

**Recommendation for Changes to  
The University of Alabama Core Curriculum**



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## **CHARGE TO THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASKFORCE**

In the Fall of 2018, Provost Kevin Whitaker created a General Education Taskforce (GET) to lead a campus-wide review of The University of Alabama's general education (GE) requirements and experiences and to develop a comprehensive plan for GE that connects the learning goals of the major, the work of Student Life, and a curriculum that further supports the development of curious learners, critical and creative thinkers and informed and engaged citizens.

The development of a well-educated undergraduate involves more than a collection of courses that lead to a degree. Students should engage in courses and experiences that are dynamic and integrative. To that end, GET is charged with detecting the UA community's expectations of GE and the current GE experiences at UA, comparing them with research-based practices that support student learning and success, and identifying the processes needed to develop, approve, implement, assess, and periodically review a responsive, dynamic program of general education.

This review should include inventorying existing experiences, benchmarking peer and aspirant institutions, consulting with colleagues, students, and staff through surveys and listening sessions, and identifying research-based practices that support student learning and success. Throughout this review and subsequent development of a comprehensive plan for GE, there are many questions to be considered. However, the fundamental questions that the GET should use to frame its inquiry and operations are:

1. What does the UA community expect all graduates to have gained from their undergraduate experiences at UA? What are the fundamental skills, abilities, and behaviors that every UA student should develop as a result of completing the general education requirements?
2. What are the purposes of a general education program?
3. What is the process for revision, ratification, implementation, ongoing review, administration, and assessment of a comprehensive plan for general education?

## RATIONALE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM

The Core Curriculum (CC) at The University of Alabama (UA) has not undergone a comprehensive review since 1995. This review was prompted by the creation of the 41-42-hour general studies curriculum by the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC). UA revised the CC in 1997 to adopt the AGSC general studies curriculum, with the addition of the current Foreign Language or Computer Science, upper-division writing-intensive courses, and mathematics requirements.

Since the last comprehensive review of the CC, UA has undergone a tremendous change. Enrollment at UA has doubled over that time, with the majority of the undergraduate student population now being drawn from outside the State of Alabama. This has resulted in UA currently having the most diverse undergraduate student population in its history.

The undergraduate students currently enrolled at UA have drastically different wants and needs than they did in 1997. Furthermore, the world into which they will step once their degree requirements have been completed is rapidly changing, requiring students to be able to learn and unlearn, so they can solve the increasingly complex problems facing a global society. To prepare our students to live productive lives once they leave The Capstone, and to fulfill the mission of the university, UA developed the [Advancing the Flagship](#) strategic plan in 2015. It is no coincidence that the first goal of the strategic plan is to provide a premier undergraduate and graduate education that offers a global perspective and is characterized by outstanding teaching, high-quality scholarship, and distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs.

In addition to achieving Goal One of the strategic plan, several pressing concerns make it imperative that General Education reform take place at UA:

**Recruitment:** The impending enrollment cliff makes it imperative that the CC is fashioned in a manner that will make it easier to continue attracting high-quality students to UA. In other words, reforming GE at UA provides us the opportunity to create a competitive advantage regarding undergraduate recruitment.

**Retention:** Most of the attrition that takes place at UA happens during the first two years of undergraduate study. This, coincidentally, is the timeframe during which undergraduates take the majority of their CC courses. Of additional note, our transfer population represents one of our most vulnerable populations. A CC that meets the needs of all populations will result in better retention. In raising retention, which would also raise graduation rates, there needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that our CC encourages all students to persist.

**Clarity and Coherence:** One of the main complaints from students concerning the CC is the lack of clarity and coherence. Students are not clear on why they are required to take Liberal Arts courses that are not directly connected to their respective majors. Designing a CC in a manner that makes readily apparent its intent, spans the entire undergraduate experience, complements the undergraduate major, and includes pivotal experiences where students can reflect and make connections between their CC coursework and majors, would help to address this shortcoming of the current CC.

**Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:** Reimagining the CC provides UA with the opportunity to ensure that all undergraduates are provided with a high-quality undergraduate educational experience. Currently, our CC allows for the stratification of the undergraduate population. Additionally, our current CC has no required coursework related to intercultural knowledge and competency. Furthermore, the lack of a first-year experience designed to acculturate students to UA and create a sense of belonging and connectedness is another major gap in UA's general education.

**Fidelity to the Intent of a Liberal Education:** The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defines a Liberal Education as “an approach to college learning that seeks to empower individuals and prepare them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in at least one specific field of study. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, strong cross-disciplinary intellectual and practical skills (e.g., communication, analytical and problem-solving skills), and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings”<sup>1</sup>.

**Assessment:** Finally, our current CC does not have shared student learning outcomes (SLOs), which makes it difficult to assess what knowledge, skills, and abilities undergraduates gain as a result of completing GE at UA. This is particularly problematic as SACSCOC now requires that universities conduct an assessment of GE as part of their recurring accreditation cycle.

Conducting GE reform provides an opportunity to reset and ensure that our CC is in line with providing a truly liberal educational experience to all our undergraduates.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap\\_vision\\_summary.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap_vision_summary.pdf)

## TIMELINE

### 2018

GET empaneled in September of 2018

- Fall 2018
  - Identified Taskforce operations requisite to fulfilling our charge
  - Established an outline and timeline for GET operations
  - Compiled and reviewed a comprehensive GE bibliography
  - Generated a framework for identifying UA constituencies and stakeholders
  - Designed preliminary poll to solicit feedback from UA faculty

### 2019

- Spring 2019
  - Benchmarked (120+) other institutions that have undergone core curriculum revision
  - Administered a campus-wide survey
  - Held listening sessions
  - Generated a preliminary vision statement and list of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
  - Held two townhalls
    - March 19, 3-4, Heritage Room, Ferguson Center
    - March 29, 3-4, 205 Gorgas Library
  - Met with
    - Deans and Department Chairs of all undergraduate degree-granting programs to solicit feedback and expectations for UA's GE curriculum
    - The Council of Assistant and Associate Deans (CAAD) to update them on our progress
    - The Core Curriculum Oversight Committee (CCOC) to discuss the initiative
    - A taskforce looking into UA foreign language learning/study abroad (all taskforce members were also members of CAAD)
  - Attended the AAC&U Conference on GE Reform (SF CA)
    - Chapman Greer
    - Kristin Maki
    - Lane McLelland

- Summer 2019
  - Attended an AAC&U Institute on GE Reform (Burlington VT)
    - Luoheng Han
    - Ginger Bishop
    - Chapman Greer
    - Richard Richards
    - Kristin Maki
  - Attended an AAC&U Institute on High-Impact Practices (Villanova PA)
    - Ginger Bishop
    - Adam Sterritt
    - Chapman Greer
    - Richard Richards
- Fall 2019
  - Reorganized with new co-chairs
    - Chapman Greer (C&BA)
    - Andre Denham (CoE)
    - Erik Peterson (A&S)
  - Expanded committee to determine Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
  - Assessed current curriculum and co-curricular practices
  - Worked with AAC&U consultant Dr. Ashley Finley to refine SLOs

## 2020

- Spring 2020 (COVID shut down campus March 13)
  - Reorganized, with Dr. Haley Townsend replacing Dr. Johnny Tice as a College of Nursing committee representative
  - Determined GET Mission Statement and Guiding Principles
  - Identified potential Student Learning Objectives – now Capacities (prefatory to defining Student Learning Outcomes)
  - Further identified UA Course Offerings (both Academic and Experiential)
  - Created report on student opinion of GE at UA
    - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE – OIRA)
    - 4 Focus Groups
    - GBA300 class Report
      - 1500-person survey
      - 600-person survey
  - Consulted with AAC&U to understand national GE models
  - Drafted 3 initial models for review

- Fall 2020 (COVID restrictions continued to apply)
  - Defined student Capacities (previously Student Learning Objectives) to help drive the development of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):
    - Effective Communicators
    - Critical and Creative Thinkers
    - Problem Solvers
    - Ethical Reasoners
    - Individually and Socially Responsible Citizens
    - Interculturally Competent and Knowledgeable Individuals
  - Created subcommittees based on expertise in the relevant Capacities with the charge of defining SLO's by determining
    - A definition
    - A set of related essential questions
    - SLO's
  - Defined 4 High-Impact Practices (HIPs) for GE
    - First-Year Experience (FYE)
    - Community Engagement (CE)
    - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) / Civic Engagement
    - Capstone Courses and Programs

## 2021

- Spring 2021
  - Finalized 3 Models (renamed Concepts) for ranking through Faculty Senate
  - Conducted presentations and listening tour across campus
  - Submitted 3 Concepts for Faculty Senate ranking:
    - Concept 3 (62%)
    - Concept 2 (23%)
    - Concept 1 (15%)
- Summer 2021
  - Attended virtual AAC&U Institute on GE Reform
  - Proposed and conducted a feasibility study with internal and external 3<sup>rd</sup>-party experts
    - Submitted Concepts 2 and 3 for evaluation
- Fall 2021
  - Completed feasibility study
    - Developed Models 1 and 2 from Concepts 2 and 3 and results of the Summer 2021 feasibility study
- Presented plan for model refinement and recommendations for implementation to university administration and Faculty Senate
- Will be requesting approval from Faculty Senate on High-Impact Practices, implementation plan, and model preference for further development



## **PURPOSE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**

General Education should be more than mere exposure to different fields of study. At the undergraduate level, students should:

- comprehend intellectual expectations and learning resources of the institution
- acquire specific skills of thought and expression
- encounter the diversity that exists within American society and in the global community
- integrate concepts from across disciplines to illuminate interdisciplinary themes, questions, and the social problems of today and how we arrived at them
- have an opportunity near the end of their course of study to pull together their learning in a Capstone project

In short, they should experience a coherent course of study, one that is more than the sum of its parts.<sup>2</sup>

We recommend that The University of Alabama outline the purpose of undergraduate education, establish guiding principles for GE, and explicitly state the knowledge, skills, and abilities (Capacities), students should acquire in a GE program as measured by Student Learning Outcomes.

Below is our recommended purpose statement:

The University of Alabama's General Education program empowers undergraduate students to be socially conscious, ethical, and well-rounded leaders, with the knowledge and skills to live productive, responsible, and rewarding lives in a diverse and rapidly-changing world.

The program challenges students to develop their logical and creative capacities by providing transformational and integrative learning experiences that complement the undergraduate major.

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<sup>2</sup> Schee, B. A. V. (2011). Changing General Education Perceptions through Perspectives and the Interdisciplinary First-Year Seminar. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 23(3), 382-387.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**

The following guiding principles governed the reform process. The taskforce resolved that the final output would:

1. Be learner-centered, accessible, inclusive, and equitable
2. Span the undergraduate experience
3. Focus on shared student learning outcomes
4. Include curricular and co-curricular experiences
5. Encourage involvement and participation throughout faculty and staff
6. Employ best practices in teaching and learning
7. Encourage exploration and student ownership of general education
8. Accommodate non-traditional, transfer, and high-credit entry students
9. Meet accreditation requirements

The GE Purpose Statement informed the Guiding Principles by which GET has operated. These principles represent the floor under which we will not go.

# CAPACITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## CAPACITIES

In completing the requirements of The University of Alabama General Education program, all undergraduates should demonstrate the fundamental skills, abilities, and behaviors that readily identify them as:



In the Spring of 2020, GET drafted Learning Objectives, now called Capacities, which informed Fall 2020's definitions of Student Learning Outcomes.

## ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

The turn of the century brought with it rapid and disruptive shifts in effectively all aspects of our lives. This has been facilitated by quantum leaps in technological innovations, changes in our economy, environmental concerns, and increasing globalization and interconnectedness. To properly equip our undergraduates for the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must (as Richard Riley stated) prepare “students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, in order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet”.

To accomplish this important task of preparing undergraduates for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we recommend the adoption of the AAC&U’s The Essential Learning Outcomes were created as a result of AAC&U’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, which was implemented to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by students to prepare them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Essential Learning Outcomes define the knowledge and skills gained from a liberal education, providing a framework to guide students’ cumulative progress.

We recommend using the Essential Learnings as a means of categorizing the knowledge students will gain as a result of participating in the revised core curriculum.

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

### **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World through study in:**

- the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

*Focused by* engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring.

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills, including:**

- Inquiry and Analysis
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Written and Oral Communication
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork and Problem Solving

*Practiced extensively* across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.

### **Personal and Social Responsibility, including:**

- Civic Knowledge and Engagement – Local and Global
- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- Ethical Reasoning and Action
- Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning and Personal Well-Being

*Anchored* through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

## MODEL ONE: ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS + T.I.D.E. COURSES

Bama Beginnings	2 semester hours
Foundations	18 semester hours
Essential Learnings	20 semester hours
T. I. D. E. Courses	0 semester hours
High-Impact Experiences (HIPs)	3 semester hours

**Total Semester Hours: 43 semester hours**

### **Bama Beginnings: 2 Semester Hours**

This proposal serves to provide an overview of a common first-year experience (FYE) that would be a cornerstone of the GE program for all University of Alabama students. We call this FYE Bama Beginnings. In a student's first year, Bama Beginnings would broadly introduce the tenets and outcomes of the GE program, using the Capstone Creed as the spine for individual exploration and key skill-building. Additionally, the two-semester course model would also provide an early introduction to community engagement, so that future high-impact practices could build on a common foundation.

Bama Beginnings will consist of a two-semester course sequence. The first-semester course, **Bama Beginnings 1**, would be taken by all incoming students. This course will use the Capstone Creed as the framework to address the themes in the Creed (the pursuit of knowledge, individual and civic responsibility, academic excellence, ethics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion). In addition to the pillars of the Creed, this course would serve as a primer for the learning goals and outcomes of the GE program. To enrich and bolster the student's learning in and out-of-the-classroom, the course would meet weekly and have an out-of-class component that consists of on-campus engagement in lecture series, workshops, performances, and other offerings.

### **Outcomes / Goals of Bama Beginnings I**

Students will be able to:

- Apply academic and social expectations of the UA community via the Capstone Creed
- Integrate intended outcomes of the UA GE in curricular and co-curricular planning
- Build community with diverse groups of peers
- Describe the impact of community engagement as a valued practice of quality education

**Bama Beginnings 2** would be taken in the second semester of incoming students' first year. This course will use the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as the framework to address the values held by the UA community. This course would serve as a primer for community engagement. To enrich and bolster the student's learning in and out-of-the-classroom, the course would meet weekly and have an out-of-class component that consists of on-campus engagement in lecture series, workshops, performances, and other offerings.

### **Outcomes / Goals of Bama Beginnings II**

Students will be able to:

- Integrate intended outcomes of the UA GE in curricular and co-curricular planning
- Build community with diverse groups of peers
- Describe the impact of community engagement as a valued practice of quality education

Among participants, a common FYE experience should show decreases in disparities by race, gender, and SES.<sup>3</sup>

**The Bama Beginnings requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA. A unique Bama Beginnings requirement will be tailored to Transfer students.**

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<sup>3</sup> Griffin, A.M., & Romm, F. (Eds.). (2008). Exploring the evidence, Vol. IV: Reporting research on first-year seminars. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Retrieved from [http://sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/pdf/MExpEvid\\_IV.pdf](http://sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/pdf/MExpEvid_IV.pdf)

## **Foundations: 18 Semester Hour**

### *Written Composition: 6 semester hours*

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum. - *From AAC&U*

### *Quantitative Literacy: 3 semester hours*

Quantitative Literacy (QL) – also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – is a “habit of mind”, competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems in a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate). *From AAC&U*

### *Foreign Language: 6 semester hours*

In an increasingly globalized world, one can no longer rely solely on the English language and this truism applies to any given field. With job opportunities scarce in certain areas, undergraduate students need to think early on about what practical skills will set them apart from other job seekers. Even an intermediate knowledge of a foreign language allows someone to rise above other candidates. Translation software is far from perfect, which is why language learning is still of the utmost importance. Learning a language is helpful not only for working in an international setting, but also in a local one. Alabama, like many other states, has an increasing number of job opportunities in international companies with representation in the US.

Furthermore, the learning of a foreign language comes with an analysis of the cultures in which that language is spoken. Thus, language learning helps one approach the world and society with greater understanding, awareness, and respect for the other.

*Digital Literacy: 3 semester hours*

Digital technology has become increasingly important in our lives, so much so that it has become ubiquitous. As the number of tools and applications we use increases, so does the need to make sure undergraduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to function in this emerging digital landscape. For that reason, we are recommending all undergraduates leave with the following set of skills and abilities, as defined by the New Media Consortium (NMC)<sup>4</sup>:

Universal Literacy – A familiarity with using basic digital tools such as office productivity software, image manipulation, cloud-based apps and content, and web content authoring tools.

We would hope that all students continue their development so much so that they can also be considered as creatively literate with digital technology and literate across disciplines as defined by the NMC:

Creative Literacy – Includes all aspects of universal literacy and adds more challenging technical skills that lead to the production of richer content, including video editing, audio creation and editing, animation, an understanding of computational device hardware, and programming, along with digital citizenship and copyright knowledge.

Literacy Across Disciplines – Diffused throughout classes in appropriate ways that are unique to each learning context (e.g., sociology courses can teach interpersonal action online, such as the ethics and politics of social network interaction, while psychology and business classes can focus on computer-mediated human interaction).

**Students may complete Foundations requirements before attending UA.**

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander, B., Adams Becker, S., and Cummins, M. (2016). *Digital Literacy: An NMC Horizon Project Strategic Brief*. Volume 3.3, October 2016. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.  
<https://library.educause.edu/~media/files/library/2016/6/2016stratbriefdigitalliteracy.pdf>



## Essential Learnings – 20 semester hours

### Knowledge of Human Cultures: 6-9 semester hours

Through study in the social sciences, humanities, and histories, with a *focused* engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

### Physical and the Natural World: 8 semester hours

Through study in the sciences and mathematics, with a *focused* engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring. These courses must be accompanied by labs to allow students to learn about the process of scientific inquiry and the application of data-driven scientific evidence.

### Creative Arts: 3-6 semester hours

Through study in the creative and fine arts, with a *focused* engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring.

## T. I. D. E. Courses

In addition to the content provided in the core curriculum, undergraduate students at UA should also be equipped with a particular set of intellectual and practical skills. To accomplish this, all undergrad students at UA will take **T.I.D.E.** courses:

- T**eamwork and Problem Solving
- I**nquiry and Analysis
- D**igital and Information Literacy
- E**thical Reasoning

**T.I.D.E.** courses are designed to ensure that UA undergrads are equipped with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for success in a rapidly changing world. These courses will provide an academic foundation that sparks a desire for life-long learning and significantly enhance the experience of UA undergraduates.

To meet this requirement students must:

- Take one **T.I.D.E.** course from each of the four categories
- Take one additional **T.I.D.E.** course from any of the four categories
- **T.I.D.E.**-designated courses cannot meet more than 2 GE requirements
- **T.I.D.E.** courses must be taken at UA

## High-Impact Practices

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The historical, social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that have influenced life in the United States (US) are shaped by social differences, including race, ethnicity, class/wealth, gender identity, sexuality, language use, disability, religion, and age. These social differences not only direct our personal and professional experiences and interactions, but also direct how social institutions (i.e., education, health, criminal justice, religious communities, industry, housing, commerce, recreation, social welfare, and citizenship rights) structure the everyday lives of all who reside in the US as global citizens.

At the interpersonal level, cultural humility is a critical practice for engaging social difference. Cultural humility is an ongoing, dynamic process of self-reflection and self-critique that examines personal assumptions, biases, and values based on historical and socio-political structures for a fuller awareness of self and others.

To work towards equity and social justice within local, national, and global contexts, there is also an urgency to move beyond the inter-personal to understand and transform social and structural institutions that also shape social differences. Thus, while on one hand, cultural humility focuses on the interpersonal (individual experiences, cultural identity, shared vulnerabilities, focusing on self-reflection and relational analysis), on the other hand, a social justice initiative requires attention to the structural context (identifying and analyzing social difference and social justice in the context of democracy, justice, fairness, and equity and what they mean within this structure).

As a result of completing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging requirement, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

- Discuss definitions of social difference via race, class, gender, sexuality, language use, ethnicity, and disability
- Explain how intersectional power relationships have been created, maintained, and challenged within their disciplinary areas and social institutions
- Reflect on how self / professional identity is shaped by historical social, cultural, ideological, and economic forces, both historical and contemporary, within society, in general, and within our academic disciplines, in particular
- Compare how inequitable power influences interpersonal relationships at the personal, local, institutional, national, and global levels
- Identify how different power relationships structure and perpetuate inequalities within our institutions: academic and societal
- Evaluate approaches that center cultural humility and vulnerability that serve to dismantle the imbalances of power with and against the past and contemporary political and economic institutional and social-cultural structures within our disciplines and in society

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- Three semester hours in 300- and 400-level courses approved for the DEIB (**D**) designation
- All **D**-designated courses are taught and graded by instructors who have at least a master's degree
- All **D**-designated courses are preferably limited to an enrollment of 35 students

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **Community Engagement (CE)**

We recognize that there are multiple pathways for students to successfully engage with the community and recommend that community engagement be integrated into the core mission areas of the university. While we believe that every experience that fulfills the community engagement requirement should have some credit-bearing component, we are not prescribing a certain number of credit hours. Instead, we advocate for a minimum number of hours (20) in which each student is engaged in their CE experience. We recommend the following broad categories of community engagement:

- **Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning:** These community-engaged experiences will be course-based and credit-bearing, and students will successfully fulfill this requirement through the demonstration of meaningful academic learning. We recommend creating a community-engaged learning designation in the course catalog. In many cases, a Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning experience will carry 3 credit hours over an academic semester. However, we also recognize that the credit hour requirements for different departments and degree programs vary. Therefore, we recommend flexibility to accommodate existing and future Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning opportunities
- **Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities:** Through the exploration of original scholarship, inquiry, and/or creative work, done in the context of partnership and co-creation, students will complete this requirement through the public presentation or dissemination of their academic work. There are many faculty and staff members who currently have CE built into their research programs and creative activities, and students who elect to participate in Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities should identify and work with a faculty or staff mentor. Students may receive academic credit for these projects and it is acceptable for student employees to fulfill this requirement. Generally, these experiences will span the course of at least a full academic year.
- **Community-Engaged Service and Leadership:** The goal of Community-Engaged Service and Leadership experiences will be to develop active, global citizens through the purposeful cultivation of leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. These will be sustained service and leadership experiences that will focus on students' awareness, preparedness, experience, and commitment to authentically engaging with community partners. Many of these co-curricular opportunities already exist through the Center for Service and Leadership, as well as at the college and departmental levels. In most cases, these experiences will span the course of at least a full academic year

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **Advanced Communications**

As an institution of higher education, it is vitally important that we provide students with a toolkit of written, oral, digital, and visual communication skills that will enable them to prosper within the university and beyond.

Courses that meet this requirement should teach students to be effective written, oral, and/or visual communicators who understand how to critically analyze a communications situation, its audience, and how to design appropriate messages and deliver them confidently. As a result of completing the advanced communications requirement, students should be able to:

- Critically analyze the rhetorical situation
- Strategically design and construct written and oral messages
- Choose the appropriate form or channel for communication
- Deliver messages across appropriate formats or mediums

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- Six semester hours in 300- and 400-level courses, preferably in the major, approved for writing (**W**), oral communication (**O**), or visual communication (**V**) designation
- The **W** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students write coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose in a minimum of two papers, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- The **O** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students conduct a coherent, logical, and carefully edited oral presentation a minimum of two times in a semester, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- The **V** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students present a visually coherent, logical, and carefully edited project a minimum of two times, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- All **W, O, V** designated courses are taught and graded by instructors who have at least a master's degree
- All **W, O, V** designated courses are limited to an enrollment of 35 students

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## Capstone

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) defines Capstone Courses and Projects as “culminating experiences that require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of ‘best work’ or an exhibit of artwork.” Clinical experiences, practicums, internships, etc. that are required as part of a degree program would also fit the criteria for a Capstone:

- All students are required to take a 400-level Capstone-designated course in their major
- All Capstone-designated courses must be a minimum of 3 semester hours
- If a student’s major does not include a Capstone experience, project, or course, the student will participate in a Capstone experience administered by the Office of Undergraduate Education

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Connect relevant experience and academic knowledge
- See (make) connections across disciplines, perspectives
- Adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations
- Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experience to respond to new and challenging contexts through self-assessment, reflective, or creative work

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **MODEL ONE: AFFORDANCES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Affordances**

- The unique element of the T.I.D.E. courses provides an additional layer of distinctiveness and authenticity to UA's GE curriculum. The name being linked with UA's "Roll Tide" culture engenders its own kind of meaning and translation for students, faculty, and staff
- In addition to the GE capacities, the outcomes-oriented T.I.D.E. courses further emphasize the orientation of the curriculum around skills. These courses will provide additional opportunities to encourage students to link their learning with skills that are valuable for success as citizens and as professionals

### **Opportunities**

- The combination of outcomes in the T.I.D.E. courses with those in the GE capacities may be a source of confusion for faculty and students. How are the two sets of outcomes related? How are they distinct? How will the additional outcomes for T.I.D.E. courses be viewed in terms of assessment?
- The addition of T.I.D.E. courses, along with high-impact practices (HIPs), will place increased demands on resources for professional development, scheduling, and communication.

## MODEL TWO: PATHWAYS

Bama Beginnings	2 semester hours
Foundations	15 semester hours
Pathways	26 semester hours
High-Impact Experiences (HIPs)	0 semester hours
Total Semester Hours:	43 semester hours

### **Bama Beginnings: 2 Semester Hours**

This proposal serves to provide an overview of a common first-year experience (FYE) that would be a cornerstone of the GE program for all University of Alabama students. We call this FYE Bama Beginnings. In a student's first year, Bama Beginnings would broadly introduce the tenets and outcomes of the GE program, using the Capstone Creed as the spine for individual exploration and key skill-building. Additionally, the two-semester course model would also provide an early introduction to community engagement, so that future high-impact practices could build on a common foundation.

Bama Beginnings will consist of a two-semester course sequence. The first-semester course, **Bama Beginnings 1**, would be taken by all incoming students. This course will use the Capstone Creed as the framework to address the themes in the Creed (the pursuit of knowledge, individual and civic responsibility, academic excellence, ethics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion). In addition to the pillars of the Creed, this course would serve as a primer for the learning goals and outcomes of the GE program. To enrich and bolster the student's learning in and out-of-the-classroom, the course would meet weekly and have an out-of-class component that consists of on-campus engagement in lecture series, workshops, performances, and other offerings.

### **Outcomes / Goals of Bama Beginnings I**

Students will be able to:

- Apply academic and social expectations of the UA community via the Capstone Creed
- Integrate intended outcomes of the UA GE in curricular and co-curricular planning
- Build community with diverse groups of peers
- Describe the impact of community engagement as a valued practice of quality education



**Bama Beginnings 2** would be taken in the second semester of incoming students' first year. This course will use the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as the framework to address the values held by the UA community. This course would serve as a primer for community engagement. To enrich and bolster the student's learning in and out-of-the-classroom, the course would meet weekly and have an out-of-class component that consists of on-campus engagement in lecture series, workshops, performances, and other offerings.

### **Outcomes / Goals of Bama Beginnings II**

Students will be able to:

- Integrate intended outcomes of the UA GE in curricular and co-curricular planning
- Build community with diverse groups of peers
- Describe the impact of community engagement as a valued practice of quality education

Among participants, a common FYE experience should show decreases in disparities by race, gender, and SES.<sup>5</sup>

**The Bama Beginnings requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA. A unique Bama Beginnings requirement will be tailored to Transfer students.**

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<sup>5</sup> Griffin, A.M., & Romm, F. (Eds.). (2008). Exploring the evidence, Vol. IV: Reporting research on first-year seminars. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Retrieved from [http://sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/pdf/MExpEvid\\_IV.pdf](http://sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/pdf/MExpEvid_IV.pdf)

## **Foundations: 15 Semester Hours**

### *Written Composition: 6 semester hours*

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum. - *From AAC&U*

### *Quantitative Literacy: 3 semester hours*

Quantitative Literacy (QL) – also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – is a “habit of mind”, competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems in a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate). *From AAC&U*

### *Foreign Language: 6 semester hours*

In an increasingly globalized world, one can no longer rely solely on the English language and this truism applies to any given field. With job opportunities scarce in certain areas, undergraduate students need to think early on about what practical skills will set them apart from other job seekers. Even an intermediate knowledge of a foreign language allows someone to rise above other candidates. Translation software is far from perfect, which is why language learning is still of the utmost importance. Learning a language is helpful not only for working in an international setting but also in a local one. Alabama, like many other states, has an increasing number of job opportunities in international companies with representation in the US.

Furthermore, the learning of a foreign language comes with an analysis of the cultures in which that language is spoken. Thus, language learning helps one approach the world and society with greater understanding, awareness, and respect for the other.

**Students may complete Foundations requirements before attending UA.**

## **Pathways: 26 Semester Hours**

A “Pathways” or “threaded” curriculum is part of a national movement initiated in 2015 that seeks to streamline a student’s journey through college by tying scaffolded choice and clear learning outcomes to broader themes. Well-executed pathways assist a greater number of diverse students in achieving their college goals by minimizing unintended dead ends or unforeseen detours in the form of excess or out-of-sequence credit, while still providing needed intellectual breadth.

It is recommended that undergraduates at UA be required to take 26 semester hours in their chosen Pathway. The 26 GE semester hours required in each Pathway can be earned by:

- Successful completion of pathway-specific designated courses
- General education credit articulation
- Transfer articulation

Foundation courses do not count toward the Pathways requirements. Any single course cannot count towards fulfilling more than one Pathways requirement.

### **Knowledge of Human Culture (6 semester hours)**

Courses that meet the requirement for Knowledge of Human Culture will explore the ways that human beings have sought to understand, organize, and interpret the human experience and to give it meaning. Subjects might include history, ethics, literature, language, and philosophy, among others.

### **The Physical and Natural World (8 semester hours)**

Through study in the sciences and mathematics, with a *focused* engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring. These courses must be accompanied by labs to allow students to learn about the process of scientific inquiry and the application of data-driven scientific evidence.

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills (3-6 semester hours)**

Intellectual and Practical Skills courses will challenge students to develop the skills inherent in Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving. Courses that meet this requirement will have student learning outcomes related to:

- Inquiry and Analysis
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Digital Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork and Problem-Solving

### **Personal and Social Responsibility (3-6 semester hours)**

Courses that meet the requirement for Personal and Social Responsibility will have student learning outcomes related to:

- Civic Knowledge and Engagement—Local and Global
- Ethical Reasoning and Action
- Personal Well-Being

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (3 semester hours)**

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- Three semester hours in 300- and 400-level courses approved for the DEIB (**D**),
- All **D**-designated courses are taught and graded by instructors who have at least a master's degree
- All **D**-designated courses are preferably limited to an enrollment of 35 students

**The Pathways requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

### **HOW WILL THE PATHWAYS BE IDENTIFIED?**

We recommend that final decisions on the process for proposing, approving, reviewing, and administration of pathways be faculty-driven. In addition, final decisions will need to be made on how to allow students to potentially move between pathways. This decision-making would be accomplished during the initial phases of the implementation tasks outlined later in this document and led by the proposed governance structure.

### **HOW MANY PATHWAYS SHOULD THERE BE?**

We recommend that there be three initial pathways. This will allow for tweaks to be made along the way and guide the eventual expansion of pathways.

### **WHAT SHOULD EACH PATHWAY FOCUS ON?**

We recommend that each pathway focuses on answering an essential question. Tighe and Wiggins<sup>6</sup> have defined several characteristics of good essential questions:

1. Is *open-ended*; that is, it typically will not have a single, final, and correct answer.
2. Is *thought-provoking* and *intellectually engaging*, often sparking discussion and debate.
3. Calls for *higher-order thinking*, such as analysis, inference, evaluation, prediction. It cannot be effectively answered by recall alone.
4. Points toward *important, transferable ideas* within (and sometimes across) disciplines.
5. Raises *additional questions* and sparks further inquiry.
6. Requires *support* and *justification*, not just an answer.
7. *Recur*s over time; that is, the question can and should be revisited again and again.

In using essential questions to guide the construction of a pathway we hope that these “big-idea questions signal that education is not just about learning the answer, but about learning how to learn.”

— Grant Wiggins

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<sup>6</sup> McTighe, J., & Wiggins, G. (2013). *Essential questions: Opening doors to student understanding*. Ascd.

Below are examples of essential questions, from which a Pathway could be constructed:

1. Why do we bother to study / examine the past, present or future?
2. How is our understanding of culture and society constructed through and by language?
3. What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?
4. What is art and its function in our lives?
5. To what extent does power or the lack of power affect individuals and society?

## High-Impact Practices

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The historical, social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that have influenced life in the United States of America (US) are shaped by social differences, including race, ethnicity, class/wealth, gender identity, sexuality, language use, disability, religion, and age. These social differences not only direct our personal and professional experiences and interactions, but also direct how social institutions (i.e., education, health, criminal justice, religious communities, industry, housing, commerce, recreation, social welfare, and citizenship rights) structure the everyday lives of all who reside in the US as global citizens.

At the interpersonal level, cultural humility is a critical practice for engaging social difference. Cultural humility is an ongoing, dynamic process of self-reflection and self-critique that examines personal assumptions, biases, and values based on historical and socio-political structures for a fuller awareness of self and others.

To work towards equity and social justice within local, national, and global contexts, there is also an urgency to move beyond the inter-personal to understand and transform social and structural institutions that also shape social differences. Thus, while on one hand, cultural humility focuses on the interpersonal (individual experiences, cultural identity, shared vulnerabilities, focusing on self-reflection and relational analysis), on the other hand, a social justice initiative requires attention to the structural context (identifying and analyzing social difference and social justice in the context of democracy, justice, fairness, and equity and what they mean within this structure).

As a result of completing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging requirement, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

- Discuss definitions of social difference via race, class, gender, sexuality, language use, ethnicity, and disability
- Explain how intersectional power relationships have been created, maintained, and challenged within their disciplinary areas and social institutions
- Reflect on how self / professional identity is shaped by historical social, cultural, ideological, and economic forces, both historical and contemporary, within society, in general, and within our academic disciplines, in particular
- Compare how inequitable power influences interpersonal relationships at the personal, local, institutional, national, and global levels
- Identify how different power relationships structure and perpetuate inequalities within our institutions: academic and societal
- Evaluate approaches that center cultural humility and vulnerability that serve to dismantle the imbalances of power with and against the past and contemporary political and economic institutional and social-cultural structures within our disciplines and in society

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- Three semester hours in 300- and 400-level courses approved for the DEIB (**D**) designation
- All **D**-designated courses are taught and graded by instructors who have at least a master's degree
- All **D**-designated courses are preferably limited to an enrollment of no more than 35 students

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **Community Engagement (CE)**

We recognize that there are multiple pathways for students to successfully engage with the community and recommend that community engagement be integrated into the core mission areas of the university. While we believe that every experience that fulfills the community engagement requirement should have some credit-bearing component, we are not prescribing a certain number of credit hours. Instead, we advocate for a minimum number of hours (20) in which each student is engaged in their CE experience. We recommend the following broad categories of community engagement:

- **Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning:** These community-engaged experiences will be course-based and credit-bearing, and students will successfully fulfill this requirement through the demonstration of meaningful academic learning. We recommend creating a community-engaged learning designation in the course catalog. In many cases, a Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning experience will carry 3 credit hours over an academic semester. However, we also recognize that the credit hour requirements for different departments and degree programs vary. Therefore, we recommend flexibility to accommodate existing and future Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning opportunities
- **Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities:** Through the exploration of original scholarship, inquiry, and/or creative work, done in the context of partnership and co-creation, students will complete this requirement through the public presentation or dissemination of their academic work. There are many faculty and staff members who currently have CE built into their research programs and creative activities, and students who elect to participate in Community-Engaged Research and Creative Activities should identify and work with a faculty or staff mentor. Students may receive academic credit for these projects and it is acceptable for student employees to fulfill this requirement. Generally, these experiences will span the course of at least a full academic year.
- **Community-Engaged Service and Leadership:** The goal of Community-Engaged Service and Leadership experiences will be to develop active, global citizens through the purposeful cultivation of leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. These will be sustained service and leadership experiences that will focus on students' awareness, preparedness, experience, and commitment to authentically engaging with community partners. Many of these co-curricular opportunities already exist through the Center for Service and Leadership, as well as at the college and departmental levels. In most cases, these experiences will span the course of at least a full academic year

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**



## **Advanced Communications**

As an institution of higher education, it is vitally important that we provide students with a toolkit of written, oral, digital, and visual communication skills that will enable them to prosper within the university and beyond.

Courses that meet this requirement should teach students to be effective written, oral, and/or visual communicators who understand how to critically analyze a communications situation, its audience, and how to design appropriate messages and deliver them confidently. As a result of completing the advanced communications requirement, students should be able to:

- Critically analyze the rhetorical situation
- Strategically design and construct written and oral messages
- Choose the appropriate form or channel for communication
- Deliver messages across appropriate formats or mediums

This requirement can be satisfied by:

- Six semester hours in 300- and 400-level courses, preferably in the major, approved for writing (**W**), oral communication (**O**), or visual communication (**V**) designation
- The **W** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students write coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose in a minimum of two papers, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- The **O** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students conduct a coherent, logical, and carefully edited oral presentation a minimum of two times in a semester, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- The **V** designation indicates that one of the conditions for a passing grade is that students present a visually coherent, logical, and carefully edited project a minimum of two times, at least one of which will be graded and returned before mid-semester
- All **W, O, V** designated courses are taught and graded by instructors who have at least a master's degree
- All **W, O, V** designated courses are limited to an enrollment of 35 students

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **Capstone**

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) defines Capstone Courses and Projects as “culminating experiences that require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of ‘best work’ or an exhibit of artwork.” Clinical experiences, practicums, internships, etc. that are required as part of a degree program would also fit the criteria for a Capstone:

- All students are required to take a 400-level Capstone-designated course in their major
- All Capstone-designated courses must be a minimum of 3 semester hours
- If a student’s major does not include a Capstone experience, project, or course, the student will participate in a Capstone experience administered by the Office of Undergraduate Education

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Connect relevant experience and academic knowledge
- See (make) connections across disciplines, perspectives
- Adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations
- Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experience to respond to new and challenging contexts through self-assessment, reflective, or creative work

**This requirement must be satisfied while enrolled at UA.**

## **MODEL TWO: AFFORDANCES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Affordances**

- In a simple distribution model, students are often unaware of the skills they developed via the GE curriculum until well after graduation. As a result, students often do not see the purpose of GE as they navigate through it and often view GE courses as those to “get out of the way.” The key promise of a pathways approach is that the GE curriculum would take on a clearer purpose for students. A pathway of courses, speaking to a great problem or grand challenge that matches students’ interests and choosing, will increase student motivation and engagement with these courses, and, as a result, the GE curriculum will assume a clearer, more meaningful purpose for students.
- A Pathways approach also offers opportunities to enhance curricular coherence and intentionality for the GE curriculum. The conceptual and content-related conversations that occur between courses and disciplines will be clearer to students. While students are developing the intellectual skills and practical knowledge they need for life, work, and citizenship, the Pathways approach, coupled with the high-impact practices, is an ideal strategy for supporting integrative learning, a growing national emphasis that is ideally accomplished through multiple forms of engaged educational experiences
- While meeting the distribution requirements, a Pathways model provides an excellent opportunity for reinventing advising in service to the GE curriculum. Rather than simply helping students find courses to complete their check sheets, opportunities for purposeful advising will emerge, focusing on helping students select courses that match their selected Pathway, while also meeting the distribution requirements. This approach provides new opportunities for meaningful discussion and reflection regarding GE course selection.

### **Opportunities**

- The choice of implementation may create significant challenges to the Pathways approach. The optimal representation for Pathways would be to use Pathways in all framings of GE to help students make meaningful GE course choices and to provide a framework for advisors as they guide students through course-selection
- A significant GE course application process and intentional curricular mapping activities would be required to purposefully build the curriculum of each pathway
- Professional development would be required for advisors to ensure advising discussions around GE adopted the purposes associated with Pathways

- To ensure integrative learning opportunities are fully realized, professional development is also needed for those teaching GE courses. Minimally, faculty must be aware that they are teaching within a Pathway and of the outcomes expected of their course(s). Broad awareness and understanding of the larger curriculum associated with a Pathway(s) within which a course is nested will provide opportunities for faculty to build into their course's cross-course conversations. Professional development opportunities for faculty to plan with colleagues across disciplines within a Pathway would be essential to ensuring intentional integrative learning occurs across these courses. A key component of this professional development would be course redesign activities to ensure courses in a given Pathway speak intentionally to the respective Pathway topic

## **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

In 1994, Alabama [Legislative Act 94-202](#) was passed, leading to the creation of the Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) and the Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS). This law requires that all schools within the State must accept the transfer of core classes from other State schools. In the case of UA's Core Curriculum, if a student has completed all core requirements at one State school, they will automatically have met our CC requirements. If a student comes to UA and has completed some of their CC requirements, it is recommended an alternate route be created to allow students to meet the UA CC requirements using core courses taken at a previous State institution.

## GOVERNANCE

General education reform involving high-impact practices and an orientation around outcomes will require multiple layers of leadership. The following positions will help guide the successful implementation of curricular revisions and engagement of faculty and staff:

- Executive Director of General Studies, to oversee full coordination of programmatic components, with oversight of assessment and professional development needs;
- Executive Director of High-Impact Practices to oversee implementation of high-impact practices, with attention to coordination among various committees and leaders of specific experiences, quality of experiences, assessment, tracking of completion of experiences, and professional development needs;
- Director of first-year seminar/experience, to coordinate between existing FYS experiences and new experiences developed for the new GE curriculum;
- Community Engagement Committee or working group to bridge the robust work of the community engagement center with faculty who are leading diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and additional faculty who are leading or coordinating other HIPs, to ensure CE experiences are fully integrated into curriculum design;
- Director of a Center for Teaching and Learning, or similar title and structure, that can guide professional development across various aspects of the newly-developed curriculum. This position is critical in garnering the engagement of faculty, helping to recognize successes, and maintaining an emphasis on the quality of classroom practice, reinforcing assessment, and supporting commitments to equity

A final consideration is to link one or more elements of the new GE curriculum with the University's upcoming SACS reaffirmation as the focus of a new QEP. For example, the QEP might focus on the development of the FYS or CE, which would catalyze the development of a core element of the new GE program by leveraging critical resources, including the broad attention that comes from the accreditation process.

## ASSESSMENT

The purpose of GE assessment is to examine the fidelity of the implementation of a campus-wide curriculum to its intended learning outcomes. In other words, does this substantial part of the UA student's undergraduate educational experience lead to the achievement of the capacities that support the GE program's purpose? With input from UA faculty, the General Education Taskforce identified a purpose, capacities that support the purpose, and outcomes that demonstrate achievement of those capacities. A meaningful approach to the assessment of student learning includes complex assessments that rely on authentic student work samples and detailed and well-vetted rubrics, such as the [AAC&U VALUE Rubrics](#). Opportunities for assessment appear throughout proposed undergraduate GE requirements, including course-embedded assessment and pre-and post-assessment bookended by First-Year Experiences and Capstone courses or projects. Additional trustworthiness can be obtained through triangulation with information from existing institutional sources, such as, but not limited to, annual program assessment of similar outcomes, institutional surveys (e.g., SOI, NSSE, etc.), student information system (Banner), UA's learning management system (Blackboard), and Student Life Assessment and Planning.

Development of a faculty-involved process begins in Fall 2021, with the identification of current opportunities for assessing GE outcomes, available tools, and training. Artifact and data collection begin in Spring 2022, followed by analysis and reporting in Summer/Fall 2022. Assessment of GE should be coordinated by an assessment specialist who works closely with the Executive Director of General Education Curriculum and should involve faculty committees for each of the capacities to be evaluated. Additional support will be provided by UA's Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Office of the University Registrar, and Student Life Assessment and Planning. Assessment of student learning is a regular, ongoing process that culminates in the Fifth-Year Review of the GE program and strategic action plans for improvement.

## RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND TASKS

What follows is a proposed timeline for implementation of the revision of UA's General Education:

- **2021 – 2022 School Year**
  - Approve model to guide curriculum development (Faculty Senate)
  - Hire Executive Director of General Education
  - Hire Assessment Coordinator
  - Establish a Transition Team
  - Begin implementation and create oversight structure
  - Begin assessment of the current Core Curriculum
  
- **2022 – 2023 School Year**
  - Approve curriculum (Faculty Senate)
  - Update undergraduate catalog
  - Conduct professional development
  - Hire Executive Director of High-Impact Practices
  - Continue assessment of current Core Curriculum
  
- **2023 – 2024 School Year**
  - Continue course approvals
  - Continue to update the catalog
  - Conduct professional development
  - Continue assessment
  
- **2024 – 2025 School Year**
  - Begin phased implementation of new General Education Curriculum
  - Implement the First-Year Experience
  - Establish Center for Pedagogical Innovation and Teaching Excellence
  - Continue assessment
  
- **2025 – 2026 School Year**
  - Implement Community Engagement requirement
  - Implement DEI 300- / 400-level course requirement
  - Continue assessment
  
- **2026 – 2027 School Year**
  - Implement Capstone requirement
  - Continue assessment
  
- **2027 – 2028 School Year**
  - First cohort graduates
    - Perform assessment of first full cycle of the revised curriculum



## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Establishment of a Center for Pedagogical Innovation and Teaching Excellence**

Any degree of curriculum transformation, particularly transformation designed around outcomes and high-impact practices, should incorporate opportunities for professional development for faculty (and, ideally, for staff as co-educators). Comprehensive GE reform is more than asking faculty to revise courses. A movement away from delivering a distribution model focused solely on the breadth of content to a model that emphasizes the application of learning and career-oriented skill development (i.e., “capacities”) should be accompanied by structured opportunities for faculty to increase their learning alongside colleagues. A Center for Teaching and Learning can be a critical infrastructure investment to support faculty engagement, support their learning, and reinforce key curricular commitments (i.e., equity, quality of implementation, and clarity of outcomes).

Given the scope of what is proposed, full-time faculty/staff are required to assist in standardizing practice, fostering the adoption of evidence-based best practice, and creating ongoing community as a practice is instantiated and revised. A Center for Pedagogical Innovation and Teaching Excellence requires a Director who can guide professional development across various aspects of the newly-developed curriculum. This position is critical in:

- garnering the engagement of faculty
- helping to recognize successes
- maintaining an emphasis on the quality of classroom practice
- reinforcing assessment
- supporting commitments to equity

### **Expedited Implementation**

Making substantive changes to the Core Curriculum is a time-consuming exercise. Currently, the precedent is to ask the faculty, via the Faculty Senate, to provide approval for all changes to the CC. Seeing that each of the proposed models will require additional decisions to be made to accomplish the implementation timeline, we recommend the Faculty Senate agree in principle to the expedited implementation.

An expedited implementation will allow existing courses that meet criteria to be put into the new curriculum, foregoing the ordinary approval process (just for these courses). Newly-developed courses which meet the requisite criteria will go through a one-time, expedited approval process.

This would allow the transition team and the proposed Executive Director of General Studies to move relatively quickly to work out additional details and to create a process for providing the necessary oversight needed to administer a dynamic and responsive CC.