The Current Gen Ed Plan

1 “Q” course: Quantitative requirement
- 5 courses in the Humanities and History
- 3 courses in the Natural Sciences (two must be a set)
- 3 courses in the Social Sciences (two must be a set)
- Physical Education

The Bates Curriculum Since World War II: The More it Changes, the More it is the Same Thing

1940s
At the outbreak of WWII, general education took the form of a set of enhanced distributional requirements:

All degree candidates had to complete at least four courses in each of five groups:

1) English and Speech; (All had to take three English courses, two focusing on composition and argument, and a Speech course.)
2) Foreign Languages and Literatures;
3) Natural Sciences and Mathematics;
4) Social Sciences other than Psychology and Education;

A.B. students had to meet particular expectations in the Classics, B.S. students, in the Sciences.

Toward the close of the War, a Postwar Committee recommended radical changes that a like-minded Faculty adopted.

* The enhancements in English and Speech were retained, but the distributional principle was abandoned.
* In its place there was a long list of prescribed courses, one each in Biology, Chemistry or Physics, Economics, Geology or Mathematics, Government, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology.
* A substantial foreign language requirement was added with a test-out option.
* The great innovation was Cultural Heritage, a specifically required, non-departmental, non-disciplinary sequence of four courses on the Western tradition.

1960s
In the throes of a different war in the late 1960s, a wave of liberalizations swept away all this prescription, and the Faculty returned to distributional scheme, with greater permissiveness and without enhancements: a total of at least six courses in the two academic divisions (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities) other than that of the major, with at least two of these courses in each division.

Later in 1979, a major curricular review resulted in relatively minor changes, retaining the distributional principle: three/five courses in each division, sets/clusters, quantitative course. Steps toward a possible writing program led nowhere.

In 1997 and 1998, another major curricular review led to more ambitious proposals that failed to secure support.

Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose. - Talleyrand
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AT NESCAC SCHOOLS

The Middle of the Road
- No prescribed courses
- Distribution requirement
- Requires a major

Schools
Bates, Bowdoin, Conn College, Trinity

The Most Permissive
- Close consultation between students and faculty
- No prescribed courses
- No distribution requirement
- Requires a major
- Requires a certain number of courses for graduation

Schools
Amherst, Hamilton, Wesleyan

The Most Prescriptive
- Even less freedom to pick and choose courses
- Adds writing, quantitative, language, cultures, and justice requirements

Schools
Colby, Middlebury, Tufts, Williams
Frameworks: What principles should govern

Example I:

Critical Thinking, Contextual Awareness, Communication, and Creativity and Risk

**Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking raises questions, reviews assumptions and encourages different perspectives.
- Exposure to different approaches
- Exposure to different ideas
- Analytical and theoretical thinking
- Evaluation of Information

**Contextual awareness:** Social and global awareness is becoming increasingly important in a diverse society.
- Local level
- National level
- International level

**Communication:** Communication is crucial to any work and school setting. Ability to communicate ideas to a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways is important.
- Writing skills
- Oral presentation skills
- Visual presentation skills

**Creativity and risk-taking:** Any intellectual endeavor entails creativity and risk-taking, but knowing how and when to take risks is important.
- How do you deal with uncertainty when thinking critically?
- How do you get students to push boundaries of conventions?
- How do you encourage students to take responsible risks – and live with failures, mixed results or successes?

Bates Education
Example II: 
Skills, Knowledge, Willingness, 
Engagement and Integration

- Develop *skills* necessary for success in all fields. 
  - Oral and written communication 
  - Formal and quantitative reasoning 
  - Research, including laboratory and multiple disciplinary techniques

- Promote *breadth of knowledge* across fields of inquiry
  - Awareness of and capacity to apply multiple ways of knowing, learning, communicating 
  - Ability to approach issues or questions from multiple perspectives. 
  - Acquisition of knowledge from several content areas 
  - Familiarity with cultural and historical contexts

- Promote *depth of knowledge* in an area of specialization
  - Illustrate the benefits of focused attention to an area and to a set of questions or problems 
  - Learn about the nature of expertise

- Foster *willingness* and the ability to tackle unfamiliar problems
  - Instill awareness of one's own perspective, biases

- Promote active *engagement* in global, national, and local arenas.
  - Cultivate the ability to put ideas into practice

- *Integrate* skills with course content

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It seems like these goals are not mutually exclusive.
Example III: 
*Areas of Inquiry Approach*

- Identifies a set of skills and areas of inquiry by examining the goals and rationale for general education
- Allows courses from any number of departments or programs to satisfy a given area of inquiry, rather than using a division-based classification of courses
- Permits and diversifies: a range of skills and areas of inquiry are included in order to form the foundation for further work in specific fields.
- Fosters Connections and Encourages Community Involvement: includes service learning or relevant fieldwork, in addition to a Major, a First Year Seminar and Capstone experiences.

**Possible Areas of Inquiry:**
- Written and Oral Communication
- Quantitative and Formal Reasoning
- Science and Technology - Process and Reasoning
- Interdisciplinary Thought and Process
- Social Justice and Cultural Diversity
- Historical Analysis
- Social and Behavioral Analysis
- Literature
- The Arts
- Epistemology and Cognition
- Ethical Concepts and Moral Inquiry
Bates Education

Plans: Here are Sample Plans that we might choose to work with.

Goals Oriented Plan

Promote Breadth of Knowledge

Interdisciplinary Study
one course in one of the interdisciplinary programs, or one cross-listed course

Multidisciplinary Study
one course in the Natural Sciences;
one course in the Social Sciences;
one course in the Humanities

Promote Depth of Knowledge

Completion of the requirements for a major
Thesis or other capstone experience
Possible secondary concentration

Develop Skills

Three courses involving writing
Oral communication and other non-written forms of expression
Quantitative and formal reasoning
Research methods
Laboratory/ experimentation

Foster confidence, a willingness and ability to tackle unfamiliar problems, and cognizance of one’s own background, bias and perspective

Cultural Diversity
Familiarity with cultural references and history
Social awareness
Responsibility to community and environment

What features of this plan stand out?

Double dipping may be possible.
Cuts across traditional divisional and departmental lines to emphasize experiences and skills in line with Bates’ ‘mission statement,’” while at the same time guaranteeing a minimal distributional requirement.

Possible Variations: Have students work out with their advisors how they are going to meet the requirements.
Open Curriculum Plan

● Definition:

• No prescribed courses, areas of study, or experiences.

• Individual curricula are designed through advising.

● Rationale:

• Enables students to develop personally customized programs of study with the guidance of faculty advisors.

• Students then come to understand and appreciate differences between ways of knowing, instead of simply assimilating a core set of values, beliefs, and traditions or covering a field of knowledge.

● What features stand out?

Demands a substantial commitment of faculty time for advising.

Advisors encourage students to see connections across different sites of learning and to view their various activities outside of the classroom as an integral part of education.

Plan encourages students to experiment with innovative approaches to learning: independent studies, group independent studies, internships, travel abroad, and independent concentrations.

At some schools, a subset of students apply for open curriculum.
Bates Education

Student Citizenship and Scholarship Plan

Coursework:

First year advisors direct new students to take a well-balanced course load including the traditional liberal arts and newer interdisciplinary classes. Once a student declares a major, the major advisor takes over the role of advising or the first year advisor stays on as the general education advisor.

Non-Course Requirements:

Student Citizenship and Scholarship:

Other requirements for graduation are all related to various forms of student citizenship and scholarship, not necessarily connected to classes.

Students are required to fulfill four of the following six expectations:

1) Leadership on Campus
   a) Athletic team or club captain
   b) Junior Advisor
   c) Resident Coordinator
   d) Club president
   e) Leader for an AESOP Trip
   f) Member of Representative Assembly

2) Scholarly presentation
   a) Presentation at a professional meeting
   b) Presentation at the Mt David Summit
   c) Giving a performance
   d) Honors and/or regular thesis defense

3) Service to the broader community
   a) Assist in a community service project
   b) Outreach program in the local school
   c) Instruct at a local ski area
   d) Work for a local election campaign
   e) Coach in a local school

4) Service to the College community
   a) Edit/staff The Student
   b) Hold work study employment
   c) Be a member of a faculty committee
   d) Be on a faculty or staff search committee
   e) Organize a lecture by an outside speaker
   f) Organize a performance or cultural event
   g) Help maintenance with upkeep
   h) Be a teaching or technical writing assistant

5) Appreciation of the World
   a) Study abroad for a semester or a year
   b) Study at another U.S. institution
   c) Take a leave of absence and travel

6) Physical fitness
   a) Play on a varsity team
   b) Play a club sport
   c) Join club excursions
   d) Enroll in an exercise program
   e) Participate in intramural sports

What features of this plan stand out?

○ Keeping track of these things is up in the air, but a combination of the registrar and advisors is most likely. An honor system is also a possibility.

Option linked to behavior: If a student garners two or more Dean’s Strikes an extra requirement is needed.
Program Overview:

● **1st Year – Exploration**
Year-long sequence of theme-based, team-taught courses with faculty from different disciplines. Each faculty member is paired with an upper division student (peer mentor) who leads smaller mentor inquiry sessions.

● **2nd Year – Communication**
Gateway classes linked to Upper Division Cluster Offerings. Each student takes three semester-long focused inquiry courses then chooses a cluster that corresponds to the course that the student found most interesting.

● **3rd Year – Individualization**

● **4th Year – Cooperation**
Teams of students from a variety of majors work together in the field. Some examples of Capstone Courses: Homeless Shelter, Bilingual Education, Multimedia Production, Neighborhoods and Watersheds, Us and Them: A History of Intolerance in America, Science Inquiry in the Outdoor Classroom.

What features stand out?
Sequencing over the four years to attend to the cognitive development of students and develop critical inquiry and complex thinking skills.
Hallmarks of Education Plan

Foundations Requirement

- Written Communication 1 course
- Symbolic Reasoning 1 course
- Global/Multicultural Perspectives 2 courses

Diversification Requirement

Assures that every student has a broad grounding in multiple domains of knowledge, while at the same time allowing flexibility for student’s with different goals and interests.

- Arts, Humanities and Literatures 2 courses from 2 of these areas
- Social Sciences 2 courses from 2 different depts/programs
- Biological Sciences 1 course
- Physical Sciences 1 course
- Science Laboratory 1 course

Focus Requirement

Develops important additional skills and discourses. These can be satisfied through the major and diversification courses.

- Writing Intensive 5 courses, 2 numbered 300 or higher
- Oral Communication 1 course
- Local and Regional Issues 1 course
- Contemporary Ethical Issues 1 course

**Wild Card Option:** A student can request that one Diversification (or Focus) requirement be waived if s/he has engaged in an extraordinary or especially valued educational experience.

Hallmark Requirement

- Second Language proficiency
  Prepares students to function effectively in a global society.
The “W-Q 2-2-2-2” Plan

W - Writing requirement:
1 FYS or “W” course in first semester at Bates
1 “W” course or “W” section in sophomore or junior year
1 senior thesis or senior seminar

Q - Quantitative requirement:
1 “Q” course

2222 - Divisional requirements:
2 courses each in the Natural Sciences (one with a lab),
the Humanities and History,
the Interdisciplinary Programs,
the Social Sciences

No double-dipping allowed, except in the case of “W” or “Q” courses, which may also be counted as meeting one of the divisional program requirements.

In addition, students must complete:
* a major
* a capstone experience (thesis, comprehensive exam or senior seminar)
* 2 x 10 weeks of Physical Education.

What features of this plan stand out?
simplicity; familiarity, and ease of implementation - this is basically a modification of our present requirements, with the addition of a writing component and the inclusion of the Interdisciplinary Programs’ courses.

Possible Variations: various redefinitions of the divisions and programs might be possible. For instance:
* Biochemistry (and Neuroscience?) could move to Natural Sciences;
* Classics and Medieval Studies could stay with Humanities and History? etc.

Possible add-ons: an optional “distributional honors” scheme:
* “Honors” for students taking 3-3-3-3 courses in each divisions and programs;
* “High Honors” for taking 4-4-4-4;
* “Highest Honors” for taking 5-5-5-5

I think this is a good requirement because a lot of students need to learn how to write well. An intensive writing course as a first year as a pass/fail course so that ALL students benefit without fear of a bad GPA.

More writing classes as freshmen are better to build up skills & leave junior yr to trade courses for majors/study abroad.

Double dipping would need to be accepted for all major requirements to get done in time unless majors change requirements.

Very similar to what we do now.

This seems kind of crazy – maybe an overload even though it might be “doable” for some.
Not a plan, just some other interesting options and possibilities…

• **Student-Designed and Faculty-Approved Education Program**
  Select students, with approval, can be exempted from general education by designing their own unique curriculum.

• **Inspire vs. Require Program**
  Students are encouraged to achieve breadth in the curriculum with incentives such as Honors, priority in housing lottery, or grants for books or computers.

• **Shared Learning Experiences**
  Common Core courses, for example, “Great Ideas in Civilizations” emphasizing skills of Writing, Oral Communication, and Information Retrieval; and/or “Great Discoveries and Events in Civilizations,” emphasizing Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis.

• **Student Labor Program**
  Requires that all students hold a part-time job. In addition to financial coupons, the Labor program provides students with a keen sense of workplace accountability, as it holds them responsible for scheduled work hours and creates performance standards that are as exacting as academic standards.

• **Experiential Education Experience (EEE)**
  Hands on, engaged learning such as an academic internship, research participation or assistance, co-op, field work, study abroad, or extensive service learning project. Students are also required to reflect upon and further develop their experience in a classroom setting.

• **Required Portfolio**
  Students outline their educational goals and progress. The portfolio is updated each semester with examples of work.

• **Second Language**
  This requirement could be fulfilled by unconventional knowledge and courses, such as computer languages or sign language.

• **Attendance at Campus Events**
  Course credit is given for frequent attendance at extracurricular events, such as lectures, debates, and performances.

• **Mandatory Attendance at Convocations.**
  All students will automatically be expected to attend all convocations that occur during their enrollment.