Re-Envisioning the Core Curriculum in the University System of Georgia

Presentation on behalf of the

General Education Council

to

Regents Academic Committee on Effectiveness and Accreditation April 25, 2019 9:45 to 10:15 am

General Education Council

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- Assistant Chair, Department of Mathematics
- AU Representative

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- Dr. Barbara Brown
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- Dr. Ken McGill
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- Mr. Brent Griffin
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- Ms. Carol Cohen
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- Dr. Robert Page
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- Dr. William K. Vencill
- Associate Vice President for Instruction
- UGA Representative

University of North Georgia

- Dr. Pamela Sachant
- Head, Department of Visual Arts
- Fine Arts Representative

University of West Georgia

- Dr. Micheal Crafton
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- State and Comprehensive University Representative

Purpose of Today's Presentation

- Provide RACEA with a status report concerning the work of the General Education Council concerning re-envisioning the core curriculum in the USG
- The General Education Council recommended* to RACAA that RACAA support a process of re-envisioning the core curriculum in the USG.
 - See attached 11/15/2018 recommendation
 - Presented to RACAA on 02/21/2019
 - The need to re-envision the core curriculum and to adopt a process to accomplish that goal was endorsed by RACAA on 2/21/2019
 - *All action taken by the USG General Education Council is advisory to the USG's Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
- The General Education Council has **not yet recommended a specific structure** for a re-envisioned core curriculum. Why?
 - Before nuts and bolts are addressed, the question is whether the case to re-envision the core is strong enough to convince you that we should all roll up our sleeves, put on our body armor and take on the task of developing a structure which meets the needs of our state.
- The General Education Council stands ready, if asked, to play a key role in the effort to re-envision the core. However, the process must individuals and groups beyond the General Education Council if it is to be successful. The process and timeline to carry out the re-envisioning will be established by the USG.

Geoffrey Galt Harpham, What Do You Think, Mr. Ramirez? The American Revolution in Education (2017)

"Harpham once met a Cuban immigrant who told him of arriving, penniless and undocumented, in the 1960s earning a G.E.D. and eventually making his way to a community college. In a literature course one day, the Professor asked him, 'Mr. Ramirez, what do *you* think?' The question, he told Harpham, changed his life: realizing that his opinion of a text has value set him on a course to becoming a distinguished professor." (back cover note).

Does the USG core curriculum now maximize the opportunities for our students to have similar life-changing experiences?

Re-envision the Core Curriculum in the USG?

"What comes to mind when you hear the term 'general education'? A menu of random courses? A way to fill seats in a department? Requirements disconnected from the major? If you are a student or a member of the increasingly skeptical public, you may also add: a waste of time?"

Chronicle of Higher Education, *Reforming Gen Ed* (Strategies for success for your campus) (2018).

Importance of Beginning with the Big Picture

"Before you tackle the gen-ed curriculum, step back and think about what it is you're hoping to achieve. Experts and those with on-the-ground experience recommend the following steps:

• "Begin with the big picture. Don't jump right into a discussion of general education. Instead, draw faculty members into a deeper conversation of what kind of graduates they want to produce. ..."

Chronicle of Higher Education, *Reforming Gen Ed (Strategies for success for your campus)* (2018). [note: this article focuses on gen ed reform at institutions which are not part of a system. In a system, the need for transferability, of course, makes the reform process even more complex and makes this point about addressing the big picture first even more compelling.}

The Core Curriculum Should Inspire Our Student to be All They Can Be Is The Core Curriculum Now Doing That?

- Does Our Current Approach to the Core Curriculum Accomplish These Goals?
 - Inspire our students to pursue a lifetime of learning
 - Provide our students with the **opportunity to explore** and find their unique passion/talent
 - Prepare our students to adapt to the rapidly changing world which awaits
 - Provide our students with the **base level of knowledge** to enable them to succeed in their chosen area of focus
 - Provide each of our 26 institutions with the ability to tailor the core to their unique mission
 - Assure transferability among our 26 institutions without loss of credit

What prevents us from achieving us from achieving our general education goals – consider:

- Grandfathering
- Communication
 - What does Area A, B, C ... mean to the typical high school graduate or parent of that graduate?
 - Do we inspire students by how we describe this important step in their education?
- Checklist approach: Do we provide room for students to explore? Needed flexibility provided?
- A Common course name/number/description system which isn't Really common, that is
 - See attached example
- Current process for system-wide review of proposals for changes to the core
- Learning outcomes for areas established at institutional level

Does the USG Core Curriculum Clearly Communicate This Message to Students?

"The title of a popular guide for first-year students published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) asks a question that has beleaguered general education advocates for years: Why Do I Have to Take This Course? In that publication, author Robert Shoenberg presents a clear case for curricular requirements and educates students about broad learning outcomes developed in the major and general education courses during their undergraduate years. Schoenberg writes that general education requirements are not 'hurdles to jump over or courses to be gotten out of the way, but rather the educational journey of a lifetime, the base on which to build a life as well as earn a living.' To paraphrase the above epigraph, general education helps students discover academic passions about which they didn't know they were passionate."

Carey, Shelley Johnson, *Peer Review*, Vo. 20, No. 3 (Summer 2018) at p. 3.

Consider how we describe the core curriculum on the website* of my own institution?

Does this inspire a student to explore, grow, learn?

East Georgia State College, in cooperation with other institutions of the University System of Georgia (USG) has adopted a core curriculum to allow the transfer of credit from one USG institution to another without penalty to the student. The Core Curriculum is subdivided into five areas: A – E as outlined below. Areas A, B, C, D, and E totaling 42 credit hours are composed of general education courses. Students successfully completing an Area A – E course at one USG institution will receive full credit, even if the area has not been completed, as long as the course is within the area hour limitations of either the sending or the receiving institution and the student does not change from a non-science to a science major.

^{*}See, also, attached Advising Sheet from East Georgia State College

East Georgia State College Academic Center for Excellence

NAME:

		_	
AREA A1: Communication Skills (6 hrs.)	Sem	Grade	Credi
*ENGL 1101 Composition I			3
*ENGL 1102 Composition II			3
AREA A2: Quantitative Skills (3 hrs.)			
*MATH 1001 Quant. Skills and Reasoning			3
AREA B: Institutional Options (4 hrs.)	Sem	Grade	Credit
COMM 1110 Public Speaking or COMM 1010 Intercultural Communication ENGL 1104 Introduction to Technical and Business Communication			3
CATS 1101 Critical & Academic Thinking for Success			1
AREA C: Humanities/Fine Arts (6 hrs.)	Sem	Orade	Credit
(CI- Choose one) ENGL 2111, ENGL 2112 ENGL 2120, ENGL 2130, ENGL 2150			3
(C2-Choose one) ART 1100, ART 2030, ART 2031, ENGL 2111, ENGL 2112, ENGL 2120,			3

ID#:

AREA E: Social Science (12 hrs.)	Sem	Grade	Credi
POLS 1101 American Government			3
HIST 2111 or 2112 U.S. History			3
(Area E Elective- Choose Two) ECON 2105, ECON 2106, HIST 1111 or 1112, HIST 2111 or 2112, HIST 2200, HIST 2300, PSYC 1101, SOCI 1101, POLS 2301, POLS 2401			3

Required Co	irses;			
			T	3
				3
				3
				3
Guided Elect	ives for Transfer Path	way:	_	•
				3
				3
			T	

AREA D: Science/Math/Technology (11-12 hrs.)		
(DI-Choose two) BIOL 1103 (Intro I), BIOL 1104 (Intro II) BIOL 1107 (Princ I), BIOL 1108 (Princ II) CHEM 1211 (Princ I), CHEM 1212 (Princ II) GEOL 1121 (Physical), GEOL 1122 (Historic) ISCI 1101 (Integrated Science) PHYS 2211 (Physics I), PHYS 2212 (Physics II)		4
(D2- Choose one) MATH 1113 (Pre-Calculus), MATH 1121 (Statistics), CSCI 1301 (Programming Principles D, MATH 1540 (Calculus I), MATH 2012 (Calculus II), MATH 2013 (Calculus III), BI- OL 1103/1104, BIOL 1107/1108, CHEM 1211/1212, GEOL 1121/1122, ISCI 1101, PHYS 2211/PHYS 2212		3-4

ENGL 2130, ENGL 2150, FILM 1100 MUSC 1100, SPAN 1001, SPAN 1002, SPAN 2001, SPAN 2002, THEA 1100

Additional Courses			
	Sem	Grade	Credit

Institutional Requirements (4 hrs.)		
PHED/HPRG(P.E.)(1)	PHED/HPRG (P.E.) (1)	
	HLTH 2051 (2)	
	HLTH 2181 FirstAid (1) Georges	

Note: Students may choose two one-hour physical activity courses or one physical activity course and the one-hour First Aid course.

* A grade of	"C" or better	is required.
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Academic Advisement Notes:

Rev 1/19

What constraints exist if the choice is made to reenvision general education in the USG

- Constraints of law and accreditation standards incuding
 - SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* (see attached excerpts from Principles and Resource Manual)
 - Standards of specialized accrediting bodies
 - Georgia State Law
- Natural resistance to change because the roles of highly valued faculty and staff will be altered if general education changes
 - Impact of likely shifts in faculty workloads
 - Impact upon advising if we provide more room to explore, students must be even more aware of the impact of their course choices on their future plan
- Time and expense of design and implementation

See generally Phillips, Loraine, Grounding General Education in Principles That Matter, *Peer Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer 2018) at pp. 4-6 (discussing the ongoing national conversation about general education and the status of specific efforts in Texas).

Questions for your consideration:

- What goals should the design of the core seek to attain? What are the attributes you want graduates to have?
- Is the core curriculum **now achieving those goals**?
- If the core curriculum is not achieving those goals, **do we have the will** to put in the hard work necessary to change?
- What are the guiding principles of an ideal structure for the USG core -- consider:
 - USG institutions are given flexibility to tailor the core to their mission?
 - Student acquire base knowledge required to succeed in their chosen area of focus?
 - Students have room to explore?
 - Attainment of required outcomes based on attainment of outcomes not completion of courses?
 - Promotes higher retention and graduation rates?
 - Complete transferability within USG?
 - Meet requirements of accrediting bodies and law?

Thank you for listening!

Your input about this proposal to reenvision the USG core curriculum is valued

Appendix

BOR Policy Manual exerpt
USG Academic Affairs and Student Handbook exerpt
SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation exerpt
Commonly Numbered Course Example

BOR Policy Manual

3.3.1 Core Curriculum

The USG core curriculum was developed with the goals of assuring institutional accountability for learning, incorporating learning requirements in global perspectives and critical thinking, allowing institutions some flexibility in tailoring courses to their institutional mission, while ensuring that core curriculum courses completed at one USG institution or through eCore, the USG's designated online core curriculum, are fully transferable to another USG institution. All core curriculum requirements must be completed as part of the associate of arts, associate of science, bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degree programs. Each institution's core curriculum shall consist of 42 semester credit hours, with minimum credit hours in each area of the core as follows:

Area A1	Communication Skills	At least 6 semester hours
Area A2	Quantitative Skills	At least 3 semester hours
Area B	Institutional Options	At least 3 semester hours
Area C	Humanities/Fine Arts, and Ethics	At least 6 semester hours
Area D	Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Technology At least 4 of these hours must be in a lab science course. *Given the importance of the STEM disciplines, any institution that wishes to drop Area D below 10 hours must make a compelling intellectual case that its core proposal will not lead to students knowing less about the natural sciences, math, and technology. [An example of such a compelling case might be if the institution proposed to put 3 or more hours of math in Area B and 7 hours of natural science in Area D.]	At least 7 semester hours*
Area E	Social Sciences	At least 6 semester hours

The specific learning outcomes for areas A through E of an institution's core curriculum are approved by the Council on General Education. Students completing any core curriculum course at one USG institution or through eCore will receive full credit for that course upon transfer to another USG institution within the same major, even if a core area is not completed and even if it means giving transfer credit across areas (e.g., credit of a math course in Area C). Assessment of the core curriculum by

Assessment of the core curriculum by each institution is required as part of their accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and by the USG Comprehensive Program Review process.

USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook

2.4.2 Areas A–F

Every institution in the USG will have a core curriculum of precisely 42 semester hours and an Area F of precisely 18 hours. All students must meet the core requirements of the institutions from which they receive their degrees. However, see the rules regarding transfer credit in

Section 2.4.9, Transfer Rules.

A1	Communication Outcomes	Courses that address learning outcomes in writing in English	At least 6 hours
A2	Quantitative Outcomes	Courses that address learning outcomes in quantitative reasoning	At least 3 hours
В	Institutional Options	Courses that address general education learning outcomes of the institution's choosing	At least 3 hours
С	Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics	Courses that address learning outcomes in humanities, fine arts, and ethics	At least 6 hours
D	Natural Science, Mathematics, and Technology	Courses that address learning outcomes in the natural sciences, mathematics, and technology.	At least 7 hours. At least 4 of these hours must be in a lab science course.
E	Social Sciences	Courses that address learning outcomes in the social sciences	At least 6 hours
F	Lower-Division Major Requirements	Lower division courses required by the degree program and courses that are prerequisites to major courses at higher levels.	18 hours

SECTION 9: Educational Program Structure and Content

Collegiate-level educational programs emphasize both breadth and depth of student learning. The structure and content of a program challenges students to integrate knowledge and develop skills of analysis and inquiry.

General education is an integral component of an undergraduate degree program through which students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge. Undergraduate and graduate degrees develop advanced expertise in an integrated understanding of one or more academic disciplines or concentrations.

The institution is responsible for delivering an appropriate portion of the academic experiences applicable to the degrees or credentials awarded.

- Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based on fields of study appropriate to higher education. (Program content) [CR]
- 2. The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. (Program length) [CR]
- 3. The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:
 - (a) is based on a coherent rationale.

- (b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
- (c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/ fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/ mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

(General education requirements) [CR]

- 4. At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (*Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree*)
- 5. At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.

 (Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)
- 6. Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training. (Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum)
- 7. The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.
 (Program requirements)

- 9.3
- The institution requires the successful completion of a general education componentat the undergraduate level that:
- (a) is based on a coherent rationale.
- (b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
- (c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. (General education requirements) [CR]

Rationale and Notes

General education is an integral component of an undergraduate degree program through which students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge. This Core Requirement establishes four key principles regarding the general education component of undergraduate degree programs:

- · The General education component is based on a coherent rationale.
- General education courses are college level.
- In order to promote intellectual inquiry, general education courses present a breadth of knowledge, not focusing on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to the student's occupation or profession, and are drawn from specific academic areas.
- The general education component constitutes a minimum number of semester hours, or its
 equivalent, and comprises a substantial component of each undergraduate degree.

It is essential to understand the general education component of the degree program within the context of the institution's mission and within the expectations of a college-level institution. Through general education, students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics. Courses in each of these areas introduce a breadth of knowledge and reinforce cognitive skills and effective learning opportunities for each student. Such courses may also include interdisciplinary studies. It is important, however, that courses selected by students as "general education" do not focus on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to that student's occupation or profession.

The SACSCOC Executive Council adopted the following interpretation in February 2010:

Courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication, and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the one course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement in [this standard].

Note that this interpretation does not preclude the mentioned courses from being part of general education requirements beyond the required courses in the three specifically mentioned areas; while they are "skill courses," these are not skills specific to a particular occupation or profession. Courses that would not be acceptable as meeting this standard are courses such as "dosage calculations" (specific to occupations) or most upper-level courses with multiple prerequisites (lack breadth of knowledge).

The rationale undergirding the courses that meet general education requirements is often published in institutional documents such as the catalog. It is important that institutions have criteria for evaluating courses for inclusion in the core curriculum, both to maintain adherence to the underlying rationale and to ensure the expected breadth of knowledge.

NOTES

In its publications, an institution is obligated to clearly designate the specific general education courses included in the three areas of knowledge: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics. Publications should clearly indicate or direct students in their options for selecting general education courses and, in particular, those considered pure humanities/fine arts that are in accord with the interpretation above. Finally, the institution should indicate how it ensures that all students follow the pathway for selecting general education courses as described in its publications.

In its assessment of institutions, the SACSCOC review committee will specifically evaluate whether each of the three subports in the standard have been addressed. This review should specifically determine (with narrative supporting) its findings underpart (c), whether credit hours that constitute the general education program at an institution are (1) drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics; (2) are consistent with the Executive Council's interpretation cited above; and (3) include courses that do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a student's particular occupation or profession.

Questions to Consider

- Does the institution have a formal guideline or policy that establishes a rationale for its general education requirements?
- How does the institution ensure that the student's breadth of knowledge acquired through the general education component of the degree program is sufficient and appropriate to its mission?

- What measures does the institution use to ensure that general education represents a substantial component of the undergraduate degree program?
- What process is used to ensure that courses students may take to fulfill general requirements support the goals of the general education component of the degree program?
- What criteria does the institution use to ensure that the desired general education outcomes meet college-level standards?
- Even if there is some variation in general education requirements across some majors, do all
 undergraduate degree programs include at least one course from the three required areas of study,
 as well as the requisite total hours?
- Does the institution designate in its publications those general education courses that are
 considered pure humanities/fine arts in accord with the interpretation above? How has the
 institution validated that the courses that the institution designates are in accord with the standard?
- Are printed materials describing general education requirements clear asto how a student can meet the requirements?
- How does the institution ensure that all students follow the pathway for selecting general education courses as described in its publications?
- How does the general education program apply to transfer students, distance and correspondence education programs, or competency-based programs?

Sample Documentation

- Description of and rationale for general education, including expected student learning outcomes.
- · Publications that consistently describe the general education requirements.
- Explanation of the process used to review or change how students meet general education requirements.
- If requirements vary by major or degree, documentation that the standard is met for all degreeseeking students.
- Specific information as to how general education requirements are met for transfer students as well
 as students in competency-based, direct assessment programs.
- An explanation (and examples) of how completion of general education requirements is tracked and verified.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 8.2.b (Student outcomes: general education)
Standard 9.7 (Program requirements)

USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook

2.4.10 Common Course Prefixes, Numbers, and Descriptions

Following are common course prefixes, numbers, and descriptions that all institutions shall use for their programs of study.

• • •

BUSA 2105 Communicating in the Business Environment organizational communications; to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.

Course Prefix C	Course Number	Course Name	Course Description	Credit
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	A course emphasizing both interpersonal and organizational communications; to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	Emphasizes both interpersonal and organizational communications as they relate to the business environment; includes delivery of different types of speeches as well as written exercises appropriate to business practice; designed to develop written and oral communication skills including the clear, concise, effective oral presentation of ideas and to develop an acceptable speaking voice.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	This course emphasizes both interpersonal and organizational communications, including written and oral exercises appropriate to business practices.	3
ENGL	2020		This advanced writing course examines the various types of letters and reports used in professional settings. The focus is on skill development in using appearance, style, persuasion, and tone when preparing purposeful communication such as sales, collections, employment, requests, goodwill, bad news, or analytical correspondence.	3
BUSA	2105	Small Business and Entrepreneurship for Non-Business Majors	This course is not available to business majors. An introduction to financial planning for small and start-up businesses that includes projections, business planning, and sources of funding.	3
BUSA	2105	Business Communications	Emphasizes both interpersonal and organizational communications including written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	Students study both interpersonal and organizational communications; to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
ВСОМ	2285	Business Comm and Reports	The study and application of external and internal communications within business organizations. The course provides an analysis of and practical experience with written and oral communications involving word and information processing systems, telecommunications, multimedia, mail systems, and computer-generated graphics. Business ethical, cross-cultural, and international issues associated with communications are explored and analyzed.	s 3
BUSA	2105	Communications in the Business Environment	Emphasis on interpersonal and organizational communication; includes written exercises and oral presentations appropriate to business practice.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	A course emphasizing both interpersonal and organizational communications; to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
SCOM	2300		This course focuses on the principles to manage communication in a variety of organizational contexts. Emphasis is on effective communication and the preparation of business presentations. Topics include, but are not limited to, interviewing, managing business meetings, and conflict management.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	An analysis and practical applications of the external and internal communications of business organizations.	3
ORGC	2205	Introduction to Organizational Communication	This course is an introduction to methods and applications of basic theories, interactive structures, and directions within various organizational environments.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	This is a course emphasizing both interpersonal and organizational communications to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	An emphasis on both interpersonal and organizational communication through written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
BUSA	2105	Communicating in the Business Environment	A course emphasizing both interpersonal and organizational communications; to include written and oral exercises appropriate to business practice.	3
COMM	3200		Students will learn to manage communication in a variety of professional and organizational contexts and will be introduced to the research basis of recommended principles. Emphasis is on clarity and persuasiveness in communicating with clients, associates, and other decision-makers.	y 3
BUSA	2108	Rusiness Communication	A management-oriented course emphasizing theories and channels on communication, semantic problems, and other barriers to effective communication with emphasis on both oral and written communications.	3