ASSUMPTIONS USED IN CREATING THE OGU GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

- **A GSP must comprise an organic whole, a synergistic “ecosystem of the intellect” that maximizes opportunities for the “collision of ideas” among its diverse components.** A viable GSP must be more than the sum of its courses. Hence, A GSP course list is a necessary but insufficient basis for creating a vibrant Program. A GSP that is merely a series of discrete, stand alone courses is an oxymoron and an obstacle to learning that demotivates students and faculty. GS courses that are conceptually separated from each other cannot exploit the intellectual capital of students and faculty. Likewise, selecting GS courses solely on discipline-based considerations enfeebles GSP vitality and fails to address student and faculty needs, abilities, and expectations.

- **Skills in writing, speaking, critical thinking, and using information technology must be embedded in GS courses across academic disciplines.** Successful learning must involve successful communication. With regard to information technology, the greater the availability of information, the greater the need for becoming “intelligent consumers of information”:--i.e., for personal skills in accessing, evaluating, and using it.

- **Understanding how and why something is taught is critical to understanding what is taught.** Learning how to think is just as important, and ultimately may be much more important, than learning what to think. Likewise, skill in framing questions may be more important than accumulating answers. Hence, among faculty and students a GSP must build a community of inquirers, not a group of receivers. Likewise, for both faculty and students a GSP must be learning-centered, not teaching-centered.

- **Students and faculty must receive a generous orientation to the intellectual expectations, rationale, goals, and learning resources of a GSP.** Students and faculty should view a GSP as scaffolding for life-long learning, not simply as a foundation for a specific major.

- **A commitment to studying ethics and to ethical behavior is an academic and practical imperative in a GSP.** Transparency in constructing the goals and component parts of a GSP is essential to its academic integrity and institutional viability.

- **Knowledge of American, western, and nonwestern experiences and ways of thinking are essential to intellectual integrity and participatory democracy.** U.S. and international students must be aware of their own intellectual traditions and those of others.

- **Not all students are “native” students.** Students attend colleges in different ways (part time, distance learning, multi-institution) and at different social and intellectual stages of their lives.

- **A coherent, exciting GSP will maximize student retention rates, faculty and student motivation, and economic efficiency.**

- **Course numbers, titles and content are being rationalized at the department level.**

- **The OGU GSP must be consistent with the AGSC/STARS requirements.**

- **A primary GSP goal is to nurture human freedom and growth in service of the human community.**

- **A GSP should provide a base of general knowledge of life skills for citizenship, livelihood, interpersonal relations, and personal development.**