



Letter to the Campus
Our Vision for General Education
January 7, 2005

Given the conflicting demands placed upon the modern university, it is challenging to maintain a focus upon our primary task. That task is to enhance our students' ability to lead meaningful and productive lives through education. A key tool for achieving that task is our general education program. General education is a core element of Weber State University and one of the most important parts of our students' undergraduate education. Our vision for our general education program is essentially a statement of what a Weber State University education signifies. To insure that we are achieving our vision for our students, we must periodically review, discuss and assess our general education program.

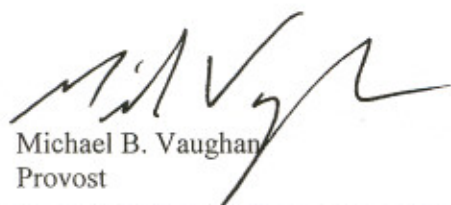
Certainly, the Northwest Commission's recent recommendation that we "regularly and systematically assess the general education curriculum and document that assessment activities lead to improvement" brings a review of general education into clear and immediate focus. However, we want to stress that an introspective look into our general education program transcends the concerns of our recent accreditation review. An examination of the goals and expectations for our general education program requires a broad-based campus conversation which looks deeply into students' undergraduate experience. This discussion must involve all parts of the academic community.

Faculty Senate Leadership, the deans, and the Provost's Office are working to organize a number of campus conversations. These conversations will involve a process of articulating desired characteristics for our students, building a sense of shared responsibility for our general education program and building a foundation for a continuing dialogue with the goal of ongoing assessment, curricular design and renewal.

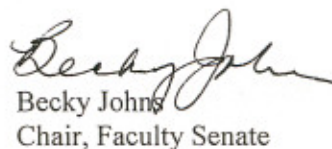
In *General Education the Changing Agenda* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1999, p. 13), Jerry Gaff writes,

In the final analysis responsibility rests with the faculty to assure that the general education program is strong, that it reflects the best of contemporary thinking, and that it meets the particular educational goals of the institution... it is incumbent on administrators to fashion incentives that encourage and support faculty in this effort...when faculty members and administrators work together, they can conduct a meaningful review of the undergraduate program, and where necessary make the changes needed for a rigorous and engaging ... curriculum.

We hope for the type of cooperative effort described by Jerry Graff. As our conversations unfold, we encourage you to participate.



Michael B. Vaughan
Provost



Becky Johns
Chair, Faculty Senate