Report on the Revision of the Trinity College of the Bible
General Education Program

I. Proposal Rationale

As stated in the HLC ***Handbook of Accreditation***, "general education is intended to impart common knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and to develop in them the skills and attitudes that an organization's faculty believes every educated person should possess. From an organization's general education, a student acquires a breadth of knowledge in the areas and proficiency in the skills that the organization identifies as hallmarks of being educated" (HLC H of A, 3.4-3).

When Trinity College of the Bible underwent its candidacy visit in November 2003, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, while acknowledging that Trinity's "approach to undergraduate general education is consistent with that of an upper division institution," the "description of general education in the *2003/2004 Catalog"* was, at best, misleading In addition, the visiting team identified three other challenges facing Trinity's approach to general education:

1) There are no descriptions of general education courses in the *2003/2004 Catalog;*
2) There is no assessment of academic outcomes for general education;
3) Faculty involvement is lacking in the area of general education at TCBTS.

In light of this assessment, Trinity College of the Bible was faced with the task of revising its general education program in a way that addressed these areas of concern without abandoning the deficit make-up approach. These changes needed to be made and implemented in time to be included in Trinity's 2005-2007 catalog; and prior to the quickly approaching accreditation visit in 2005.

Beginning of 2004, the General Education Sub-Committee began researching trends in the approach to general education by other NCA accredited institutions of higher learning. The General Education sub-committee investigated the general education programs of traditional, as well as distance education institutions. Traditional schools included: Avila University[1], Indiana State University, and the University of Cincinnati. Distance Education institutions included: Capella University, North Central University, Kaplan College, and Walden University. As a result of the information obtained through online research, site visitations, and phone conferences, Trinity developed a new General Education Program that utilizes the "embedding" of general education competencies into all undergraduate courses.[2]

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[1] Dr. Ernest I. Nolan, chair of the HLC of the NCA Consultant Evaluation Team, strongly recommended that Avila University be visited by Trinity's General Education Traveling Team. He suggested that Avila's approach to General Education would be a possible model that could be adapted to TCBTS's of education.

[2] Based on the General Education sub-committee's research, the "embedding" of general education is the current trend in the fulfillment of an institution's general education requirements. Moreover, "embedding" is recognized by NCA as an effective means of ensuring that students acquire necessary general education

The advantages of "embedding" is that it: 1) maintains the deficit make-up approach; 2) addresses the concerns raised by the visiting team for the HLC of the NCA; 3) permits students having general education shortfalls to make up their deficit; 4) provides FTIAC students with several options for meeting their general education requirements; and 5) brings Trinity into compliance with Criterion Four: Core Component 4b of the HLC *Handbook for Accreditation*.

II. Overview of the New General Education Program

Under the proposed program, General Education is to be spread across four Breadth of Knowledge areas which have been drawn from Trinity's Institutional Core Competencies. The Breadth of Knowledge of Knowledge Areas include: Alternative Learning (knowledge), Effective Communication, Critical Inquiry and Thinking, and Healthy Relationships and Sensitivity to Human Diversity. Moreover, each Breadth of Knowledge Area contains Intended Learning Outcomes that represent the various skills and attitudes that the faculty of Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary believe every Trinity graduate should possess (See Appendix A).

Trinity College of the Bible requires 31 semester credit hours of General Education for students enrolled in the Associate of Arts degree program. Those enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree program must validate 45 semester credit hours of General Education. Trinity's General Education requirement is made up of two components: the **General Education Required Core** and the **General Education Elective Component**.

Trinity's General Education Required Core enhances fundamental skills and knowledge that all students must demonstrate proficiencies. A total of 15 semester credit hours are required to satisfy this component for the Associate of Arts degree as well as the Bachelor of Arts degree. The content in the General Education Core Component is the same for both degrees. The required 15 semester credit hours consist of three semester credit hours in each of the following five subject areas: Written Communication, Oral Communication, History, Psychology, and Philosophy or Religious Studies.

The General Education Elective Component enhances fundamental skills and knowledge to complete Trinity's General Education requirements. For the Associate of Arts degree, the General Education Elective Component consists of the remaining 16 credits of the required 31. The General Education Elective Component for the Bachelor of Arts degree is comprised of the remaining 30 credits of the required 45.

The General Education Elective Component allows students to include courses from a broad educational spectrum. Examples of General Education elective subject areas include literature, music, art, economics, sociology, computer technology, mathematics, and science. In addition, because general education has been embedded into all of Trinity's biblically-based undergraduate courses, any of these may be taken to satisfy the General Education Elective Component.

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competencies (NCA website document, Governance Gen. Ed. Focus Group, *General Education and the World of Work* @ http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/restructuring/charges/chggened.html.

Summary of General Education Required Credits					
Degree	General Education Required Core Credits (5 Specific Areas/3 Credits Each)		General Education Elective Credits		General Education Total Credits
Associate of Arts	15	+	16	=	31
Bachelor of Arts	15	+	30	=	45

The General Education Required Core and Elective Components may be validated through any of the following means:

1. Transfer Credits from general education courses previously completed at approved colleges or universities as determined by the Office of the Associate Dean of Admissions based upon an evaluation of official transcripts. All transfer credits are calculated on a semester credit hour basis and are considered only for those courses in which the student received a grade of 'C' of higher.
2. Successful performance of standardized tests such as College Level Examination Program (CLEP) or Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Upon receipt of an official transcript for these tests, the Office of the Associate Dean of Admissions evaluates and determines General Education transfer credit.
3. Trinity Undergraduate courses. Trinity courses taken to satisfy a General Education deficit cannot be included as part of the student's associate's or bachelor's degree core credits.

The General Education Elective Component may also be satisfied through the submission and validation of a Trinity Undergraduate Portfolio. This portfolio must conform to the standards established by the Council for Adult Experiential Learning and the **Trinity Portfolio Guidebook**. An Undergraduate Portfolio cannot be used to validate courses in the General Education Core Component.

III. How Embedding Will Work

A. **Step One:** Immediately following the "Course Objectives" section of the Trinity Study Guide, the instructor/course designer will insert a new section entitled **General Education Breadth of Knowledge Areas with Intended Learning Outcomes**, into the Study Guide.
B. **Step Two:** Using the *Trinity College of the Bible General Education Breadth of Knowledge Areas with Intended Learning Outcomes* document (See Appendix A), instructors will select the Intended Learning Outcomes that are appropriate to their course/s and place them under the corresponding Breadth of Knowledge areas that are appropriate to their course.
C. **Step Three:** Instructors/Course designers are to make sure that modular assignments are designed so that they help students to achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes selected for their course.

D. **Step Four:** Save your document and then send an electronic copy to the Dean for Curriculum Development.

IV. Implementation

A. Phase One of the implementation process has been completed. This involved the embedding of general education Breadth of Knowledge Areas w/ Intended Learning Outcomes into Trinity courses that were previously identified as general education courses.
B. Phase Two will involve embedding the remainder of Trinity's undergraduate courses with General Education Breadth of Knowledge Areas and Intended Learning Outcomes. This process is to be completed by December, 2005.
C. The identification of individual courses as "GE" courses will end with the release date of the 2005-2007 catalog.
D. The distribution of separate General Education study guides will cease with the release date of the 2005 catalog.
E. All Trinity College of the Bible undergraduate courses will be imbedded by December of 2005.
F. As required by the *Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary Course Design Manual*, instructors creating new undergraduate courses must embed them with Trinity General Education Breadth of Knowledge Areas and Intended Learning Outcomes.

Appendix A

**TCBTS General Education Breadth of Knowledge Areas with
Intended Learning Outcomes**

As stated in the HLC *Handbook of Accreditation,* "general education is intended to impart common knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and to develop in them the skills and attitudes that an organization's faculty believes every educated person should possess. From an organization's general education, a student acquires a breadth of knowledge in the areas and proficiency in the skills that the organization identifies as hallmarks of being educated" (HLC H of A, 3.4-3). Trinity's four (4) General Education Breadth of Knowledge (B of K) areas are drawn from the Institutional Core Competencies. Moreover, the Intended Learning Outcomes listed under each B of K area represent the various skills and attitudes that the faculty of Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary believe every Trinity graduate should possess.

Alternative Learning (Knowledge): Demonstrate cognitive skills and learning outcomes stemming from a Christ-centered distance education dedicated to integrity, excellence, and innovation.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

The Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary graduate will have knowledge of:

❖ Terms and definitions relevant to their specific area of study.
❖ Key developments, theories, paradigms, and principles learned in his/her course of study.
❖ The important contributors to the literature of their program.
❖ Major themes, events, and personalities found in the Old and New Testaments.
❖ The Bible's nature and content.
❖ Solid hermeneutical foundations for biblical interpretation of the Old and New Testaments.
❖ The biblical foundation and historical development of Christian doctrine and practice.
❖ Biblical theology.
❖ The nature and ministry of the church.
❖ The ever-widening multi-national demographics of the church.
❖ Major periods in philosophical history, philosophers, theologians, writers, artists, and other great thinkers and their influence upon the development of civilization and the Christian faith.
❖ Major ethical theories.
❖ Philosophy and apologetics.
❖ The various formal and informal tools of logic that philosophers and apologists use to state arguments and warrant assertions.

❖ Criteria used to classify, examine and interpret various competing worldviews as seen in the world and its religions today.
❖ History, from biblical through post-biblical times as an expression of the interaction of human choice and divine sovereignty.
❖ Systematic theology solidly rooted in the Christian tradition.
❖ The relationships between the various areas of theology.
❖ Christian educational theories, principles, practices, programs, and procedures.
❖ Biblically-based problem solving skills in the various disciplines.
❖ The basic and essential components of successful Christian ministry.
❖ The uniqueness of a biblical model of counseling.
❖ The structures and uses of information systems.

Effective Communication: Communicate effectively with those whom you serve in the religious or global community.

The Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary graduate will be able to:

Intended Learning Outcomes:

❖ Do assigned readings and demonstrate an understanding of their written and/or quantitative content.
❖ Demonstrate the ability to summarize, paraphrase, and question using standard written English.
❖ Write a clear, well-organized paper, using standard English that utilizes primary and secondary sources.
❖ Properly cite sources using Turabian style.
❖ Make a clear, well-organized verbal presentation.
❖ Demonstrate visionary transformational leadership that influences, motivates, and empowers those seeking to live for Christ and further His Kingdom.

Critical Inquiry & Thinking: Exhibit familiarity with other worldviews and show that critical inquiry is included as an integral part of your ongoing evaluative learning process.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

The Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary graduate will be able to:

❖ Analyze, summarize, and interpret a variety of reading materials including texts, journal articles, classical, and primary sources.
❖ Critically discern both in the selection and use of theological texts.

- ❖ Apply acquired biblical and theological knowledge and skills to life and ministry situations.
- ❖ Identify a problem in ministry and professional situations, and utilizing biblically-based problem solving skills, develop viable solutions.
- ❖ Elaborate upon knowledge to create new thoughts, processes, and or products.
- ❖ Think critically and make connections in learning across disciplines.

Healthy Relationships and Sensitivity to Human Diversity: Display healthy relationships with self, family, church, and others and foster sensitivity to people of diverse ages, genders, ethnicity, beliefs, and socioeconomic levels for the purpose of ministering more effectively within the religious or global community.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

The Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary graduate will be able to:

- ❖ Explain how the education they received was based on the teachings of the Bible and structured around the central theme of the deity of Christ.
- ❖ Develop and explain a personal biblical world view as a framework for ethical decision making and behavior.
- ❖ Describe a plan for maintaining communion with God in their own personal lives.
- ❖ Demonstrate self-direction, intellectual curiosity, and understanding of differing world views.
- ❖ Demonstrate sensitivity to people of diverse ages, genders, ethnicity, beliefs, and socioeconomic levels.
- ❖ Foster effective skills in evangelism, discipleship, and acts of compassion in a variety of contexts.
- ❖ Demonstrate intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual growth.
- ❖ Demonstrate spiritual, civic, and social responsibility.