

FYS: The problem administration has yet to work with the faculty to solve

Problem #1: the current FYS violates SASCOC standards.

FYS is a course granted 3 hours of **academic credit** in the General Education core.

The current incarnation is a non-disciplinary student success course. The administrator who created this freshman orientation oversees all aspects of its curriculum and provides pre-packaged content to FYS instructors (who are primarily fractionalized staff) each term.

SASCOC standard 10.4.c: The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.*

**Specifics for how the current version of FYS violates standard 10.4.c are available in the appended "FYS Timeline."*

Problem #2: FYS-E does not meet corequisite guidelines, and it allows students to bypass college readiness standards altogether.

FYS is the course the institution uses to meet CPE guidelines for students who have not met academic readiness in reading (guidelines outlined in 13 KAR 2:020, section 7[4]).

Like the other "enhanced" versions of courses designed to provide corequisite credit to students at MSU, FYS-E should include the same content and assignments as its "regular" version. Its only variance should be in support: it needs to provide more instructional time for students who have not met readiness standards in reading.

Unlike ENG 100-E or the enhanced versions of General Education Math courses, FYS-E is categorically different than its regular option. It includes an "extra" set of reading assignments, thus adding more work to students who have already been identified as not being college ready. Furthermore, the grading scale allows students to pass the course without passing (or even attempting) the reading "add on." ***This means that the institution is credentialing "college readiness" in reading without being able to guarantee that standards in reading have been met.***

Problem #3: the administration has not worked with Senate to rectify the problems.

Faculty have acknowledged they did not properly oversee the creation of the new FYS, and, for close to two years, they have worked within shared governance structures to rectify documented problems. This governance work has been stalled or dismissed because the administration will not acknowledge that problem #1 or problem #2 exist.

FYS Timeline

- FYS was created in 2008-2009 General Education reform effort, the same effort that produced 499C.
- After the General Education program that included FYS was approved, the institution adopted a QEP designed to foster critical thinking skills within the already existing FYS class.
- In 2017, the upper administration unilaterally dissolved the “critical thinking” QEP. This decision was made without the input of the persons who had designed the “critical thinking” QEP or the faculty person who was then tasked with FYS coordination.
- It was the position of upper administration (a position voiced by the Associate Provost) that the dissolution of the “critical thinking” QEP was equivalent to the dissolution of the 3-hour course faculty had designed before the “critical thinking” QEP was chosen.
- The Associate Provost was tasked by the previous provost and the current President to create a new version of FYS focused on “student success.”
 - The membership of the “FYS Redesign Team” was determined by administration. Only four of the ten “redesign” members were faculty.
 - The “faculty input” to the course is limited to a few discrete units that the Associate Provost asked select faculty persons to generate.
 - The final version of the “redesigned” FYS was approved through an ad hoc curricular review created and overseen by the Associate Provost:
 - The Associate Provost, listed as a reviewer/approver in more than one place in the curriculum forms, is actually the originator of the new FYS.
 - The name listed on the form as the originator of the new FYS is the former coordinator of FYS, who was asked to sign the curriculum form after she was administratively removed from her coordinator position. This person did not help create the new FYS.
 - The new FYS was presented to the faculty on the GEC as a temporary solution that was designed to “teach out” the current program as a new General Education was being created. (Note: this new program removed FYS from the core and did not include any sort of freshman orientation.)
 - The Associate Provost assembled an ad hoc FYS committee to oversee the “redesigned” FYS. At peak faculty inclusion, only 4 of the 12 ad hoc committee members were faculty persons.
 - The Associate Provost herself presented the General Education Council with the curricular paperwork for the “enhanced” version of FYS. (Note: the Associate Provost is also responsible for ensuring the institution meets corequisite guidelines.)
- While the Associate Provost was working on a freshman orientation that conforms to Goal 2, strategy 7 of the “Student Success” portion of MSU’s Strategic Plan, the General Education Taskforce, working under time constraints imposed by a previous provost, proposed an entirely new General Education program titled “LUX.”

- In Spring 2018, Faculty Senate passed a resolution resolving to review the recommendations of LUX “in a time frame of its own devising” in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the 2008-2009 effort (wherein an ambitious proposal for reform faltered because administratively promised resourced never materialized and assessment efforts had not been determined).
- In 2019, interim Provost Albert, working in consultation with faculty leaders, crafted an ad hoc committee to revisit the General Education reform effort. This effort produced a streamlined program that re-introduced FYS to the General Education core, under the assumption that FYS would be placed back under faculty control and gain more actual academic content (in order to fulfill its “enhanced” function as a reading course).
- The revised proposal (or the “LUX revision”) was presented to Senate in 2019 before it was approved via a faculty-wide vote.
- While the ad hoc committee was working on the General Education curriculum, Senate was revising the General Education committee in order to address the process issues that led to FYS being removed from faculty control in the first place. A revised General Education committee (GEC) was approved by Senate in Fall 2019 and a new FYS subcommittee was approved by the same body in February 2020.
- The 2019-2020 Chair and Chair-elect of Senate had multiple conversations with the upper administration (the Associate Provost, the interim Provost, and the President) throughout 2019-2020 about FYS and its attendant problems. Faculty leadership (including the entirety of the 2019-2020 Senate Executive Council) supplied multiple documents and written responses to administrative queries re: the GEC and FYS.
- At no point has the administration been able to effectively demonstrate that the redesigned FYS course went through a properly vetted curricular review process or that faculty are in any way in given the “primary responsibility for the content, quality, or effectiveness” (SACSCOC standard 10.4.c) of the redesigned FYS.
- Faculty-led efforts to enshrine proper channels for General Education curricular review have been stalled or, in the case of the new FYS committee, summarily dismissed.
- In an October 14, 2020 email to the President of Senate regarding FYS, President Morgan stated that he did not “see anything that would run contrary to SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation.” In this same email, Dr. Morgan stated that the FYS curriculum was approved by the GEC and the University Curriculum Committee. While the new FYS was approved by the GEC as “temporary” solution, the course was never approved by the University Curriculum Committee *because General Education curriculum does not go through the university undergraduate curriculum committee.*

Final note: the staffing of the current version of FYS does not run counter to SACSCOC credentialing because the administratively created course is defined—in UAR 113.02 category J—as a “non-disciplinary First Year Seminar/Student Success” course. Important point: University **Administrative** Regulations are, by their very nature, administratively defined, and the definition of the new FYS course (and the persons the administration wishes to teach it) is buried in a document that is supposed to offer “Guidelines for Assessing Faculty Credentials.” The majority of persons who teach FYS are fractionalized staff.