UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Friday February 2, 2024
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – via zoom

Items for Discussion:

1. **What essential knowledge, skills, and context do all our students need? Review and finalize as appropriate.**

   Enabling Outcomes: Enabling outcomes should typically be introduced in a student's first and/or second year on campus and focus on inquiry and critical thinking, communication, data literacy, and quantitative literacy.

   Inquiry and Critical Thinking A habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion, while also developing a capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

   Communication and Information Literacy: This includes oral and written communication.

   Digital and Data Literacy: ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

   *Quantitative Literacy***:** 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 can reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday situations.

   Integrative Outcomes: Integrative outcomes are skills and dispositions students build across the curriculum as they make connections between ideas and experiences in different disciplinary contexts.

   Scientific Reasoning: Involves inference processes in forming hypotheses, designing experiments to test hypotheses, distinguish determinate evidence from indeterminate evidence, and interpreting evidence that supports or refutes the hypothesis.

   Civic Knowledge and Engagement: Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills,

values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

Global Learning: Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability.

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence: Beyond mere exposure to culturally different others, intercultural knowledge and competence requires the capacity to meaningfully engage those others, place social justice in historical and political context, and put culture at the core of transformative learning.

Ethical reasoning: Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about the morality of human conduct It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

QUESTIONS:
a. Is this an appropriate number of outcomes? Two exemplar programs have widely different outcomes. [Portland State University's gen ed](#) program has 4. [Purdue University has 12](#).

b. Does it make sense to distinguish between enabling outcomes and integrative outcomes?

c. Does the Committee still support an expectation that at least one Enabling outcome is reinforced in every general education course?

d. How do we refine these broad outcomes into actionable rubrics to be used in the classroom?

2. **How will this essential knowledge, skills, and abilities be organized so that it is cohesive and consistent at both the course and general education program level? Discuss and brainstorm.**

   a. Purpose of Gen Ed
      i. UNO's general education curriculum invites students on a journey to explore enduring grand questions of humanity that will inspire them to find their calling and change the world. To tackle the most enduring and contemporary issues, the general education curriculum is designed to equip learners with essential skills, emphasizes the integration of knowledge across disciplines, and encourages deliberate engagement with our community so students thrive as citizens and in their future professional endeavors.
   b. Goals
      i. Less of a check the box approach (e.g. students explore their interests with less regard for what requirements courses satisfy)

    ii.   More integrative curriculum that creates explicit connections among courses, fields, and majors

    iii.   Inspiring courses for new students rooted in transformative texts and enduring questions.

    iv.   Deliberate introduction and reinforcement of outcomes across the general education curriculum

c. CURRICULAR ELEMENTS / QUESTIONS?????

    i.   [Model #1](#) pros and cons

        1. Matt's personal thoughts

           a. Pros: deliberate reinforcement of skills throughout curriculum; retains some familiar elements with a modified distribution approach, includes upper division requirements, includes digital and data literacy

           b. Cons: lacks a focus on gateway courses rooted in enduring questions; lacks an outline of how pathway would fit in this model; questions about the feasibility and campus support for 1 credit hour 1st year experience course and portfolio course.

    ii.   Additional Ideas:

        1. The model adopted should encourage and support courses that are rich with discovery and exploration of humanity's enduring questions.

           a. CORE (Culture, Origins, and Rational Exploration)

        2. Inner CORE that introduces enabling outcomes

           a. Gateway courses, enduring questions, & transformative texts while building capacity around enabling skills

        3. Outer CORE that builds integrative skills while creating opportunities for purposeful pathways. This might help students see general education as less of a check the box exercise.

    iii.   How might UNO create more opportunities for gateway courses? What would these look like?

    iv.   How might UNO create purposeful pathways through which students can complete most or all of their gen ed requirements and link the curriculum to their professional or intellectual aspirations?

        1. Purdue awards a certificate upon completion of a pathway (includes gateway courses and upper division disciplinary courses)

    v.   Examples of how other institutions have created gateway courses and pathways are included in this [Teagle document](#) (pages 19-31).

    vi.   How might we transition into a new model?

d. How will the model support transfer students (course by course, something else)?

    i.   [Portland State (quarter system)](#) determines general education requirements for transfer students based on the number of transfer credits.

        ii. Should there be a specific requirement for upper division general education gateway course(s) for our own students and new transfers?

3. **Courses for review**
   https://nextcatalog.unomaha.edu/courseadmin/

   Temporary Approval Fall 2024:
   1. ENGL 1140: English Composition I with Support – 4 credit hours
      (Fundamental Academic Skills – Composition I)

      Course Description: Instruction and practice in academic literacy practices, especially writing summaries, analyses, and critical essays in response to assigned texts. ENGL 1140 is designed to give students extra support needed to fully develop their writing skills and is equivalent to ENGL 1150.

Next meeting: February 9, 2024, 1-3pm via zoom