GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE

The current General Education Program has been in place since 1998. In 2018 the administration called for a review of the program with a possible refresh. A task force was formed and a review of the current program was done. The full report with recommendations is available. Concurrently, there were two other initiatives around Gen Ed: Strategic Planning and AAC&U General Education Institute. The Strategic Planning resulted in the strategic initiative within Pillar One of the Strategic Plan now referred to as The Wildcat Journey. The AAC&U Institute resulted in an action plan for the General Education program moving forward.

Faculty focus groups were conducted last October. These faculty focus groups provided the opportunity for faculty/staff to come together and discuss their ideas about the General Education program. A designee at each table recorded the ideas from the rich conversations on giant post-it notes. These sheets were posted on the wall. A gallery walk at the end of each session allowed the attendees to see and vote for their favorite ideas. There were four questions asked, two identical questions in each session, and one different. The votes on the feedback were tallied and the top 7 answers for each question are listed below. A word cloud was also generated for each question’s answers, which gives an idea of the frequency of various ideas.

1. What would attract, inspire and excite our students and faculty in a new General Education program? (Top 7 answers)

- Experiential Learning
- Interdisciplinary Teaching
- Big Questions/Ideas/Challenges Driven Courses
- Real World Applications
- Create UA Gen Ed Story
- Skill Building
- Small Class Size

2. What should the outcomes of the UA General Education program be? (Top 7 answers)

- Global Citizens
- Intercultural Competence
- Creative and Critical Thinkers
- Effective Communicators
- Interdisciplinary Connections
- Professionalism
- Common Skills

D2L Did You Know?

D2L Community

If you are a member of The University of Arizona, and you wish to begin offering workshops and trainings for members of the general public, the D2L Community site is for you.

The D2L Community site exists to help facilitate collaboration between campus and community. When you create courses within this version of D2L, you can enroll anyone with a valid email address. If you do not charge your participants, D2L is free for you to use. If you do charge see the requirements for payment under Paying for course sites below.

If you are unsure where to begin, please contact the D2L Support Team and they can help you get started. Be sure to include that you are trying to access D2L Community, the name of the event, workshop or course and the email address you’re using.

D2L Support Contact Info:
Email: d2l@arizona.edu
Phone: (520) 626-6804 (M-F 8 am - 5 pm)

Help Request Form (UANetID login)
D2L Open Lab Hours:
Monday: 1:00pm - 4:00 pm
Tuesday: 1:00pm - 4:00 pm
Wednesday: 9:00am - 12:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00am - 12:00 pm
Friday: 9:00am - 12:00 pm

Can’t make it to Open Labs? Contact us.
Manuel Pacheco Integrated Learning Center, Room 103
The final summary is from the index cards provided to each table. Attendees were encouraged to write down anything that they did not get to share with the group, were concerned about, or did not feel comfortable sharing in a group setting. These comments were summarized by the following categories. Due to the length of the list, we are sharing only the major categories.

- Understanding the importance of Gen Ed and relevance to majors
- Faculty Development
- Creation of a final “capstone” project at completion of “Gen Ed experience”
- Assessment/Accountability
- Budget/RCM
- Advising/registration
- Course approval
- Interdisciplinarity
A student survey was graciously sent out by some of the faculty who attended one of the focus groups to students in their Gen Ed classes. We had almost 800 students respond. Below is a summary of the responses.

Student survey question #1 summary (742 responses)
How would you describe the purpose of the General Education classes you take?

9% To fulfill requirements  
3.6% Fun  
8.3% They serve no purpose, waste of time, money makers for the university  
76% To broaden education outside of major  
2% Other

Student survey question #2 summary (788 responses)
What types of courses would you be excited to take as part of General Education?

Overwhelmingly, the students wanted General Education classes that relate to various cultures, history and mythology. A close second were courses related to science (psychology, biology, astronomy, botany, etc.). Another popular response was a course on real world skills, such as how to do taxes, healthcare, job searching, how to use social media, and health and wellness.

Other areas included: Languages  
Hands-on activities Related to major  
Courses out of the ordinary (vampires, folklore, fantasy, conspiracy theories) Diversity and inclusion  
Medically related Logic/critical thinking  
Current events/modern technology Sports and recreation (Physical education)  
Nutrition and cooking Advertising/marketing  
Music, Dance, and Arts (appreciation, drawing, painting, etc.) Mindfulness (meditation, mind and body)  
Religion and spirituality

Interestingly, the mention of online courses was minimal. A few students also mentioned that they would prefer small discussion groups over large lectures. There are many other topics that were noted which may offer more insight when developing the final Gen Ed program.

Student survey question #3 summary (761 responses)
Are there particular skills that you want to learn through General Education?

There were many different “skills” that were mentioned, with some of them being more popular than others. The following list includes the most identified skills:

Life skills, including personal finance Communication skills, including public speaking and presentations  
Writing skills Critical thinking  
Broad range of knowledge Cooking  
Culture Study skills and time management  
Teamwork/interacting with others

Student survey question #4 summary (752 responses)
Would you be interested in General Education classes that help you apply what you’re learning to solve large-scale problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total affirmative (e.g. yes)</th>
<th>598</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative (e.g. no)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other answers</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I prefer to think of it as added value."
Student survey question #5 (769 responses)
For the Gen Ed courses you have taken, how did you choose your courses?

The way students choose their Gen Ed courses is not too varied. The following list is in no order:

- Course description/title sounded interesting
- Randomly
- Recommended by a friend, sorority, fraternity, etc.
- Smallest workload possible
- Advisor recommended
- If it fit in their course schedule for that semester
- Professor rating on Rate My Professor or TCEs
- If course was related to major
- If it was considered to be an "easy A"
- Smallest workload possible
- If it fit in their course schedule for that semester

What does all of this information tell us? That we need a full-time person dedicated to building our General Education Program. As such we announce our new Executive Director for General Education:

Susan Miller-Cochran, PhD
Executive Director, General Education
Refresh Initiative
Professor

Susan Miller-Cochran is professor of English and Executive Director of the General Education Refresh Initiative. She teaches undergraduate courses in rhetoric and composition and graduate courses in the doctoral program in Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English (RCTE). From 2015-2019, she directed the Writing Program at the University of Arizona. Before joining the faculty at UA, she was a faculty member at North Carolina State University (2006-2015) where she directed the First-Year Writing Program. Prior to NCSU, she was a faculty member in English at Mesa Community College (AZ). She also taught writing and applied linguistics and co-developed the first online course in the English Department as a graduate student at Arizona State University.

Susan’s charge from the Provost as the Executive Director of General Education is to work with faculty to develop a conceptual plan by March and then to work with stakeholders across campus to design the logistical support, infrastructure, and communication necessary to launch the new General Education curriculum by August 2021. She has formed a Faculty Advisory Task force that includes representation from all of the colleges as well as undergraduate students to start the work of designing the conceptual plan, and she will be seeking input from advisors, graduate students, staff, and other stakeholders along the way. The team is referencing the data collected from faculty and students as well as the 2018 General Education Task Force report.

If you are interested in working with the team revising General Education, feel free to write to her at millercochran@arizona.edu.
TRELLIS PROGRESS: LIVE FOR SPRING 2020

Trellis Progress is now available for the spring semester to all UA faculty through their D2L course sites. This convenient, comment-based feedback system provides instructors, graduate assistants, and TA’s the ability to send timely, progress reports to their students. The product focuses on three important factors that can influence a student’s experience: their relationship with an instructor, their classroom performance, and the university’s ability to intervene and guide students to academic resources. By providing faculty with a single platform to address all three factors, we hope to strengthen and support the quality of interactions we can deliver as a university.

As an instructor, the timing for feedback can be unique to course structure, but it’s important to take academic dates and deadlines into account. We recommend using Trellis Progress to send course feedback during the following windows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Length</th>
<th>Suggested Feedback Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular session courses starting on 1/15</td>
<td>Send by 2/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 week courses starting on 1/15</td>
<td>Send by 2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 week courses starting on 3/16</td>
<td>Send by 4/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 week courses starting on 1/15</td>
<td>Send by 1/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 week courses starting on 2/20</td>
<td>Send by 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 week courses starting on 4/2</td>
<td>Send by 4/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over time, Trellis and SSRI will continue exploring ways to expand usage and functionality. Feedback from faculty, students, and university partners is welcomed. Thank you to all staff for making strides to support the University’s Strategic Plan. Best wishes in the coming year.

For more information or to contact us:

Visit the Trellis CRM website at https://trellis.arizona.edu/ or contact Darcy Van Patten, Executive Director, Digital Transformation and Student and Academic Technologies.

Visit the SSRI website at https://studentsuccess.arizona.edu/trellis-progress or contact Christine Salvesen, Assistant Vice Provost, Student Success and Retention Innovation and Executive Director, SSRI Strategy Team at cls@email.arizona.edu.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS, SPRING 2020

The first set of Professional Development Offerings from the Office of Instruction and Assessment and our partners are now open for registration. Find more information and register at this link https://oia.arizona.edu/content/796

The of offerings for the entire year can be found at https://oia.arizona.edu/content/8 Registration usually opens about 3 weeks before the beginning of an offering.