The University 189 Task Force has completed its review of the course as charged by the General Education Committee.

During this process, we reviewed the following materials:

- Provost Schnell’s original memo to the General Education Committee
- Questions the General Education Committee asked instructors of the course to consider at open forums
- Recommendations from Dante Miller, Student Body President
- Quantitative and qualitative data from the survey of NDSU students
- Recommendations from Bill Slanger (OIRA) based on the survey of NDSU students
- Carolyn Schnell’s expertise in national trends of campuses and research of first year experience courses
- Video conference on the First Year Experience with John Gardner

Task force members also consulted other departmental contacts as needed.

After lengthy discussions and carefully considering all available materials, we remain strongly committed to the retention of the University 189 course as an academic requirement and make the recommendations and suggestions as outlined in this report.

The following document includes:

- Recommended Framework for University 189 Courses with Content Examples
- Supplemental Suggestions and Discussion by General Education Charge
- Implications

The task force also wishes to thank Derek Jorgenson, Library Reference Associate, for his assistance in recording and organizing our meetings.
Recommended Framework for University 189 Courses with Content Examples

A core of four objectives should be required for all 189 courses replacing the original twelve. Beyond the core objectives, faculty members have the flexibility to customize the course to fit student needs, faculty expertise, or departmental/college needs.

Course description

This course is designed to ease the transition for new students at North Dakota State University. The students will learn skills and techniques used by successful college students. In addition, topics such as navigating campus resources and services, making career-related decisions, and fostering a sense of community will be emphasized.

General Education

Successful completion of this course will serve to meet the General Education First Year Experience academic requirement for students entering NDSU.

Core Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify and navigate campus services.
   
   Examples: NDSU Community rights and responsibilities - A Code of Student Behavior • Bison Connection • Bookstore • Counseling Service • Career Center • TRIO Programs • Registration & Records • Disability Services • Student activities • Multi-Cultural Student Services • Wellness Center • ITS • Library

2. The students will identify/learn techniques and activities for enhancing academic success in higher education.
   
   Examples: Information Technology Services • Library and information skills • ACE • Identify the difference between High School and College • Study skills and test taking strategies • Time management • Goal setting • Personal learning style • Responsible decision making • Rights and responsibilities of community • Academic integrity • Plagiarism • Student support services

3. The class will assist the students in making career-related decisions.
   
   Examples: Getting to know your advisor and department faculty • Getting to know the Career Center and Counseling and Disability Services • Study abroad • Internships and co-ops • Volunteer Network • Program curriculum

4. The class will foster a sense of community.
   
   Examples: The class will ... Become an environment of supportive peers • Encourage individual contact with the course instructor • Encourage individual contact with a student’s academic adviser • Include small-group as well as whole-class active participation
Supplemental Suggestions and Discussion by General Education Charge

Create a framework which provides a common university experience which both initiates students into university culture and into NDSU, and allows for appropriate variations based on student needs.

To begin the task of providing a common framework, the committee reviewed the current description of the course and the original objectives that many courses have adopted or modified:

1. The student will become familiar with the campus and the services offered
2. The student will develop and understanding of personal learning style
3. The student will study techniques for academic success in higher education
4. The student will learn effective goal setting
5. The student will learn effective time management
6. The student will learn effective stress management
7. The student will practice responsible decision making
8. The class will become an environment of supportive peers
9. The class will encourage individual contact with the course instructor
10. The class will encourage individual contact with a student’s academic adviser
11. The class will include small-group as well as whole-class active participation
12. The class will assist the student in making career-related decisions

From these twelve, four core objectives were identified that should be included in every University course:

1. Students will be able to identify and navigate campus services.
2. Students will identify/learn techniques and activities for enhancing academic success in higher education.
3. The class will assist the students in making career-related decisions.
4. The class will foster a sense of community.

Beyond the core objectives, faculty members have the flexibility to customize the course to fit unique student needs, departmental or college needs, faculty expertise, common readings, etc.

Many of the issues with the course that students addressed in the survey and as noted in the summaries had to do with the content delivery. Increasing the rigor of the course was noted. These are areas under the control of individual faculty. The task force concluded that providing faculty with assistance in planning, development, and delivery would provide consistency and allow the use of subject experts to help develop units that may be unfamiliar to a faculty member. Based on this information, the task force makes the following suggestions:

- Develop a resource that faculty can use to assist with the specifics of the course, provide options and recommendations, etc. This would also help in the area of course consistency and creating a common experience.
- Develop modules using subject experts and varied pedagogies (see discussion on page 5).
- Develop approved General Education Outcomes/assignments for the core areas that could be adopted by instructors and shared (e.g. library and information skills, information technology skills, etc.).
• Provide support through Blackboard, sessions for training and sharing of experiences, etc. At a minimum, faculty should be able to share what they have developed and make materials available through a University 189 Blackboard organization, website, or other appropriate method.

• Explore the possibility and implications of allowing departments to offer the course with variable credits or alternate forms of delivery. One possibility, for example, would be for some departments to offer a 2-credit course and include a set of readings that would demand more time than the "standard" course.

• Share Carolyn Schnell’s PowerPoint presentation on the history and benefits of this course with faculty in order to foster a greater understanding of its purpose and importance.

❖ **Consider ways to tailor the course or provide other alternatives to meet the needs of particular groups of students, e.g. older than average, undecided, students with previous college experience, and transfer students.**

We believe 189 is the safest group to “break the ice” at NDSU; students can share their expertise, share ideas, and become familiar with other students they will encounter in other classes. Do not segregate by classification of students; blend them in at every opportunity. A better choice is to offer alternative class assignments when appropriate.

Transfer students entering with twenty-four credits or more may be advised to take a 189 to get them up to speed as quickly as possible. Skills and information specific to NDSU could be made available to transfer students in alternative ways, such as workshops, seminars, or online modules.

Currently, sections of the course are offered with many online components for nontraditional students, defined as those students who failed the course or did not take the course at the beginning of their NDSU career.

❖ **Examine to what extent parts of the course could be folded into orientation, offered as online modules, etc.**

**Relationship of University 189 to Orientation and Other Programs**

Two programs, new student orientation and welcome week, are coordinated by the Office of Orientation and Student Success to assist new students with their transition to NDSU.

*New student orientation programs* are one day events held throughout the summer (June, July and August). On these days, students are introduced to student services via presentations and contact tables. Students also meet with an academic advisor for course selection and register for fall semester courses.

*Welcome Week* is held the first week of fall semester classes in an effort on the part of the entire campus community to make the beginning of the academic year a positive experience for new and returning students.
These activities and events offer an introduction to many topic areas that are covered in more depth and with an academic focus in the 189 courses. Neither should replace the other. However, these areas need to work together to be most effective.

The General Education Category for University 189 is First Year Experience Course. Developing a philosophy for the first year experience at NDSU, something the task force feels strongly about, would help to identify areas for collaboration between the course and the Office of Orientation and Student Success, Residence Life, and other areas that work with first year students.

**Online Modules and Other Methods of Delivery**

An online version of the course is typically offered to students whose entire program is distance education. Portions of the course for all students are already presented online, such as the Basic Library and Information Research Skills Tutorial. The four core objectives leave ample room for utilizing online modules for delivery of content without compromising the social and community aspects of the course.

The task force suggests that a working group, such as a standing committee, be formed to identify and develop modules that utilize subject expertise, appropriate rigor, and effective pedagogies and technology for delivery of the modules.

Faculty would be responsible for selecting the modules that best match their students’ needs, or they might choose to allow the students to select their own. Faculty may also choose to use the 189 text developed on campus or select another text as long as the content supports the core objectives. Peer mentors are also encouraged.

Faculty should be able to share what they have developed and make materials available through a University 189 Blackboard organization, website, or other appropriate method.

*Consider how to balance the desire of some departments or colleges to use UNIV 189 to socialize their majors with the high percentage of NDSU students who transfer between majors and between colleges.*

Task force members reiterated the importance of targeting at least a portion of 189 to familiarize students with their college and/or department. However, one of the four proposed course objectives also recognizes that not all students choose to remain in the major that attracted their initial interest.

The new Objective 3 reads “The class will assist the student in making career-related decisions.” This objective includes activities connected to a particular major (e.g., getting to know your adviser, department faculty) but also includes activities intended to facilitate decision making about one’s major (e.g., getting to know the Career Center). We believe that, as presently outlined, University 189 will provide the opportunity for students either to begin a successful academic career in their first-identified major or to initiate an informed search to find a different career path.

**Implications**

We understand that many of the suggestions, such as developing a philosophy of NDSU’s First Year Experience, online teaching modules, and a resource for faculty involve longer term commitment.
The task force is committed to the success of the University 189 course. We realize that even though our work has concluded, the discussions and suggestions open up the potential for further dialog and deliberation. Many of the task force members are willing to assist in whatever is determined to be the next step.