentration upon freshmen and sophomore courses, Good University’s Core

Curriculum in 2002 is less extensive than the average general education curriculum, as articulated as most, and more directive than most. The growth and development of both the University College and the general education review process are notable achievements which promise future benefits.....

QUESTIONS, PEER INSTITUTION COMPARISONS, AND CONCLUSIONS:

As the profile above suggests, Good's general education story is a complex one that cannot be assessed simply. Overall, the long-term trend seems to have been to strengthen the liberal education aspects of the general education program...

Good University might be profitably compared to Another University within the State of Midwest. These two institutions have both formed University Colleges, but Good University has gone beyond this to establish periodic general education review.... Other public Research Intensive Institutions to which State might be compared include.... None have the core oriented student support systems of Good U....

What were the motives and causes of these structural reforms that led the faculty to embrace the articulation and, therefore, direction of course taking and giving behavior into specific subjects and introductory courses so often associated with the liberal arts? What was the nature of the faculty and administration considerations in 1978, 1986, and 1990 reforms? Did the review process instituted in 1994 have anything to do with placing the administration of the Core into the University College by 1998? What sort of general education innovations have the faculty begun to consider?

A statistical analysis as the one above indicates some of the strengths and weaknesses of the University Core against a body of colleges and universities correlated by similar structures and similar subjects. On our site visit, we would hope to be able to "fill out" the "story" of how new innovations and trusted structures will be integrated and used in the future.

Participants in *Trends in the Liberal Arts Core* look forward to learning from Good's faculty and administration the reasons for their program's unique history and contribution to American higher education.

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