

From: Bernhardt Saini-Eidukat
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 10:58 PM
To: Marion Harris; RaNelle Ingalls; Rajesh Kavasseri; Andrew Mara; Kent Sandstrom; Char Myhre; Cynthia Naughton; Lisa Nordick; Larry Peterson; Seth Rasmussen; Susan Ray-Degges; Carolyn Schnell; Herbert Snyder
Cc: Kenton Rodgers
Subject: CULE concerns

Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing you in your capacity as a member of the ad hoc CULE committee. First, I'd like to thank you for your service to the University.

I am concerned at the lack of a laboratory science credit in the proposed new General Education scheme (as described in attachment 5 from the agenda for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting). A justification for the revision of Gen Ed is the perceived need for more critical thinking training among undergraduates. It is exactly in applied settings such as science lab courses that students experience the frustrations and successes of critical thinking! Lab courses provide all the experiences we say we want our students to have: they are "hands-on" "learn by doing" classrooms.

There seems to be a misguided view among the CULE committee of science labs as non relevant to non-STEM undergrads. The CULE committee should commission an "environmental scan" of the type of learning happening across campus in Gen Ed science lab courses. Or, please visit and observe actual labs! I think you'd be surprised at how valuable, interesting, informative, conducive to critical thinking and dare I say, fun! - this type of experience can be for non-STEM students.

Of even greater concern, is the downgrading from 10 credits of "science and technology" required to only 3 credits of "natural and physical worlds" plus 3 credits of "technology".

Many non-STEM students graduating from NDSU will only have the Gen Ed requirements as their exposure to science. Some of them will go on to be community leaders, making policy decisions with wide effects. Others may find themselves on a jury evaluating scientific evidence in a trial. NDSU must prepare all students - not just STEM students - with a good understanding of the "science behind science." 3 credits are not enough!

The Gen Ed requirement for science and technology should be increased in the proposed new scheme, and a hands-on lab course should be kept in the scheme. An alternative is to keep the current Gen Ed system, and tweak it to improve its outcomes.

regards,

-Bernie

--

Bernhardt Saini-Eidukat tel 701-231-8785
Dept. of Geosciences fax 701-231-7149
NDSU Dept. 2745 P.O. Box 6050
North Dakota State University Fargo, ND 58108-6050 USA

<http://www.ndsu.edu/geosci/>