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OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM NO. OVCAA-BMP 15-088

TO : ALL DEANS, DIRECTORS, HEADS OF ACADEMIC UNITS

FROM : BENITO M. PACHECO, Ph.D. ✕
Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT : UPD 2015 GE Pre-Conference Symposium on the Number of Units

DATE : 11 August 2015

As part of the preparations for the UP Diliman 2015 General Education Conference to be held on 28-29 September (details about the GE Conference will be released in a separate memorandum), we are holding a symposium to discuss the number of GE units that the different academic units are recommending for their respective degree programs. This GE Pre-Conference Symposium on the Number of Units will be held on Monday, 24 August, 1-5 PM, at the College of Engineering Theater. All deans, directors, and chairs of units with undergraduate degree programs are invited to participate in this symposium.

To organize the Symposium discussions more efficiently, we request each college/unit to submit ahead of said event information on the following:

1. The number of GE units that you recommend for your degree program/s
2. The types of GE courses recommended – academic units may specify any combination of GE courses, e.g., based on the initial 11 categories of GE courses that are mentioned in the proposed new GE framework by the UP System Task Force (2015), the current GE domains, the academic clusters, or any combination of these
3. Courses from the University Writing and Communication Program (UWCP; please see an early version of the CAL proposal as annexed hereto) – please indicate how many courses are recommended to be taken, and if the UCWP courses are to be considered part of the GE curriculum or considered complementary
4. Other relevant information regarding your recommended number of GE units for your degree programs

Your submissions will be considered as inputs to our discussions during the Pre-Conference Symposium on 24 August; they are in no way considered as the final design of your GE curriculum yet. We are collating the abovementioned information to help us identify what issues need to be deliberated on before and during the UPD GE Conference in September.

Please submit the requested information by Monday, 17 August, via email to the OVCAA (ovcaa@ovcaa.upd.edu.ph) with the SUBJECT: NUMBER OF GE UNITS. The detailed program of the Symposium on 24 August will depend on your submissions.

Thank you.

**THE U.P. DILIMAN UNIVERSITY WRITING AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAM:
A GENERAL EDUCATION PROPOSAL
FROM THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS
U.P. DILIMAN
February 26, 2015**

The College of Arts and Letters proposes a comprehensive University Writing and Communication Program(UWCP) as a key feature of a 33-unit General Education program for the University of the Philippines in Diliman. The UWCP aims to train students in modes of advanced writing and communication to prepare them for active participation in their academic and future professional lives. The Program is grounded on an understanding of writing and communication not as mere conveyors of knowledge through impeccable grammar or rhetorical flourish but as the very means to knowledge itself, as inherent acts of critical thinking directed to/for specific discourse communities that are deeply implicated in systems of knowledge and power. CAL views language, primarily in the form of written and oral communication, as a means of inquiry and investigation, a method of arriving at truth, or as the very shaper of knowledge. Language is the very medium of knowledge. The mastery of spoken and written language is therefore the key to learning itself.

The UWCP will ensure that university students acquire the necessary facility and confidence in oral and written communication and the capacity for advanced critical thinking through oral and written language. The UWCP will consist of four courses:

- Two (2) general writing courses (one each in English and Filipino),
- an oral communication and presentation course in either English or Filipino to be taken in the student's first year in the University, and
- an advanced writing course allied to the student's major to be taken in the student's junior year.

Significantly, the program requires the general writing course in both Filipino and English. As UP students who speak to and for the nation to the world, facility in both the national and international language is deemed essential. The nation's recent experience of Yolanda, where top scientists from U.P. were able to predict and disseminate their predictions to the English-speaking part of the nation but were unable to communicate this valuable information to a greater part of the population, resulting in a great number of casualties and deaths, underscores the need for an intelligentsia that is attuned and able to communicate with the rest of the national community.

Aside from training and the expected facility in two languages, the UWCP is also a two-tiered program where the basic courses in freshman year are supplemented by a more targeted junior year writing course in line with the students major. These courses immerse students in the practices of writing and communication within their particular discourse communities. Courses like Science Writing, Technical Writing, Business and Corporate Communication, Critical Writing for the Arts, Writing for the Social Sciences, etc., will be developed by the English and/or Filipino departments in tandem with relevant academic units.

The University Writing and Communication Program and the General Education Program

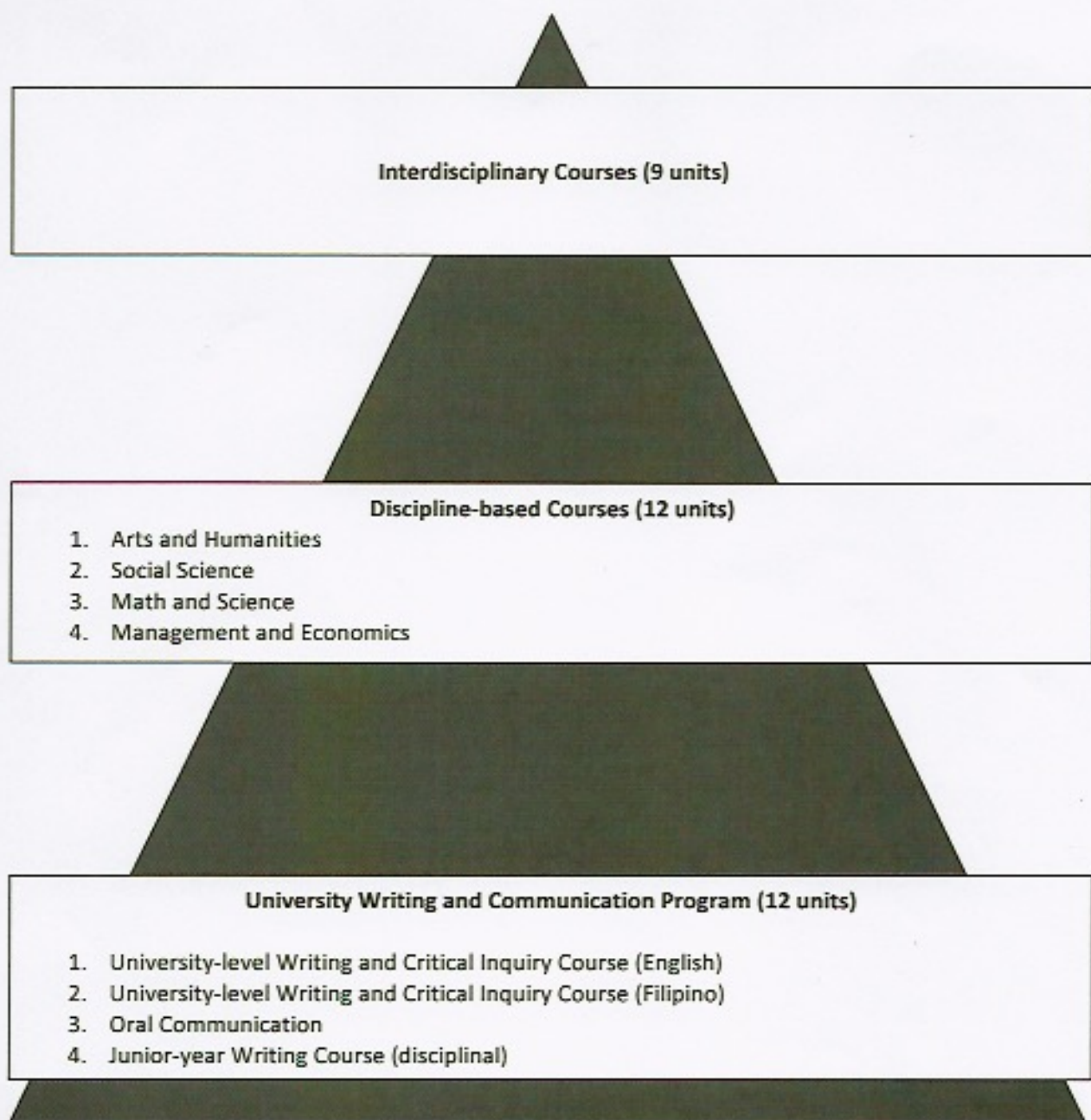
At the very core of the GE program is an able communicator – in written and oral Filipino and English. General Education is incomplete if configured simply on the basis of the knowledge that is deposited in students, if construed as a menu of essential facts or branches of learning for the students' consumption. General Education ought to find its fruition in the student as a producer or creator of new knowledges - molded, integrated, created – from what s/he has learned and, most importantly, communicated with the world. At the core of a GE program is an individual who can demonstrate the ability to express complex thought in speech and writing, a student who can speak well, think clearly, and write effectively. For this reason, the UWCP is integral to, if not the very foundation of a General Education Program.

While it can be argued that the principles of writing and communication have been ingrained in students by basic education, the approach to writing and communication of the UWCP guarantees an entirely different level of performance and practice. For example, being process-oriented, it is not genre or output-based - it does not merely teach students the parts of a research paper or different citation formats but hones evaluative faculties involved in discerning between potential sources or calibrating the extent to which quotation is necessary in a given piece of writing. It teaches not only principles of writing well but instills in the students the idea that forming an opinion or making an argument happens in the context of other opinions and arguments that have been made before them. It teaches students to claim a voice within the context of a larger discourse community.

In short, the UWCP is envisioned to raise the level of incoming students to the expectations of the University. It is founded on the belief that the best and brightest of the land must demonstrably think, write, and speak like the best and brightest of the land.

The Place of the UWCP in GE

In addition to the four courses (12 units) taken under the UWCP, CAL proposes an additional 12 units of disciplinary courses and 9 units of interdisciplinary courses to complete a 33-unit General Education program.



THE PROPOSED G.E. PROGRAM

The 12 units of disciplinary courses—one 3-unit course each from the domains of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, and Economics and Management – are meant to expose students to advanced (beyond High School-level) study in a variety of disciplines and introduce them to disciplinary rigors in fields outside of their own majors. The interdisciplinary courses serve as “connector” courses to demonstrate and provoke critical thinking across disciplines.