In November 2006, UW-Stevens Point initiated a formal revision process of its General Education Program by inviting a team from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to visit the campus and review the existing General Degree Requirements (GDRs). In their report to the campus, the AASCU team found that there was uncertainty on the part of some faculty members, students, and advisors about the purpose and value of the GDRs; those who spoke to the team about the GDRs focused on disparate content areas rather than transferrable skills. Because of the lack of clearly articulated learning outcomes, the assessment of student learning within the GDRs was problematic.

Based on the report from the AASCU team, as well as findings of a UW-Stevens Point GDR Research Team, the UW-Stevens Point Faculty Senate formed the General Education Policy Review Committee (GEPRC) to create a new General Education Program. In looking for guidance on the format, content, and assessment of the new program, members of the GEPRC followed the lead of many other universities nationwide in looking to the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) initiative entitled Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), the foundation of UW-System’s LEAP Wisconsin. In particular, the essential learning
outcomes outlined in the LEAP initiative served as a model for the mission statement and program learning outcomes developed for UW-Stevens Point’s new General Education Program. A brief summary of the core components of UW-Stevens Point’s General Education Program are provided below.

**Mission Statement:** The General Education Program provides the framework of a liberal education, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to facilitate intellectual and personal growth, pursue their advanced studies, and improve the world in which they live.

**General Education Program Outcomes**

The General Education Program seeks to develop these qualities of global citizenship in four distinct ways. After completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.

- Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.

- Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
• Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

General Education Program Structure

UW-Stevens Point’s General Education Program is thoughtfully conceived and distributed across all four years of a student’s education, beginning with First Year Seminar, Quantitative Literacy, and Oral and Written Communication components in the first year (i.e., Foundation Level) through Communication and Capstone experiences in the major in the last year (i.e., Integration Level). The diagram below illustrates all levels of the General Education Program and the disciplinary categories that are included within each level. (Click here for a complete explanation of the UW-Stevens Point General Education Program: **UW-Stevens Point General Education Program brochure**.)
General Education Program Assessment

Along with creating a new General Education Program, UW- Stevens Point also created a rigorous new assessment process. Each year of the General Education Program assessment cycle, a different level of the program is assessed, and all faculty and academic staff teaching General Education courses at that level must submit a course portfolio. The course portfolio must include a course syllabus, an explanation of course alignment with the General Education Program category learning outcomes, a brief description of how the General Education Program learning outcomes were addressed through course experiences and assignments, summarized results of a discipline-appropriate assessment showing evidence of student achievement of the General Education Program category learning outcomes, and a plan for how the assessment results will be used to sustain and improve student learning.

The course portfolios for each General Education Program category being assessed are then reviewed by Faculty Learning Communities. The Faculty Learning Communities, each comprised of 4 – 6 faculty/staff members who teach in the category under review, provide a feedback rubric to every instructor about their course portfolio and also work with the UW-Stevens Point Assessment Coordinator to aggregate data and make recommendations for changes and improvements to the General Education Program. UW-Stevens Point is in its third year of General Education Program assessment, and some changes that have occurred as a result of this intensive assessment process include the revision of GEP category learning outcomes to better reflect the central focus of each category, the creation or refinement of instructional professional development to address needs that are identified during the
assessment process, the removal of GEP category designations when courses aren’t aligned with the learning outcomes, and the revision of the GEP assessment process itself. The UW-Stevens Point General Education Program assessment process, solidly grounded in the tenets of UW-System’s LEAP Wisconsin, has provided the campus community with rich data about the effectiveness of the General Education Program and continually points the way to further improvement.