Maurianne Adams, Chair of the General Education Council, began by introducing the nature of the presentation and offering some background on the Integrative Experience. Professor Adams’ section of the presentation would discuss the criteria and options for the Integrative Experience, as well as the timeframe for implementation. Assistant Provost Stassen would continue with a summary of the ways in which the Davis Grant that the University has received can provide support for departments in implementing the IE. Finally, Vice Provost Barr would present an interim report on the processes that the University has developed for thinking about the funding of the project.

The Integrative Experience came out of a 27-member task force that met for two years (2007-2009). Twelve members of that task force were also members of the General Education Council. The task force included deans, department chairs, associate provosts and other members of the administration, and professors. It was a great example of collaborative thinking concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the General Education Program. The task force began by fixing the easiest problems and worked its way up to the final goal of the Integrative Experience, which was initially conceived of by an earlier task force led by Professor John Jenkins. A number of measures were undertaken to strengthen the Gen Ed Program. The purposes and learning objectives of the Program were updated and clarified. Many of them had not been reviewed since the 1980s, and were in need of modernization. Communication within the Program was improved by the creation of a website, as well as with support through workshops and with fellows that reached out to instructors. Last year, the Gen Ed Council worked incredibly hard at converting Gen Ed Social World courses from three to four credits. Finally, and most importantly for the discussion today, the Faculty Senate last year approved the framework for the Integrative Experience.

Drawing on a considerable amount of research and literature, the Gen Ed Council thought about what the Integrative Experience should accomplish. What is integration? What kinds of mindsets and mental skills do students need as they enter the world of citizenship and the workforce? The Gen Ed Council was inspired by the work of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), as well as the Carnegie Foundation, while thinking about the dimensions of integrative thinking, particularly at the upper division. The Integrative Experience is located in the upper division because the Council wants students to have the opportunity to think back over their at least three years at the University—the trajectory of their Gen Ed courses, their entry into their major, what they have learned in the major—and also to project themselves ahead, considering life after the University and contemplate the problem-solving skills and capacities that they can use for lifelong learning. The IE is not only the culmination and completion of the General Education requirement, but it is three credits embedded in the major, and may be counted toward the major. It was important to the Gen Ed Council that the departments themselves determine the options that will satisfy the IE within their major. These could be within departments or collaborations between departments, schools, or colleges. As departments figure out their IE requirements, they will use the Gen Ed online submission manager for both the overall departmental plans and the specific IE proposals. Departments will be required to identify an IE coordinator who will make it easier for the
department to maintain continuity and sustain the IE over time. They will also be required to
appoint an individual to communicate with the Gen Ed Council to discuss their options. The
construction of the overall departmental plans are opportunities for departments to consider how
they will be able to offer the IE to all of their majors. Small departments may only have one or a
couple of IE options. Large departments are likely to have a menu of options for their students. As
departments consider options for their students, they will also be able to consider how they may
handle them for honors students, for people in travel abroad, and for other unique cases. The overall
departmental plan represents the big picture, and it will be revised over time as departments,
students, and thinking concerning the IE evolve. The specific proposals—which are also submitted
through the online submission manager—indicate the exact requirements being put forward by
departments to satisfy the IE for majors. These options are tracked all the way to the Registrar’s
Office, so the Registrar will have a record of approved IE options for each major. There is a two-
track submission process: the overall departmental plan and the specific proposals—as many as the
department needs of the latter for its unique needs.

The General Education Council will be reviewing the specific options on the basis of three criteria
that have been crafted to be as specific as possible while maintaining great flexibility. As departments
submit specific proposals on the online submission manager, prompts will as the submitters to
explain how each specific proposal addresses each of the following three criteria:

Does this option provide a structured, credited context for students to reflect on and to integrate
their learning and experience from General Education courses and their major?

Does this option provide students with the opportunity to practice General Education learning
objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary
perspective taking, at a more advanced level?

Does this option offer a shared learning experience for applying prior learning to new situations,
challenging questions, and real-world problems?

If the criteria are satisfied, the proposal will move forward from the Gen Ed Council. If the criteria
are not fully satisfied or clear, the Gen Ed Council will communicate with departments asking for
clarification or adjustment.

From the perspective of the Gen Ed Council, the IE is criteria driven to be as open as possible while
maintaining a similar level of quality throughout the campus. This allows for a wide range of options.
The Council wants each major to design options that make sense for each major and its students. In
some cases, departments will be able to take existing courses or capstones and compare their
curriculum with the Gen Ed criteria to see what adjustments may need to be made. Slight revisions
of these courses or capstones that fulfill the three criteria may be sent to the Gen Ed Council to be
reviewed as an IE. In other cases, departments can take the IE as an opportunity to develop entirely
new courses. In many instances, these new courses may include educational initiatives that the
department had wanted to develop for many years; the IE can be the opportunity to follow through
on these. Some departments are offering credit-bearing modules, sometimes as many as six offerings.
Theses, service learning projects, and field experiences may be considered in relation to add-on
modules that enable the entire experience to meet both the three-credit requirement and the IE
criteria. There are ample opportunities for cross-unit collaborative courses or other experiences.

The Gen Ed Council has already seen a wide range of options. As they are examined, the Council
always refers to the three criteria that were approved by the Faculty Senate. Many works in progress
are described on the General Education website (http://www.umass.edu/gened).

Last year was very much a pilot for the IE component of Gen Ed. The Council worked very hard to
strengthen its own thinking about the Integrative Experience by analyzing a number of models. This
year is focused on proposals, as implementation will take place next year. Academic Year 2012-2013
will be the first year that juniors will be able to take the IE requirement. The Gen Ed Council is
advising departments, particularly large ones, to offer the IE options next year, as well as the following, so that students in their junior year may take it at that time if the department prefers that. This semester, all departments are encouraged to submit their overall departmental plans and their specific option proposals. The Gen Ed Council needs to be examining the proposals this fall. By January, the Council will review the program, considering whether or not all the majors will have their needs met by the spring so the program can begin in full force in the fall of 2012.

*Martha Stassen, Assistant Provost for Assessment and Educational Effectiveness,* noted that the tight timeline for implementing the IE was always apparent, and that departments and the institution as a whole would need assistance in moving forward. The University was fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Davis Educational Foundation to help with the process. The University held a campus kick-off event in September to help departments understand more about the IE and its criteria. Over 100 individuals representing nearly every department with undergraduate majors participated. In addition to the aforementioned Gen Ed website, an IE steering committee is working with any department that would like a consultation to answer questions regarding the IE or run proposals and ideas by the Gen Ed Council. Departmental seed grants are also available that can be used by departments for a variety of purposes that could help them move forward with the IE. Money could be used to purchase food for a departmental meeting to discuss the IE or to gather information from students regarding their experiences, among other options. Finally, the Davis IE fellows are entering their second year. Roughly 20 departments have been involved creating options for their departments, schools, or colleges. The Davis IE fellows and their departmental affiliation are listed on the Gen Ed website. Both the steering committee and the fellows have been great resources from the beginning, helping to clarify the IE criteria, acknowledging the complexity of the IE and making it more feasible, and informing the understanding of the cost of the IE.

*Carol Barr, Vice Provost for Undergraduate and Continuing Education,* noted that she was a member of the original task force on Gen Ed reform, and has been delighted to work on the General Education component of the curriculum for a number of years. As a Vice Provost, her role in relation to Gen Ed has evolved, but she believes that it is incredibly important that the University thoroughly explore the IE and implement it correctly. A consultant that came to campus near the end of September noted her astonishment at the accomplishments of the University. A number of colleges and universities across the country are implementing curriculum sections similar to the IE, but this consultant—who studies integrative education—did not know of any other school implementing the IE within the major. Integrative education is incredibly beneficial to students, and the University is taking an innovative approach by combining it with the major.

At the 708th Meeting of the Faculty Senate, the IE steering committee was charged by the Provost to take a careful look at the early evidence to help get a better sense of the scale of the resource requirements for the IE. The steering committee met on October 12 to review the initial IE proposals. The committee reviewed every proposal that has been submitted. There is a variety of approaches. The committee is composing some scaling cost projection guidelines to assist in estimating the cost of the IE to the campus. The IE is a definite net gain to the curriculum at the University, but it will cost money. The proposals that have already been submitted include new, faculty-led small courses; new, faculty-led mid-sized courses with TA support; courses utilizing Team Based Learning classrooms that seat 90 but are broken down into groups of nine, with some courses breaking down further into groups of three; one credit add-ons; modules; theses projects; and more. The variety of approaches is critical to the IE, in that the initiative is all about what makes sense for each major and its students.

The information regarding the scaling cost framework will be distributed shortly to all the department heads and chairs. The information will be disseminated straight from the steering committee to the departments. It will be distributed to the deans and the Provost as well. Questions will be added to the online submission manager in order to acquire more information on the cost of IE implementation at the University. The deans, heads and chairs will discuss implementation plans. As part of the two-step process (the overall departmental plan and the specific proposals), the deans will be making sure that all students can be taken care of in the specific proposals as well as
monitoring the costs of implementation. The Provost and the deans will then discuss transitional costs. Provost Staros has stated that he is prepared to assist with transitional costs to make sure that the fall 2012 implementation goes smoothly.