ConnectED Symposium

May 4, 2022

Session 1: Path to ConnectED
The Beginning: GE Task Force

- In January 2016, the General Education Task Force (GETF) was charged by the Provost Hacket.
- The charge was to develop a general education curriculum comprised of 30 credit hours
  - which was portable across all undergraduate majors in the university.
  - Governed by a coherent rationale as required by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
  - That allowed participation from all units responsible for undergraduate education at VCU.
- Additionally the taskforce was charged to develop processes for implementing and managing the new GenEd30 curriculum.
The Beginning: GE Task Force

GETF Members

1. Jennifer A. Johnson, Associate Professor & Chair of Sociology, College of Humanities & Sciences- Chair
2. Faye Prichard, Director of Writing, Assessment, and Evaluation, Honors College- Chair
3. Genevieve Beaird, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing
4. Leigh Ann Craig, Associate Professor, Department of History, CHS
5. Alen Docef, Associate Professor, School of Engineering
6. Shelli Fowler, Interim Dean for University College, previous representative: Kristin Reed, Associate Professor
7. Nicholas R. Garcia II, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, previous representative: John Mahoney, Associate Professor
8. Robert H. Gowdy, Associate Professor, Department of Physics, CHS
9. Jeffrey S. Legg, Associate Professor, School of Allied Health Professions
10. Sara Wilson McKay, Associate Professor, School of the Arts
11. Joan M. Pellegrini, Associate Professor, School of Dentistry
12. Allison K. Ryals, Assistant Professor in Teaching, School of Social Work
13. Daniel P. Salandro, Associate Professor, School of Business
14. Mikhail J. Valdman, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, CHS
15. Joy Whitenack, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, CHS, previous representative: Angela Reynolds, Associate Professor
The Beginning: GE Task Force

Coherent Rationale:

VCU’s General Education Program seeks to provide a diverse student body with a broad base of knowledge and the intellectual skills to participate actively in a changing world. To those ends, the VCU General Education Program challenges students to seek creative answers to complex problems, see connections between disciplines and between ideas, and develop an informed perspective on the varieties of human experience.
The Beginning: GE Task Force

Themes
- Global and Cultural Awareness
- Creativity and Aesthetic Experience
- Diversities in the Human Experience
- Complex Problem Solving
- Foundations of Learning
- Scientific Reasoning

Learning Goals
- Ethics and Civic Responsibility
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Collaborative Work
- Critical Thinking
- Written & Oral Communication

Three Dimensions of GenEd
- Natural Science/Mathematics
- Fine Art/Humanities
- Behavioral/Social Sciences

SACS Mandates
The Beginning: GE Task Force

Foundations: *Remain the same as previous General Education Requirements:*

- Univ 111, 112 and 200
- Mathematics or Statistics course

Areas of Inquiry: *Developed by the GE Task Force*

- Diversities in the Human Experience
- Creativity, Innovation, and Aesthetic Inquiry
- Global Perspectives
- Scientific and Logical Reasoning
GECC and GEAC Timeline of Major Events

3/2018
Gen Ed Taskforce Report to the Provost Office

8/2018
Gen Ed Assessment Workgroup Convened

10/2018
Gen Ed Curriculum Committee Convened

1/2019
Gen Ed Workgroup Finalized Learning Goals and Outcomes

9/2019
Gen Ed Assessment Committee Convened

12/2021
Racial Literacy foundational requirement approved

2020/2021
GEAC creates Assessment Plan; GECC initiates open call for course proposals

5/2022
Summer Scoring “Learning Collaborative”
After a presentation by the Gen Ed Task Force Leadership, TWO framing questions guided our approach:

What kinds of learning is GE30 intended to provide to students? (intellectual and practical skills; a knowledge of many disciplines and modes of inquiry; integration across disciplines; experiential learning; others?)

What goals for student learning does the GE30 Final Report state and imply? What can be inferred? For this task, think of a goal as a high level expectation for what students will be know or know how to do because of the GE30 program – or something that they will know or know how to do better because of the GE30 program.
Gen Ed Assessment Requirements

**SACSCOC:**
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.

**SCHEV:**
In assessing critical thinking, written communication, quantitative reasoning, and the two additional chosen competencies, institutions shall employ rigorous strategies that rely primarily on *direct measures* (i.e., using actual student work or student performance) and that allow for inferences about the abilities of the general student population. (It is not appropriate, for example, to limit the assessment of quantitative reasoning to students who are majoring in mathematics.) Indirect measures and logical inferences may be used to complement direct assessments.
SCHEV Competencies

Four Required:

- Written Communication ➔ Communicative Fluency (including Oral Communication)
- Critical Thinking ➔ Critical and Creative Problem Solving
- Quantitative Reasoning ➔ Quantitative Literacy
- Civic Engagement ➔ Ethical Reasoning

Two Campus Choices:

- Information Literacy
- Global and Cultural Responsiveness
### First Draft of Learning Goals - November of 2018

#### DRAFT - GE 30 Learning Goals - DRAFT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GE 30 Learning Goals</th>
<th>Communicative Fluency</th>
<th>Problem Solving (critical &amp; creative)</th>
<th>Quantitative Literacy</th>
<th>Ethical Reasoning</th>
<th>Global and Cultural Responsiveness/Agility</th>
<th>Information literacy: reading; inquiry; digital mediums</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>VALUE-Oral Communication</td>
<td>VALUE-Creative Thinking</td>
<td>VALUE-Quantitative Literacy</td>
<td>VALUE-Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>VALUE-Intercultural Knowledge and Competence</td>
<td>VALUE-Information Literacy</td>
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<td>VALUE – Written Communication</td>
<td>VALUE-Critical Thinking</td>
<td>VALUE-Civic Engagement</td>
<td>VCU Core-Oral communication</td>
<td>VCU Core-Ethical and Civic Responsibility</td>
<td>VCU Core-Oral communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DQP-Communicative Fluency</td>
<td>VALUE-Problem Solving</td>
<td>SCHEV-Quantitative Literacy</td>
<td>DQP-Quantitative Fluency</td>
<td>DQP-Civic and Global Learning</td>
<td>DQP-Use of Information Sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VCU Core-Writing Proficiency</td>
<td>SCHEV-Critical Thinking</td>
<td>VCU Core-Quantitative Literacy</td>
<td>SCHEV-Civic Engagement</td>
<td>DQP-Engaging Diverse Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VCU Core-Oral communication</td>
<td>SCHEV-Oral communication</td>
<td>SCHEV-Quantitative Literacy</td>
<td>DQP-Oral communication</td>
<td>SCHEV-Oral communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCHEV Competencies</td>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>(Campus Choice)</td>
<td>(Campus Choice)</td>
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</table>
Charge

The General Education Assessment Committee is a standing, advisory committee to the Provost or designee. The committee recommends the assessment approach for general education at the University to ensure the following: 1) faculty engaged in general education teaching and learning have information from general education assessment efforts that will enhance understanding and deepening student learning in general education annually, and 2) the university will have the information necessary to meet external stakeholders’ requirements and standards for student learning in general education.

The General Education Assessment Committee is charged with designing, implementing, and administering a plan for assessing VCU’s general education goals and outcomes for student learning. The formation and charging of a general education assessment committee fulfills the 2018 General Education Task Force recommendations to the Provost. As it relates to the Task Force recommendations, the parameters for planning assessment of student learning in VCU’s general education program includes the following:
Parameters for Planning Assessment of Student Learning in VCU’s Redesigned General Education Program (Target Implementation: Fall 2021)

1. **Design** an assessment program to measure the following student learning competencies:
   - Communicative Fluency
   - Ethical Reasoning
   - Global and Cultural Responsiveness and Agility
   - Information Literacy
   - Critical and Creative Problem Solving
   - Quantitative Literacy

   across the five areas of inquiry comprising VCU’s redesigned general education program:

   - Foundations of Learning
   - Diversities in the Human Experience
   - Creativity, Innovation, and Aesthetic Inquiry
   - Global Perspectives
   - Scientific and Logical Reasoning

2. **Implement** an assessment plan in alignment with SCHEV’s policy which will:
   - include strategies for engagement, communication, and collaboration with faculty and appropriate campus partners;
   - describe and document the processes and procedures of the assessment plan;
   - document evidence of student learning and how well the competencies have been achieved;
   - inform VCU’s general education program about students’ demonstrated learning;
   - recommend benchmarks or targets to measure continued progress towards meeting the general education program’s learning competencies.

3. **Recommend** appropriate uses of assessment results to support student learning and to communicate to institutional stakeholders.
2021 AAC&U Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment
Embracing the Best Emerging Practices for Quality & Equity
February 11–13, 2021

From Reflection to Reimagination: Making Excellence the “New Normal”
2022 Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment
FEBRUARY 9 - 12, 2022
Wednesday, February 9, Virtual
Thursday, February 10-12, In Person
Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina

2019 General Education and Assessment: Creating a 21st-Century General Education—Responding to Seismic Shifts

2020 General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment

The Confluence of General Education and Liberal Studies as the Building Materials for Engaged Lifelong Learners

Colloquium on Liberal Education at Research Universities
# Gen Ed Learning Goals Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gen Ed Goal</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
<th>2022-2023</th>
<th>2023-2024</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative Fluency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Literacy</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical Reasoning</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Literacy</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global and Cultural Responsiveness</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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[https://provost.vcu.edu/initiatives/gened/goals/](https://provost.vcu.edu/initiatives/gened/goals/)
Building the Curriculum: GECC process

- Open call for proposals: Jan 2020

- Initial review process
  - 113 proposals submitted in first call; several more this past year
  - To date, 94 courses have been approved and added to the ConnectED curriculum

- Number of GenEd courses running in 2021-2022 (excluding Foundations):
  - Fall 2021: 63 courses; 361 sections
  - Spring 2022: 65 courses; 304 sections
  - 73 distinct courses running AY 21-22
  - 22 of these courses were developed specifically for the new GenEd
### Distribution of Courses: Foundations, AOI & BOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Humanities/Fine Arts</th>
<th>Natural Science</th>
<th>Social/Behavioral Science</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Diversities in the Human Experience</td>
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<td>UNIV Foundations</td>
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<td>Quantitative Foundations</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>94</strong></td>
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## Distribution of Courses: Learning Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Communicative Fluency</th>
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<th>Global and Cultural Responsiveness</th>
<th>Problem Solving (Critical &amp; Creative)</th>
<th>Quantitative Literacy</th>
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<td>Global Perspectives</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific &amp; Logical Reasoning</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>UNIV Foundations</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
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New Curriculum = Revitalized GenEd @ VCU

● **More unit participation:**
  ○ Some courses moved out of majors and opened up to general student population
  ○ Several units offering general education courses for the first time
  ○ Faculty reps on the committee designing and maintaining the curriculum

● **Innovative and balanced curriculum:**
  ○ Creative approaches to teaching disciplines in order to reach broader student audiences
  ○ Exciting new course offerings
  ○ A diversity of course options for our students
  ○ Provides a more well-rounded general education experience
New course examples

● NURS 103: Culture, Diversity & Communication in Health Care Settings
● ARTH 201: Banned! Art & Controversy
● TEDU 207: Urban Awareness & Urban Education
● DANC 230: Dance in Hollywood
● MHIS 251: American Popular Music
● BNFO 125: Disease and Human Ancestry
● THEA 215: Live Theatre Now
● INNO 210: The Innovation Intersection: Industry & Entrepreneurship
● SPCH 221: Oral Communication & Presentation
This is ConnectED!

A general education program where students can...

- Have a cross-disciplinary general education experience
- Learn from a diverse group of faculty invested in general education
- Connect their education to the world beyond the classroom

“At VCU….general education is an opportunity: a chance to expand your horizons both inside and outside the classroom. That’s why we call it ConnectED. We believe your academic work should be a bridge, connecting you to new passions and interests, and to subjects you’ll love that you might not have found otherwise. A bridge connecting you to society and the wider world, and to the skills that will help you make a difference out there in it.”

connectED.vcu.edu
Current courses: Testimonial Videos

- GenED Highlights Video
Q&A

SOCY 250

NEXT 240

TEDU 210