These are the combined email and personal inputs I received from the School of Professional Studies faculty regarding the general education program between 9-16-2011 and 9-30-2011. As a follow up to this, the School of Professional Studies again discussed these matters in depth on 9-29-2011 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Their final input is noted in the 9-29-2011 meeting minutes.

1) I like the idea of everyone having ENG 201 and then taking the additional communications course (BUS 301, ENG 309 or ENG 326).

2) I wouldn't mind students having more options in the physical/biological/behavioral science aspect. (As a side note, not needed for the feedback you send....I think we're fortunate with the Social Science requirement with Econ being in there for our Bus majors!)

The proposed general studies proposal matches the guidelines of Association of American Colleges and Universities, specifically the Liberal Education Outcomes (2005) guidelines. The proposal is comprehensive and elegant in design and can be implemented even at small colleges that are increasingly facing resource shortages.

There is a time and money savings to more advanced students who don't require as many prerequisite courses, an advantage that can be built into the college's marketing efforts. On the other hand, students who are lacking college prerequisite skills should be well-served by taking all the courses the proposed program recommends.

I especially welcome a new “Integrated Learning and Decision Studies” component of the proposal because it allows a student to integrate their knowledge across disciplines, in a similar way that each course is currently required to have a cumulative experience in each course at Peru State.

I am positive about the possibility of opening other than traditional “hard” or natural science classes eventually to the list of lab courses. I think our students will be highly motivated by this and it may make finding lab courses easier for our online and commuter population of students.

The ability to bypass CMIS 101 is interesting and actually fits some of the thoughts I have towards this course. Currently it is about 70% office applications and 30% information systems. We are using a simulation environment that can also be used for a nominal fee (I believe $20) to create a test out option. Perhaps we could create some self-directed remedial program to allow students to get office skills and thus truly make contemporary office skills a prerequisite and add then far more information/technology content to CMIS 101 included some more advanced spreadsheet applications or other skills faculty determine as a need.
The two course required series is an interesting idea but will have some tweaking to accommodate transfer students bringing in one but not both of the series. This seems more like a procedural issue. I would support the two course sequence as an option, but not as a requirement.

Stats 340 to Math 240 level – yes. Often our students waited until the end of their program to take this course when knowledge in this course would have been helpful for upper division classes.

It appears that for very well prepared students that this general education program would work well for and it has enough safety nets for those bringing in deficit skills wishing to improve.

My own personal take is that skills in a college algebra course might be better used in our program than the skills in the finite math course as shown on the syllabus.

1. **Make sure all required courses and some options are offered online with enough frequency to satisfy online students.**

2. **Make the Social Science Focus Studies a recommended two-course sequence... but not required.** This will allow a student who has one course completed to change focus for the second course and would be more accommodating to transfer students. Advisees can strongly encourage students to follow the 2-course sequence approach for all of the good reasons Todd discussed.

3. **The Political Science & Human Geography sequence is unclear.** Do these courses already exist or will they be newly developed? There doesn’t appear to be a natural 2-course sequence existing now.

4. Once finished, it would be very helpful to have specific course listings for each category so that it is crystal clear to advisors and students which courses count in which categories.

5. I assume that the "double-counting" policy means that a course can satisfy a GS requirement and a Major requirement at the same time. Please clarify that the credits are counted only once, however. That is, a course wouldn’t be counted as 6 credits if it meets two requirements, right? Maybe a term other than "double-counting" could be devised to avoid the appearance that credits are literally counted
twice. I think the word "counted" can be misinterpreted. Perhaps this phrase is better: "One course may be used to satisfy a requirement in a student's general studies program and major program."

In regards to the Philosophy requirement and the possibility of BUS 351 Organizational Ethics fulfilling that requirement;

The course now covers utilitarianism, deontology, Kant, rules-based ethics systems generally, and situational ethics generally. Honestly, it is not heavy on philosophy and includes no direct readings of philosophers. The extent of the philosophy study is to categorize and identify different approaches to modern day problem-solving. It covers roughly 2 weeks on-campus and 1 week in the online version of the course.

The course is interdisciplinary. Many of the modern-day problems involve matters that students in any field may encounter in their careers, such as workplace ethics, discrimination, environmental issues, poverty issues, health care, free speech, immigration, elections, the appropriate role of government, etc. From a business perspective it also includes consumer rights, marketing and selling, issues of moving production (and jobs) overseas, the conflicting obligations of a business to its shareholders, customers, employees, and the surrounding community, etc.

So.... here’s my "take" on the question of general studies:

a) IF we conclude that the study of ethics is sufficiently valuable to all students to be a GS course, then this course meets that role nicely. It is truly interdisciplinary in that the situations studied are generally applicable to students in all disciplines. I think it is a valuable study of applied critical thinking on big issues that matter.

b) IF we conclude that the study of philosophy and philosophers is required for GS, then this course isn’t that. Truly, I am probably not even appropriately qualified to teach pure philosophy. I don’t even recall taking a course of "pure" philosophy in my undergraduate or graduate degrees, although I did take a course in logic that might have covered some of the same ground.

However, I would argue that a study of ethics and its application to modern day problems is at least as valuable as is the study of philosophy and philosophers for our students. From my perspective, I would like to see the GS requirement be "philosophy or ethics" with a choice for students, just as they choose between fine and performing arts or between history and economics.
If I were asked to cover more philosophy in the existing ethics course, I could do so, but it would still be an ethics course with some introduction to philosophical thought, as opposed to a philosophy course. I hope this helps! -- Christy