

GENERAL STUDIES COMMITTEE SECOND REPORT

IDEAS FOR FACULTY WORKSHOP CONSIDERATION

JULY 15, 1997

THE



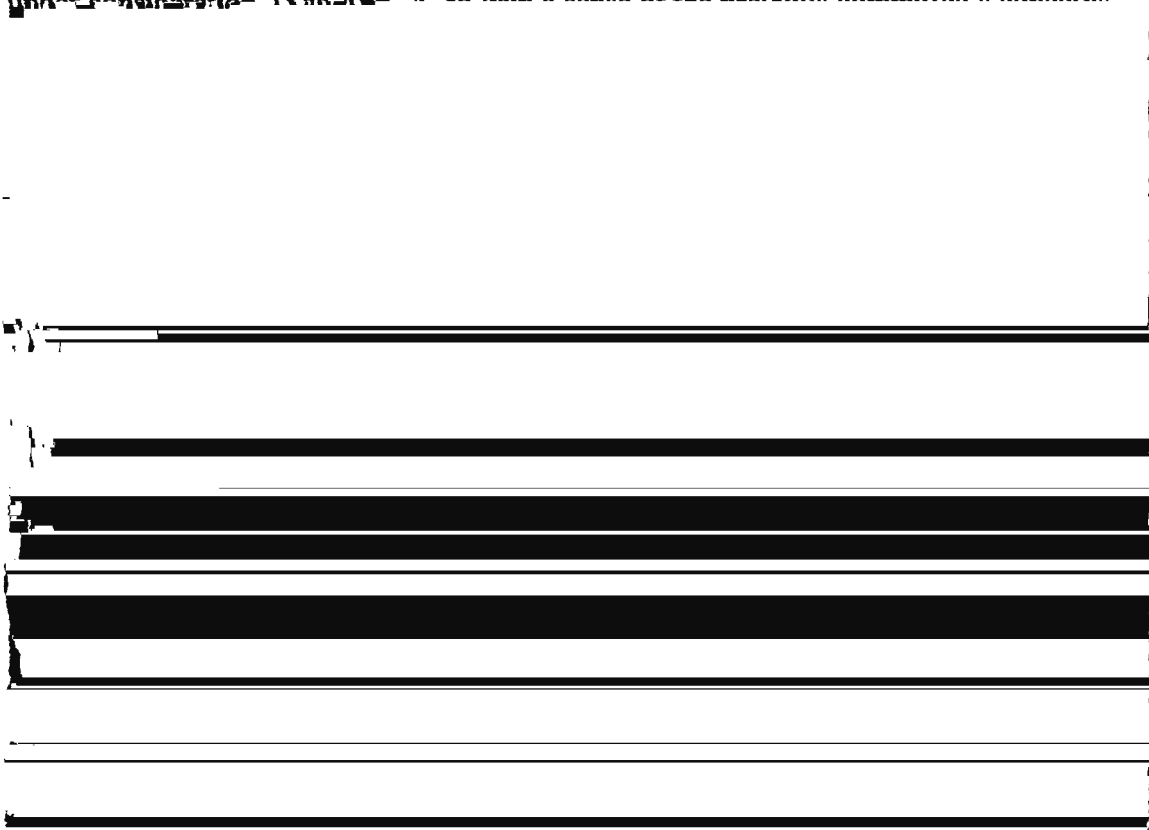
TO The Faculty

FROM: Robert Helsabeck *Robert Helsabeck*
Chair, General Studies Comm.

SUBJECT General Studies Committee, Second Report
Ideas for Faculty Workshop Consideration

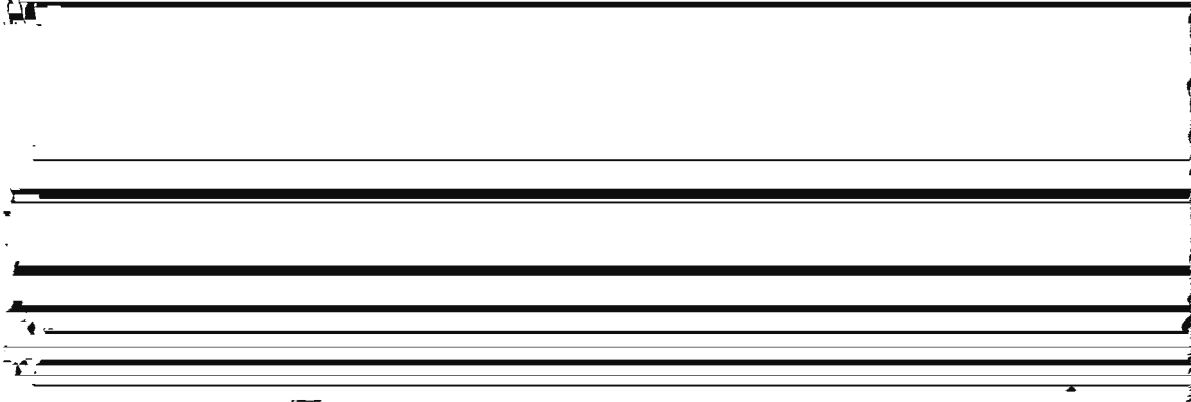
DATE: July 15, 1997

The General Studies Committee over the past year has been attempting to fashion some modest reforms which reflect the unfinished ideas of former committees, the May, 96 Faculty Retreat, the Fall Faculty Conference of 97, and our own discussions occurring throughout the year. We have included several documents in the Appendices which reflect the extent of the discussion over some time and provide background for some of the ideas under consideration. (See Appendix A to gain a sense of the previous committee's concerns.)

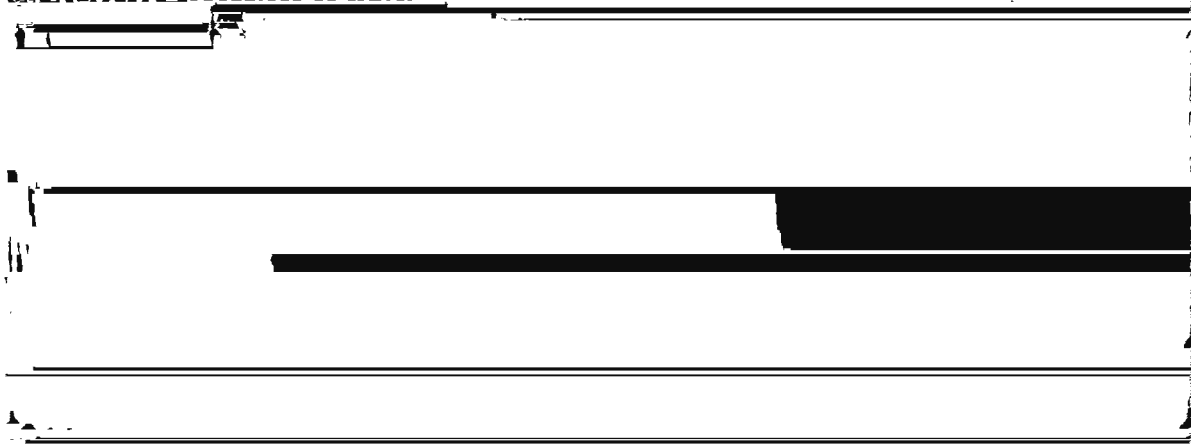


REPORT TO THE FACULTY

As we think about the "delivery" of general education to our students, we should have the broadest view of the curricular resources available to us and should agree on the essential nature of General Studies courses. Then we can profitably consider changes in the way we structure the offering of courses and the General Studies requirements. Regardless of the



outcomes of discussions of structure, we can consider various ideas which could be



I

The Curricular Resources: Courses available for the general education of students

As we consider reforming the curriculum, we should recall the variety of course types that are available to us. Some types we have used extensively. Others are underdeveloped.

By Pedagogy/Audience

5) *Seminars* (Most developed is the Freshman Seminar - regular General Studies courses offered specifically to Freshmen.) Currently Freshman Seminars involve infusions of bibliographic instruction, oral communication, and various attempts to connect the student

[REDACTED]

to the larger academic culture.) We approved some years ago the use of the seminar mode for GIS courses and have moved in that direction, (e.g. limiting the size of GIS courses, GIS students collaborative-learning opportunities as seminar leaders, and as active-participants in the selection of materials and/or approaches to the reading in GIS courses).

6) *Collaborative Courses* (A special pedagogical approach particularly appropriate to

[REDACTED]

II Nature of General Studies Courses

As regards the nature of General Studies courses, these attributes seem essential:

- 1) that they are transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary in one of several ways: either by applying knowledge beyond what is typical in program courses; or by considering the larger context of the subject; or by the drawing upon several disciplines;
- 2) that they are targeted to the non-major; and
- 3) that they are self-contained, free-standing, i.e., complete educational experiences in themselves.

III Goals of General Education (Outcomes)

In 1991, the Faculty approved a list of desirable general education outcomes (see App C. for revised list of 13 outcomes and the COEP Report which predated the list).

Soon thereafter, Jan Colijn, Dean of General Studies, asked faculty members to indicate which of the outcomes their courses served. He then conducted a transcript analysis to determine the relationship between what students actually take (the real curriculum) and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IV Achieving the Desired Outcomes

As the committee attempted to improve the "red curriculum" we considered several

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

options. One option, advocated by a minority of the committee, was to leave the current General Studies curriculum in place, but do more to ensure that faculty honor the

[REDACTED]

V
Revised General Studies Curriculum
(Plan A)

The Committee believes that the present curriculum is effective in meeting the *Primary Goals* and, with one exception, (oral communication), the *General Competency* outcomes that we seek for our students' general education.

We believe that the two outcomes listed as *Primary Goals* ("1. Commitment to Learning

[REDACTED]

Learning and a "Commitment to Learning" (1. Commitment to Learning)

1944-45 Objective with Current Approach and Comparison New Categories

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

GH11. General Humanities courses are designed to provide students with an appreciation

[REDACTED]

**Subscript Option
(Plan B)**

The table structure is largely hidden by redaction. A small number '1' is visible in the right-hand column of the second row from the top of the table area.

VI Additional Recommendations

The following set of ideas have been discussed over the past few years and can stand upon a new topology. They are numbered for ease of

1. **Strengthen the Freshman Seminar.** We would like to give some special attention to the freshman seminar effort. The freshman seminar can be seen not only as a course with a particular content, but also a linking structure to the broader academic culture. We have discussed ideas of linking freshman seminars to senior seminars in public debates or speeches; agreeing upon a theme for the year that all freshman seminars would link to at some point in the semester, much as we do now in bibliographic instruction and the AIDS

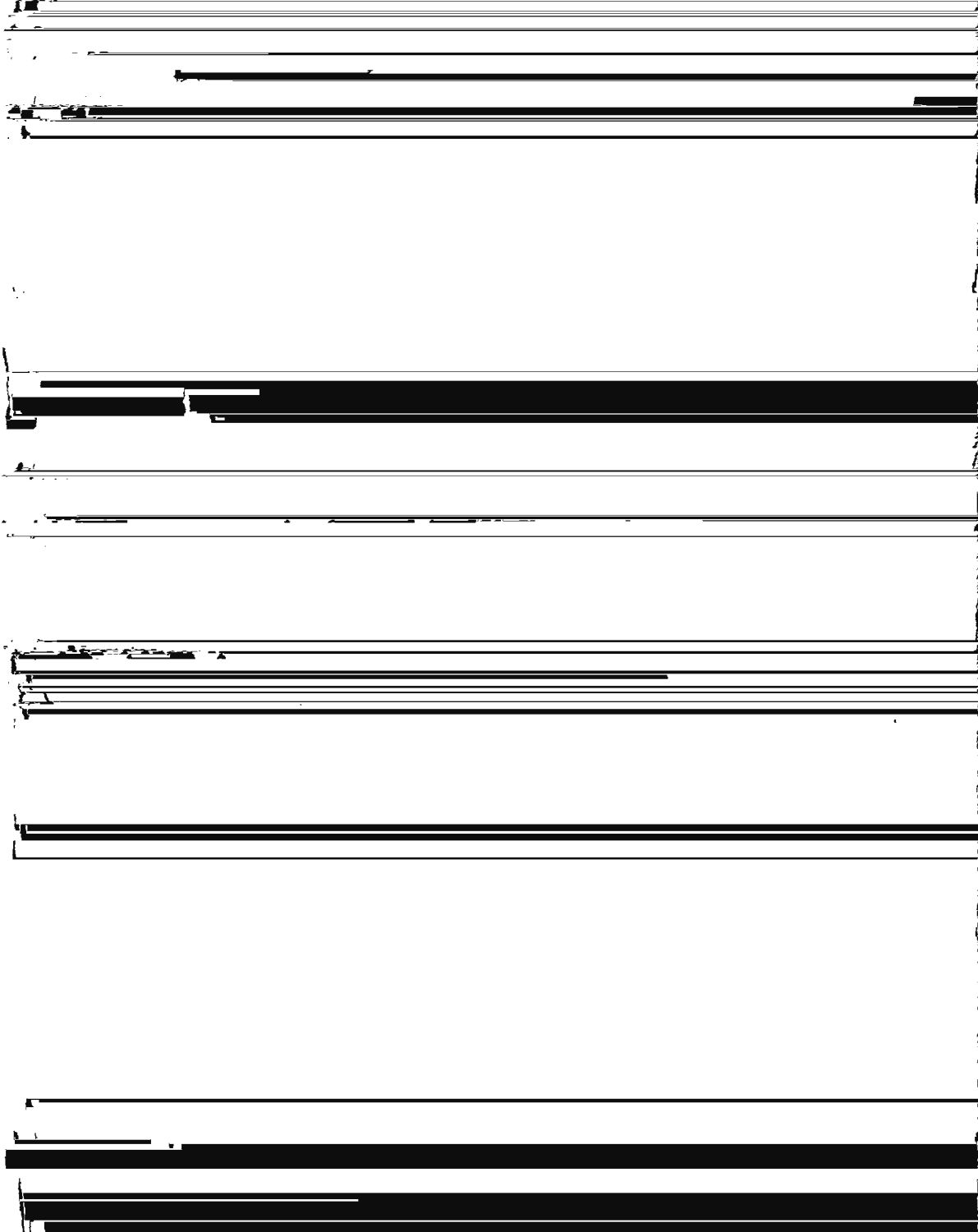
A.) The creation of a "Great Ideas" course taught by a dozen or so faculty, either as a special Junior GIS course, as part of the new GIM category, or in its own category, perhaps GHS (General Humanities and Science.)

B.) The development of several courses each involving 6-10 faculty members which might encompass the entirety of one of the new G-categories. For example, "Encounter with the Arts" for GAR; "The History of Ideas" for GHU; "World Civilizations" or "Science, Technology, and Society" for GHS. These courses could use existing or home grown video materials, outside speakers, and breakout discussion sections.

C.) The grouping of Junior level General Studies courses around common themes with a speaker series to support the courses. (See the Matlage/Ghorashi Proposal implemented last Fall, App E.) By grouping these new courses at the Junior year, after the major is chosen, we could reasonably require students to choose a G-course from a category at some distance from their major. This junior courses would provide more humanities for the scientist and more science for the humanist.

2. **Strengthen the Freshman Seminar.** We would like to give some special attention to the freshman seminar effort. The freshman seminar can be seen not only as a course with a particular content, but also a linking structure to the broader academic culture. We have discussed ideas of linking freshman seminars to senior seminars in public debates or speeches; agreeing upon a theme for the year that all freshman seminars would link to at some point in the semester, much as we do now in bibliographic instruction and the AIDS

We need to have some workshop time and perhaps an ongoing coordinator/convener. A group dedicated to enriching this experience for first year students led by a convener



“Not open to Biology majors” is one solution. The Junior requirement in Item #1, above is another.)

Another area needing attention under the redundancy problem is our current G-requirement for transfer students. Currently, students with 64 credits need only take a

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education. (It also is available.) Perhaps it is time to take up these plans again or at least discuss the value of an articulation of "alternate avenues."

10. Recommit to the 2- or 1-course standard for General Studies teaching. Over the

[Redacted content]

Appendix A

**March 25, 1996
Invitation to a Faculty
Reconsideration of
General Education
at
Stockton**

TO: The Faculty

FROM: Robert Helsabeck, Chair *Robert Helsabeck*
General Studies Committee

SUBJECT: An Invitation to a Faculty Reconsideration
of General Education at Stockton

DATE: March 25, 1996

After twenty-five years of providing for the general education of our students, we would do well as a Faculty to take stock of what is still working and what needs revision. This is what good faculties do. we oversee the curriculum. With this responsibility in mind, the

[REDACTED]

faculty-wide discussion of the state of general education at Stockton.

As we on the General Studies Committee have discussed our current approach to the provision of general education we have reminded ourselves that our approach has two distinct components

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Ideas of one sort suggest an elaboration of "common intellectual competencies" required of all

students. Currently, we have a writing and a quantitative reasoning requirement delivered "across

the curriculum" as well as an additional requirement in critical thinking in the BASK program. Some of us have proposed that we think comprehensively in terms of (1) *Acquiring Information*

[REDACTED]

One idea is to raise topical courses to the Jr./Sr. level to provide study at the "edge" for the general student and to make better use of our General Studies requirement for transfer students.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Used to "stretch" a student's work beyond the major but are not

[REDACTED]

Appendix

August 14, 1996
Report to Faculty on
May 1996 General Studies
Retreat

TO: THE FACULTY

FROM: ROBERT HELSABECK *Robert Helsabeck*
CHAIR, GENERAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: GENERAL STUDIES RETREAT (Late May 1996)

DATE: AUGUST 14, 1996

On Friday, May 31, approximately 35 faculty and met from 9:30 until 2:30 for the purpose of considering the general education of our students. We taped the proceedings so a word-for-

word record is available to those of you who might like some auditory diversion. (Thanks to Steve Kubricki for taping to proceedings and to Tom Kinsella for his note-taking.) In this communiqué, I will attempt to distill from the discussion the overall sense of the meeting as well as some areas of concern and some ideas proposed. I hope these "markings" will stimulate fruitful discussions this Fall. (I will not ascribe the comments to specific persons, but will merely note the substance, except when a fuller proposal is involved.)

The General Studies Committee conceived of this meeting as an opportunity to look at general education at Stockton "de novo." We didn't want to limit our ideas to only those suggestions which would fit into the current structure. However, as we got into the discussion, the opinions ranged from "starting over" to preserving the current structure, but fixing some of the deficiencies and engaging in other incremental changes. The prevailing view was that we have a system currently (the G-categories) that is quite open to almost any reforms we might wish to adopt and therefore ought to be preserved. Further, some concern was expressed that a "total overhaul" might result in the baby ending up in the yard with the bath water

Some Concerns

The list of concerns is presented tersely, assuming you can fill out the arguments to fuel the Fall

[The remainder of the page contains a list of concerns, which is almost entirely obscured by heavy black redaction bars.]

7. We are concerned that we may be paying "opportunity costs" in having students take G-courses in the same division of their major. These are courses that may be worthy, but take the

place of other courses which might provide more breadth in a given student's course of study.

8. For some, the "At Some Distance" (ASD) category is unclear. For others, it is a place of

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better with this segment of the graduation requirements.

9. We identified several "structural problems" in our efforts in general education. For example,

12. General Studies to be responsive to thematic concerns of the day, then on

Various ideas for some element of "core" in the curriculum would also contribute to faculty collaboration and the strengthening of a common culture. Another idea was the drawing

soc

be

Two ideas in a somewhat different vein still addressing the idea of academic culture, included the restoration of the "State of the Art" in General Studies in which all course syllabi in General Studies are published for a given year. Also more workshops to address curricular development in General Studies were also called for. We need to do more than teach good classes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

knowledge outcome to something more fundamental - the nature of the person

[REDACTED]

larger concern of the general education of our students, and not focus entirely upon the General Education curriculum. Several thought that the appropriate faculty should be given control over

Appendix C

General Education
Outcomes and
narrative on the
Goals of General



GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES

PRIMARY GOALS

Objective I: Commitment to life-long learning to the exploration of new ideas

outside one's specialization, and to placing one's own knowledge in the context of other disciplines and of society as a whole.

2 Objective II: Commitment to citizenship, through the ability to make informed decisions about public issues, while conscious of one's responsibility for doing

so, and of one's responsibility as an individual for the social whole.

GENERAL COMPETENCIES

3 Objective III: Ability to reason logically and abstractly and to comprehend and

4 Objective IV: Ability to understand numerical data so as to be able to comprehend arguments and positions which depend on numbers and statistics

THE GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION AT
STOCKTON STATE COLLEGE

:

A wide variety of assumptions and aspirations underlay
general education at Stockton, most notable among them the



We want graduates able to make informed decisions about

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Also included is the ability to write and speak effectively and persuasively for public impact and to understand numerical data sufficiently so as to be able to

[REDACTED]

recognize the experiences of individuals.

The social sciences' understanding of the social

Finally in this list of general content experiences, education for life-long learning and citizenship requires

, the fundamental but often goals and consequences of the economic, scientific and political activities humans undertake. Here

various disciplines We have always believed that courses

GENERAL STUDIES, 1996: SOME REFLECTIONS

Approved for Faculty: _____ Date: _____ 1996

[REDACTED]

A number of fundamental assumptions underlay the origins of the General Studies curriculum at Stockton in the minds of the original designers and those who were attracted to teach in it in the earliest years. Among these assumptions I believe were the following: 1) the explosion of knowledge and cultural awareness had destroyed the credibility of the previous

[REDACTED]

concerns of general higher education in the U.S. in that the...

Alumni evaluations, when undertaken, indicated in general a high degree of satisfaction with their

general studies courses, but there has also been a gradually growing sense in the faculty that the results generally have not been what had been hoped for.

There are it seems to me two major reasons for this outcome: inadequate program development and mistaken assumptions about students. Regarding the first cause, it must be recognized that many faculty members with the interdisciplinary background and awareness necessary to teach these courses no longer do so or cannot do so often enough. In addition the kinds of courses linking various faculty interests to new and developing emerging problems and intellectual trends of interest to students capable of engaging them is outside of the classroom

learning have not developed as they did in the first years of the curriculum's existence. This situation, has in turn arisen out of a number of causes but two of the most significant are: 1)

the initial expectations. One possible route is to seek collectively as a faculty the resources

[REDACTED]

necessary to bring the program to its original and only partially fulfilled expectations. I think this is an important option that I would like to see widely and thoroughly discussed among the faculty

and with the administration of the school. This is a... [REDACTED]

Over time, I fear, these faculty would end up in teaching these courses almost exclusively with the unwanted professional consequences that would entail for them and for students. I also fear that

such an approach while useful in the arts and humanities, would not likely result in a core of



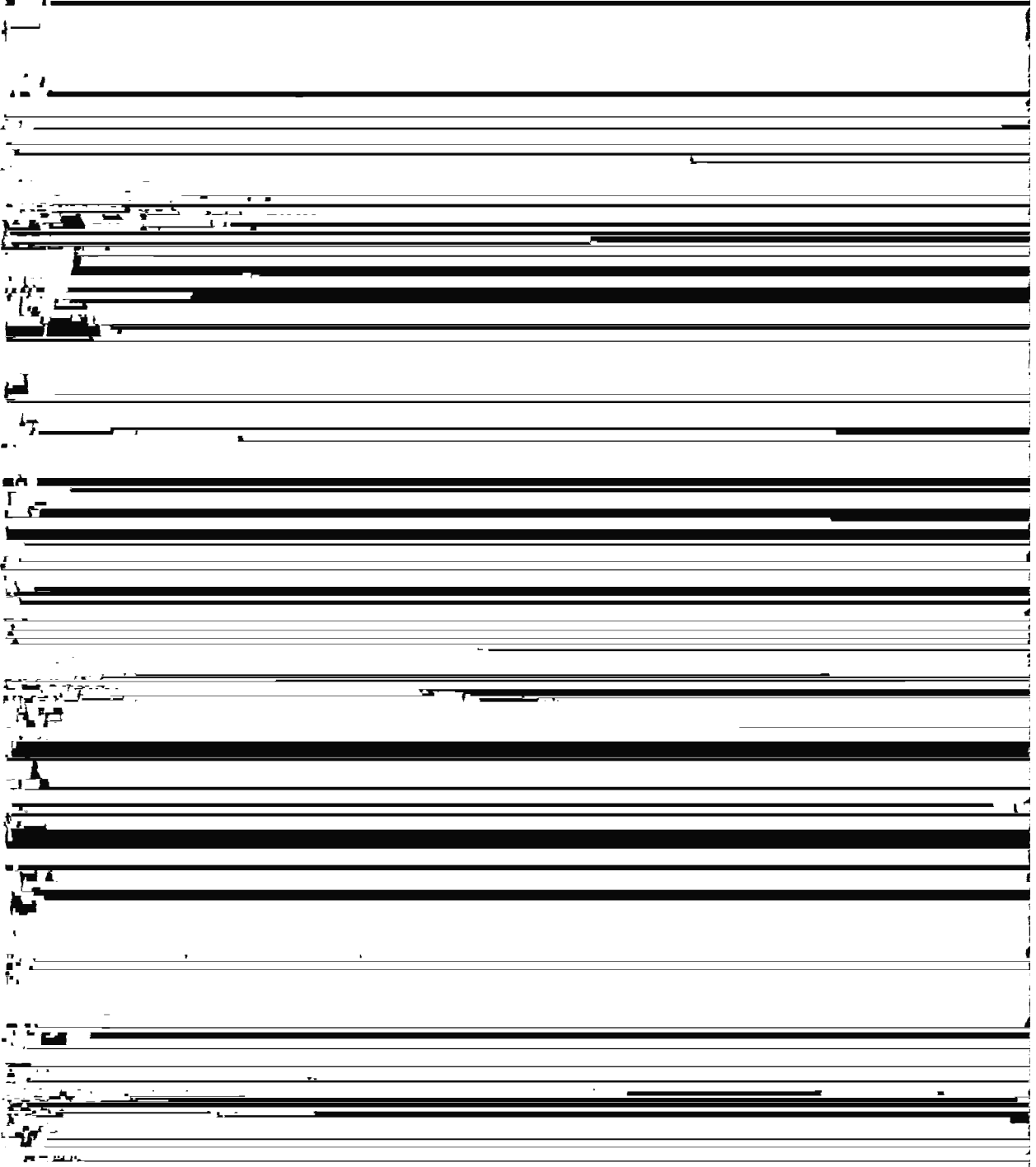
Appendix E

**Great Issues
Evening Lecture Series
Proposal**

submitted to General Studies Dean Jan Colijn
by Alan Mattlage and Reza Ghorashi

Introduction:

The increase in full-time, resident students at Stockton presents the college with both an opportunity and an obligation



these lectures, but we need not limit proposals to include only
General Studies. The number of speakers in such a series could

Possible topics for the series might include broad
philosophical or methodological issues that would otherwise not
find a prominent place in our curricular offerings. For example,
faculty from various divisions might submit proposals as follows:

:

To test the viability of an on-going lecture series, the General Studies Division should help fund a prototype lecture series this fall semester.

This semester, Alan Mattlage and Ross Chozachi are teaching

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China, we have not yet been able to contact her about this series,

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Expenses:

As the speakers for the prototype are thus far fairly local, travel expenses will not be especially steep. The honoraria will be the largest expense.

[REDACTED]

Appendix F



General Studies

In the Office of General Studies

Introduction

The General Studies course offerings are

8. Awareness of the achievements and perspectives of people of different nations and cultures, and of different races, genders, and ethnicities.
9. Understanding of the techniques, findings, and procedures of the social sciences as they relate to social structures and to evaluating issues of public policy.
10. Critical understanding of one's own values and those of others, and of their role in making ethical choices.

ment that students take at least four credits of GIS course work is an attempt to help them bring together their earlier General Studies experiences into some kind of integrated framework.

Courses in General Arts and Humanities

Courses in Interdisciplinary Topics (GEN)

Goals
The GE
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of

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1. On the nature of science: What science is and is not and why; contrasting science as

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