

Letter of Support from Academic Administrators

January 31, 1994

Academic Affairs Committee
Campus

Dear Colleagues:

Following three years of planning, we established the General Education Project Team at the request of the Council of Deans. The team has now generated a general education proposal that is pedagogically substantive and responsive to accreditation concerns. With the full participation of all colleges, and with safeguards to protect impacted areas, the proposal is financially realistic. Moreover, the proposal comes at a time when the University is re-examining its reward system with special attention to the importance of teaching.

This letter is to express, as explicitly as possible, the position of myself and the Council of Deans regarding the policy, practice, and budgeting necessary to make the program successful.

An important component of implementing the proposal, is the adaptation of existing courses and development of some new ones (with the obvious implication that some existing courses will be dropped). This depends upon opportunities to test ideas, adapt innovations and, in some instances, learn new methods. This is the most important application of the budget called for in the proposal. We plan to support several approaches to this aspect of implementation:

Allocating resources to encourage and support course development and/or modification -- through faculty stipends, mini-grants to departments, funds to support faculty interdisciplinary efforts, etc.

Providing Graduate Teaching Assistant support for departments with faculty engaged in course development and revision.

Support through the mini-grant program recently initiated by the Educational Communication Center by designating a significant portion of that budget to the development of general education courses enriched by or delivered through media.

Funding faculty travel to conferences about general education concepts and teaching methods with the assumption that the participants would share information with colleagues through on-campus seminars.

Providing opportunities for faculty to share innovations, ideas, questions and problems regarding the development of general education curriculum and course.

The Office of Educational Advancement will provide administrative support for general education. This allows the time previously spent by Educational Advancement in working with the project team to be shifted to supporting actual implementation. It also ensures a coordinated approach to instructional development and assessment.

As each department continues to improve its criteria and standards for salary increases, promotion, and tenure, it must be guided by an intent to optimize the best that every faculty member has to give. Faculty achievement in general education is and will become an increasingly important aspect of that process. The Deans will work with faculty at the department and college level toward this end.

Best personal regards.

Yours truly,

James R. Coffman
Provost

Dean Marc Johnson Dean Lane Marshall
Dean Peter Nicholls Dean Daniel Short
Dean Michael Holen Dean Donald Rathbone
Dean Brice Hobrock Dean Timothy Donoghue
Dean Barbara Stowe Dean Jack Henry
Dean Michael Lorenz

cc: President Wefald