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I. Executive Summary

In December 2017, Dr. Gail Burd, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, invited a diverse team of faculty, students, college academic administrators and academic professionals to join a task force to review the current general education program and make recommendations for a revitalized program that is more engaging, interdisciplinary, integrated, relevant, and innovative. Specifically, the General Education Task Force was asked to: 1.) Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our current general education program structure at UA and peer institutions; 2.) Collect information through surveys and focus groups from UA faculty, advisors, students, and administrators about their opinion about the current programs and improvements that might be proposed; 3.) Identify pilot projects that might be developed that would strengthen our Gen Ed program and student learning outcomes, 4.) Align reforms that will permit assessment of student learning outcomes in the institutional learning outcomes; 5.) Identify barriers to accomplishing desired reforms and offer suggestions to overcome the barriers and 6.) Align reforms to other institutional priorities at UA. Although foundation courses such as math, English and languages are a crucial component of general education, these were not included in this review. The Task Force was mindful of the fact that while it included representation from a variety of units and constituencies, it was a relatively small, appointed group. Our recommendations provide a starting point which can inform a process of curricular and administrative change, as that process proceeds in accordance with the principles of shared governance.

The Task Force embraced the opportunity to gather information about the existing program and to propose changes that would improve the student experience and enhance student learning. The existing program, which has been in place since 1998, was designed to meet specific learning outcomes such as thinking critically, communicating effectively, understanding and valuing differences, and using information effectively. While these learning outcomes remain essentially sound, the Task Force proposes to expand the learning outcomes to address the needs of a changing world that require students to think creatively, collaborate effectively, use information ethically and apply new knowledge, skills and abilities to become creative problem solvers in an increasingly complex environment. In a parallel effort, the UA is developing a new strategic plan to help shape the future of the University. This plan focuses on student success and outcomes, with a strong emphasis on the General Education program. The strategic planning team collected feedback regarding the general education program and reached a similar conclusion that the program needs to be redesigned with a focus on skills required for the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) which is “fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds.”

By gathering input from key internal and external stakeholders, the Task Force identified features of the existing program that are beneficial and should be retained. For example, the UA general education program is unique in that students generally can change majors without losing their general education credits. In addition, the general education program offers considerable breadth and many outstanding scholars in UA’s premier programs that excite students about topics that are outside of their major fields of study. As such, the Task Force cautions against a complete overhaul of the program without consideration for the strengths of the existing program.

However, the Task Force identified a number of important shortcomings of the existing program and uncovered several significant opportunities for improvements. For example, students often feel that
their general education is not relevant and view gen ed courses as a “box that must be checked”. Many express frustrations because they find it difficult to access enough reliable information about the general education offerings to make informed decisions about which courses to take and the categories for the Gen Ed distribution requirements (NATS, INDV and TRAD) do little to inform the students about the nature of the courses. Also, concerns about inconsistent quality surfaced suggesting that the overall management of the program is insufficient. The lack of sufficient controls, combined with the influence of Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) on departmental behaviors with respect to general education, has led to a dramatic increase in the number of general education courses, exacerbating the challenges of program management. As a result of the growth of the number of courses offered, the enrollments in many courses are lower than anticipated resulting in poor utilization of instructors and campus resources. Unfortunately, in many cases, assessments of student outcomes are not performed adequately, and no structure is in place to regularly monitor, evaluate and improve assessments. Although, the assessment data is limited, there are indications that some very important goals, such as improved student writing, are not being achieved. The extensive and consistent feedback regarding the shortcomings of the current general education program convinced the Task Force that the general education program is due for a major redesign.

The Task Force also reviewed programs at other institutions, both those that have been designated as UA peers as well as those that are quite unlike the UA (e.g. small privates). Many of the peer institutions have uninspiring programs similar to the existing program at UA which highlights the opportunity for UA to differentiate itself by introducing a more innovative general education program. Some of the most interesting programs incorporate themes and offer interdisciplinary courses that introduce students to several different perspectives. The themes typically focus on big ideas or grand challenges, thus addressing concerns about the relevance of general education. These innovative programs served as a model for the recommendations that the Task Force developed.

Following the review of the existing program and investigation of programs at other institutions, the Task Force developed high-level recommendations for a new curriculum that includes a Signature 4IR Skills Portfolio, a suite of courses focused on future-oriented skills and competencies, in which students prepare to pursue extraordinary opportunities and tackle complex problems of a rapidly changing world. They will have the option to choose themes addressing grand challenges (e.g., climate change, privacy in the 4th IR, future of learning) or interdisciplinary big ideas (e.g. the science and moral implications of artificial intelligence), providing real-world contexts for improving creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. New categories that resonate with students and faculty alike will be established. In the proposed program, students will have the opportunity to complete optional capstone courses which will provide engagement activities that allow them to apply new skills and competencies.

In addition, the Task Force determined that an interdisciplinary central development and management team will be essential to support innovative course design, effective communications, novel delivery modes, strategic scheduling, ongoing course and program assessments and overall quality assurance. Professional development for instructors and advisors will ensure that the goals of the program are achieved and maintained.
In Summer 2018, during the time that the Task Force was convened, a subset of the group had the opportunity to accompany Gail Burd at the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment. During the sessions, the group prepared an action plan that will serve as a starting point for the team that will ultimately be tasked with designing and implementing the new program. The plan builds on the recommendations of the Task Force, including updated learning outcomes, revised general education categories that are more relevant to tomorrow’s opportunities and challenges (e.g. Innovation & Creativity, Information, Computation & Data Literacy, Ethical Reasoning & Civic Engagement, etc.), replacement of the Tier 1/Tier 2 designation with a more meaningful designation to indicate depth/level and an administrative structure for a Center for General Education.

In summary, while the existing general education program has some merits, the Task Force concluded that UA has an opportunity to significantly enhance the student experience by introducing a new and innovative interdisciplinary general education program that offers students an opportunity to explore important and relevant topics from many perspectives and develop essential skills to become productive citizens and creative problem solvers of the future. The outdated categories for general education courses will be replaced with new more relevant categories. Interdisciplinary courses focused on big ideas and grand challenges will be designed to promote diversity of thought, advance fundamental communication and quantitative reasoning skills, and develop a commitment to civic responsibility and life-long learning. A new management structure is essential to the success of the proposed program. As with all major changes, the design and implementation of the new general education program must be undertaken with due diligence and adherence to well-established policies and procedures that involve faculty across campus. The purpose of this report is to provide a foundation for exciting changes that will transform the general education program while effectively engaging all stakeholders who are impacted by the change. We also expect that the proposed changes in this report will form the jumping off point for the strategic plan and will align well with the goals and metrics of the new plan.

II. Preface

The General Education Review Task Force was convened by Dr. Gail Burd, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education beginning Dec 2017 to initiate a review of the current UA University-Wide General Education program, and based on those findings, to propose recommendations for improvement. This report represents the work of a broad representation of faculty, students, appointed personnel and administration from across the UA educational units (Appendix 1).

In keeping with our assigned mission, this report will provide a brief history of the extant program, a description of its present state, a synthesis of the assessment as reflected by survey data and insights from focus groups of various stakeholders, and a series of recommendations for future changes. To begin, however, we will provide a description of our consensus of what characterizes a successful and productive General Education program.

NOTE: It is acknowledged that the Foundations (English Composition, Math and 2nd Languages) are an essential component that falls under the umbrella of the General Education. However, the focus of our review is strictly on the General Education courses of the program and does not address the Foundations component.
III. Task Force Mission

The function of the General Education Curriculum is set forth in the University’s General Catalog as follows:

The University-wide General Education Curriculum helps students attain the fundamental skills and broad base of knowledge that all college-educated adults must have, whatever their specific areas of concentration (i.e., the major and minor). The experiences of General Education encourage students to develop a critical and inquiring attitude, an appreciation of the interdisciplinary nature of subject areas, acceptance of persons of different backgrounds or values, and a deepened sense of self.

The framework of the General Education Curriculum originated with the Faculty, through efforts initiated almost a quarter century ago, and the essential architecture of our University-wide General Education Curriculum has remained in place since 1997-98.

Toward the end of fall semester 2017, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gail D. Burd, formed a Task Force to review General Education (GE) at our University. Dr. Burd’s charge to the Task Force included:

- Collect UA data needed for the review (including information from stakeholders)
- Collect and review literature about the goals of Gen Ed in undergraduate education
- Review and discuss how Gen Ed contributes to the overall learning outcomes from a college education
- Collect information on the structure, requirements, and policies of the Gen Ed programs of peer institutions
- Provide analysis for what has been learned from the review
- Provide suggestions for change to the existing program based on the finding from the review

Soon after the Gen Ed Review Task Force began work, the University-wide strategic planning process began to define the pillars of the forthcoming UA Strategic Plan. Education quickly emerged as a significant ingredient of Pillar 1 in the Plan. During the Ideation stage of the planning process, it also became evident that a re-envisioning of General Education would be included amongst the initiatives enacted under Pillar 1.

The goals defined by Dr. Burd for the Gen Ed Review Task Force dovetailed nicely with the developing strategic planning exercise; our goals included:

- Discuss the strengths and weakness of our current Gen Ed program structure at UA and peer institutions
• Collect information through surveys and focus groups about current programs and improvements that might be proposed

• Identify pilot projects that might be developed that would strengthen our Gen Ed program and student learning outcomes

• Align reforms that will permit assessment of student learning outcomes in the institutional learning outcomes

• Identify barriers to accomplishing desired reforms and offer suggestions to overcome barriers

• Align reforms to other (current) institutional priorities at UA

In going about our work, the Gen Ed Review Task Force remained both mindful of these goals and of the need to remain relevant to the strategic planning process. In the pages that follow, we report on the important results of our effort.

IV. Ideal Characteristics of a Successful General Education Program

A Gen Ed program should be designed to provide an engaging educational experience that is interdisciplinary, cohesive, relevant and innovative. To accomplish this, it should:

1. Engage both students and faculty in the excitement, relevance and purpose of General Education (hereafter “Gen Ed”)

2. Enable students to:
   a. Explore topics beyond those of their major course of study
   b. Experience the rich and extensive body of faculty expertise, available at the UA

   Taken together, these should provide students with a substantive breadth of knowledge, while cultivating an appreciation for multiple perspectives around any given topic.

3. Prepare students to respond to real-world problems through the development of essential skills: critical thinking, written and verbal communication, and quantitative literacy/reasoning.

4. Contribute significantly toward the institutional learning outcomes, such that students are enabled to:
   a. Think Critically
   b. Communicate Effectively
   c. Understand and Value Differences
   d. Use Information Effectively & Ethically

5. Complement the discipline-based knowledge and expertise gained in a student’s major and broaden a student’s perspective and understanding of context.

The guiding principles of the current Gen Ed program stem from the May 1992 Report of the President’s Task Force on Undergraduate Education and were articulated in the March 2004 review of Gen Ed at the University (1998-2003 UWGEC Review Report). These principles remain relevant, and are repeated here to emphasize the central and enduring belief in the benefits of a General Education:
Undergraduate education at the university level must provide citizens with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of mind that are the foundation of a lifetime commitment to learning, personal development, and social responsibility.

- **First, knowledge.** Educated persons are aware of a substantial body of facts, ideas, and theories and have a critical appreciation of the ways this knowledge is acquired and used. They understand and appreciate other cultures as well as Western culture. They are familiar with the various modes of access to knowledge that can facilitate a lifetime of learning.

- **Second, skills.** Educated persons have at their disposal various intellectual skills that can serve them throughout their lives. Among the most important are the skills of analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, and evaluation—the ability to define the issues in a complex problem, place the issues in their appropriate context, identify the pertinent facts and their relations, examine alternative interpretations, and arrive at sound conclusions. These skills are integral parts of the abilities to write, speak, listen and reason effectively; to employ the symbolic and quantitative language of mathematics; and to interpret the semiotics of culture—the ways societies constitute values and meaning systems through literature and art as well as through rituals and institutions.

- **Third, attitudes of mind.** Four attitudes—all essential to the wise and humane suite of knowledge and intellectual skills—are especially important. The first is intellectual integrity, that is, a respect for evidence, reason, and the contingent nature of truth. The second is open-mindedness, that is, a respect for different views and the ability to suspend judgment until convincing evidence is available or until the bases for these differences are understood. The third is motivation, that is, such personal characteristics as initiative, curiosity, and an appetite for learning. The fourth is intellectual commitment, that is, the willingness to pursue a line of inquiry to its logical conclusion—no matter how uncomfortable the conclusion.

Thus equipped, university graduates should be ready to take their place in the world: to pursue careers or advanced degrees, to participate in a democracy, to serve their fellow human beings, and to achieve personal fulfillment.

Successful implementation of a Gen Ed program, at the scale of a major public research university, involves additional practical considerations, which, in turn, dictate the need for certain program attributes. These include:

1. Promote the integrated nature of the program by reinforcing the fact that the program and its goals greater than the sum of its parts. A flexible, common and comprehensive program structure that can accommodate:
   a. the educational needs of undergraduates from all majors/colleges
   b. the curricular design of all majors, some of which require the staging of Gen Ed course work throughout the four-year plan of study
   c. migration of students between majors/colleges
d. the intellectual curiosity of individual students, seeking to explore and develop their academic interests (especially beyond their major course of study)

e. significant differences in the college-preparedness of first-year students

2. A curriculum design, with embedded assessment and deliberate mapping of courses, that ensures consistent achievement of the learning outcomes espoused by the program

3. Active involvement of faculty known for their teaching excellence and content expertise

V. History and Overview of Current General Education Program

History
In the Summer of 1995, groups of UA faculty met to develop a new university-wide general education curriculum. The Faculty Senate adopted the new University-wide General Education structure in 1997 and students began matriculating under these guidelines as of Fall 1998. After many years of a menu-driven, individualized format with students choosing from more traditional narrowly focused ‘introductions’ to specific fields, the current program was designed to provide a more directed exploration of academic breadth, focusing on interdisciplinarity early in a student’s career, common learning outcomes for each of 3 interdisciplinary strands, an appreciation of diversity of thought and culture, and development of essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork and effective use of information technology, all guided by the mantra: “In short, the goal of the general education program is to prepare students to respond more fully and effectively to an increasingly complex world”. (1998-2003 UWGEC Review Report)

In 1998-99, an Assessment subcommittee of the University-wide General Education Committee along with Tier 1/Tier 2 faculty members designed a process to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum, refining the desired outcomes and measures for the assessment process. The resulting recommendations for assessment protocols were presented to the full Committee in spring 2000. In addition, in early 2003 the UWGEC voted to formally incorporate Information literacy requirements and learning outcomes skills into the Program.

An inaugural review of the first 5 years of the General Education Program was undertaken by the University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) in 2003 to review the program’s design, implementation, effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses. The official result was submitted in March 2004 to the current Vice Provost for Instruction (VPI) (1998-2003 UWGEC Review Report). While the issues of program sustainability, funding, assessment and coordination were highlighted as essential elements needing continued focus, this review supported the overall efficacy of the new program in meeting the educational needs of UA students.

Given the University’s pattern of holding Academic Program Reviews every 7 years for all academic units a subsequent review was undertaken by a more widely representative Review Team in 2004. This report reaffirmed the importance of the Gen Ed program and its general objectives, indicating that the existing structure of Foundations, Tier 1/Tier 2 courses was adequately meeting the goals of this program. However, the report highlighted key recommendations requiring attention: increased clarity of the learning outcomes, increased awareness of and communication about the relevance of GE, need for
persistent assessment of courses and program, and dedicated and predictable funding to support the goals of the program. While attempts have been made to address these recommendations with variable success, each of these has been articulated once again in the present review as critical to a successful General Education program in the future.

In Fall 2006, a Leadership Team on Outcomes Assessment (LTOA) was convened by the Provost’s Office and charged with developing successful partnerships with individuals on campus who support the operations of outcomes assessment efforts. The LTOA's initial projects focused on general education; however, the ultimate goal was to identify strategies that lead to continuous improvement of the teaching and learning experience for students and to provide a recommendation for assessment at the University that is meaningful, manageable, and sustainable. The group was also asked to provide input to the campus community and to central administration regarding external (e.g., accreditation, ABOR) calls for data to demonstrate that students are achieving the institutions goals for learning.

And finally following a 2010 systematic review of Tier 1 courses, it was determined that while a majority of the courses met the Gen Ed criteria, the generic numbering of the Tier 1 course prefixes (INDV, TRAD and NATS) created confusion for students, difficulty in advising and practical conflicts for online registration. Resolution of these problems led to re-designation of the three (3) Strand course numbers, and these steps represent the last major change in the Gen Ed Program.

Profile of Current General Education Program

As previously noted, our current General Education Program has been in effect for 20 academic years. In this section, we present data characterizing the current state of the program, including some trends seen over the past several years.

As of Fall 2018, 581 courses (186 Tier 1; 395 Tier 2) have been approved for the Gen Ed Program. The numbers for courses in each of the Gen Ed strands are shown in Table A below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 Strand</th>
<th>No. of Courses</th>
<th>Tier 2 Strand</th>
<th>No. of Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDV</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>INDV</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>NATS</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAD</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>ARTS</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HUM</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A: Number of Courses Approved for Gen Ed Program by Strand, as of Fall 2018

- Of these 581 courses, 202 have been approved for the Diversity Emphasis attribute.
- For Spring and Fall terms of CY 2017, a total of 760 sections of Tier 1/Tier 2 courses were offered, with 70,326 students enrolled in the courses (93 students per section, on average), representing nearly 211,000 SCH of instructional effort (Table X).
Growth in Course Offerings

Figure 1 below charts the growth in the number of Tier 1/Tier 2 courses offered since the inception of the Gen Ed Program in Fall 1998. Please make note of two artefacts in the data set. First, relevant data are not available for CY 2008 in UAnalytics, so one short interval in the time line is missing. Second, and more significantly, the dramatic increase between the Spring 2011 and Fall 2011 semesters is not real. The spurious increment results from the renumbering of all Tier 1 courses, which was done to align the course identifiers with the new PeopleSoft/UAccess software; this measure also helped mitigate student confusion over multiple courses titles that carried the same course prefix and number. Prior to Fall 2011, official Tier 1 course identifiers were restricted to a small set of numbers (101, 102, ...) and three course prefixes (INDV, NATS, TRAD)—and, so, under such a numbering/taxonomic system, there were multiple course titles associated with each course prefix/number. With the current version of UAnalytics, it is not feasible to identify individual course titles under the heading of a single course prefix/number (i.e., INDV 101, sections 1-XX). This means only ten Tier 1 course types are identifiable in the data set prior to Fall 2011 and the number of Tier 1 courses shown for semesters prior to Fall 2011 is artificially low.

These artefacts notwithstanding, important trends are still evident. From Fall ‘98 through Spring ‘11, a 150% increase in the number of Gen Ed courses implies significant growth in the number of Tier 2 courses. Over that interval, undergraduate enrollment grew from 26,157 (Fall 1998) to 30,665 (Fall 2011), or by 17%.

From Fall ‘11 through Spring ‘18, the number of (Tier 1 + Tier 2) courses increased from 282 to 404, or by 43%, while undergraduate enrollment grew by about 15%, to 35,123 at Fall 2017 Census for AY 2017-18. This increase of offerings represents a lengthier menu from which students can choose, however the data below suggests that many of these courses are under-enrolled. Management and oversight of course availability and section sizes are important for resource utilization (e.g. room use) and for support of faculty instructional effort in ways that efficiently and effectively promote student advancement toward education goals.
Figure 1. Number of Gen Ed courses taught (Tier 1 + Tier 2) each Fall and Spring semester of the existing Gen Ed Program, AY 1998-99 through AY 2017-18.

Course Contributions by College
Table B enumerates both the number of courses and the enrollment for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gen Ed courses offered, by College, in CY 2017. At Tier 1, about a third of Gen Ed courses originate from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS), another quarter come from College of Humanities (COH), while the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS, 11%) and College of Science (COS, 9%) round out the four colleges offering the bulk—approximately 75%—of Tier 1 courses.

At Tier 2, CALS is less prominently involved and, as might be expected, the College of Fine Arts (CFA) is among the top four colleges that provide the instruction, owing to the requirement that all undergraduates take three units of Arts at the Tier 2 level. SBS and COH together account for more than 60% of the offerings and, in aggregate, SBS, COH, CFA and COS provide for more than 80% of the Tier 2 courses.
### Table B. Number of courses and enrollment for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 Gen Ed courses offered, by College, in CY 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>T1 F2017</th>
<th>T1 S2017</th>
<th>T2 F2017</th>
<th>T2 S2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Courses</td>
<td>% Courses</td>
<td>Enrollment% Enroll</td>
<td># Courses</td>
<td>% Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Col Arch Plan &amp; Landscape Arch</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Agric and Life Sci</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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<td>0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Fine Arts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Humanities</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>4782</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Optical Sciences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Public Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Science</td>
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<td>8.8%</td>
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<td>College of Social &amp; Behav Sci</td>
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<td>32.7%</td>
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<td>Eller College of Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate College</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>113</td>
<td>19393</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>16386</td>
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</table>
Course Size and Percent Enrollment

Tables C below show the number of Tier 1 Gen Ed course sections of selected size, by Strand, for each of the last seven Fall semesters (2011 through 2017).

In recent years, the number of large Tier 1 course sections (enrollment ≥ 200) has jumped above 20 in the TRAD and INDV strands, respectively; the number of large sections in the NATS strand has also bumped upward, but remains few. In each of the last three Fall semesters, the Gen Ed program has included more than 45 sections with enrollments ≥ 200, and that constitutes a noticeable (>30%) increase over the average for Fall ‘11 through Fall ‘14.

### Table C

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tier One</th>
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<td>&lt;50</td>
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<td>50-99</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>100-199</td>
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<td>200-299</td>
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<td>&gt;300</td>
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### Table D

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<td>Section Size</td>
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<td>F12</td>
<td>F13</td>
<td>F14</td>
<td>F15</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;300</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier One</th>
<th>Nats</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section Size</td>
<td>F11</td>
<td>F12</td>
<td>F13</td>
<td>F14</td>
<td>F15</td>
<td>F16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tables C.

Number of Tier 1 Gen Ed course sections of selected size, by Strand, Fall semesters 2011 through 2017.

Among Tier 2 sections, the greatest changes have occurred within the INDV strand, increasing steadily over the past 4 years from 11 in to 21 large sections (enrollment ≥ 200). A dramatic increase in the number of smaller classes offered (enrollment ≤ 50) was also seen within INDV, jumping from 34 in 2014 to 53, 58 and 55 in the 3 subsequent years.

Table D below provides data on the seating capacity and percent enrollment for Tier 1 and Tier 2 courses by strand for the past 7 years. While it might be reasonable to equate increase in class size with an increased need, the data in Table D do not fully support this hypothesis. Across all Tier 1 courses, comparing the seats enrolled vs. the seat capacity, the average percent enrolled, or seat occupancy, in 2014 was 88%. By 2017, this has declined to an average of 72% enrollment, leaving a significant number of empty seats.

In Tier 2, the situation is more dire, with an average of 57% enrollment in 2011 across the strands, with Arts being the exception at close to 100%. Among INDV sections, this has largely remained stable, while in NATS it has actually improved to 70% in 2017. In the Humanities, however, the percent enrollment has dropped to the low to mid 40’s over past 3 years. This represents a severe under-utilization of faculty and facilities, particularly in the Humanities, and inefficiency across the entire program.
Table D. Seating capacity and percentage enrollment for Tier 1 and Tier 2 courses by strand for AY 2011-2017

Career Timeline for Taking Gen Ed Courses
Table E below lists the division by class standing for students enrolled in all Tier 1/Tier 2 courses for Calendar Years 2014 –2017.
When in their careers are students taking T1 and T2 courses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Standing</th>
<th>Tier 1 (%)</th>
<th>Tier 2 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First year</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†The number of courses taken totals to 261,305, for CY 2014–2017.

Table E. Enrollment in Tier1/Tier2 courses by class standing for CY 2014-17

These data can be disaggregated to examine the stage at which undergraduates in the various Colleges fulfill their Gen Ed requirements (see Fig 2 below). While the Tier 1 courses tend to be completed early, irrespective of discipline, Tier 2 completion shows clear distinctions between the Colleges. For example, undergraduates who are obliged to complete a high number of lower-division prerequisites as part of their four-year plans of study (e.g. Engineering, Architecture, Medicine, Science, …), naturally must postpone Tier 2 course work until well into their junior and senior years. A large percentage of Tier 2 enrollment for juniors and seniors in Fine Arts and Humanities reflects the overlap of Tier 2 courses with upper division courses selected by majors in these two colleges.
Comparison of Grades Across the Strands

Wanting to investigate an oft-quoted statement that students are looking for ‘GPA boosting’ courses in particular strands, it was important to determine the average grades awarded across the 3 different strands. Using Gen Ed courses in Fall 2017 semester as a test group, the average grade was calculated by taking the total number of grade points awarded divided by the total number of students awarded an A – E grade for each strand.

**Fall Term 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>T1 Strand</strong></th>
<th><strong>GPA</strong></th>
<th><strong>T2 Strand</strong></th>
<th><strong>GPA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDV</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>INDV</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATS</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>NATS</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAD</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>ARTS</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HUM</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is remarkable is that at Tier 1, the GPAs awarded across the strands are identical. This appears to indicate a uniformity of grading across the Tier 1 program regardless of the college offering the course. At Tier 2, there is a spread in GPA. The fact that students in the Arts courses receive higher grades can be interpreted as more of these grades are assigned for participatory courses (e.g., choir, orchestra, dance, etc.) where grades tend to be higher.

The fact that Tier 2 grades are higher than Tier 1 grades can possibly be explained by the absence of the underperforming students who are not retained after freshman year in the Tier 2 courses.

GE Course Instructors
To gain insight into who is teaching Gen Ed courses, the following chart provides data for Academic Years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. The total Student Credit Hours (SCH) taught in Tier 1/Tier 2 courses are given with respect to the job classification of the instructor of record. Table F and Fig. 3 below indicate that non-tenure track faculty teach as many SCH as tenure track faculty, and are trending to increase, being responsible for over 50% of the instruction. It should also be noted that during these same 3 years an average of 10% of SCH were taught by graduate assistants, even though this is contrary to General Education Program policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are the instructors for Gen Eds? (Student credit hours taught by year)</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other employees</td>
<td>8,902</td>
<td>5,746</td>
<td>8,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure track faculty</td>
<td>55,184</td>
<td>46,095</td>
<td>46,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate assistants</td>
<td>4,918</td>
<td>13,915</td>
<td>10,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-TT instructors</td>
<td>50,758</td>
<td>60,459</td>
<td>57,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other employees</td>
<td>4,709</td>
<td>6,068</td>
<td>4,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure track faculty</td>
<td>41,890</td>
<td>42,674</td>
<td>33,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate assistants</td>
<td>12,505</td>
<td>12,862</td>
<td>13,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-TT instructors</td>
<td>46,905</td>
<td>35,268</td>
<td>64,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N sections</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>1,838</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: Fall 2014-2017 long term (Fall and Spring) Gen Ed courses as identified and list of instructor roles from UAIR.

Table F. Instruction in Gen Ed courses by instructor roles and Student Credit Hours, AY 2014-17
Figure 3. Percentage of Instruction in Tier1/Tier2 courses by instructor roles and Student Credit Hours, AY 2014-17

Mode of Instructional Delivery
In view of the increasing popularity of and pressure to develop online course offerings, the data in Table G below identifies the modes of course delivery for the past three academic years. The vast majority (e.g., 80-85%) of General Education courses is still taught in person with roughly 15% -- 20% of General Education courses taught either completely or partially online. Although there is no statistically significant increase in online presence within these last 3 years, the most recent year does show the highest percentage of fully online and hybrid combined. The more marked difference, however, is seen when comparing the average % of online General Education courses with all courses taught at the UA, (e.g. 16.5% vs. 9.1%, respectively).
Table G. Delivery modes of instruction for Tier1/Tier courses and all UA courses, AY 2014-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How has the modality of gen ed courses changed over time?</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among Tier 1/Tier 2 Gen Ed courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully online</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In person</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N sections*</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>1,857</td>
<td>1,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among all courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully online</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In person</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N sections</td>
<td>11,481</td>
<td>15,130</td>
<td>5,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the current General Education program provides sufficient Student Credit Hours (SCH) across the academic disciplines for the vast UA student population, a population that tends to focus on meeting the Gen Ed requirements fairly early in their careers though this varies with degree program. However, over the past decade the proliferation in number of Gen Ed-approved courses combined with the fact that many courses offered are under-enrolled each term represents a severe under-utilization of faculty expertise and classroom space. In addition, uneven distribution of courses across the 3 strands, suggests a lack of philosophical and programmatic oversight and actually makes the choices more difficult for both students and academic advisors. And finally, an increasing tendency towards larger class size leads to reduced quality of student-teacher interactions, decreased active learning and inability to support development of writing and verbal communication skills, all resulting in reduced opportunities for true learning.

VI. Assessment of Current General Education Program

Feedback from Stakeholders

Beyond the statistics provided above, we attempted to characterize the current Gen Ed program with respect to quality and effectiveness through feedback from the multiple stakeholders most concerned with General Education: students, alumni, faculty, advisors, staff and administrators. The following findings represent the synthesized insights from surveys and interviews of these groups as well as the 6-months of discussions among the broad representation of the Task Force itself.

- **Students**: student-led interviews with 162 students distributed across class standing and colleges
- **Alumni**: surveys of 143 alumni who graduated from 2010-2016
- **Advisors/staff/administrators**: extended 1:1 interviews with 18 advisors, academic administrators and student support staff across colleges and programs
- **Faculty**: multiple informal surveys, interviews and discussions
Positives Aspects of Present Program

Taken all together the feedback indicates that there are many positives about the current Gen Ed program, with a strong sentiment that we should not “blow it up” and start from scratch. The most common pluses cited were:

1. A wide variety and breadth of courses from which students can choose
2. Broad participation across colleges, with courses reasonably distributed
3. A common structure for all students facilitating those transferring between majors, especially between colleges
4. Opportunity to learn about new ideas
5. Ability to connect with students outside their major

In addition, both present students and alumni noted that General Education helped them broaden their experience into well-rounded people, boost their GPA, build organization and time management skills, meet people outside their major, and improve critical thinking and communication/writing skills. The following quotes highlight these findings.

‘To be honest, while in college I thought Gen Eds were largely a waste of time but I think that’s faulty thinking of a student...However, looking back, I’m so glad I was exposed to different styles of thinking. After you leave college and get a career, things get pretty streamlined in terms of what you’re experiencing. It can be really boring and you often forget there’s more to the world than just what you’re doing. I think Gen Ed classes really cater and help foster that kind of thinking.’

“I got to learn from professors that I wouldn’t normally get to interact with”

“Helps build skills that include: connections, organization, and time management”

“A few of the classes I took were actually very fun and it helped me grow in personal interests like music, art, nutrition, etc.”

“I have had the opportunity to interact with students across campus that were not in my major such as engineering students and other science majors because of our gen eds”

“I was able to look at things in a new perspective”
In general, alumni recalled that the quality of their Gen Ed experience was either good/very good (57.8%) or acceptable (28.6%). And as seen in Fig. 4 above, alumni reflections on ‘what is the most positive thing from your Gen Ed experience at the UA that has been helpful to you after graduation?’ reinforced the benefit of Gen Ed expanding their horizons and sphere of knowledge. However, when considering their ability to deal with real-world experiences, both this figure and the answers to a similar question, rating their Gen Ed courses in terms of improving their ability to respond to real world problems as poor/very poor (29%) or adequate (32%), deals a blow to the concept of general education preparing our students to be productive citizens of the future.

Navigating through Courses
With respect to how students decide which courses to take, the responses varied widely. As shown in Fig. 5 below, for alumni, the highest response to which factors impacted their choice of Gen Ed courses was smaller classes and online classes, followed closely by input from friends or advisors, reputation of the instructor, ease of the course or that it related to their major or career goals. Interestingly, the least impactful factor was ‘that it fit into my schedule’, discounting the theory that students choose their Gen Ed courses primarily to streamline their schedules.

Present students surveyed also relied on advice from friends and advisors, indicating that their choice of courses was hindered by lack of information about the individual courses, learning outcomes and expectations.
Issues with Present Program

This feedback, however, contains a substantial body of legitimate concerns and desire for change. Present students and alumni enumerated a variety of issues: that it was hard to find good courses that fit their schedule, that the topics weren’t relate-able, that there was too much busy work, that academic expectations were low, there were too many large classes, that instructors and students were unengaged, and that classes were time consuming.

Feedback from faculty and administrators point to the implementation of RCM which has stimulated some RCUs to offer more courses than needed and then close those that do not enroll enough students. This forces students to subsequently find another Gen Ed course that may not be of interest to fill a Gen Ed requirement, devaluing the purpose of the Gen Ed program.

The most robust comment, however, from all populations queried was on the lack of clarity about the overall purpose of Gen Ed courses and Gen Ed requirements. The perception that Gen Ed is irrelevant and not applicable to either their major study area or to real-life undermines the goal of GE. Indeed, that fact that some of the newest faculty on campus have been assigned to teach in Gen Ed courses without themselves understanding the common learning outcomes and goals further entrenches the students’ perceptions.

Figure 5. Alumni response regarding factors impacting choice of Gen Ed courses
A recent observation by a faculty member at a meeting directed at student success with a mix of faculty, staff and a significant number of students in attendance underscores this depth of this issue.

“...A student was presenting some of the insights that came from student only discussions and one of the bullet points was that they essentially do not see how gen ed courses support in any way their major programs of study. As part of this, I asked the students if any of them could tell me why they thought they were asked to take gen ed courses.....no answer....not one... “

In summary, the lack of understanding of the overarching goals of the Gen Ed requirements results in students and advisors making somewhat random choices to fulfill these requirements. This, combined with little reinforcement from faculty on the benefits and interconnectedness of Gen Ed courses leaves one to conclude that the Gen Ed requirements comprise a mere buffet of courses rather than a true program guided by a central philosophy and goals.

Suggestions for Improvement from Stakeholders
Interestingly, the themes or opportunities for improvement that emerged from the analysis were consistent across all the populations sampled. Specific suggestions are listed below for 4 central issues: Quality, Choice, Flexibility and Relevance/Context.

**Quality**
There is a clear mandate across the populations sampled to improve the quality and reduce the variability in quality across Gen Ed courses and to clearly communicate the relevant details to students who are making choices of Gen Ed courses.

• **Reduce the variability in quality** across Gen Ed courses, to include more consistency in quality instructors, level of workload and difficulty, and grading.

• **Communicate course expectations** clearly to students, particularly with respect to evaluations and workload.

• **Recruit enthusiastic faculty** to ensure quality student experiences in Gen Ed courses.

• **Offer smaller class size** to facilitate quality interaction between faculty and students.

• **Eliminate or redesign classes** with poor enrollment and inadequate learning outcomes.

**Choice**
The large number of Gen Ed courses pose challenges for students as they try to select courses. Students balance wanting to boost their GPA and wanting easy courses with recognition later as alumni of the value of Gen Eds in broadening their perspective. First Generation students may be at a disadvantage in the marketplace of “easy Gen Eds”, lacking the social capital and ability to navigate the university system, even at the level of which Gen Eds might be most appropriate or “easy”.

Regardless, today there are relatively few ways to easily sort and select Gen Ed courses based on interests, quality, or topic. With RCM, there is pressure to attract students into Gen Ed courses, leading to increased “false advertising” with attention-grabbing course titles that simply do not adequately describe the course content and lead to negative student experiences.
• Provide better tools to help choose Gen Ed courses, with mechanisms to sort and filter based on items like:
  - course titles and descriptions
  - short video descriptions
  - syllabi
  - mode of delivery
  - class size
  - interests
  - advising input
  - recommendation system (star ranking)

• Retain diversity of Gen Ed courses to broaden student perspective and to learn about ideas and connect with other students in ways that wouldn’t otherwise emerge

• Provide Life Skills options for Gen Ed courses to include knowledge of financial and health systems

*Flexibility*

Our students are often balancing jobs and other university commitments that create complexity in scheduling courses. Flexible options for Gen Ed courses are important:

- Online courses
- Hybrid courses
- 7.5 week options
- Summer courses
Relevance/Context
The lack of a consistent narrative about General Education at the UA creates challenges for students and advisors. For students, their experience is that Gen Ed classes seem disconnected from one another, such that the sum is less than the parts in the Gen Ed experience. For students, staff, and advisors, there is a general lack of knowledge about the goals of General Education and a lack of detailed knowledge about General Education courses outside of anecdotal information. As such, starting as early as orientation, when students are pre-assigned General Education courses to ensure they have seats in classes when they arrive and continuing on to conversations with major advisors who lack the expertise to help guide student decisions around General Education, we are missing an enormous opportunity to build credibility and impact from the General Education experience.

Building and communicating a narrative around the value of General Education and connecting Gen Ed courses’ broader relevance is needed by all players on campus – faculty, staff, administration.

- Broadly market the goals of Gen Ed on campus. Actively reinforce with students, staff and faculty.
- Map Gen Ed classes to their broader relevance (by faculty). Demonstrate how Gen Ed courses complement students’ majors in the context of the Gen Ed courses.

VII. Comparison of Peer Institution General Education Programs
Most US colleges and universities, unlike institutions of higher education outside of the US, offer a general education program designed to broaden students’ understanding of perspectives from experts in fields other than their major field of study. The programs vary greatly, but typically strive to prepare students to become better citizens by fostering their knowledge of the wider world.

This section summarizes a review that was conducted of the following:

- General Education at UA Peer Institutions
- Innovative General Education Programs

General Education at UA Peer Institutions
The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) has designated fifteen institutions as UA peers that are used as benchmarks for various analyses. Appendix 2 includes links to the General Education Programs at these institutions as well as a brief description of the nature of the programs. Of the 15 institutions, the following three appear to have the most innovative general education programs:

University of Maryland-College Park (http://www.gened.umd.edu/)

The U of M general education program includes the I-Series which is a “signature program of General Education at the University of Maryland. I-Series courses are lively and contemporary. They speak to important issues that spark the imagination, demand intellect, and inspire innovation.” Within the four areas of the Distributive Studies, students are required to complete two courses that are approved for I-Series. In addition, students may take 3 credits of Experiential Learning to satisfy their general education requirements.
At the University of Minnesota, designated themes overlay the Distributed Core requirements. “The designated themes are topics central to an understanding of contemporary life. Investigating these themes helps you prepare to become knowledgeable, ethical, and engaged public citizens.” Students must satisfy both the distribution requirements and the designated themes.

At Penn State University, Integrative Studies courses “ask the student to consider a topic from the perspective of two different General Education Knowledge Domains, they aim to advance the student’s ability to comprehend things from multiple perspectives, to see connections, and to grasp the concept that one must employ different modes of thinking, different epistemologies to understand more adequately the nature of things; one domain is not fully equal to the task of understanding the world around us.”

The Ohio State University, one of UA peers, recently formed a General Education Review Coordinating Committee that published a proposal to revise their program (https://oaa.osu.edu/general-education-review). In the proposed theme-based program, all students would complete the Citizenship theme and pick from one of four other themes that are “broadly inclusive topical areas”.

Innovative General Education Programs
A review of general education programs, regardless of size or mission of the institution, was conducted to identify features or approaches that might help to inform the recommendations of the UA General Education Task Force. A complete list of the programs reviewed including links to the general education websites are included in Appendix 2.

The following programs have features that align particularly well with the goals that the task force established early in the review and recommendation process:

University of Virginia (General Education - Forums Curriculum)
UVA offers three General Education curricular options in the College of Arts & Sciences: New College Curriculum, Forums Curriculum and Traditional Curriculum. The Forums Curriculum offers “Tailored groups of courses built around a central topic, providing students with the opportunity to have a themed general education experience across academic disciplines. New themes are introduced each year, and presumably some themes are discontinued. According to their website, 40 students are admitted to each theme. Forum topics available in 2018 are: HUMANS, NATURE, & EVOLUTION, RELIGION, POLITICS, & CONFLICT, VIA ASIA, FOOD, SOCIETY, & SUSTAINABILITY, SPACE, KNOWLEDGE, & POWER and VISIONS OF THE GOOD.

CSU Chico (Pathways in General Education)
Supported by a grant from the AAC&U,CSU Chico implemented a Gen Ed Pathways Program in 2012 which aligns closely with the recommendations described in the AAC&U publication, “General Education
Maps and Markers: Designing Meaningful Pathways to Student Achievement General Education Maps and Markers (GEMs). The program “...consists of ten Pathways that organize the breadth of general education offerings in the arts, humanities, natural and social sciences into broad, multi-disciplinary, but intellectually coherent areas of study.” Students have the opportunity to earn an interdisciplinary minor in one of 10 subjects which include Food Studies, Global Development Studies, Health and Wellness Studies, Science, Technology, and Values, Ethics, Justice, and Policy Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Great Books and Ideas, International Studies and Sustainability Studies.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Undergraduate Studies)

Although very different from UA, WPI has successfully implemented two programs, the Great Problems Seminar and the Grand Challenges Scholars Program that may provide a model for the UA. The Great Problems Seminar (GPS) is a two-term course that “gives students and faculty the opportunity to step outside their disciplines to solve problems focused on themes of global importance...”. The Grand Challenges Scholar Program (GCSP), open to all undergraduate majors at WPI, enables students with a passion to address significant challenges facing society to engage in real-world experiences.

Cornell University’s College of Arts and Sciences

An article in a recent issue of INSIDE HIGHER ED, described the recommendations of a committee charged with updating the general education curriculum at Cornell University’s College of Arts and Sciences. In general, the Curriculum Review Committee has recommended a curriculum in which students take one course from ten different categories. The primary rationale is encouraging students to explore early and retaining simplicity without erasing distinctions.

VIII. Recommendations

Musings of a Future Incoming Freshman - New Student Orientation, July 2022

*Phew, guess having this in July is to get us ‘oriented’ to the 100 degree weather... At least it’s cool inside this classroom; thought my mom was going to have a heat stroke. Weird room – what’s with the little groups of tables and chairs? But hey, now I can sit with that kid from California and maybe our moms can talk to each other instead of us!*

*So here we go – guess we’ll hear a lot more about stuff we have to take to graduate in 4 years... Ugh, they are probably going to highlight all the usual suspects – chemistry, English, economics....*

*Hey wait a minute – what’s she talking about? Are those pictures of that dam backing up Lake Powell? I’ve been there... And now one with kids and women picking coffee beans out in Africa... and a really weird painting of – I guess it’s a woman – that was stolen from here on campus... **What is all this??**

*Nice, I get to take classes to find out more about all these... then maybe work with some friends to explore more out in the real world... Maybe it’ll help me figure out what I want to do! WOW, this Wildcat Core sounds really interesting.*

*Hey Mom, I think I’m going to like it here!*
The above imagined musings exemplify the aspirations of the Task Force to transform general education from an undesirable requirement into an inspiring opportunity to explore topics of interest while developing new and relevant skills.

Based on the review and collective efforts of the Task Force members over the past six months, the Task Force recommends that the university establish a Center for General Education to house a true General Education Program as a definable entity complete with the following key elements: 1.) Management/leadership structure to design, implement and oversee the program; 2.) Relevant, interdisciplinary curriculum that fully engages students, 3.) Funding mechanism to provide support and credibility; 4.) Communication and marketing strategy to engage all stakeholders in the purpose and excitement of the program, and 5.) Professional development plan for faculty and advisors. The new program, tagged as The Wildcat Core, will promote diversity of thought, advance fundamental communication and quantitative reasoning skills, and develop a commitment to civic responsibility and life-long learning. The following sections describe these recommended elements in greater detail.

Management/Leadership Structure
As noted above, one of the key downfalls of the current Gen Ed program is that it has lacked programmatic oversight, enabling the original focus of the program to wander off track. The following components are highly recommended to enable this to be successful:

I. Physical location for the Center for General Education:
   - Will provide a sense of community, commitment and credibility to the program.
   - Should include makers spaces for incubation of new ideas and new courses
   - Should include collaborative spaces for seminars and small conferences

II. Administrative Structure should include:
   - Director and Co-Director/coordinator to oversee program and insure high quality, diversity and appropriate number of offerings.
   - A suggested report path: Academic Affairs arm of Provost’s office and Deans’ Council
   - A re-envisioned General Education Committee with University-wide faculty and student representation for programmatic and course development, innovation, and assessment
   - Expertise personnel for professional development, assessment, writing, etc.
   - General Education Advisory Committee with broader programmatic strategy and planning
   - Implementation Team: a temporary group to jumpstart the process of establishing the Center for General Education
     - This group will work with the Director and Co-Director to form the functional committees described above.
     - Will be responsible for establishing course criteria, and program philosophy
     - Will enable vetting the new program across many focus groups
     - Develop marketing strategies
Figures 6 and 7 below provide a possible model for managerial composition and structure.

**Figure 6: Organizational Structure for Proposed General Education Program**

III. Essential functions to achieve desired outcomes:

- Establish strategic plan and guiding philosophy for program
- Develop criteria for Gen Ed courses
- Provide regularly scheduled assessment of efficacy and relevance for courses and effectiveness of instructors
- Persistent review of distribution, number and breadth of course offerings
- Support for education-related scholarship and innovation
IV. Directed and predictable funding to support the mission of the program:
As Kirp (2002) stated in his publication about the adoption of RCM at the University of Southern California and the University of Michigan, RCM is known to cause “academically questionable behavior” if not managed properly. Since the adoption of RCM, the University of Arizona has seen a significant increase in the number of General Education courses offered, particularly very large courses, as well as an apparent decline in the educational quality of some of the courses offered. To rectify the situation, it is essential to establish a management structure to develop, coordinate and implement the program’s mission. In addition, the following changes to the financial support and the RCM funding model for General Education are recommended:

A. Provide funding (distinct from the RCM model) that would flow through the management structure to support the mission of the program, which may include:
   - Funds to cover the cost of the management structure personnel and facilities to house the program.
   - Salary support for leadership and affiliated faculty commensurate with teaching contributions, and for programmatic innovations.
   - Special compensation for faculty who collaborate to offer multi-disciplinary General Education courses.

B. Adjust the RCM model to incentivize smaller classes and disincentivize departments from offering excessive numbers of General Education courses, particularly very large lecture courses. A proposed RCM model for the Gen Ed Program is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Enrollment (students):</th>
<th>D. Multiplier:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. 0-49</td>
<td>F. 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. 50-149</td>
<td>H. 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. 150+ students</td>
<td>J. 0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Further analysis is required to determine the appropriate multipliers depending upon anticipated changes in the number and sizes of course offerings resulting from new policies implemented by the management structure and less incentive to teach large classes.
- Early drafts of the new strategic plan under President Robert Robbins calls for a “novel, redesigned, forward-looking General Education curriculum”. Implementation of the above recommendations is necessary to enable the institution to achieve this goal.

The Wildcat Core – A Re-Envisioned General Education Program Overview
The exciting new Wildcat Core will give students an opportunity to explore relevant topics of interest while developing fundamental skills that will complement the knowledge, skills and abilities developed through their major coursework. The proposed curriculum includes interdisciplinary gateway courses addressing today’s world problems, complex issues and big ideas as well as exploration courses which provide breadth and depth across a wide array of expertise.
Gateway Courses

Each Gateway course will take an interdisciplinary approach to address a unique problem, complex issue or big idea relevant to the world today. As such, each Gateway course (i.e., GW 1-XX)

- Serves as an introduction into a particular problem or issue
- Can stand alone or be the ‘Gateway’ to exploring the topic in more detail.
- Will be taught by 3 instructors with expertise in different areas, providing multiple perspectives to the issues or theme at hand
- Each week will include one or two days of lecture with 100 students to delve into the relevant content and one day meeting in groups of 30 to focus on communication, discussion and group activities
- Can be taken individually for a maximum of 3 GW courses/student
- Can be followed up with 2 courses selected from a theme-related list to provide more in-depth investigation of scientific, social, political, economic and environmental considerations of the theme.
  - NOTE: this list of theme related courses should be Gen Ed approved courses, increasing flexibility between this path and the Exploration path.
- An optional 1-unit capstone engagement opportunity will be available for students choosing to pursue the theme-related depth. This hands-on capstone project or experience will enable small groups of students to integrate and apply acquired knowledge and practice essential professional and life skills
- This GW PLUS “3 course + 1 experience” packet will be indicated on a student’s transcript to highlight the emphasis pursued within the Wildcat Core.

Example #1: Gateway course GW1: ‘H2Onward: Providing access to clean water for all’

- Collaborating instructors from Renewable and Natural Resources, Economics and Public Health
- Theme related courses from which students will choose 2 for further depth (these courses are identified by the 3 instructors for this GW course:
  - ABE 170A1 – Basic Concepts in Water-Related Applications
  - AREC 150C2 – World Food Issues
  - AREC 373 - Environmental Economics
  - ARL 441A - Natural Resource Management in Native Communities
  - ENVS 310 – Ecosystem Health and Justice
  - HWRS 170A1 – Earth: Our Watery Home
  - HWRS 201 – Water Science and the Environment
  - HWRS 202 – The Water Cycle
  - HWRS 203 – Arizona Water Issues
  - HWRS 204 – Environmental Water Quality Issues
  - MIC 204 – Microbes and Society
  - PHIL 323 – Environmental Ethics
  - PLG 202 – Cities of the World: An International City Planning Perspective
  - RNR 384 - Natural Resources Management Practices
  - SOC 307 - Environmental Sociology
  - SWES 170A1 – Introduction to Environmental Science
  - SWES 210 – Fundamentals of Environmental Science and Sustainability
- Capstone experience: Working with 3-5 students to develop inexpensive and portable water filters
Example #2 Gateway course GW2: ‘Finding Meaning in a Digital World: Arts and humanities helping to define a meaningful life’

- Collaborating instructors from Humanities, Commercial Art, Psychology
- Theme related courses from which students can choose to further depth
  - ART 160D1 – Art & Society in the Western Tradition
  - ART 160D2 – Design: Culture & Language
  - ESOC 150B1 – Social Media and Ourselves
  - ESOC 210 – Hacking and Open Source Culture
  - ETCV 301 – Interpreting and Presenting Digitally
  - HNRS 150B2 – Exploring Electronic Presence: From the Telegraph to Twitter
  - HNRS 206H – Bodies and Machines
  - HUMS 150A1 – Video Game Sights, Sounds and Stories
  - ISTA 161 - Ethics in a Digital World
  - ISTA 263 – Learning in the Information Age
  - ISTA 301 - Computing and the Arts
  - JOUR 150C1 – News in a Digital Age
  - PAH 372 - Intercultural Competence: Culture, Identity, Adaptation, and Intercultural Relations
  - PLS 170C2 – Introductory Biotechnology
- Capstone experience: Working with 3-5 students to explore the impact of art therapy in cancer patients.

**Exploration Courses**

These courses will provide breadth and depth across a full range of expertise, and capitalize on the many excellent courses already offered at UA. However to be included in the new Wildcat core options, each course will need to apply for and be reviewed by the Gen Ed Committee with respect to the newly established criteria for Gen Ed courses. Features of these courses include:

- Vary in size and content
- Have in common an exploration of a topic within a particular discipline while developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills typical of that discipline.
- Students can complete this path by choosing one (100-200 level) course in every category
- Require extended depth in 2 (at the 300 level) areas of interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories for Exploration Courses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals, Cultures &amp; Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
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</table>

**Meeting Wildcat Core requirements**

As mentioned above, these 2 paths can be mixed and matched to complete the Wildcat Core. For example, a student could choose to take 1 GW Plus (3+1) packet, one additional GW course and complete their requirements by choosing from the Exploration courses in each of the 5 different categories. It would also be possible to complete requirements solely through one path, through the...
Gateway courses, taking 3 different GW Plus packets, or utilizing the Exploration courses, one from each category plus extended depth in 2 categories.

**Additional Requirements:**
All students, regardless of path, will also be required to satisfy 2 or more courses with the Diversity attribute and 2 or more course in the 4IR Skills Portfolio. Course identification for these attributes will be determined at the time of course review and approval within the Gen Ed program.

**Communication and Marketing Strategy**

**Sharing the Story of General Education: UA Style**
We are aware that even the most creative and meaningful general education (GE) program can be diminished simply by the way it’s presented, the manner in which courses are taught, and the way in which we discuss the program with students during advising meetings. To avoid these risks, we must make investments to unveil the UA general education program with the same spirit of enthusiasm in which it was designed.

Academic advisors are in the unique position of having the opportunity, and perhaps the obligation, to help students craft their own unique path in general education by selecting from a broad array of courses within a guided framework of requirements. (White, 2015) Advisors can help students to understand general education as a set of learning goals as opposed to a list of checkboxes to ‘just get out of the way’. (Lowenstein, 2014)

Similarly, faculty are in the perfect position to help students entertain real world questions through an integrated and interdisciplinary lens. Collaborating with colleagues from across campus, they can share their expertise and enthusiasm for the bigger issues facing today’s world, approaching the problems from multiple perspectives, giving students a new appreciation for the benefits of general education.

To this end, it is incumbent on the Implementation Team to develop marketing strategies to engage all stakeholders and provide instructor and advisor training to present the new Wildcat Core to facilitate its success. Several strategies are proposed below:

**Helping Students Understand (Appreciate) General Education**
First impressions are powerful, and we need to take steps to ensure the unveiling of the UA Wildcat core and Gen Ed program to students is done in the same spirit of enthusiasm as the program was designed. Our goal is that every interaction students have with general education at the UA, whether it is in the classroom or with the advisor describing the program, sparks student interest and motivates them to take ownership in the customization of their own Gen Ed program. We want students to understand that Gen Ed is about the opportunity for unimagined learning.

Students will learn that Gen Ed faculty and academic advisors are the ‘go to’ people with their questions about the program and the possibilities.
Acquainting Students with the Wildcat Core

Prior to New Student Orientation

The purpose of Gen Ed and highlights of the Wildcat Core are introduced to students in Next Steps, the online preparatory assignment which all new students will complete prior to attending New Student Orientation (NSO). The purpose of the Gen Ed ‘assignment’ is to spark student interest in GE. A short vimeo of student Gen Ed testimonials as well as faculty and advisor comments will be included as a ‘first look’ at GE. A simple online tutorial will be included in Next Steps intended to familiarize students with the online resources for reviewing courses.

At orientation students will be provided additional information and an overview of the Gen Ed requirements at their college meetings. The underlying message is that there are requirements for Gen Ed and there are guidelines; however, students are in control of crafting their own unique Gen Ed curriculum. They are reminded of resources to assist them on the Gen Ed journey: faculty, advisors and online resources.

We continue experimenting with student cohorts in some Gen Ed courses that are also paired with living learning communities. These pilots include faculty and advisor office hours in select residence halls.

An annual General Education Fair could be held near the beginning of each fall semester, ideally in conjunction with the popular Meet Your Major Fair. This event, co-hosted by faculty and advisors, will be an informative and festive way to showcase the Gen Ed program, spotlight new courses, recognize excellence in some of the tried and true courses, and feature outstanding Gen Ed faculty.

And finally, finding the right Gen Ed course, making an educated decision about whether to explore new options, supplement major content or follow a particular theme, was one of the most frequently raised concerns for all stakeholders in GE. Largely this is due to a lack of information regarding the courses from which to choose. This is a strong mandate to develop an online and searchable catalogue. Suggestions range from including short introductory videos highlighting course content and style, a common rating scale, specifics regarding course format, evaluation and workload expectations. Principedia, a format developed at Princeton University with content largely populated by students, is a new digital format tackling many of these issues (https://principedia.princeton.edu, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ntlf.30151). These are options to consider as we attempt to provide students with the best information to enable wise choices throughout both General Education and major courses.

Beyond these introductory and supportive services designed to share our excitement with students for GE, we believe the core responsibility of helping students to manage individual Gen Ed programs rests between the student and the academic advisor. This is a key and favored responsibility for the UA advising community. UA advisors are eager to share their insight and enthusiasm for what they believe is one of the best features of an undergraduate student’s experience – an integrated, customized general education program.
Professional Development
For Faculty
If we are to engage our students in the benefits of Gen Ed and the Wildcat Core, the instructional cohort teaching these courses should be comprised of the most effective and engaging teachers from across the UA campus. To insure this, the Center for General Education should:

I. Actively engage faculty in collaborative efforts, by enabling work across departments and validate their efforts
II. Provide support for these faculty to provide value for their efforts (e.g. recognition, financial, P&T, etc.) and retain their participation
III. Offer ongoing professional development for both new and experienced instructors
IV. Support educational scholarship with small grants for research, travel and resources

For Advisors
As a signal to the value we place on general education, we will invest in comprehensive Gen Ed training for our new advisors as well as a mechanism for providing on-going updates and interactions between academic advisors and Gen Ed faculty. These activities will provide faculty and advisors multiple venues through which to share feedback, discuss trends, address concerns, and explore new ideas.

All new academic advisors will complete a mandatory, comprehensive Gen Ed Training Program that includes:

- GE program requirements and options,
- learning outcomes and how to describe to students,
- strategies for helping students to create an integrated approach in developing their unique Gen Ed program.
- exceptions (college petitions)
- evaluation process for in-state and out-of-state transfer credit
- additional college-specific Gen Ed training is also provided

Quarterly Gen Ed Refresh Updates will be available for continuing advisors and includes online training options, seminars, faculty/advisor engagement opportunities, and short faculty presentations. Advisors will be required to keep updated (maintain certification) on the Gen Ed program through annual participation in a prescribed number of refresh sessions as defined by advisors’ managers.

Routinely scheduled faculty and advisor engagement opportunities include seminars, round table discussions, symposiums and workshops on trends/issues.

Each college will select at least one Gen Ed advising specialist to serve as a resource to advisors in their respective colleges. This highly experienced advisor will be an especially valuable resource for new advisors in the college and a way for faculty to efficiently convey quick, important announcements to the advising community. The Gen Ed advising specialist may provide college-specific in-service Gen Ed
seminars for advisors and faculty. The Gen Ed specialists from each college meets regularly as a working group to exchange good practices, updates, and discuss issues/trends.

A Gen Ed Update section will continue to be a regular feature of the Advising News monthly newsletter. New courses and Gen Ed faculty are included as a way to bring added richness to information available to advisors.

Additional Recommendations
The following individual points are recommendations which arose from feedback across the stakeholders, loosely collected here, are worthy of strong consideration.

I. Create a ‘transcriptable’ attribute that will appear on students’ transcripts once they have completed the Wildcat Core. This would be unique addition to a student’s transcript and resume highlighting the breadth and interdisciplinary insights they have gained through their personalized path in the Wildcat Core.

II. Identify designated teaching spaces for General Education courses enabling more diverse scheduling patterns that fit the new pedagogical styles combining lecture and small group discussions (i.e., 1-2 days/week with large lecture, 1 day a week small group classes).

III. Develop guidelines for a stronger and more consistent focus on writing, analytical and communication skills across all Gen Ed courses. These are most frequently cited by employers as primary to successful employability.
   a. Reduced class size is essential to provide assessment critical to developing these skills

IV. Pair specific sections of English composition courses with a specific Gateway Theme (see below for description of these courses), using theme as core to writing assignments.

V. Highlight richness of resources and expertise across UA, Tucson and Southern Arizona through a series of seminars, colloquia, or 1 unit courses (e.g., UAre Here)

VI. UA for Life - Through collaboration with the UA Alumni Association, the Wildcat Core could also include accessible, life-long education for our alumni and stakeholders. Using innovative venues, talented and passionate educators who make their mark in UA’s general education will be showcased in a unique “UA for Life” program designed to bring the most current, relevant, and thought-provoking topics to our alums, building passion for academic discovery at all stages of life and establishing deeply-rooted alumni engagement.

The Wildcat Core will be an inspiring academic experience for life, beginning the first moment our students arrive on our beautiful campus and continuing throughout their lives.
# IX. Implementation of Wildcat Core and Issues for Consideration

**Overview of Timeline and Process for Producing Revised General Education Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Potential Roadblocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Report from Gen Ed Task Force</td>
<td>It’s a dry heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refine the Gen Ed description in the Strategic Plan and make plans with Strategic Planning Committee to begin implementation under Pillar One of the Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Lack of alignment between Strategic Planning Process and Gen Ed planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refine RCM funding for Gen Ed with new SCH or similarly appropriate funding model</td>
<td>Funding model that (i) elicits buy-in from RCM sub-committee, Deans, Central Admin and other stakeholders; (ii) operationally supports proposed Gen Ed leadership/management and program structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Fall 2018</td>
<td>Revised Gen Ed Task Force plan, Gen Ed learning outcomes, and Gen Ed categories and candidate topics for pilot Gateway courses</td>
<td>Faculty participation early in semester</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop Communication Plan about:</td>
<td>Finding resources for university-wide communication with multiple stakeholders; including faculty, student, advisor, and administrative supporters as plan is rolled out</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Center for General Education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Revised Gen Ed Program structure, Gen Ed learning outcomes, and Gen Ed categories and candidate topics for pilot Gateway courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Fall 2018</td>
<td>Listening tours/focus groups with faculty, students, staff, and other stakeholders</td>
<td>Capturing faculty attention and participation; listening and responding effectively to feedback to improve plan and achieve buy-in from stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● plan activities for discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● collect data to analyze as we actively revise plan, in light of feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recruit faculty for selected pilot Gateway course(s) or similar pilot courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Late Fall 2018</td>
<td><strong>Fall 2018 (cont.)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Potential Roadblocks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and recruit faculty for Gateway (or similar) pilot courses</td>
<td>Forming an effective, small team of faculty organized around the pilot topic and a common pedagogical approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Propose Center for General Education to University Administration</td>
<td>Physical space; funding</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th><strong>Potential Roadblocks</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>Pilot Gateway (or similar) course as an example of incubation process for new Gen Ed courses/topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logistics of classroom space and enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify both temporary and permanent physical space for the Center for General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competing interests who also need space on campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| March 2019    | Present progress toward revised Gen Ed Plan to Arizona Board of Regents |
| Late Spring 2019 | Finish revised Gen Ed Plan, including categories and learning outcomes |
|               | Initiate approval process for Gen Ed proposal(s), to include the categories, outcomes, and structure: |
|               | - Faculty, students (ASUA), and advisors |
|               | - Undergraduate Council |
|               | - CAAC |
|               | - Provost’s Council |
|               | - Faculty Senate |
|               | TBD through conversations in Fall 2018 focus groups |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2019</th>
<th><strong>Potential Roadblocks</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Pilot additional courses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recruiting early adopters from the Faculty to design and teach pilot courses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement review process for current Gen Ed courses that includes signature assignments and assessment plan aligned with new Learning Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding model that produces anxiety in RCUs that could potentially lose Gen Ed courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Five Years Out**

Completed plan and implement most aspects
Issues for Consideration

Gateway Courses

I. Piloting Gateway Course Concept

   The new Gateway courses include several unique pedagogical and logistical features, including instruction by a 3-faculty team with instructors from different departments collaborating on a course, alternating between large lecture and small discussion courses within a week, focusing on the most current world issues or very large complex problems in courses for academically naive freshmen. Each of these present challenges that need to be tested on a small scale, before tackling development of the large number of courses that would be required.

   Therefore, it is imperative that this type of course be piloted early in the process. Dr. John Pollard is offering a course in the Honors College this upcoming spring which explores many of the features envisioned for the Gateway courses. The post-hoc assessment and analysis of this course will provide insight into the feasibility of future Gateway (GW) course development.

II. Course Availability

   Given the desire for exposure to interdisciplinary and real-world focused courses early in a student’s career, ideally all incoming freshmen would be required to take at least one of the Gateway courses. However, considering the incoming size of a freshman class (~7000) and the preferred course size for each GW course (~100/class), at a minimum 70 Gateway sections must be offered each year.

III. Course Development

   Based on experience garnered from the Honors College Pilot this upcoming spring, it would be desirable to develop a number of pilots to be offered in fall 2019 to incoming freshmen. While Dr. Pollard’s course will provide considerable insight into the course format and pedagogy, it is being tested with a unique population in honors students. Scaling this up for all incoming freshmen will require additional pilots for wide-spread feasibility.

   Following this second round of pilots, a more extensive cohort of GW courses could be developed, hoping to add 25-30 per year to reach the minimum needed. It is only at this point that the GW courses could be ‘required by all incoming freshmen’ and applicable to the 2021 catalog. A campus-wide announcement inviting faculty to consider collaborating to offer this type of course should coincide with this second set of pilots.

   This reasonable ramp up of course offerings will require summer workshops for faculty, review of potential courses, and considerable attention to room/course scheduling to be successful. These will be key functions of the various administrative components of the Center for Gen Ed early on.
IV. Course Relevance
To maintain freshness and up-to-date content and topics for GW courses, the 3-instructor team for each GW course must reapply to be included in the GW cohort every 3 years. This will enable turnover of courses, topics and instructors as the views and issues of the world change, as well as accommodate changes in faculty and departments involved. This assessment will occur in a staggered fashion, updating existing courses or adding new ones each year.

Exploration Courses
I. Categories for Exploration Courses
These recommendations eliminate the Tier 1/Tier 2 identification as TRADs, INDVs or NATS, labels that were confusing to students. These will be replaced with the 5 categories indicated above, providing more meaningful identification of disciplinary focus.

The addition of the Technology and Innovation category provides a home for multiple courses across campus that did not fit in the old category scheme. In addition, it highlights a relevant focus for students as we head into the 4IR. It is anticipated that these courses will meet the newly established criteria for the 4IR skills attribute, which could include complex problem solving, coding, machine logic, data management but also people management and team-building. (World Economic Forum)

II. Course Availability and Inclusion in GE
It is anticipated that the categories of the Exploration courses will be populated by courses that already exist on campus, capitalizing on the extensive expertise of present faculty. However, each course instructor or offering academic structure will need to apply to be approved for Gen Ed credit, indicating how they will meet the Gen Ed criteria and which of the new categories is most appropriate.

III. Assessment and Course Distribution
It will be incumbent on the administration of the Center for Gen Ed to frequently assess the quality, quantity and distribution of these courses. It is only with persistent cycles of assessment, review and revision that the program will be able to maintain its effectiveness and freshness.

X. Summary and Final Comments
In summary, the UA general education program has wandered off track due to a number of factors including a lack of adequate programmatic and administrative oversight. With the new strategic planning effort underway, UA has a unique opportunity to improve the student experience by redesigning the general education program to better prepare students for the exciting opportunities and significant challenges of our changing world. The essential goals of general education remain intact but can be enhanced to include essential knowledge, skills and abilities that students need to become productive citizens and creative problem-solvers for the future. It is time to invest in a revitalization of our general education offerings and develop a cohesive program that can become a true pillar of our students’ education career as a Wildcat.
References:


Appendix 1: General Education Review Task Force Members

**Leadership Team:**

Lucinda Rankin, PhD. ² (Chair; Associate Director, Physiology Undergraduate Program; Lecturer, Physiology, College of Medicine)

James Baygents, PhD (Co-Chair; Associate Dean, Academic Affairs-College of Engineering; Associate Professor, Chemical and Environmental Engineering; College of Engineering)

Hunter, Jane Ph.D., PMP (Co-Chair; Director, Academic Resources & Special Projects; Office of the Provost)

**Task Force Members:**

Fabian R Alfie, PhD. (Professor, French and Italian; College of Humanities)

Merdith Aronson, PhD. (Manager of Integrated Advising Analytics; Office of Academic Affairs)

Roxie L. Catts, M.Ed. ² (Director, Advising Resource Center; Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost)

Lisa Elfring, PhD. (Assistant Vice Provost, Office of Instruction/Assessment; Associate Professor, BIO5 Institute)

Melissa A. Fitch, Ph.D. ² (Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, The Honors College; University Distinguished Professor of Latin American Cultural Studies; College of Humanities)

Thomas A Fleming PhD. ¹ (Astronomer, Steward Observatory; Senior Lecturer, Astronomy; College of Science; Chair, UWGEC)

Amy V Fountain, PhD. ¹ (Associate Professor, Linguistics; College of Social & Behavioral Sciences)

Elaine V Marchello, PhD. ¹ (Assistant Director, Assessment, Office of Instruction and Assessment)

Barbara (Bobbi) Mckean, PhD. ² (Faculty Director of General Studies; Associate Professor, Theatre; College of Fine Arts)

Susan Miller Cochran, PhD. ¹ (Professor, English; Director of the Writing Program; College of Social and Behavioral Sciences)

William T Neumann, PhD. ² (Professor of Practice, Management Information Systems; Eller College of Management)

Pamela A Perry, PhD. (Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs; Eller College of Management)

John R Pollard, PhD. (Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, UA Honors College; CUES Fellow; Associate Professor of Practice, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry; College of Science)

Dennis T Ray, PhD. ² (University Distinguished Professor, Professor of Plant Sciences and Natural Resources and the Environment; College of Agriculture and Life Sciences)

Lilly Weyers ¹, (Senior, undergraduate student, College of Science)

University Wide General Education Committee present ¹ or past ² member

**Administrative Assistance:**

Martha Farnham (Administrative Assistant, Office of Academic Affairs)

Kat Francisco (Executive Associate to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost)
Appendix 2: General Education at UA Peer Institutions

1. **University of California-Davis**
   [https://registrar.ucdavis.edu/registration/plan/ge](https://registrar.ucdavis.edu/registration/plan/ge)
   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program; effective in 2011.

2. **University of California-Los Angeles**
   [https://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Academics/GE-Requirement](https://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Academics/GE-Requirement)
   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program; varies by college.

3. **University of Florida**
   [https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/)
   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program.

4. **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
   [https://courses.illinois.edu/gened/DEFAULT/DEFAULT](https://courses.illinois.edu/gened/DEFAULT/DEFAULT)
   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program.

5. **University of Iowa**
   [https://clas.uiowa.edu/clas-core](https://clas.uiowa.edu/clas-core)
   [https://myui.uiowa.edu/my-ui/courses/by-gen-ed.page](https://myui.uiowa.edu/my-ui/courses/by-gen-ed.page)
   Distribution requirements in 10+ categories in three main areas; no themes; above-average marketing; effective in 2017.

6. **University of Maryland-College Park**
   [http://www.gened.umd.edu/](http://www.gened.umd.edu/)
   I-Series courses - students must complete two courses that are approved for I-Series; Students may take 3 credits of Experiential Learning

7. **Michigan State University**
   [https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.aspx?Section=283](https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.aspx?Section=283)
   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program.

8. **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities**
   [https://onestop.umn.edu/academics/education-requirements](https://onestop.umn.edu/academics/education-requirements)
   Typical distribution requirements; Designated theme "attributes", must satisfy 4 of 5 themes.

9. **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**
   [http://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/general-education-curriculum-degree-requirements/](http://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/general-education-curriculum-degree-requirements/)
   Distribution requirements; Making Connections curriculum, double-dipping allowed.

10. **Ohio State University-Main Campus**
    [http://advising.osu.edu/generaleducation.shtml](http://advising.osu.edu/generaleducation.shtml)
    Typical distribution requirements; Proposal to Revise General Education published in February 2018.

11. **Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus**
    [https://gened.psu.edu/](https://gened.psu.edu/)
    Distribution requirements; Optional pathway for Integrative studies which include interdomain courses (SU 2018).

12. **Texas A & M University**
http://catalog.tamuct.edu/undergraduate-information/general-education-core-requirements/

13. **The University of Texas at Austin**

   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program.

14. **University of Washington-Seattle Campus**
    [https://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/academic-planning/general-education-requirements/overview/](https://www.washington.edu/uaa/advising/academic-planning/general-education-requirements/overview/)

   Typical distribution requirements; slightly above average description of program.

15. **University of Wisconsin-Madison**
    [http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext)

   Typical distribution requirements; standard description of program.