

Report

of the

Task Force on
General Education and
Student Learning



August 2005
The University of Georgia

Executive Summary

“We need a more robust discussion about the aims of education. What do today’s college students really need to know and be able to do when they graduate?”

Carol Geary
Schneider,
President of the
Association of
American Colleges
and Universities,
Liberal Education
(Summer 2003)

The University of Georgia seeks to maintain and enhance the highest quality undergraduate experience possible. To this end, Dr. Arnett C. Mace, Jr., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, appointed a Task Force on General Education and Student Learning in September 2004. The Provost charged the committee to explore questions related to whether the University has a rigorous intellectual climate, how students learn and should learn in today's academic environment, and whether the University's general education requirements remain innovative and engaging for undergraduate students and provide the most effective overall education for them.

The twenty-four member Task Force began its work in October 2004. The group's members included faculty broadly representative of various colleges and schools across the University, faculty who hold key positions on the University Curriculum Committee, and senior administrators and students with significant interest and experience in undergraduate education.

During the Academic Year 2004-05, the Task Force met approximately every two weeks. Initially, the meetings focused on a series of wide-ranging reports as we discussed various concepts of general education. Task Force members met with students, faculty, advisors, and experts on matters related to the work of the Task Force. Additional suggestions and comments were gathered in e-mails from faculty and students. A preliminary report of the Task Force was examined at a faculty symposium, sponsored by the Teaching Academy, in April 2005. In these ways, the Task Force provided considerable opportunities for input, generated campus-wide interest and conversation related to its charge, and benefited greatly from that exchange.

The general education portion of the report suggests that students must be prepared for a future in which the world will be more connected globally and locally, more diverse, and will continue to change rapidly in science and technology. That future will be permeated by information, and teamwork and collaboration will be emphasized. These developments will also pose important ethical challenges. The Task Force recommends a curriculum that will emphasize moral reasoning, life sciences, physical sciences, quantitative reasoning, world culture and languages, history, literature, fine arts, and social studies. Graduates of the University should have developed the ability to engage in complex thought, analysis, and reasoning; to communicate effectively in both speech and writing; to value lifelong learning and community service; to understand the world through international experience and the study of a foreign language; to reason quantitatively; to learn collaboratively; and to appreciate and engage diversity in the University community and the community at large. The Task Force provides nineteen recommendations to enhance general education by improving both the general education curriculum and specific areas within that curriculum.

The Task Force also concluded that the University of Georgia must create a higher quality learning environment for its undergraduate students. The quality of the University's undergraduate students has increased rapidly over the last ten years. Graduates of the University of Georgia are excellent, yet the Task Force concluded that the University can take the undergraduate experience to a higher level. The expectations for student performance have not increased as rapidly as the quality of the students. This report includes twenty-four recommendations for improving the learning environment by creating a campus life more centered on learning, by providing the structure and support that are integral to excellent teaching, and by improving faculty development and rewards for effective undergraduate instruction.

True to its mission, the University of Georgia has provided excellence in undergraduate instruction since its inception. This has been made possible by thoughtful, engaged reflection on the needs of our students in the world beyond the University, and by concerted self-reflection on the University's success at adapting to meet those needs. We recognize that graduates in this 21st century face significant, different challenges than graduates of the past. Overall, the work of the Task Force, and the recommendations outlined here, constitute important steps toward enhancing the undergraduate experience in fundamental and significant ways.

The work of the Task Force required considerably more involvement than most University committees. We thank all committee members for devoting their time and energy to the effort that produced this report. The drafting subcommittee, which consisted of Rodney Mauricio, Christine Riordan, and Frances Teague, performed well beyond the call of duty to record our deliberations. Our graduate assistant, Ben Coppedge, provided tremendous support to the Task Force in a variety of ways. Susan Sheffield provided editorial support in preparing the report for printing. We appreciate all who contributed to making this report a timely and important document for the University of Georgia.

*Delmer Dunn
Jere Morehead
Co-Chairs*

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I. Introduction

“What one knows is, in youth, of little moment; they know enough who know how to learn.”

Henry Adams,
The Education of Henry Adams (1907)

In September 2004, Dr. Arnett Mace, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, convened this Task Force (see Appendix 1), charging it with “a comprehensive evaluation” of undergraduate education and asking for “appropriate recommendations for the ongoing improvement of undergraduate education at the University of Georgia.” In his letter appointing the Task Force, he wrote:

The purview of the Task Force will include exploring questions related to whether the University has a rigorous intellectual climate, how students learn and should learn in today’s academic environment, and whether the University’s general education requirements remain innovative and engaging for undergraduate students, and provide the most effective overall education for our students.

That charge is wholly appropriate, given the University’s history. Since 1785 when it was chartered, the University of Georgia has had a strong commitment to excellent instruction: “Our present happiness joined to pleasing prospects should conspire to make us feel ourselves under the strongest obligation to form the youth, the rising hope of our Land” (Charter of the University of Georgia). The Provost acknowledged this obligation, remarking, “The University of Georgia has consistently sought to provide students with an engaging, rigorous, and relevant education” (see Appendix 2). This Task Force, then, continues that centuries-long commitment. Chaired by Dr. Delmer Dunn, Vice President for Instruction, and Professor Jere Morehead, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Task Force began meeting in fall 2004. This report provides the results of almost a year’s work by twenty-four members of the University of Georgia community.

A. What the Task Force Did

MEETING AND READING: During the Academic Year 2004-05, the Task Force met approximately every two weeks. Initially, the meetings focused on a series of wide-ranging reports as we discussed various concepts of general education. Principal among these were the *Greater Expectations* report (prepared by the Association of American Colleges and Universities); the *Building a Nation of Learners* report (prepared by the Business-Higher Education Forum); and reports on recent general education reforms at Harvard, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania. Overall, Task Force members consulted over 20 leading reports and articles on general education and student learning. The Task Force also reviewed statements of general education from the University of Georgia, the University System of Georgia, and from the University of Georgia’s peer and aspirational schools.

Perhaps the most influential document we examined was the 2003 report of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) based on an extensive survey completed by university students across the nation, including 558 first-year students and 294 fourth-year students at the University of Georgia. The responses of these University of Georgia students were compared to students of the same grade level at peer and aspirational institutions¹ across the country. The NSSE survey covers such topics as academic and intellectual experiences, study habits, advising, and satisfaction with education.

According to the NSSE survey, University of Georgia students rated their overall experience in college highly favorable and significantly higher than students at our peer and aspirational institutions. Despite that positive result, the NSSE survey pointed to some problems in the education received at the University of Georgia. Specifically, the survey suggests that our students are not being adequately challenged by our courses: compared to peer and aspirational institutions, a significantly higher number of our students characterize their work in classes as simply “memorizing facts, ideas, or methods so you can repeat them pretty much in the same form.” Our students study less than students at these other institutions, averaging between 12 and 13 hours per week. Unfortunately, that fact was highlighted this spring in a nationally televised CBS News report on university education that focused on the University of Georgia. Most university faculty agree that students should be preparing 30-45 hours per week outside of class to do well. Our students write less than their peers at other institutions, scoring significantly below students at peer and aspirational universities at writing papers of any length. Finally, significantly fewer of our fourth-year students complete a capstone experience compared to seniors in the peer group.

TALKING WITH INDIVIDUALS: In addition, the Task Force met with individuals who could provide guidance on specific topics. Ms. Carole Middlebrooks, a health educator at the University Health Center, spoke with us about student alcohol and drug use; Dr. Carol Geary Schneider, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, considered ways in which higher education might change in the future; and Dr. Michael Adams, President of the University of Georgia, discussed ways to improve undergraduate education and provide necessary resources for that goal. Members of the Task Force attended events relevant to the group’s efforts, such as programs arranged by the Teaching Academy, the annual Public Service and Outreach Conference on Service Learning, and the annual State of the University address by President Adams.

TALKING WITH GROUPS: The Task Force convened discussion sessions with groups in the University of Georgia community to solicit ideas about undergraduate education at the University and how it might be improved. Open sessions with faculty and undergraduates were well attended, and all responses that came in after the events were forwarded to Task Force members by electronic mail. In addition, Task Force members met with the University’s academic advisors, Foundation Fellows, Franklin Residential College students, and senior administrators. Appendix 3 lists the forums held. Further, many faculty and students provided comments by e-mail, which were also shared with all Task Force members.

¹Iowa State University; Ohio State University; Pennsylvania State University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; University of Indiana, Bloomington; University of Iowa; University of Maryland, College Park; University of Michigan; University of Missouri; University of Nebraska; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of Oklahoma; University of Texas, Austin; University of Virginia; University of Washington; University of Wisconsin, Madison.

B. What the Task Force Concluded

In the spring semester, the Task Force began considering all recommendations that we either received or conceived, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each. The Task Force also began to consider its message to the University community regarding general education goals for undergraduates. In this report, we present the Task Force's conclusions about general education (Section II), the foundation of every undergraduate's experience at the University of Georgia, as well as a discussion about the learning environment at the University of Georgia (Section III). We provide specific recommendations for each conclusion. During the University of Georgia Teaching Academy's 2005 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, held April 8-9 at the Emerald Pointe Conference Center in Buford, Georgia, over 60 faculty and five undergraduate participants scrutinized a draft of this report. We have carefully considered and incorporated much of the feedback from this symposium, as we did the responses from earlier discussions.

We found many points of pride at the University of Georgia, but we have identified areas that require attention. Our Task Force has not proposed radical changes to the curriculum or to campus life. While some of our recommendations are ambitious, most are practical. Certain proposals will be easily adopted, but others will require the energy and commitment of the campus as a whole. Some recommendations can be enacted immediately while others will require significant resources and time to be implemented. As a whole, the Task Force believes that following these recommendations will result in a dramatic improvement in undergraduate education at the University of Georgia.

As the University community reflects on this report, we hope that a conversation about undergraduate education and the learning environment continues and spreads across our campus. University of Georgia students are excellent, and the faculty and administration want to give them the best education possible.

II. General Education

“The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life.”

Plato,
The Republic, Book IV
(ca. 400 BCE)

A. What General Education Will Need To Do

The NSSE report highlighted some serious challenges for undergraduate education at the University of Georgia. This Task Force was charged with a much broader agenda, however, than remedying the deficiencies suggested by the NSSE survey. The Provost asked if our current general education requirements prepare students for the future. How will we do such preparation? What will an undergraduate at the University of Georgia need to know today to be successful in the future?

The most certain prediction that we can make about the future is that it will be different from the present. Precisely how the future will be different and how change will proceed from today until then, we cannot know. Yet universities have an obligation to prepare their students to deal with this changing world and uncertain future. Although the future is unknown, we can make some educated guesses about its features and how universities might respond.

People will be increasingly connected globally. Our graduates will find themselves living and working in other countries and with citizens of other nations who have vastly different world views. To succeed, our undergraduates must become effective global citizens. They must understand different cultures, appreciate different viewpoints, and be able to communicate in different languages. We should educate our students to be involved and engaged with the global community.

Second, universities will be more closely connected locally with their resident communities. Students should recognize their responsibilities as citizens of their communities. Precisely because the state supports higher education, the university will always be engaged in solving the problems of the local community, the state, and the nation. The university can help the community, but engagement within the community can also help the university attain a myriad of educational goals.

Third, our own nation will be more diverse than it is now. While diversity has often been compressed into the singular dimension of race, our society will surely have to expand its understanding of the term to embrace race, nationality, religion, socioeconomic and cultural background, and experience. Variety produces richness. To succeed, our students must both appreciate this diversity and work within the context of a diverse community. Our students must learn to interact effectively with those different from themselves, and to do so with civility and understanding.

Fourth, science and technology will continue to play an important role in our world. Science and technology touch our everyday lives more than ever, and the pace of changes in these arenas will likely accelerate in the future. Despite all the positive ways that science affects our lives, it will, as always, pose challenges, raising questions about policy and ethics. Citizens will have to make informed decisions about the role of scientific discoveries and technological applications in our society. In this context, our undergraduates must understand the scientific method and develop a basic understanding of both the life and physical sciences. We should be no more tolerant of an art major who does not understand science than of a science major who cannot write.

Fifth, information will permeate our global society. Information technology will soon provide almost all of recorded human knowledge in a readily accessible and searchable format. A monopoly on information can no longer exist: an “educated” person will not simply be one with a capacious memory, but someone who can locate information, and understand, evaluate, and use it. In order to prepare its students for the growing availability of information, the university cannot be a place where students merely accumulate a static portfolio of facts. Instead, it must be a place where students learn how to discover new information, assess its validity, and creatively synthesize and apply it to a changing world. In the early twenty-first century, a student’s education must emphasize knowing how knowledge is created, rather than memorizing facts.

Sixth, knowledge, technology, and globalization will pose ethical challenges for our society. Because we have a responsibility to educate morally responsible citizens, ethics and moral reasoning should be carefully integrated in our classes and in a student’s overall university experience. Simply knowing the rules of ethical behavior in our particular professions is not enough; we must also know how those rules came to be and why they came to be.

Finally, it is clear that teamwork and collaborative endeavors will increasingly be emphasized in the future. In part this is due to the greater complexity of problems and more complex technology. In part it is due to greater understanding of human behavior that emphasizes collaborative efforts that produce better products, solutions, and understanding. Thus, the university must make ample opportunities available for collaboration, including developing the ability to work in teams.

Although the future presents challenges, many aspects of a university education will undoubtedly remain the same. Students will always need to know how to think critically and creatively. Students will always need to know how knowledge is created and how information is accessed and assessed. Students will always need to know how to understand quantitative processes and reasoning. Students will always need to know how to communicate effectively in speech and writing.

In a university, students should be supported in honing existing skills and challenged to develop new ones. The most successful institutions will provide intellectual contexts and social opportunities such that students stretch themselves, take the measure of their own intellectual powers and reach for new levels of mastery, maturity, and responsibility. The degree of any university’s success in education can be measured in the quality of its alumni: educated and engaged adults who take part in forming the future we all share. The very best educated alumni will have the advantage of undergraduate years that have transformed them into effective and conscientious citizens; they will engage broadly, thoughtfully, and responsibly in forging communities and creating new knowledge.

The modern research university is uniquely qualified to provide such an environment for learning. The best education should provide opportunities to train students to create knowledge of their own. The discovery of new knowledge on this campus is not a distant and far-removed activity; knowledge is being created in

every office and every lab; and undergraduates can be active participants in this important enterprise. As such, a research university provides a rich and engaging environment for undergraduate education at the frontiers of knowledge. When well-balanced, research and undergraduate teaching can be harmonious and complementary endeavors.

B. How Will the University of Georgia Meet These Challenges?

“The principal goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done; men and women who are creative, inventive and discoverers, who can be critical and verify and not accept, everything they are offered.”

Jean Piaget,
quoted in
Education for Democracy,
eds. Kathe Jervis
and Arthur Tobier
(1988)

What kind of education will best provide the preparation for students to meet such challenges? Recognizing and preparing for these formidable changes will require a general education that is rigorous while allowing for creativity and flexibility. The Task Force discussed at length various possibilities: should general education at the University of Georgia consist of a well-defined and common set of knowledge, or be based on the reading of a number of “Great Books,” or focus on the construction of knowledge?

After a year’s reflection, the Task Force concluded that general education at the University of Georgia should provide substantive knowledge, but emphasize how that knowledge is constructed in several broad areas of inquiry. Given the complexity and unknowable nature of the future, we reaffirm the liberal arts education as the foundation for learning. The mark of a classic liberal arts education is the development of deep, but general, skills that can be brought to bear in novel and changing circumstances. These skills are exactly those needed for an uncertain future. Consequently, a liberal arts education may be more valuable now and in the future than it has been in the past.

Some students ask why increased specialization and career preparation should not be the University’s primary mission. It is precisely because the skills of knowing how to produce and interpret knowledge can be confidently predicted, whereas career-specific skills cannot. Thus, educating students to be effective learners throughout

their lives will best prepare them for future careers. Employers tell us that they seek persons who can think analytically, communicate effectively, solve problems, collaborate with diverse colleagues, serve diverse customers, and exercise sound ethical judgment. A liberal education is career preparation because it develops just those skills. Students educated within the framework of a liberal arts education will look forward to a future prepared for employment in fields not yet even imagined. But, a university education is so much more than career preparation: a university education should prepare students to make a living, but it must also show students how to live a life worth living.

The University of Georgia’s overarching goal is for our students to be intentional learners and critical thinkers, trained to be engaged, discerning, and independent. They should acquire the tools, skills, and knowledge to continue learning throughout their lives. By current estimates, the average American will change jobs three to five times in a lifetime, and this trend is likely to accelerate in the future. The education the University of Georgia provides must make our students adaptable and ready for change.

We have identified more specific goals of general education at the University of Georgia. All of our students should understand how knowledge is constructed and how to do research and analyze information. All our students must communicate effectively. All our students should have a deep understanding of our own government and history. They should develop the power of the senses and introspection through the study of music, art, drama, and literature. Our students need to understand society and diversity in this country and in the world. As our own nation becomes increasingly diverse, we believe that all students must develop an understanding of the values and cultures of the diversity of people living and working here in the United States. Our students should have an international experience. All our students must study a foreign language at least to a level of proficiency. Our students should not only recognize standards of ethical behavior, but also know the derivation of those standards. University of Georgia students must understand quantitative reasoning, the scientific method, and the relationship between science and technology. All our students must learn how to work collaboratively.

To acquire these capabilities, students need to learn both inside and outside of the classroom. The Task Force has identified nine areas of inquiry that form the foundation for a sound educational basis for new general education requirements at the University of Georgia:

- Moral Reasoning
- Life Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Quantitative Reasoning
- World Culture and Languages
- History
- Literature
- Fine Arts
- Social Studies

A student educated at the University of Georgia should also develop certain abilities:

- Engage in complex thought, analysis, and reasoning
- Communicate effectively in both speech and writing
- Appreciate lifelong learning and community service
- Understand the world through study of foreign language and international experience
- Reason quantitatively
- Learn collaboratively
- Appreciate and engage diversity in the University community and the community at large

Our current curriculum achieves many of the general education learning outcomes identified in this report. But the Task Force believes that finding new ways to capture the imaginations of both students and faculty can re-invigorate and enrich the undergraduate experience. Although we envision the continuation of currently offered lower-division courses to meet core requirements, the University should add fresh, innovative courses to fulfill the promise of a superlative general education.

Therefore, we recommend that the University develop a new set of courses to serve as a central core of a new general education requirement. Faculty teaching these courses will emphasize how knowledge is constructed in a given area of inquiry: the courses should not be broad surveys, but rather should provide

our students with the basic tools to analyze the area of inquiry in some depth. We envision that our most dedicated and gifted faculty will teach these courses and that the University Curriculum Committee will approve new core courses and assess their success and relevance on a regular basis.

In this report, the Task Force offers a number of recommendations to implement our vision of an updated general education at the University of Georgia. We recognize that implementing these recommendations will create structural challenges, but we believe those challenges are outweighed by the resulting benefits. As the changes suggested in these recommendations move through the faculty governance process, we wish to make the following comments:

The current general education curriculum constitutes 50 percent of the 120 credit hours needed to earn a degree for most programs at the University of Georgia. This core includes the following: Area A requires 9-10 hours in the essential skills of math and English composition; Area B allows 4-5 hours of institutional options; Area C requires 6 hours in the humanities and arts; Area D requires 10-11 hours in mathematics, science and technology; Area E requires 12 hours in the social sciences; Area F allows 18 hours of “major-related” courses. Courses in the major and electives constitute the other half of the credit hours required for graduation in most undergraduate majors.

Updating our general education requirements can occur without significantly increasing the number of hours in our required core curriculum. We are well aware of constraints on credit hours in many majors, particularly in our professional schools where accreditation by national organizations is important. The Task Force recommends, however, that all departments across the University carefully examine their major requirements. Can the goal of depth of study in the major be achieved with fewer courses than are currently required? Can we build into our curriculum an opportunity for our students to explore multiple interests through an expanded numbers of electives? Certainly, it is up to the faculty in each program to answer these questions, but we encourage faculty to carefully balance the major’s requirements with those of the University as a whole. As Provost Arnett Mace noted at the Faculty Symposium, the idea of accreditation is changing, with accrediting bodies asking programs to define missions and goals and describe how those goals are being met, rather than adhering to an inflexible set of course requirements.

It is possible to build more flexibility into our curriculum and at the same time offer students a more rigorous academic experience. For example, well-prepared undergraduates might fulfill at least some of their general education requirements in upper-division courses, as long as those courses provide enough breadth in the area of study and the student has satisfied all prerequisites for work at this level. Not all upper-division courses will be appropriate to meet our vision of general education; thus, the University Curriculum Committee should ensure that only appropriate upper-division courses would fulfill a general education requirement.

We think it is imperative to assess the impact of the changes recommended by this report. Individual departments must regularly review the requirements for the major and the courses taught to assure that they adequately meet the general education goals identified in this report. Additionally, each department and other appropriate units should specify learning outcomes and assess their contribution to the University’s general education goals. Continued participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement will also allow us to measure some of the outcome of these changes. Other appropriate assessment tools should be utilized as needed. The Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs should monitor whether the recommendations laid forth in this document have been implemented.

Finally, as the Task Force discussed general education, we noted with frustration that the University System of Georgia’s requirements might place limits on the changes we wish to implement at the

University of Georgia. At our first meeting, the Provost urged the Task Force not to be constrained by the Board of Regents' policies as the University of Georgia can ask for special dispensation from such policies. When appropriate, we must do so. As one of the four research-intensive universities in the System, the University of Georgia is in a unique position to combine the educational and research missions of our campus. That unique character should be recognized in defining our own general education goals and learning outcomes.

We are aware that any foundational change in an institution as large as the University of Georgia cannot happen overnight. We hope that this report marks the opening of a campus-wide conversation about the nature of education in a changing University, a changing state, a changing nation, and a changing world.

C. Recommendations for Changes

The Task Force makes nineteen recommendations to improve general education at the University of Georgia.

1. Make General Education Stronger

This first set of recommendations covers broad aspects of general education.

I.1.1. Statement of General Education Goals and Learning Outcomes in Syllabus

The Faculty have a collective responsibility for identifying how each of our courses addresses the University's general education goals. The general education learning goals can be incorporated into courses for the major as well as those in the core curriculum. Faculty submitting courses to the Course Approval Process Automation (CAPA) system should incorporate a specific statement about general education, and each syllabus should contain a statement indicating how the course's learning objectives contribute to general education goals.

RECOMMENDATION: Each course syllabus and CAPA course application should contain a statement describing how course objectives meet the general education goals identified in this report.

I.1.2. Ongoing Review of General Education Requirements

We think it is critical to ensure that all approved courses meet the prescribed University standards related to these general education requirements and to consider additional ways to invigorate the original goals set forth in these requirements. In the open forums conducted by the Task Force, students and faculty often questioned whether general education courses were meeting the original intent of the requirements and standards.

RECOMMENDATION: The General Education subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee should implement procedures for the periodic review of courses used to meet general education requirements to ensure that they are adequately satisfying the general education learning goals.

I.1.3. Developing New Courses to Meet General Education

Although many lower-division courses currently achieve general education learning outcomes, we need to capture the imaginations of our students and faculty in new ways. In the forums, students and

faculty raised concerns about some of the courses that students presently take to fulfill general education requirements: the courses are too large and engage neither the faculty teaching the courses nor the students taking them. We must strive to reduce the preponderance of survey courses in the general education curriculum. Although we envision the continuation of meeting core requirements through traditional introductory courses, we believe that adding fresh, innovative courses will better fulfill the promise of general education.

RECOMMENDATION: The University should encourage departments to develop new courses that will serve as a central core of a new general education requirement. These courses will be focused, emphasizing depth rather than breadth, and demonstrating how knowledge is constructed in that area of inquiry.

I.1.4. Exposure to Tenured or Tenure-Track Faculty

Task Force members felt that all undergraduate students need to connect with faculty earlier in their undergraduate years to ensure that they develop a zeal for learning and foster relationships that can help them develop future plans regarding a major and career. The credit hours taught by nontenure-track instructors, including graduate assistants, at the University of Georgia has been steadily rising: in fall 2002, 33.1 percent of all credit hours were taught by nontenure-track instructors; that percentage rose to 37 percent in fall 2003, and 40.3 percent in fall 2004. Certainly, we have a very competent and effective cadre of instructors, nontenure-track faculty, and teaching assistants complementing our tenured and tenure-track faculty in teaching lower-division undergraduate courses. Although tenured or tenure-track faculty cannot and should not teach all lower-division courses, they should play a more prominent role in such courses.

RECOMMENDATION: Take steps to ensure that tenured or tenure-track faculty teach more courses typically taken by undergraduate students in the first and second years of study.

I.1.5. Upper-Division Courses

The Task Force noted that students cannot currently count any courses numbered over 3000 for general education credit. Undergraduates who have satisfied all prerequisites for work at this level might fulfill at least some of their general education requirements in upper-division courses, as long as those courses provide enough breadth and demonstrate how knowledge is constructed in that area of inquiry. The General Education subcommittee should ensure that only appropriate upper-division courses fulfill a general education requirement. Opening appropriate upper-division courses to ambitious undergraduate students who seek general education credit would allow those students to enroll in more challenging, demanding classes without penalizing them by withholding general education course credit.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow student access to appropriate upper-division courses to count toward satisfaction of general education requirements, providing those students have the necessary prerequisites.

I.1.6. Overburdened Majors

The Task Force noted that the high number of major courses required for completion of some undergraduate majors has a negative impact on students' exposure to a broad, general education by effectively restricting them to a single academic area. Each department with an undergraduate major should closely evaluate its requirements to ensure students are allowed to take classes in which they are interested. Can the goal of depth of study in the major be achieved with fewer courses than currently required?

The Faculty must answer this question, but they must carefully balance the major's requirements with those of the University as a whole. In addition, all departments with undergraduate instruction should incorporate general education learning outcomes into the classes required for the major.

RECOMMENDATION: Modify undergraduate major requirements to enhance the ability of students to take courses outside of their discipline and recommend that departments engaged in undergraduate education examine their major requirements to ensure that they are providing their students with a broad, general education.

I.1.7. The Role of Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

Dr. Carol Geary Schneider of the Association of American Colleges and Universities noted in her meeting with the Task Force that many American universities are responding to the sharp increase of incoming students with AP credits. Several Task Force members advised that AP credits should be used as a placement tool and not as a means to replace college-level courses since high school AP classes do not adequately replicate the education at a research university. Harvard University only allows students scoring a "5" on an AP exam to place out of a course, and a student entering Yale University who scores highly on an AP exam must still fulfill the college's requirement, but does so by taking a course at a higher level. We recognize that AP credit plays a role in the recruitment of excellent students, and we want to encourage high school students to take the most challenging academic program available. We must recognize, however, that an increasing number of our entering students are placing out of many of our core classes without either undergoing the rigorous assessment of or acquiring the skills taught at a research university.

RECOMMENDATION: The Office of the Vice President for Instruction should develop a plan to address the issue of academic rigor and AP exams.

I.1.8. Integrated Capstone Experience

The undergraduate experience at the University of Georgia should include a Final-Year capstone experience, whether through supervised classroom experiences or service-learning projects, that requires a student to integrate significant learning that has taken place throughout the undergraduate career. A capstone provides a means for students to produce a new academic product and should serve as the pinnacle of the undergraduate learning experience. Students must be prepared through their first three years with the skills to complete such a capstone.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage all students, and require all students graduating with honors in their major, to complete a substantive capstone experience in the major. All colleges should develop and implement major-specific Final-Year capstone experience programs.

I.1.9. Funding for Capstone Experience

The Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) program currently provides funds for a limited number of students to pursue independent research projects. The University should make available additional funds to CURO so that more students can receive support for research projects.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase funding to a competitive grants program to assist students in completing research projects as part of a capstone experience.

2. Improve Specific Areas within General Education

The Task Force identified the need to improve the general education curriculum in several specific areas.

I.2.1. Effective Writing

President Michael Adams stated in his 2005 State of the University Address: “Writing is the synthesizing exercise of an educated mind.” Currently, many students are not required to write a substantial paper after they complete the composition courses, English 1101 and 1102. Across the curriculum and across all four years of university education, the faculty must reinforce and sustain a commitment to excellence in writing. Expanding an existing program like the Franklin College Writing Intensive Program across the University by incorporating significant writing assignments into upper-level departmental courses would help to standardize writing education across the University.

RECOMMENDATION: Incorporate significant writing assignments into more courses across the University so that students are exposed to rigorous writing experiences throughout their undergraduate career.

I.2.2. Writing Intensive Courses

Task Force members suggested expanding the system that designates courses as writing intensive. Expansion of this system would allow the University Curriculum Committee to designate additional courses that meet a minimum number of writing assignments as “writing intensive.” Each graduating student should take at least two writing intensive courses.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand the current system that designates selected classes as “writing intensive” or containing a “writing component” across the University.

I.2.3. Foreign Language

The Task Force believes that serious language training is a necessity. We should require all students to study a language at least to proficiency and encourage them to attain greater competency. Proficiency in a second language is a learning outcome agreed upon by Task Force members and higher education associations alike. Proficiency is measured by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in terms of levels (http://www.languagetesting.com/scale_acad.htm). University of Georgia students should attain a level of proficiency that falls within the ACTFL ranges of “Novice High” to “Superior.” The number of semesters it takes to achieve proficiency will vary depending on the language of study. From summer orientation forward, all University of Georgia undergraduates must understand that they have to display proficiency in a second language to obtain a bachelor’s degree. We also believe that the University should increase admissions requirements for foreign language in the high schools to three years of study in a single language.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish the expectation that graduating students will be able to communicate effectively in a second language. Increase the requirement for admission to the University of Georgia from two to three high school courses in the same language no later than fall 2009.

I.2.4. International Experience

We applaud the University’s commitment to increasing the number of our students with experiences in other countries and cultures, and those programs should be expanded. But it is important to give

more University of Georgia students a “deep-immersion” international education experience. We encourage the University to provide students with opportunities to immerse themselves in the culture and language of another country: conversing, thinking, and studying in a new language, reading newspapers, and even taking classes in a foreign institution of higher learning. There should be less emphasis on transplanting University of Georgia faculty and students to University of Georgia enclaves within those countries and more emphasis on providing real immersion into those cultures. We also need to develop a greater number of less expensive (e.g., shorter term) international education opportunities in order to provide greater access for students lacking the resources to participate in traditional study-abroad programs. Fund-raising for needs-based scholarships for international education must be an institutional priority. Finally, the University should endeavor to bring more international students to the University of Georgia. Thus, students might achieve this general education goal here in Athens by interacting with students from other countries and becoming involved with an increasingly international local community.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to develop and expand international education opportunities such as exchange programs and low cost international classes and trips. Additionally, raise funds to provide scholarships for international education opportunities.

I.2.5. Ethics and Moral Reasoning

While Task Force members readily acknowledge the quality of ethics education currently being provided in individual departments across campus, the Task Force noted the lack of substantive ethics education within the general education curriculum. Participants in the Faculty Symposium thought it important to develop new courses to meet this requirement for general education. These courses could be taught either in the philosophy department or within the major (where they could be discipline-specific). In the latter case, such courses should be taught by faculty specifically trained in the teaching of ethics. We make a critical distinction between knowing ethical rules and understanding how those rules are derived (moral reasoning): it is not enough simply to know the rules of ethical behavior in our own professions.

RECOMMENDATION: Institute a new general education requirement in moral reasoning where students must analyze the construction of rules of ethical behavior.

I.2.6. Quantitative Reasoning

Basic quantitative reasoning constitutes a fundamental skill required for responsible citizenship. Students are currently required to take mathematics courses to the level of pre-calculus. Although we reaffirm that students must have proficiency in mathematics, we would like to expand the scope of quantitative skills to an understanding of basic mathematical and statistical reasoning. For example, students should be able to interpret accurately graphs presented in newspapers and the statistics of polling or health recommendations. We recommend that students select at least two courses with a significant quantitative component. Those courses need not necessarily be courses in mathematics or statistics. For example, a course in sociology, psychology, or political science could satisfy the quantitative reasoning course if it contained substantive mathematical or statistical content.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand the scope of the general education requirement in mathematics to two courses with a significant quantitative component.

I.2.7. Scientific Literacy

Science provides a rational means of contemplating and understanding the world. Furthermore, technology challenges us on a daily basis. Every student should be required to demonstrate an understanding of modern science and the scientific method, ideally at a level that would allow the student to understand the news and expository articles in such general audience journals as *Science* and *Nature* or the science section of *The New York Times*. At this time, the University general education requirements call for 12 credit hours in the social sciences, yet only two courses in the sciences. Is this enough? As science and technology touch our everyday lives at an ever increasing pace, our students must be scientifically literate. Particular attention should be paid to engaging students whose only exposure to science will be classes designed for nonmajors.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase the requirements for basic science and make science classes for nonmajors more engaging by developing the connections between science and society.

I.2.8. Effective Oral Communication

Since the early nineteenth century when the Demosthenian and Phi Kappa Literary Societies were formed, the University of Georgia has had a long tradition of superb oratory. Speaking clearly, with logic and force, is an important skill for students to develop in their classes as well. As undergraduates move through the curriculum, they should have several opportunities to hone their talents as oral advocates, presenting in-class critiques of their reading, summaries of their research findings, and arguments to support their informed opinions. For example, courses based on Barnard College's "Reacting to the Past" program emphasize strong speaking skills. While not every student needs to take a formal speech class, each graduating student should have taken several courses that include oral participation in the form of classroom discussions and individual presentations.

RECOMMENDATION: Faculty should include in their classes, where appropriate, formal oral presentations, exercises that engage students in oral arguments, and classroom discussions.

I.2.9. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning contributes to effective learning. It comports with the learning styles increasingly employed by undergraduate students. The increased emphasis on collaborative learning ties in well with the demands that individuals develop the skills to effectively work in teams, collaborate, and communicate well with one another. Faculty can play an important role in fostering collaborative learning by encouraging students to work together in groups.

RECOMMENDATION: Faculty should include, when possible, class opportunities for collaborative learning.

I.2.10. Information Literacy

As Samuel Johnson said, "Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it." Given the tremendous growth of recorded knowledge, the educated person must rely upon the knowledge of where to find information.

RECOMMENDATION: Support the Division of Academic Enhancement, University Libraries, Enterprise Information Technology Services, Office of Instructional Support and Development, and other academic support units in providing opportunities for students to acquire skills in locating, evaluating, and using information resources in a wide variety of formats.

III. Student Learning

“A little learning, indeed, may be a dangerous thing, but the want of learning is a calamity to any people . . .”

Frederick Douglass,
Commencement
Address
(1894)

“Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion . . . is but knowledge in the making. . . . Give me the freedom to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.”

John Milton,
Areopagitica (1644)

A. What Needs to Change in the Learning Environment?

Over the last ten years, the academic profiles of the students at the University of Georgia have improved. In 1996, the average SAT of our incoming students was 1190. For 2004, the average SAT of incoming students was 1233. This year, the average SAT score of students who were not admitted to the University of Georgia was 1136, which closely matches the average of students who were admitted in 1990. The conclusion is inescapable: the quality of students at the University of Georgia is improving at a remarkable pace.

Yet the perception exists that the learning environment at the University of Georgia is not intellectually rigorous. The results of the National Survey of Student Engagement, student and faculty letters to the campus newspaper, the *Red and Black*, and our conversations with students confirm that our students are often not academically challenged. While individual faculty members strive to make each class intellectually challenging, a culture of low expectations has been allowed to take root in the University. In order to counter this development, students must be challenged to devote more time to their academic responsibilities, and faculty must be encouraged and rewarded for offering rigorous courses. Faculty and administrators should consistently insist on rigor, and students should demand it in all their courses. We applaud the Educational Affairs Committee of the University Council for its ongoing investigation of grade inflation. Their work may lead to important recommendations, if warranted, to maintain the highest academic standards.

The enormous success of the Student Learning Center, with its state-of-the-art facilities and extended hours, as well as the administration's policy that first-year students reside on campus suggest a hunger for academic community. Such efforts have been welcomed by students and faculty alike. A campus-wide effort should be made to develop a variety of activities and programs that extend through the weekend to encourage students (especially those in their first year) to remain on campus. Expanding and renovating the Tate Student Center presents an excellent opportunity to design spaces that will help us develop a campus culture to support the goal of a campus with a more academically centered culture. We applaud the University's plans to increase living space on campus. As the University plans new buildings or renovates old ones, we urge consultation with classroom designers and faculty, so that the facilities have the needed infrastructure and equipment for innovative instruction and access to IT resources.

Innovative teaching methods are central to the University’s mission. We would welcome a greater focus on rewarding such innovation, but we would also like to improve the process whereby faculty learn about new and more innovative teaching methods by expanding the role of the current Office of Instructional Support and Development (OISD). To recognize this expanded mission, we believe that OISD should be renamed the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Yet innovative teaching requires innovative teachers far more than methods or technology. The University might consider expanding its teaching personnel by recruiting alumni experts as adjunct faculty and encouraging emeritus faculty to remain engaged in the University community. Finally, innovative courses may need faculty from different disciplines to teach across boundaries. Such programs as the “Study in a Second Discipline” should be expanded to provide the faculty with the resources to teach more broadly. Obstacles to team-teaching, both across and within disciplines, must be dismantled.

The Provost’s charge to the Task Force specifically asked, “How can the University of Georgia engage a wider variety of diverse students in the intellectual life of the campus?” Based on input from the Task Force, students, administrators, academic advisors, and faculty across the campus (see Appendix 3), the Task Force makes the following recommendations for improving the learning environment.

B. Recommendations for Changes

Twenty-four recommendations have been made to improve the learning environment. These recommendations have been organized under three main areas:

- Creating a campus life centered on learning
- Improving pedagogical infrastructure and systems
- Improving faculty development and rewards

1. Create a Campus Life Centered on Learning

The Task Force believes it is important to create a campus life that supports learning. To this end, the Task Force makes twelve recommendations.

II.1.1. Continue to Expand Housing Opportunities and Improve Classrooms on Campus

Students who live on campus tend to be more intellectually engaged than students living off campus. With the completion of the East Campus Village, the University has made significant progress in providing on-campus housing. The Task Force applauds the University’s decision to require first-year students to live on campus. Efforts to increase living space on campus must be continued. In addition, as the University plans new academic buildings or renovates old ones, we urge consultation with classroom designers and the faculty so that the facilities have the needed infrastructure and equipment for innovative instruction.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to expand on-campus housing opportunities and improve all campus facilities. Incorporate the latest classroom designs when existing classrooms are remodeled so as to enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of these spaces.

II.1.2. Learning Communities

Numerous studies have shown that students living in residential learning communities are more academically engaged than their counterparts enrolled in traditional learning structures: they report engaging in more pre-class preparation, studying, discussing intellectual issues outside of class, and interacting with faculty. The University currently supports several residential learning communities, including the Creswell Learning Community, the Mary Lyndon language communities, Freshman College, and the Franklin Residential College. The Task Force hopes that the University expands its efforts in residential learning, including academic advising within the residence halls.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand residential learning community programs like the Creswell Learning Community, the Mary Lyndon language communities, Freshman College, and the Franklin Residential College so that a larger number of students may participate. Expand academic advising within the residence halls.

II.1.3. Orientation

The Task Force expressed concern that only a very limited amount of time at orientation is devoted to academic or other intellectual issues. Expanding the academic component in orientation would better prepare incoming students for the rigor of the intellectual climate and the academic expectations of the University. We should give parents, as well as students, information about the University's academic expectations. We should consider establishing a common book for all incoming students to read and discuss during orientation. An annual recommended summer reading list compiled from faculty suggestions would give incoming students a common intellectual base and communicate the message that reading substantive books is an important component of a rich intellectual life. Finally, the University needs to communicate the expectation that students are citizens of the local community—not merely visitors.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand and implement a larger academic component to orientation, including a recommended common book and a summer reading list that will thoroughly introduce incoming students to the University's intellectual climate, the academic expectations for students, and the general education plan.

II.1.4. University-wide Mentoring Program

Task Force members felt that all undergraduate students need to connect with faculty earlier in their undergraduate experiences to foster relationships that can help them develop their future plans regarding a major and career. The Task Force felt that the University should offer more opportunities for students to be mentored during their first year on campus. Given that the University hosts 24,000 undergraduates, it is easy for first-year students to feel disconnected. A University-wide mentoring program, modeled after the Honors Faculty Mentor Program, would provide incoming first-year students the opportunity to interact with faculty members within their own discipline. Some reward or incentive should be granted to faculty for agreeing to serve as mentors. Mentors would provide their students with information relating to the academic, social, cultural, and extracurricular aspects of the first year.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand the Honors Faculty Mentoring Program across the University on a voluntary and college-specific basis.

II.1.5. First-Year Seminars

Task Force members noted the importance of the First-Year Seminar Program for introducing students to the intellectual expectations and rigor of the campus. At this time, participation in the First-Year

Seminar Program is voluntary for both students and faculty and the Task Force recommends that it remain so. However, Task Force members believe that more incoming students should be encouraged to participate in a first-year seminar. In implementing this recommendation, it is important to note that most faculty get no teaching credit for teaching first-year seminars. Task Force members suggest that if teaching credit or other substantial rewards were granted for these courses, then faculty would be more likely to agree to teach them (see II.3.2).

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage first-year students to participate in the First-Year Seminar Program and other innovative seminars that emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as introducing students to faculty.

II.1.6. Extracurricular Cultural and Leadership Experiences

Students should be actively engaged in extracurricular, cultural, and leadership activities to further develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Task Force noted that the Franklin College Blue Card Program rewards with early course registration students who attend ten cultural events (lectures, dance or drama productions, or museum visits) and turn in a short reflective essay. This program should be expanded to the University as a whole to promote extracurricular cultural engagement and participation in leadership activities among undergraduates.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase the exposure of students to and participation in extracurricular cultural events and leadership activities. Provide rewards for students who participate in cultural events and engage in leadership activities.

II.1.7. Engaging Lectures

The presence of incentives to attend extracurricular activities led the Task Force to ask if enough speakers of national and international stature were coming to campus on a regular basis to engage the interests of our students. Spring Commencement should feature a major speaker who reflects intellectual rigor, who speaks on substantive issues, and who inspires and motivates. If the University presents programs that excite students, and publicizes them adequately, then students will build habits of participation.

RECOMMENDATION: Renew University efforts to attract and publicize invigorating cultural events and important speakers, especially for Spring Commencement.

II.1.8. Minimize Alcohol-related Offenses

Carole Middlebrooks of the University Health Center addressed the Task Force on November 19, 2004. Ms. Middlebrooks shared information and statistics showing that campuses that had implemented parental notification policies have seen significant reductions in recidivism for alcohol-related offenses. She also cited a statistic reporting that over 95 percent of parents surveyed said they wish to be notified if their children are in trouble with alcohol.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate a “Parental Notification” policy wherein parents of students who commit two or more alcohol-related offenses are promptly notified.

This Task Force recommendation was adopted by President’s Cabinet on February 3, 2005

II.1.9. A Seven-Day-a-Week University

To promote community, extracurricular learning, and personal development, the University campus should be a vibrant and stimulating place seven days a week, not just Monday through Thursday. More classes should be scheduled on Fridays and more campus events over the weekend. First-year students should take a balanced course load that includes several MWF classes throughout their undergraduate experience. When two-hour undergraduate courses are offered, more use should be made of a MF or WF scheduling to discourage students from defining the weekend as beginning on Thursday night. Overall, more Friday classes will serve to support a new academic culture on this campus.

RECOMMENDATION: Encourage the departmental scheduling of more MWF classes and schedule more one- and two-credit hour classes on WF and MF as well as more varied, campus-wide, residence hall, learning community, and student club events for students during the weekend (Friday afternoon through Sunday evening). Such events could be academic, cultural, athletic, or purely social.

II.1.10. Keep Campus Venues Open for More Hours

To provide a late-night alternative to going downtown for students, these ‘hubs’ of student academic and physical activity should remain open for an expanded operating schedule. Consideration should be given to providing resources to allow the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center to remain open for 24-hours a day.

RECOMMENDATION: Expand the operating hours of the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center.

II.1.11. Ensure that Student Organizations are Consistent with University’s Goals

All student groups—whether social or academic—should be integrated into the University’s academic community. Every group is expected to be inclusive rather than exclusive and to embrace diversity. We are concerned not only about diversity issues, but also about student focus on social rather than academic matters.

RECOMMENDATION: The University Council’s Student Affairs Committee should examine student organizations, including the Greek system, to see if their processes and programs are consistent with enhancing the University’s intellectual climate.

II.1.12. First-Year Students and Automobiles

The Task Force encourages incoming students and their parents/guardians to consider the relative merits of the first-year student having a car in Athens. A rich first-year experience provides the foundation for the student’s undergraduate career and having a car on campus in the first year might be seen as an ever-ready distraction from the academic, cultural, and social community which is a world-class university. The Task Force recognizes that financial and/or family responsibilities make it necessary for some first-year students to have a car on campus, but those who are free of such responsibilities should be encouraged to consider if they would benefit from spending at least their first year of college without a car.

RECOMMENDATION: Include a letter, as part of the admissions packet, to incoming students and their parents/guardians encouraging them to consider the relative merits of the first-year student having a car in Athens.

2. Provide the Structure and Support Excellent Teaching Requires

The Task Force identified the need to improve the infrastructure that supports excellent teaching. Observations and recommendations on providing the structure and support needed to improve the learning environment at the University are listed here.

II.2.1. Class Size

The enrollment in individual undergraduate classes has increased, especially in recent years. Some students lament that they cannot graduate on time because they cannot get into major classes they need. In short, the University has an insufficient number of faculty to address the student demand for classes. Expanding the number of students in any given class beyond what is pedagogically sound does not constitute a viable solution. Virtually every study on teaching finds a strong correlation between effectiveness and a satisfactory student-faculty ratio. As participants at the Faculty Symposium commented, “Everything the Task Force wants to accomplish—more learning, more interaction, more thinking, more reading, more writing, better mentoring relationships—is contingent on this recommendation.”

RECOMMENDATION: Channel more resources toward hiring additional faculty members, so class sizes and student/faculty ratios decrease.

II.2.2. Grading System

The Task Force strongly endorsed using a plus-minus grading system to allow for greater grade differentiation for students, faculty, and potential employers. Task Force members also suggested that using a plus-minus system will encourage students to devote more attention to their academic performance. Most of our peer and aspirational institutions have adopted a plus-minus grading system (see Appendix 4). The University Council has expressed support for the establishment of a plus-minus system on several occasions, most recently approving this proposal on April 27, 2000. However, discussions with the Board of Regents at that time did not resolve issues related to implementation of the proposal. We must renew those efforts as such a grading system has the potential to greatly increase academic rigor in our courses.

RECOMMENDATION: Renew efforts to implement the University Curriculum Committee’s recommendation to develop and implement a “plus-minus” grading system across the University to allow for better grade differentiation in academic performance and to strengthen the rigor of undergraduate courses.

II.2.3. Drop/Add Duration

Many faculty and students report that the recently extended “Drop/Add” phase led to the first week of class effectively being wasted.

RECOMMENDATION: Reduce the time period of Drop/Add for undergraduates.

This Task Force recommendation was approved by University Council on April 21, 2005, as follows: University of Georgia students registering in undergraduate classes may drop/add classes through the fourth business day of classes for the fall and spring term. Students registering for graduate classes will be allowed to drop/add classes through the sixth business day. Students are responsible for work assigned and material covered from the first class meeting.

II.2.4. Uniform Course Evaluations

Faculty should welcome constructive feedback from their students on what works well in their courses and what might be improved. Course evaluations also play a role in evaluating some aspects of teaching effectiveness. The Task Force expressed concern over the lack of uniformity between different departments' end-of-course evaluations and the lack of questions on academic rigor. Establishing comprehensive and uniform end-of-course evaluations, but allowing for course-specific questions, would provide an effective tool to assess undergraduate courses and the degree of academic rigor. The University should develop an online evaluation system, which would preserve class time and allow for more thoughtful responses from students. This system should be made available to instructors for mid-course evaluations.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish an online course evaluation system. Formulate a uniform set of questions for all University undergraduate courses. The evaluation should include a question regarding student perceptions of the course's academic rigor. The evaluation should also include questions developed by colleges, schools, or departments that address concerns appropriate to disciplines and courses. Develop an online mid-semester evaluation form for the benefit of instructors.

II.2.5. More Sophisticated Teaching Evaluations

Some faculty members suggest that the University's reliance on student evaluations simply encourages instructors to be less rigorous in their courses. Furthermore, many faculty members feel that student evaluations are disproportionately influenced by grades the student has received in the course at the point the evaluation is completed. Since the Task Force identifies excellent teaching as a key to student learning, these concerns suggest that the University needs to encourage more sophisticated evaluation methods.

RECOMMENDATION: Foster the development of a more complete teaching evaluation process where both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of an instructor's teaching. Evaluations might include such methods as periodic peer-review, interviews of students by faculty peers, or a teaching portfolio.

II.2.6. Service Learning

The University currently offers several courses that include some form of service-learning, but more needs to be done to offer students the opportunity to participate in academic experiences that systematically combine classroom instruction with out-of-classroom learning activities.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop and implement a plan to create an Office of Service Learning to coordinate, promote, and expand service learning and international service learning opportunities across the campus.

II.2.7. Technology

Today's learning environment demands state-of-the-art technology. Faculty and students are sophisticated users of technology. To remain competitive in today's academic environment, the University of Georgia must focus on obtaining the best instructional technology available for our classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION: Improve the instructional environment in classrooms by installing modern technology appropriate to given classrooms, and then adopt a plan for maintaining and replacing this equipment as needed.

3. Improve Faculty Development and Rewards

The Task Force identified the need to both reward faculty for excellent teaching and help faculty improve their teaching.

II.3.1. Faculty Rewards

The Task Force repeats the sentiments expressed in numerous national reports: the University must provide attractive incentives for excellence in undergraduate teaching. The quality of undergraduate instruction should be a more significant consideration in merit pay, recognition, and promotion and tenure decisions. Evidence that teaching is a vital consideration in merit raises and in promotion and tenure decisions is imperative since faculty focus on rewards in deciding how to spend their time. At this time, few incentives encourage faculty to make substantial investments in undergraduate education.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a University-wide faculty review system that encourages, recognizes, and rewards high-quality undergraduate teaching.

II.3.2. Accounting for Faculty Workload

Many departments assess faculty teaching by courses (e.g., four courses per year). Inflexibility in assigning teaching workloads leads to disincentives, particularly when faculty receive no credit for teaching first-year seminar courses or for team-teaching a course. In addition, faculty teaching in undergraduate research is often not credited toward faculty members' teaching load. Departments should assess faculty workloads, and in particular teaching loads, using hours rather than courses.

RECOMMENDATION: Assess teaching loads by hours (e.g., twelve hours for four 3-credit courses), rather than assessing faculty loads by courses (e.g., four-course teaching load), to encourage the teaching of one- and two-hour seminars. Departments should also account for hours faculty spend teaching students in research.

II.3.3. Faculty Development

Earlier studies have indicated that the University of Georgia is one of the few major public universities that does not have a structured leave policy. Yet it is well known that such programs provide a tremendous boost in the development of teaching skills and research productivity. Such programs are widely considered one of the most effective measures for invigorating undergraduate instruction, as faculty are able to concentrate on the latest research, prepare new classroom presentations, attend more professional conferences to enhance their knowledge in their fields of instruction, and complete their own studies on topics related to their classroom offerings. In addition, the Task Force felt that the University should provide additional resources for on-campus faculty development, particularly, the "Study in a Second Discipline" program.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate a structured leave policy for tenured faculty members. Increase support for the "Study in a Second Discipline" program.

II.3.4. The Center for Teaching and Learning

Although the Task Force felt that the Office of Instructional Support and Development (OISD) serves a valuable role on campus, its impact must be multiplied. OISD, which we recommend be renamed the "Center for Teaching and Learning," (CTL) should develop frequent workshops or seminars that

illustrate “best practices” in teaching. The CTL should collect data to demonstrate to a national audience the University of Georgia’s commitment to undergraduate education. The CTL should also coordinate with the Office of Institutional Research to evaluate how well we teach on this campus.

RECOMMENDATION: Increase pedagogical training and communication on campus by expanding the role and resources to OISD (renamed as the Center for Teaching and Learning).

II.3.5. The Center for Emeritus Faculty

Emeritus faculty from the University of Georgia, or other distinguished faculty who move to the Athens area for retirement, can be a valuable resource for the University’s effort to improve undergraduate education. We recommend the creation of a Center for Emeritus Faculty to encourage the involvement of emeritus faculty in working with students and active faculty. Such faculty can serve in a variety of ways from acting as faculty mentors to teaching established courses and seminars as the principal lecturer or as a guest speaker. We believe such faculty can serve as a tremendous resource for undergraduate students seeking wise counsel in the development of their undergraduate plans and career objectives.

RECOMMENDATION: Create the Center for Emeritus Faculty to coordinate the contributions of emeritus faculty to teaching and learning on campus.

IV. Conclusion

The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University noted: “An undergraduate at an American research university can receive an education as good or better than anything available anywhere in the world, but that is not the normative experience.” The Task Force agrees with this statement and believes that the adoption of these recommendations can lead to dramatic improvement in undergraduate education at the University of Georgia. We look forward to a campus conversation during the next year that will build momentum for implementing the goals contained in this report which we believe will take this outstanding institution to new levels of excellence.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS

CHAIRS:

Delmer Dunn	Regents Professor, School of Public and International Affairs, and Vice President for Instruction and Associate Provost
Jere Morehead	Meigs Professor, Terry College of Business, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

MEMBERS:

Bruce Bongarten	Professor and Associate Dean, School of Forest Resources
Josef Broder	University Professor, Interim Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and Chair, University of Georgia Teaching Academy
Joe Crim	Professor, and Associate Vice President for Instruction
Anne Dupre	J. Alton Hosch Professor, School of Law
Thomas Dyer	University Professor, and Director, Institute of Higher Education
Steven Elliott-Gower	Associate Director, Honors Program
Noel Fallows	Professor, and Department Head, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Brian Glaser	Professor, College of Education
Jan Hathcote	Associate Professor, and Associate Dean, College of Family and Consumer Sciences
Loch Johnson	Regents Professor, School of Public and International Affairs
Peggy Kreshel	Associate Professor, College of Journalism and Mass Communication
Rodney Mauricio	Assistant Professor, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Teresa O'Neal	Student Representative, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
Rosemary Phelps	Professor, College of Education
William Potter	University Librarian, and Associate Provost
Harry Hunt Revell	Student Representative, School of Public and International Affairs
Christine M. Riordan	Associate Professor, and Director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement, Terry College of Business
Candace Sherman	Associate Dean, Student Leadership Center, Office of Student Affairs
Frances Teague	Meigs Professor, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
William Vencill	Associate Professor, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Scott Weinberg	Professor, and Associate Dean, College of Environment and Design
Mark Wheeler	Professor, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

GRADUATE ASSISTANT:

Ben Coppedge	Research Assistant, Office of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
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APPENDIX 2: PROVOST'S CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

I would like to thank each of you for serving on the Task Force on General Education and Student Learning. I assembled this Task Force to evaluate important issues at the University of Georgia: the intellectual climate of our campus, the evolution of student learning, and the general education of our undergraduates. As you know, the University of Georgia has consistently sought to provide students with an engaging, rigorous, and relevant education. This high quality of instruction has been possible because dedicated faculty and administrations over the years have continually explored and developed innovative approaches to undergraduate education. You now will become a part of that important work.

We have not examined undergraduate education in a broad sense since the President's Task Force on the Quality of the Undergraduate Experience in 1997 which Professor Morehead chaired. To continue our tradition of making constant improvements and maintain the academic excellence already found on this campus, this new Task Force should carefully reevaluate the University's general education requirements and approaches to enhancing student learning. I hope that this group will identify new and far-reaching approaches to undergraduate education and student learning that will incorporate the strengths of our current technology and academic resources and suggest innovations in design and practice, more responsiveness to individual learning styles, and engaging a wider variety of diverse students in the intellectual life of the campus. As you do so, you will have to carefully assess our general education of undergraduates as well.

If you are speculating why you, specifically, were asked to serve on this Task Force, please allow me to briefly explain. You were selected because of the unique and important perspectives on student learning and undergraduate education that you bring to this table. This Task Force is composed of individuals representing a diverse body of knowledge and expertise. Your challenge will be to integrate the evaluations and advice that follow from your expertise and good work into one coherent and seamless set of recommendations that will prepare strategies to enhance the effectiveness, relevance, and rigor of the undergraduate academic experience here at the University of Georgia. My appointment of both Dr. Dunn and Professor Morehead to co-chair this Task Force demonstrates the importance I place on your work this coming year.

Your assignment over the next several months is to investigate, assess, and make recommendations for improving the undergraduate intellectual climate of the University of Georgia with a specific focus on our general education requirements and student learning strategies. Several important questions will need to be considered:

1. Are the University's teaching strategies commensurate with how students are learning today?
2. Are the current general education requirements preparing students with relevant, adaptable, and cross-functional lifelong learning skills that transcend a student's particular area of study?
3. Are the general education requirements effectively preparing students for success in the continually changing twenty-first century workplace and for premier graduate programs?
4. Are undergraduate students being intellectually challenged and rigorously engaged throughout the entire four-year undergraduate learning experience? While these general questions need to be answered, many more specific questions of general education and student learning also will require exploration by this Task Force.

Let me suggest several for your consideration:

1. Should our orientation program have a greater focus on academic preparation and introduction of faculty?
2. Should we expand our “Living and Learning” programs to offer more thematic course clusters to a greater number of undergraduate students?
3. Have the teaching methods employed by University of Georgia professors been modified to take into account the way students learn today?
4. Has the University of Georgia taken full advantage of the technological innovations available to enhance the learning environment?
5. In developing our undergraduate core curriculum, have we taken into account how to prepare students for the realities of the twenty-first century workplace?
6. Are our faculty providing a rigorous and fair assessment of their student’s work?
7. Do our general education requirements effectively develop in students cross-functional, adaptable learning skills such as problem solving, team work, critical reasoning, writing, and leadership?
8. Have we taken the necessary steps to adequately respond to student’s individualized needs and styles of learning?

In addition to exploring these and other questions you may develop, please remember that many of our peer institutions have been or are now involved in much the same assessments that we are beginning today. I encourage you to take into account these “best practices” and consider proven, innovative strategies used by other peer institutions and consider their possible relevance at the University of Georgia.

Your Task Force will be in operation from this date until you complete your task, hopefully by late spring or early summer of 2005. If possible, I ask for a report outlining your findings and recommendations by that time. Thank you in advance for your commitment of time and effort to further improve the intellectual environment at this fine institution. Your service is genuinely appreciated.

APPENDIX 3: SOLICITATION AND RECEPTION OF PUBLIC COMMENT

The following five questions, or close variations thereof, were posed to the campus constituencies listed below. (1) What are the most important learning outcomes for general education? (2) What one or two recommendations would you make to improve the academic culture on campus? (3) Are there aspects of student life or culture at University of Georgia that detract from increasing the intellectual rigor of undergraduate courses? (4) What could the University do that would help students create a better intellectual climate on this campus? (5) What would you identify as the primary difference or differences between courses in which you have learned a great deal and courses in which you have been disappointed in what you have learned?

Constituency: **Undergraduate Students**

Method: Public forum

Date: February 2, 2005

Location: Student Learning Center

Moderators: Dr. Delmer Dunn and Professor Jere Morehead

Constituency: **Undergraduate Learning Community Participants**

Method: Public forum

Date: March 2, 2005

Location: Rutherford Hall Commons (Franklin Residential College)

Moderators: Dr. Joe Crim and Dr. Rodney Mauricio

Constituency: **Foundation Fellows**

Method: General discussion

Date: January 22, 2005

Location: Foundation Fellows Retreat

Moderators: Professor Jere Morehead and Dr. Steven Elliott-Gower

Constituency: **Academic Advisors**

Method: General discussion

Location: Academic Advising Coordinating Council Meeting

Date: January 14, 2005

Moderator: Dr. Delmer Dunn

Constituency: **Faculty Members**

Method: Public forum

Date: January 25, 2005

Location: Student Learning Center

Moderators: Dr. Delmer Dunn and Professor Jere Morehead

Constituency: **College Deans**

Method: General Discussion

Date: February 24, 2005

Location: Georgia Center for Continuing Education

Moderators: Dr. Delmer Dunn and Professor Jere Morehead

APPENDIX 4: PLUS-MINUS GRADING ACROSS U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Data from a web search of individual university catalogs (as of 4/22/2005).

* Denotes a University of Georgia peer institution (as defined by USG Board of Regents)

Denotes a University of Georgia aspirational institution; (as defined by USG Board of Regents)

The following institutions use plus-minus grading (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F):

*Arizona State University

California Institute of Technology

Columbia University

#Cornell University

Dartmouth College

#Duke University

Emory University

Florida State University

Harvard University

*Indiana University

*Iowa State University

Johns Hopkins University

Louisiana State University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

*Michigan State University (4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, 0.0)

*North Carolina State University

#Northwestern University

Ohio State University

Ohio University

Oregon State University

Pennsylvania State University

Princeton University

Rice University

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Stanford University

State University of New York – Stony Brook

University of Alabama

#University of California, Berkeley

*University of California, Davis

#University of California, San Diego

University of Chicago

*University of Colorado

University of Connecticut

University of Delaware

University of Florida

University of Hawaii

#University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

*University of Iowa

*University of Kansas (Schools of Architecture and Urban Design, Business, Education, Fine Arts, Journalism and Mass Communications, and Social Welfare only)

University of Kentucky

University of Maine (faculty members have option of adding plus/minus)

*University of Maryland, College Park

University of Massachusetts

#University of Michigan

#University of Minnesota

*University of Missouri- Columbia

University of Montana

*University of Nebraska

University of Nevada-Las Vegas

University of New Hampshire

University of New Mexico

#University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

University of Notre Dame

*University of Oregon

University of Pennsylvania

University of Rhode Island

University of South Carolina (A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, F)

University of Tennessee (A, B+, B, C+, C, D, F)

University of Utah

University of Vermont

#University of Virginia

#University of Washington

#University of Wisconsin (A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F)

*Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Wake Forest University

Washington University, St. Louis

Yale University

The following universities do not use plus/minus grading:

Auburn University

Brown University (A, B, C, no credit)

*Texas A&M University

University of Alaska

#University of Arizona

University of Arkansas

University of Mississippi

University of North Dakota

University of Oklahoma

University of South Dakota

#University of Texas, Austin

University of Wyoming

West Virginia University

APPENDIX 5: LIST OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

I. GENERAL EDUCATION

1. Make General Education Stronger

I.1.1. Each course syllabus and CAPA course application should contain a statement describing how course objectives meet the general education goals identified in this report.

I.1.2. The General Education subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee should implement procedures for the periodic review of courses used to meet general education requirements to ensure that they are adequately satisfying the general education learning goals.

I.1.3. The University should encourage departments to develop new courses that will serve as a central core of a new general education requirement. These courses will be focused, emphasizing depth rather than breadth, and demonstrating how knowledge is constructed in that area of inquiry.

I.1.4. Take steps to ensure that tenured or tenure-track faculty are teaching more courses typically taken by undergraduate students in the first and second years of study.

I.1.5. Allow student access to appropriate upper-division courses to count toward satisfaction of general education requirements, providing those students have the necessary prerequisites.

I.1.6. Modify undergraduate major requirements to enhance the ability of students to take courses outside of their discipline and recommend that departments engaged in undergraduate education examine their major requirements to ensure that they are providing their students with a broad, general education.

I.1.7. The Office of the Vice President for Instruction should develop a plan to address the issue of academic rigor and AP exams.

I.1.8. Encourage all students, and require all students graduating with honors in their major, to complete a substantive capstone experience in the major. All colleges should develop and implement department-specific Final-Year capstone experience programs.

I.1.9. Increase funding to a competitive grants program to assist students in completing research projects as part of a capstone experience.

2. Improve Specific Areas within General Education

I.2.1. Incorporate significant writing assignments into more courses across the University so that students are exposed to rigorous writing experiences throughout their undergraduate career.

I.2.2. Expand the current system that designates selected classes as “writing intensive” or containing a “writing component” across the University.

I.2.3. Establish the expectation that graduating students will be able to communicate effectively in a second language. Increase the requirement for admission to the University of Georgia from two to three high school courses in the same language no later than fall 2009.

I.2.4. Continue to develop and expand international education opportunities such as exchange programs and low cost international classes and trips. Additionally, raise funds to provide scholarships for international education opportunities.

I.2.5. Institute a new general education requirement in moral reasoning where students must analyze the construction of rules of ethical behavior.

I.2.6. Expand the scope of the general education requirement in mathematics to two courses with a significant quantitative component.

I.2.7. Increase the requirements for basic science and make science classes for nonmajors more engaging by developing the connections between science and society.

I.2.8. Faculty should include in their classes, where appropriate, formal oral presentations, exercises that engage students in oral arguments, and classroom discussions.

I.2.9. Faculty should include, when possible, class opportunities for collaborative learning.

I.2.10. Support the Division of Academic Enhancement, University Libraries, Enterprise Information Technology Services, Office of Instructional Support and Development, and other academic support units in providing opportunities for students to acquire skills in locating, evaluating, and using information resources in a wide variety of formats.

II. STUDENT LEARNING

1. Creating a Campus Life Centered on Learning

II.1.1. Continue to expand on-campus housing opportunities and improve all campus facilities. Incorporate the latest classroom designs when existing classrooms are remodeled so as to enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of these spaces.

II.1.2. Expand residential learning community programs like the Creswell Learning Community, the Mary Lyndon language communities, Freshman College, and the Franklin Residential College so that a larger number of students may participate. Expand academic advising within the residence halls.

II.1.3. Expand and implement an academic component to orientation, including a common book and a recommended summer reading list that will thoroughly introduce incoming students to the University's intellectual climate, academic expectations for students, and undergraduate general education plan.

II.1.4. Expand the Honors Faculty Mentoring Program across the University on a voluntary and college-specific basis.

II.1.5. Encourage first-year students to participate in the First-Year Seminar Program and other innovative seminars that emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as introducing students to faculty.

II.1.6. Increase the exposure of students to and participation in extracurricular cultural events and leadership activities. Provide rewards for students who participate in cultural events and engage in leadership activities.

II.1.7. Renew University efforts to attract and publicize invigorating cultural events and important speakers, especially for Spring Commencement.

II.1.8. Initiate a “Parental Notification” policy wherein parents of students who commit two or more alcohol-related offenses are promptly notified.

II.1.9. Encourage the departmental scheduling of more MWF classes and schedule more one- and two-credit hour classes on WF and MF as well as more varied, campus-wide, residence hall, learning community, and student club events for students during the weekend (Friday afternoon through Sunday evening). Such events could be academic, cultural, athletic, or purely social.

II.1.10. Expand the operating hours of the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center.

II.1.11. The University Council’s Student Affairs Committee should examine student organizations, including the Greek system, to see if their processes and programs are consistent with enhancing the University’s intellectual climate.

II.1.12. Include a letter, as part of the admissions packet, to incoming students and their parents/guardians encouraging them to consider the relative merits of the first-year student having a car in Athens.

2. Provide the Structure and Support Excellent Teaching Requires

II.2.1. Channel more resources toward hiring additional faculty members, so class sizes and student/faculty ratios decrease.

II.2.2. Renew efforts to implement the University Curriculum Committee’s recommendation to develop and implement a “plus-minus” grading system across the University to allow for better grade differentiation in academic performance and to strengthen the rigor of undergraduate courses.

II.2.3. Reduce the time period of Drop/Add for undergraduates.

II.2.4. Establish an online course evaluation system. Formulate a uniform set of questions for all University undergraduate courses. The evaluation should include a question regarding student perceptions of the course’s academic rigor. The evaluation should also include questions developed by colleges, schools, or departments that address concerns appropriate to disciplines and courses. Develop an online mid-semester evaluation form for the benefit of instructors.

II.2.5. Foster the development of a more complete teaching evaluation process where both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of an instructor’s teaching. Evaluations might include such methods as periodic peer-review, interviews of students by faculty peers, or a teaching portfolio.

II.2.6. Develop and implement a plan to create an Office of Service Learning to coordinate, promote, and expand service learning and international service learning opportunities across the campus.

II.2.7. Improve the instructional environment in classrooms by installing modern technology appropriate to given classrooms, and then adopt a plan for maintaining and replacing this equipment as needed.

3. Improve Faculty Development and Rewards

II.3.1. Establish a University-wide faculty review system that encourages, recognizes, and rewards high-quality undergraduate teaching.

II.3.2. Assess teaching loads by hours (e.g., twelve hours for four 3-credit courses), rather than assessing faculty loads by courses (e.g., four-course teaching load), to encourage the teaching of one and two hour seminars. Departments should also account for hours faculty spend teaching students in research.

II.3.3. Initiate a structured leave policy for tenured faculty members. Increase support for the “Study in a Second Discipline” program.

II.3.4. Increase pedagogical training and communication on campus by expanding the role and resources to OISD (renamed as the Center for Teaching and Learning).

II.3.5. Create the Center for Emeritus Faculty to coordinate the contributions of emeritus faculty to teaching and learning on campus.

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO HOW STUDENTS LEARN TODAY

In his charge to the Task Force, Provost Arnett Mace posed a question of whether the faculty's teaching methods are commensurate with how students learn today. Some evidence exists that students do learn differently from their counterparts in the past. Certainly the Television Age inaugurated more visual learning than that which took place in the days when the written and spoken word were key. The continued development of technology further enhanced the emphasis on the visual in learning. The development of new technologies has produced further change. The Internet has opened a wide range of information that was previously less accessible and in some cases not accessible at all. The increase in the availability of information also requires students to develop new approaches to the evaluation of the sources of information. Electronic mail and technology, like WebCT, make it possible for students to communicate with each other and with faculty members in ways previously possible only in face-to-face encounters. Students also place a premium on learning by doing and by involving themselves in collaborative learning. Thus, there is less emphasis on learning in isolation from others. These changes do not replace more traditional learning methods: listening to lectures, reading books or journal articles, or studying alone at home or in a library. But they do form an increasing part of students' total learning that must be incorporated in modern pedagogy.

Several recommendations of the Task Force address some part of these new learning processes:

I.1.8. Encourage all students, and require all students graduating with honors in their major, to complete a substantive capstone experience in the major. All colleges should develop and implement department-specific Final-Year capstone experience programs.

I.1.9. Increase funding to a competitive grants program to assist students in completing research projects as part of a capstone experience.

I.2.8. Faculty should include in their classes, where appropriate, formal oral presentations, exercises that engage students in oral arguments, and classroom discussions.

I.2.9. Faculty should include, when possible, class opportunities for collaborative learning.

I.2.10. Support the Division of Academic Enhancement, University Libraries, Enterprise Information Technology Services, Office of Instructional Support and Development and other academic support units in providing opportunities for students to acquire skills in locating, evaluating, and using information resources in a wide variety of formats.

II.1.1. Continue to expand on-campus housing opportunities and improve all campus facilities. Incorporate the latest classroom designs when existing classrooms are remodeled so as to enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of these spaces.

II.1.2. Expand residential learning community programs like the Creswell Learning Community, the Mary Lyndon language communities, Freshman College, and the Franklin Residential College so that a larger number of students may participate. Expand academic advising within the residence halls.

II.1.10. Expand the operating hours of the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center.

II.2.6. Develop and implement a plan to create an Office of Service Learning to coordinate, promote, and expand service learning and international service learning opportunities across the campus.

II.2.7. Improve the instructional environment in classrooms by installing modern technology appropriate to given classrooms, and then adopt a plan for maintaining and replacing this equipment as needed.

II.3.4. Increase pedagogical training and communication on campus by expanding the role and resources to OISD (renamed as the Center for Teaching and Learning).

APPENDIX 7: IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations of the Task Force will require a number of processes for implementation, depending on the particular recommendation. The recommendations will first be sent to Provost Arnett Mace, who appointed the Task Force and asked for recommendations. It will be his decision as to which recommendations he will accept and begin the process of implementation. In general, some recommendations will require only administrative action to implement. Others will require consideration by the University Council, the Cabinet, or the Board of Regents. Some may require some combination. The following represents an approximation of implementation of each recommendation. In some instances the recommendations will require action by departments, schools, and colleges that will follow the procedures established by these units.

I. GENERAL EDUCATION

1. Make General Education Stronger

I.1.1. Each course syllabus and CAPA course application should contain a statement describing how course objectives meet the general education goals identified in this report.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and University Curriculum Committee.

Means of Implementation: Incorporate technological changes into online automated CAPA system. Communicate new requirements to university faculty and those involved in the course approval process.

Resource Implications: Moderate.

I.1.2. The General Education subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee should implement procedures for the periodic review of courses used to meet general education requirements to ensure that they are adequately satisfying the general education learning goals.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee.

Means of Implementation: Committee approval.

Resource Implications: None.

I.1.3. The University should encourage departments to develop new courses that will serve as a central core of a new general education requirement. These courses will be focused, emphasizing depth rather than breadth, and demonstrating how knowledge is constructed in that area of inquiry.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and University Curriculum Committee.

Means of Implementation: Conduct meetings with deans to communicate the rationale and implications of this recommendation.

Resource Implications: Special funding initiative to encourage this action.

I.1.4. Take steps to ensure that tenured or tenure-track faculty are teaching more courses typically taken by undergraduate students in the first and second years of study.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and deans.

Means of Implementation: Periodic Review by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction and deans.
Resource Implications: Funding for expanded faculty.

I.1.5. Allow student access to appropriate upper-division courses to count toward satisfaction of general education requirements, providing those students have the necessary prerequisites.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee.

Means of Implementation: Committee approval.

Resource Implications: None.

I.1.6. Modify undergraduate major requirements to enhance the ability of students to take courses outside of their discipline and recommend that departments engaged in undergraduate education examine their major requirements to ensure that they are providing their students with a broad, general education.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee, Office of the Vice President for Instruction, and deans.

Means of Implementation: Review by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, University Curriculum Committee and deans.

Resource Implications: None.

I.1.7. The Office of the Vice President for Instruction should develop a plan to address the issue of academic rigor and AP exams.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and appropriate University Council committee.

Means of Implementation: Creation of a task force or special committee by the Vice President for Instruction.

Resource Implications: None.

I.1.8. Encourage all students, and require all students graduating with honors in their major, to complete a substantive capstone experience in the major. All colleges should develop and implement major-specific Final-Year capstone experience programs.

Implementation Official: Request by Provost and Vice President for Instruction made to deans for individual action plans by various schools and colleges, and University Curriculum Committee as appropriate.

Means of Implementation: Through the various school and colleges, with course approval by the University Curriculum Committee.

Resource Implications: No direct resource implications but it will have an impact on faculty workloads.

I.1.9. Increase funding to a competitive grants program to assist students in completing research projects as part of a capstone experience.

Implementation Official: Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO).

Means of Implementation: Establish a systematized application, review, and grant awarding process.

Resource Implications: Suggested funding of \$100,000 per year.

2. Improve Specific Areas within General Education

I.2.1. Incorporate significant writing assignments into more courses across the University so that students are exposed to rigorous writing experiences throughout their undergraduate career.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Create a committee to study effective methods of expanding these opportunities in selected departments.

Resource Implications: Increased faculty workload and/or graduate assistant support.

I.2.2. Expand the current system that designates selected classes as “writing intensive” or containing a “writing component” across the University.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee.

Means of Implementation: Committee approval; General Education subcommittee would review course descriptions and designate appropriate “writing intensive” courses.

Resource Implications: See above.

I.2.3. Establish the expectation that graduating students will be able to communicate effectively in a second language. Increase the requirement for admission to the University of Georgia from two to three high school courses in the same language no later than fall 2009.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, University Curriculum Committee, Faculty Admissions Committee, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Revise graduation requirements and communicate this expectation through appropriate means.

Resource Implications: Funding for expanded faculty and course offerings.

I.2.4. Continue to develop and expand international education opportunities such as exchange programs and low cost international classes and trips. Additionally, raise funds to provide scholarships for international education opportunities.

Implementation Official: Office of International Education and Office of External Affairs.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: Minimal program development costs but major fundraising implications for the capital campaign.

I.2.5. Institute a new general education requirement in moral reasoning where students must analyze the construction of rules of ethical behavior.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee and Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Committee approval.

Resource Implications: Additional faculty needed.

I.2.6. Expand the scope of the general education requirement in mathematics to two courses with a significant quantitative component.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee and Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Committee approval.

Resource Implications: Increasing availability of courses containing significant quantitative components with appropriate faculty hiring and support.

I.2.7. Increase the requirements for basic science and make science classes for nonmajors more engaging by developing the connections between science and society.

Implementation Official: University Curriculum Committee; Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Office of Curriculum Systems, and Office of Instructional Support and Development, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Convene a colloquium for faculty teaching undergraduate science courses to discuss how to make science courses for nonscience majors more engaging.

Resource Implications: Moderate.

I.2.8. Faculty should include in their classes, where appropriate, formal oral presentations, exercises that engage students in oral arguments, and classroom discussions.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Office of Instructional Support and Development, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Encourage faculty to make such changes in course content.

Resource Implications: None.

I.2.9. Faculty should include, when possible, class opportunities for collaborative learning.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Office of Instructional Support and Development, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Encourage faculty to make such changes in course content.

Resource Implications: None.

I.2.10. Support the Division of Academic Enhancement, University Libraries, Enterprise Information Technology Services, Office of Instructional Support and Development and other academic support units in providing opportunities for students to acquire skills in locating, evaluating, and using information resources in a wide variety of formats.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Development of additional programs.

Resource Implications: Moderate.

II. STUDENT LEARNING

1. Creating a Campus Life Centered on Learning

II.1.1. Continue to expand on-campus housing opportunities and improve all campus facilities. Incorporate the latest classroom designs when existing classrooms are remodeled so as to enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of these spaces.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs-University Housing Department and University Committee on Facilities.

Means of Implementation: Building and renovating additional residence halls and campus facilities for learning groups and the establishment of these learning groups.

Resource Implications: Significant capital costs.

II.1.2. Expand residential learning community programs like the Creswell Learning Community, the Mary Lyndon language communities, Freshman College, and the Franklin Residential College so that a larger number of students may participate. Expand academic advising within the residence halls.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs-University Housing Department.

Means of Implementation: Expansion of current offerings.

Resource Implications: Increased funding and staffing to support continued expansion of learning community programs and advisers in residence halls.

II.1.3. Expand and implement an academic component to orientation, including a recommended common book and a summer reading list that will thoroughly introduce incoming students to the University's intellectual climate, academic expectations for students, and undergraduate general education plan.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost, Office of the Vice President for Instruction, and Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Means of Implementation: Change orientation schedule.

Resource Implications: None.

II.1.4. Expand the Honors Faculty Mentoring Program across the University on a voluntary and college-specific basis.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Expand on the model currently followed by the Honors Program.

Resource Implications: Moderate.

II.1.5. Encourage first-year students to participate in the First-Year Seminar Program and other innovative seminars that emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as introducing students to faculty.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, other colleges and schools, and the Honors Program.

Means of Implementation: Provide increased funding to encourage greater numbers of faculty to teach these seminars.

Resource Implications: \$150,000 per year.

II.1.6. Increase the exposure of students to and participation in extracurricular cultural events and leadership activities. Provide rewards for students who participate in cultural events and engage in leadership activities.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and University Committee on Student Affairs.

Means of Implementation: Student Affairs Committee or special task force to explore effective ways to implement this recommendation.

Resource Implications: Minimal.

II.1.7. Renew University efforts to attract and publicize invigorating cultural events and important speakers, especially for Spring Commencement.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost and Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Means of Implementation: Increase frequency of such campus events and speeches.

Resource Implications: Significant, depending upon level of implementation.

II.1.8. Initiate a “Parental Notification” policy wherein parents of students who commit two or more alcohol-related offenses are promptly notified.

Implemented (by Cabinet action). Office of Student Affairs

II.1.9. Encourage the departmental scheduling of more MWF classes and schedule more one- and two-credit hour classes on WF and MF as well as more varied, campus-wide, residence hall, learning community, and student club events for students during the weekend (Friday afternoon through Sunday evening). Such events could be academic, cultural, athletic, or purely social.

Implementation Official: Office of Vice President for Instruction, deans, and department heads; Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs—Student Activities Department.

Means of Implementation: Administrative.

Resource Implications: Increased costs for weekend programs depending upon level of implementation.

II.1.10. Expand the operating hours of the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center.

Implementation Official: Associate Provost and Librarian and Division of Student Affairs.

Means of Implementation: Administrative mandate.

Resource Implications: Funding and staffing increase to support expansion of operating hours.

II.1.11. The University Council’s Student Affairs Committee should examine student organizations, including the Greek system, to see if their processes and programs are consistent with enhancing the University’s intellectual climate.

Implementation Official: University Council Student Affairs Committee.

Means of Implementation: Committee action.

Resource Implications: None.

II.1.12. Include a letter, as part of the admissions packet, to incoming students and their parents/guardians encouraging them to consider the relative merits of the first-year student having a car in Athens.

Implementation Official: Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Means of Implementation: Acceptance or orientation packet.

Resource Implications: Insignificant.

2. Provide the Structure and Support Excellent Teaching Requires

II.2.1. Channel more resources toward hiring additional faculty members, so class sizes and student/faculty ratios decrease.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: Significant increases in faculty funding for the next three years—50 new faculty hires already committed for FY 06.

II.2.2. Renew efforts to implement the University Curriculum Committee's recommendation to develop and implement a "plus-minus" grading system across the University to allow for better grade differentiation in academic performance and to strengthen the rigor of undergraduate courses.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost and Board of Regents.

Means of Implementation: Renew previous request made to Board of Regents.

Resource Implications: Minimal reprogramming costs.

II.2.3. Reduce the time period of Drop/Add for undergraduates.

Implemented

II.2.4. Establish an online course evaluation system. Formulate a uniform set of questions for all University undergraduate courses. The evaluation should include a question regarding student perceptions of the course's academic rigor. The evaluation should also include questions developed by colleges, schools, or departments that address concerns appropriate to disciplines and courses. Develop an online mid-semester evaluation form for the benefit of instructors.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Faculty Affairs Committee, Office of Instructional Support and Development, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Development of uniform course evaluation survey which contains a set of required questions and options for adding others depending upon the discipline.

Resource Implications: Minimal.

II.2.5. Foster the development of a more complete teaching evaluation process where both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of an instructor's teaching. Evaluations might include such methods as periodic peer-review, interviews of students by faculty peers, or a teaching portfolio.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Office of Instructional Support and Development, Faculty Affairs Committee, colleges, schools, and departments.

Means of Implementation: Committee action.

Resource Implications: Minimal in new outlays; will require faculty time.

II.2.6. Develop and implement a plan to create an Office of Service Learning to coordinate, promote, and expand service learning and international service learning opportunities across the campus.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction and Office of Vice President for Public Service and Outreach.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: \$150,000 per year.

II.2.7. Improve the instructional environment in classrooms by installing modern technology appropriate to given classrooms, and then adopt a plan for maintaining and replacing this equipment as needed.

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction, Office of Instructional Support and Development, Office of Campus Architects, and Physical Plant.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: Significant.

3. Improve Faculty Development and Rewards

II.3.1. Establish a University-wide faculty review system that encourages, recognizes, and rewards high-quality undergraduate teaching.

Implementation Official: University Council Faculty Affairs Committee and deans.

Means of Implementation: Committee action.

Resource Implications: None.

II.3.2. Assess teaching loads by hours (e.g., twelve hours for four 3-credit courses), rather than assessing faculty loads by courses (e.g., four-course teaching load), to encourage the teaching of one- and two-hour seminars. Departments should also account for hours faculty spend teaching students in research.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost and deans.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: Moderate.

II.3.3. Initiate a structured leave policy for tenured faculty members. Increase support for the “Study in a Second Discipline” program.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost and deans.

Means of Implementation: Recommendation from University Council.

Resource Implications: Significant.

II.3.4. Increase pedagogical training and communication on campus by expanding the role and resources to OISD (renamed as the Center for Teaching and Learning).

Implementation Official: Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Means of Implementation: Administrative.

Resource Implications: Increase of funding and resources to Center for Teaching and Learning.

II.3.5. Create the Center for Emeritus Faculty to coordinate the contributions of emeritus faculty to teaching and learning on campus.

Implementation Official: Office of the Provost.

Means of Implementation: Administrative action.

Resource Implications: Cost of space and operation of Center.
