General Education Committee

General Education Program Review 2017-18

Summary of Proposed Pilot of Program Modifications

March 23, 2018

Based on findings from the General Education Program Review of 2017-2018 and with the goal of continuous improvement, the GEC proposes the following:

1. The cross-cutting capacities will be renamed as "University Learning Outcomes" (ULOs) and reframed as central to the general education program (see below). To help achieve this, departments could be encouraged to assess the ULOs in their general education courses, rather than the GESLOs associated with each of the discipline-specific areas.

2. To ease the transition from emphasizing GESLOs to university learning outcomes, the GEC will pilot a process in which departments with general education courses have the option of assessing either the GESLOs (knowledge-based) or ULOs (skills-based). Recruitment for the pilot assessment program could be facilitated by asking programs proposing new general education courses and those programs rewriting existing courses (intro to biology, intro to psychology, and calculus I) if they wish to participate. A call for other participants will go out in Fall 2018.

3. The GEC and UAC will offer a training/workshop for faculty participating in the pilot (pre-implementation) and a debriefing (post-implementation) to understand what worked well and adjust where needed.

4. The GEC will develop a series of informational and discussion-based workshops to introduce and promote the general education learning outcomes. These workshops should target department chairs and program directors, faculty, advisers, and students.

5. Build more flexibility into the Knowledge Applications requirement, by allowing any course outside the student's major with a general education pre-prerequisite to count for the KA requirement.

Maintaining the General Education Course List

6. The GEC will communicate with chairs in departments with general education courses that have not been offered regularly and request information about the status of the course. If it is not anticipated that the course will be revived, GEC will request removal of the general education designation from the course.

Addressing issues with assessment

7. Course-based assessment of knowledge applications and diversity will be replaced with indirect measures, for example, using data already collected from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Diverse Learning Environments (DLE). NSSE includes relevant items that would allow for comparisons over time and between students in their first year and senior year to estimate the impact of general education courses on measures of integrative learning for KA courses and for understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.) for USD courses.

8. Reducing the assessment requirements for KA may make it possible for departments to offer additional KAs, thus increasing flexibility for students (this is redundant given #5)

9. The GEC, with assistance from OIRA, will offer feedback and guidance to faculty who rely on multiple-choice, knowledge-focused assessment, helping these colleagues to explore alternative or supplemental assessment approaches that emphasize the application of knowledge or critical thinking skills. Additional resources may need to be available to support departments with large general education programs, to aid them in developing more robust assessments.

10. The GEC is responsible for approving new course proposals, reviewing petitions of exception (POEs) and transfer courses, and reviewing assessment reports. Given this work, and the need to pilot new assessment measures and assist programs with their assessment processes, an *ad hoc* General Education Assessment Committee be created for 2018–20 to direct the pilot studies, review assessment reports, and develop a strategic plan for future implementation. This committee, which would include representatives from the GEC and University Assessment Committee (UAC), could focus on helping new courses develop more robust, but achievable, assessment methods in their proposed courses and on aiding existing courses on improving their assessments. Members of this committee might provide workshops on general education course assessment and models of effective, robust assessment methods.

University Learning Outcomes Defined (formerly Cross-cutting Capacities)

ULO: Critical Thinking

Oakland University students will develop into critical thinkers capable of comprehensively exploring issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Critical thinking may be demonstrated through an OU student's ability to:

- gather and assess relevant information using abstractions for effective interpretation,
- arrive at well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, and test them against relevant criteria, and
- recognize and assess the assumptions, implications, and consequences of alternative systems of thought.

Critical thinkers are also capable of

- raising vital questions and problems, and formulating those questions clearly, and
- collaborating with others to achieve solutions to complex problems.

The critical thinking requirement can be demonstrated through a student's ability to handle formal reasoning and through more complex assignments that require OU students to analyze or critique information.

ULO: Effective Communication

OU students will become effective communicators who analyze rhetorical situations--including audience, purpose, and context--adapt their discourse to diverse genres and media, treat their sources and source material ethically, and meet the expectations of a variety of discourse communities in the academy and beyond.

ULO: Information Literacy

As information literate learners, OU students will develop an integrated set of abilities that allow them to reflectively discover information, understand how that information is produced and valued, and use information ethically to create new knowledge and participate as lifelong learners in society.

ULO: Social Awareness/Responsibility

OU students recognize themselves as members of multiple communities, constituted by their participation in the classroom, civic institutions, societal conversations, physical environments, and within increasingly-global contexts. OU students who are socially aware may become generous citizens who demonstrate their intercultural competence and consider the ethical implications of their words, actions, and engagement with or indifference to these communities.