Executive Summary

The General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee presents this document to outline the process and product of its work to propose a revised general education curriculum. Our proposal is the Big Questions Curriculum. This curriculum is defined by a set of core competencies with overarching big questions. The committee built off of the work of the General Education Curriculum Process Committee and the General Education Curriculum Review Committee to construct a curriculum that more effectively serves the mission and values of the University of Richmond. The proposed curriculum retains several aspects of the current model, including a shared first-year experience, a second language proficiency requirement, and a breadth of coursework in the liberal arts. It supplements these components with competencies that, among other things, address the current curriculum’s shortcomings in writing and numeracy. In addition, campus discussions and the University’s mission have led to the addition of an explicit diversity, equity, and inclusivity requirement. Finally, the proposed curriculum includes unifying questions to create connections between and beyond courses and to emphasize the role of multidisciplinary thinking in addressing problems. The remainder of this report outlines the details of our proposed curriculum along with its motivation and justification.
The Charge from the General Education Curriculum Review Committee to the General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee (May 2019)

The Charge.
The General Education Curriculum (GEC) at University of Richmond is the set of required courses that all undergraduates must pass prior to graduation and currently consists of two units of First-Year Seminars, up to four units of a Second Language (Com II) requirement, up to six units of Fields of Study courses, and zero-unit Wellness courses. After a year-long evaluation, the General Education Curriculum Review Committee determined that the current GEC is not well suited to teach essential skills, abilities, and perspectives for undergraduates, or to fulfill our university’s mission of preparing students “for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world.” While the structure of the curriculum is functional, the neglected GEC has become a list of boxes to check for students. The GEC contains redundancies and weaknesses in the instruction of writing, numeracy, and wellness.

The General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee is tasked to carefully sculpt and reshape UR’s GEC to patch its gaps and bring coherence to the curriculum. Given the GEC’s central role in our students’ educational experience, a well-designed, intelligible, and intellectually ambitious curriculum can invigorate the university’s faculty and students and create a sense of purpose for the university that attracts prospective students.

The Product.
Building on the suggestions and proposals outlined by the GEC Review Committee’s final report, the GEC Improvement Committee will prepare a revised general education curriculum proposal that addresses the shortcomings and incoherence of the current curriculum to present to the Faculty Senate.

The Process.
The GEC Improvement Committee will identify its chairperson or co-chairs before August 19, 2019. The GEC Review Committee chairperson will make available all documents and data generated by the review during 2018-19, including the review’s final report. By December 2019, the GEC Improvement Committee should coalesce around a draft curriculum so that relevant members of the administration (Vice President of Planning & Priority, the university registrar, etc.) can inspect the model and recommend changes. A complete and detailed proposal should be presented to the Faculty Senate, relevant faculty governance bodies, and administrators during Spring 2020 for approval (the committee should be prepared to spend more time shepherding the proposal, if necessary). If approved, the GEC Improvement Committee should create a draft charge for a new committee responsible for implementing the new curriculum.

Amended Charge (Approved at April 3, 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting)

I move that the Senate should extend GECIC’s (General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee) charge to allow them to continue their work during AY20-21, with a request that the GECIC provide the Senate with a detailed timeline of actual and discrete deliverables that will be presented to the Senate during the course of AY20-21 and a request that GECIC tie these deliverables directly and explicitly back to the work of the previous two general education reform committees.
I. Introduction

The General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee (GECIC) was formed at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year with the charge to propose a revision to the University’s general education curriculum. As stated in the charge, the general education curriculum is meant to include the current First-Year Seminars, Second Language (Com II) requirement, six units of Fields of Study courses, and Wellness courses. Following the work of the General Education Curriculum Process Committee (GECPC) and the General Education Curriculum Review Committee (GECRC), the GECIC set out to address the deficiencies of a curriculum described by the GECRC as being in an “unhealthy state”.

The University of Richmond seeks to prepare students for “lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world”. The general education curriculum, shared by all students, has the potential to be a cornerstone of a Richmond education. Previous committee work, which included faculty, student, and staff feedback, indicates that the curriculum requires considerable attention.

The GECPC (Spring 2018) offered several recommendations to avoid common, and potentially ruinous, problems in the review and revision process. The first was to identify what problems need fixing. Much of this was handled by the GECRC, and the GECIC has been careful to focus its efforts on those areas identified by the GECRC’s year-long review. Similarly, we have made efforts to consistently communicate to our academic community the importance of these areas and the importance of general education itself. A second recommendation was to value committee work and the importance of the process. The GECIC has worked to maintain a close relationship with both the administration and faculty, particularly the Faculty Senate. These relationships have led to a more transparent and productive process. Third, the GECPC suggested that the general education curriculum should be considered in its own right, as a crucial foundation to the undergraduate curriculum. For this reason, as discussed below, the GECIC began its work with the construction and sharing of goals for the general education curriculum. This established our work to address a portion of the curriculum that is shared by the entire university and fundamental to the education provided at the University of Richmond. Finally, the GECPC recommended that the process be imagined as a “research-based exercise”. Thus, curriculum review was an empirically driven process, based on literature reviews and on-campus data collection. Following this, the improvement process took a design-thinking approach that included iterations and feedback from faculty, staff, students, and outside experts. The GECIC is grateful to the GECPC, as its work provided the necessary foundation to help ensure a successful general education reform effort.

The GECRC (Summer 2018 - Spring 2019) examined the current general education curriculum to identify areas that required improvement. Their process involved a review of general education at peer and aspirant institutions, including other reform efforts. They also collected verbal and written feedback from faculty, staff, and students. The GECRC found that the current general education curriculum does not adequately provide the “essential skills, abilities, and perspectives”, nor does it fulfill the University’s mission to prepare students “for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world”. In particular, they identified key shortcomings in wellness, writing, numeracy, and cohesion. The GECIC approached the reform process with these areas in mind, seeking to construct a curriculum that is more effective and better suited to the University’s mission.

The GECIC took up its work upon the GECRC’s completion of its final report. Our process included weekly committee meetings (with time allotted for visitors), outreach to and meetings with campus stakeholders, and discussions at school faculty meetings and Faculty Senate meetings. We also held open forums in Spring and Fall 2020 to discuss curriculum models and more detailed curriculum ideas. The committee sent members to both the 2019 and the 2020 AAC&U Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment and we have continued to be in communication with associated experts. Design of the final curriculum proposal followed an iterative process, whereby the curriculum was repeatedly updated.
and modified in response to feedback. Throughout the process, our objective has been simple: to create a curriculum that reflects the values of a University of Richmond education and best serves our students.

As the culmination of its work, the GECIC presents this report that outlines our proposal for a revised general education curriculum. The proposed curriculum involves a move away from the current structure, which operates largely based on traditional academic disciplines, and toward one built on core competencies. This move reflects the transdisciplinary nature of the fundamental elements of an exceptional education. The proposed curriculum retains several aspects of the current model, including a shared first-year experience, a second language proficiency requirement, and a breadth of coursework in the liberal arts. It supplements these components with competencies that, among other things, address the current curriculum’s shortcomings in writing and numeracy. In addition, campus discussions and the University’s mission have led to the addition of an explicit diversity, equity, and inclusivity requirement. Finally, the proposed curriculum includes unifying questions to create connections between and beyond courses and to emphasize the role of multidisciplinary thinking in addressing problems.

The Big Questions Curriculum

Major structural differences relative to current curriculum:
1. The proposed curriculum is built primarily around Core Competencies and Understandings, rather than Fields of Study, with the addition of several new competencies
2. Inclusion of Big Questions courses
3. Reduction of the First-Year Seminar to a single unit
4. UR100 to replace Wellness 085 and 090 requirements

Motivation
a. The General Education Curriculum Review Committee (GECRC) emphasized the need to bring a clear identity to the general education curriculum, one that is coherent and purposeful. Furthermore, they found that the current Fields of Study (FOS) do not effectively capture the “breadth and scope” of general education, and recommended an examination of FOS definitions and boundaries. Therefore, we have built the proposed curriculum around a set of Core Competencies and Understandings (CC&Us) that reflect essential foundations of learning. These CC&Us also help to avoid the formation of silos around specific elements of the curriculum and create opportunities for a variety of disciplines in the general education curriculum. In addition to CC&Us, the Big Questions reinforce the transdisciplinarity of general education, emphasizing the roles of different disciplines and approaches to problem-solving. The Big Questions also serve to create a shared experience in the curriculum for faculty, staff, and students.

b. Among the shortcoming of the current general education curriculum, the GECRC identified particular weaknesses in writing, numeracy and wellness. The proposed curriculum reduces the First-Year Seminar (FYS) requirement, the primary vehicle for writing in the current curriculum, from 2 units to 1 unit and instead includes written communication as a CC&U that students must satisfy twice beyond FYS, thus providing opportunities for iterated instruction and skills development in this important area. We retain a single FYS course as an introduction to academic inquiry and reinforce it with more specific learning objectives for writing and oral communication. Similarly, the proposed curriculum includes a CC&U in quantitative data literacy to address numeracy and data analysis. Finally, a parallel committee has created and piloted
UR100, “a 14-week course around issues intended to facilitate a positive, healthy start for all incoming first-year students”. The committee supports this as an effective approach to wellness. We recommend that future work in implementing a revised curriculum be reconnected with the UR100 program.

c. The GECRC suggested a requirement that addresses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI). Numerous faculty and student voices, particularly in response to the current socio-political landscape and events on campus and in the city of Richmond, echoed this sentiment. Moreover, DEI is a cornerstone of the University Mission and Value Statements. Still, the current general education curriculum lacks any explicit recognition of DEI. The proposed curriculum, therefore, features DEI as a core competency.

II. Committee Work

The General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee (hereafter referred to as GECIC) was formed late in the spring semester of 2019. The committee began its work soon thereafter, beginning with meetings with GECRC members, allowing us to study, in depth, the work of that committee, as well as the work of the previous committee, the GECPC, in 2017-18. Several members of the GECIC attended the AACU Institute on General Education & Assessment (IGEA) in June of 2019, and the GECIC engaged with their work across the remainder of the summer. Important early work included engaging with both the GECRC and the GECPC reports, reviewing the resources contained in those reports, investigating additional resources for general education review and reform, meeting with campus leaders regarding diversity, equity, and inclusivity, building upon the work begun at the AACU IGEA conference, and finally, constructing goals that would help to guide our work. We first shared our goals in community info sessions in early fall 2019. Those goals, which continued to serve as the backbone of our efforts across the nearly two years of our work, are:

1. Introduce students to modes of academic inquiry that lead to thoughtful, critical analysis and provide a foundation for lifelong learning.

2. Challenge students to integrate and synthesize knowledge in order to ask questions, solve problems, gain perspectives, and apply learning.

3. Engage students in thoughtful self-reflection and exploration of their place in relation to a dynamic and diverse community.

As the fall progressed, we constructed the basics of three different models, each of which took into account the recommendations of the GECRC. We shared those models with our campus community in early 2020 for comments and feedback. While elements of nearly all of the models found some champions, it was clear that each of the models, as constructed at that time, also contained elements that were either not popular or raised concerns. And just before we were to present the three models, the campus was rocked by a series of racial hate crimes, which resulted in a loud and clear call for a diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) component to be included in any general education revision. The GECIC took all of the feedback it received during the campus forums and went back to work on the models. In particular, we spent time in February undertaking a study of how other schools were incorporating DEI into their general education curricula. We also met with members of the ICC to help guide us in this
work. In fact, our last day on campus, prior to the pandemic shut down, was spent in a meeting between GECIC and ICC members.

We expected to have additional models to share in late March/early April, yet the COVID-19 pandemic altered that plan. The GECIC realized just as UR went fully virtual in March of 2020 that we needed more time for our work. The task was simply too large to adequately complete in a single year, given that our community wanted more from us than a general education model; they also wanted questions answered concerning implementation, which was not a part of the committee’s original charge. Yet, it was clear that any general education model presented to the faculty for a vote had to include details about implementation, oversight, faculty training, resources, etc. COVID-19 also slowed things way down, as faculty were no longer fully invested in the work of the GECIC, given the necessity of pivoting to an all online teaching format literally overnight. Faculty on the GECIC were also facing teaching challenges and those needed to be addressed first. While the GECIC continued its work, the committee did need a short period to refocus and reorganize, as basically everyone else on campus did after the spring pivot. Finally, we also needed time to educate ourselves as to what other schools were doing in bringing DEI into their general education curricula, and how we might do that at UR. The committee membership changed in May, with Kevin Cherry rotating off and Armond Towns coming onto the committee. Dr. Towns was an integral part of the GECIC’s work on bringing DEI into the BQ Curriculum model. So, with each of these things in mind, the committee requested more time in order to faithfully discharge its responsibility. The extension was granted, with the final draft report now due to the Faculty Senate on January 22, 2021. This extension was helpful to us, as it allowed us to continue to both deepen and broaden the scope of our work, even during the pandemic lock down and beyond. The committee met regularly during our first year of work, for 90 minutes each week.

During the summer of 2020, a team from the GECIC attended a virtual AACU IGEA, this time bringing specific ideas and questions that followed our first year of work. The Institute was a high value experience for our team, particularly due to our interactions with our faculty mentors and other school teams. We were also able to develop a plan that we enacted as soon as the institute ended, resulting in the creation of multiple learning outcomes for several of our CC&Us (as well as allowing us time for consulting with campus stakeholders about the language of those learning outcomes and revising where necessary), a timeline for moving through the fall semester (which we followed almost to the letter), and, importantly, the construction of the BQ Curriculum. Included in our summer 2020 work was the creation of our DEI learning outcomes. Dowha Karar, a Westhampton student, also joined our committee over the summer, replacing Jennifer Munnings who had just graduated.

Across the fall of 2020 we continued to meet with stakeholders and opened up the first thirty minutes of our weekly two-hour meetings to our community. We heard from multiple campus constituents (faculty, staff, and students) across those weekly 30-minute conversations, addressing multiple topics that spanned the BQ curriculum model. We also continued to meet with various faculty groups (such as junior faculty, second language faculty, the Humanities Advisory Board, and others) while also holding four community forums: two in October (15, 16) and two in November (19, 20). Finally, we also shared updates with the Faculty Senate, and joined faculty meetings of A&S, Business, and Jepson Schools. We are grateful to our colleagues who took the time to meet with the committee across the fall semester – their input was always heard and considered, and resulted in changes that strengthened the promise of the BQ Curriculum itself.

Midway through the semester we began work on a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document based, in part, on the questions that came to us from the campus forums. Working on the FAQ document also allowed us to view the BQ curriculum from multiple vantage points, which in turn helped us to sketch out what implementation might look like. Toward the close of the fall semester, the committee continued to hear concerns from one area of Arts & Sciences, in particular. The GECIC requested an extension of the
deadline for our final draft report from Faculty Senate so that we could continue to study and address these concerns. Members of the GECIC continued to work on supporting documents across the winter break, and met with stakeholders prior to the start of classes in January 2021. Those meetings and other input resulted in additional changes to the model to address concerns about the perceived complexity and lack of breadth. The BQ Curriculum model, presented to the Faculty Senate on January 22, reflects those changes.

III. The Big Questions Curriculum Proposal

a. Vision statement and goals

The Big Questions curriculum at the University of Richmond is designed to provide students with a grounding in the liberal arts & sciences. Historically the liberal arts provided an education for free people, for participation in civic life, and we envision this Big Questions curriculum as providing an education both foundational and flexible enough for 21st-century citizenship. Students may “enter” the curriculum at a number of different points, but all of them are grounded in the liberal arts & sciences. Their focus may be on the transdisciplinary “Big Questions” (BQ) that animate cross-campus discussion. These courses, grounded in traditional disciplines and interdisciplinary programs, may also satisfy Core Competencies & Understandings (CC&U) requirements, but for some students they will be the unifying “core” of their curricular explorations. Other students may find themselves most animated by the opportunity to develop core competencies and understandings (CC&U), in courses that provide skills for lifelong learning. Again, these courses may at the same time be posing Big Questions, and will always be grounded in disciplinary or interdisciplinary content, but some students will be most drawn to their skill-based focus. Some elements of the curriculum may best be provided at an advanced level, within majors: a second writing intensive course, focused on writing in the discipline, for example, or an oral communication requirement, satisfied by a major requirement to present research in public or to take a certain number of courses that include a focus on presentation and/or speaking skills. The intent of the curriculum is to provide a uniquely integrated experience for each student: as they select their course of study, choosing among elective, pre-requisite, and major courses, they will find attributes of the general education available in every category.

The curriculum serves both those students who entered the University already committed to an academic pursuit, and those who hope to discover it here. Its interlocking components mean that exploration is rewarded, while not disadvantaging those who are already focused.

Every new curriculum is a leap of faith, and an investment in the future. Taking on this work is challenging and requires a commitment to student learning. There are always details to be worked out and that is also the case here. That said, this curriculum reflects the work not only of three committees over the course of almost four years, but of colleagues who have provided feedback and experts whom we have consulted. The learning outcomes outlined here, we hope, guide the development of robust new courses as well as revisions of current ones, many of which will transfer easily into this curriculum.

The General Education Curriculum supports the University’s mission with three objectives.

1. Introduce students to modes of academic inquiry that lead to thoughtful, critical analysis and provide a foundation for lifelong learning.

2. Challenge students to integrate and synthesize knowledge in order to ask questions, solve problems, gain perspectives, and apply learning.
3. Engage students in thoughtful self-reflection and exploration of their place in relation to a dynamic and diverse community.

b. Overview of curriculum

The Big Questions curriculum weaves transdisciplinary questions through a set of competency requirements, all of which are housed in departments and interdisciplinary programs. The objective is to build competencies in key areas, introduce students to multiple modes of inquiry, and bring context and cohesion to a student’s coursework through overarching questions. Structurally, the curriculum requires students to take courses designated with particular attributes to fulfill an aggregate requirement. This set of attributes can be divided into three components:

1. **Big Questions**: The Big Questions provide an opportunity for students to engage with pressing and enduring questions. This approach recognizes that a key element of education is learning what questions to ask and how to pose them. These questions challenge thought, shake up disciplinary boundaries, and engage students to bring their diverse perspectives to bear on enduring as well as emerging issues. Students must take two Big Questions courses.

2. **The Core Competencies & Understandings**: The Core Competencies and Understandings are the centerpiece of the curriculum. They build a foundation for student growth and provide students with what they need to ask questions and solve problems across an array of disciplines. They provide skills for lifelong learning, competencies and understandings that students will continue to draw on throughout their lives both to “produce scholarly and creative work” and to maintain an attitude of “thoughtful inquiry” to the world around them. There are twelve core competencies & understandings, with variable unit requirements attached to each; a single course may have up to two core competencies. All CC&U courses, like Big Questions courses, are housed within departments and interdisciplinary programs. Combining CC&Us in an individual course creates an integrative educational experience that foregrounds the ways both traditional disciplines and interdisciplinary scholars approach their content. The frameworks, pedagogies, and content areas of each CC&U may differ, but all share the fundamental values of intellectual exploration, knowledge creation, and creative problem solving.

3. **The First Year**: All students will take a first-year seminar to introduce them to the fundamentals of college-level writing, information literacy, and oral communication. These small courses also offer the opportunity to work closely with a faculty mentor and develop intellectual community. FYS courses should include written communication and oral communication as learning objectives, consistent with the detailed learning objectives in this proposal. First-year students must also complete a required wellness seminar. FYS and Wellness courses may not count toward any other requirement.

i. Core Competencies and Understandings (Description of Learning Outcomes in Appendix A)

- Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of courses a student must take with that CC&U. For Second Language Proficiency, we retain the definition in the current curriculum, rather than a required number of courses.
- Artistic Expression (1)
- Deep Reading (1)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (2)
- Experimental Reasoning (1)
- Change Over Time (1)
- Structured Reasoning (1)
- Oral Communication (1)
- Quantitative Data Literacy (1)
- Second Language Proficiency (second language proficiency)
- Social Inquiry (1)
- Written Communication (2)

ii. Recommendations for implementation

This section provides GECIC recommendations for implementation of the BQ Curriculum as well as the rationale for these recommendations. If the BQ curriculum is adopted by the UR faculty, an Implementation Committee that follows will ultimately determine implementation details including rollout, course approval, and assessment. (See the formal charge for the Implementation Committee in Section V.)

The GECIC recommends there be consistent, thorough, and prudent oversight of all aspects of the BQ curriculum. To this end, the GECIC recommends the appointment of a new Director of General Education (and perhaps the establishment of an office of general education) to oversee the curriculum alongside the General Education and FYS Committees.

- Recommendation 1: We recommend the appointment of a Director of General Education, who could oversee the curriculum and interface with the General Education Committee to oversee the CC&Us and BQs. In fact, this director could be part of a new Office of General Education. The Director of General Education should come from the teaching faculty and have experience in general education and/or curriculum development. The position should carry with it course reassignment comparable to the Director of the Faculty Teaching & Learning Hub or an Associate Provost or Associate Dean position, and should report to Academic Affairs to provide appropriate oversight.
- Recommendation 2: We recommend a new Big Questions (BQ) subcommittee be formed. This committee will be in charge of selecting new and curating the existing list of big questions for the BQ curriculum, approving courses for BQ credit, and assessing existing courses already designated for BQ credit.
- Recommendation 3: We recommend a new CC&U subcommittee focus on approving courses for Core Competency & Understanding (CC&U) credit as well as assessing existing courses already designated for CC&U credit. The committee would approve courses based on instructor plans to substantively integrate the CC&U learning outcomes listed above into their course learning goals.
- Recommendation 4: We recommend the retention of the FYS committee. The committee would begin by reconsidering existing FYS courses in light of the BQ Curriculum’s updated learning outcomes for FYS. The ongoing charge of this committee should be both to approve new courses for FYS credit and assess existing courses already designated for FYS credit.
- Rationale for these Recommendations: One of the shortcomings of our current general education curriculum is that there is no rigorous oversight of courses, in large part because the job is one that takes time and attention. Our recommended enhanced committee structure and centralized Director of General Education should allow for more effective oversight of the new BQ Curriculum both holistically and at the level of individual components.
The Director of General Education together with the BQ, GE, and FYS committees will be important resources needed for the new curriculum to thrive at UR. The GECIC also recommends resources in the form of stipends and professional development for individual faculty interested in developing and adapting courses for the BQ curriculum.

- Recommendation 1: We recommend that stipends be made available for faculty who are interested in developing and teaching courses for the BQ curriculum. This could also involve an agreement by faculty members to offer the corresponding course a certain number of times.
- Recommendation 2: Professional development opportunities should also be available for faculty interested in developing courses. These could take the form of workshops dedicated to individual CC&Us and to pedagogy to support them. These workshops could be hosted by external consultants or experts from within the faculty. These workshops should be encouraged, and perhaps required where no other expertise in an area can be demonstrated but not required. They could be offered in coordination with the UR Faculty HUB.
- Rationale for these Recommendations: Adapting and designing courses requires an immense amount of work, and faculty need support in this work. These faculty resources will enrich our curriculum, promote a greater number of course offerings, and engage faculty in important discussions around best practices.

Many of the details of approving courses for various BQ curriculum attributes would be determined by an Implementation committee in conjunction with campus stakeholders. Here, the GECIC offers guidelines for course approval processes and policies. Other Logistics

- Recommendation 1: We recommend that BQ and CC&U courses can be taken within a student’s major. This should be entirely up to individual departments/programs, yet the GECIC hopes that various elements of the BQ curriculum could either count for the major or could be taken in the major.
- Recommendation 2: We recommend that a single course count for no more than two CC&Us. Attributes should be driven by the appropriate pedagogy and content area focus of the course. Some important exceptions: an FYS course should only count for FYS and no additional general education requirements, and courses cannot count for more than one BQ.
- Recommendation 3: We recommend that AP courses continue to be the responsibility of individual departments with the responsibility to offer credit for particular courses.
- Recommendation 4: We recommend study abroad courses could count for any element of the BQ curriculum in UR-based study abroad programs as long as they meet the learning outcomes.
- Recommendation 5: For multi-section courses, such as ECON 101, we recommend all sections must carry the same set of CC&U attributes. However, the Big Question attribute could come at the instructor level.
- Rationale for these Recommendations: These recommendations are offered as a way to balance feasibility of the curriculum from the point of view of students and flexibility for individual faculty in terms of what they teach.

Finally, the GECIC recommends a 2-year roll out of the BG curriculum and a thorough review/evaluation of the program after 5 years.
IV. Curriculum FAQ

OVERVIEW:

What are the elements of the BQ Curriculum?
- 1-unit first-year seminar; Wellness (.25 units)
- Students will take courses to satisfy two additional areas
  - Core Competencies & Understandings: Cover 12 CC&Us (as defined below; some require more than one unit in the area)
  - Big Questions: 2 units designated as Big Questions Courses

What are the CC&Us?
Core Competencies and Understandings:
- provide students with what they need to ask questions and solve problems across an array of disciplines
- provide skills for lifelong learning, competencies and understandings that students will continue to draw on throughout their lives both to “produce scholarly and creative work” and to maintain an attitude of “thoughtful inquiry” to the world around them
- build a foundation for student growth

The CC&U areas are:
- Artistic Expression (1)
- Deep Reading (1)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (2)
- Experimental Reasoning (1)
- Change Over Time (1)
- Integrative Learning (TBD—pilot program will determine unit structure)
- Structured Reasoning (1)
- Oral Communication (1)
- Quantitative Data Literacy (1)
- Second Language Proficiency (0-4)
- Social Inquiry (1)
- Written Communication (2)

What is a Big Question Course?
Big Questions courses
- engage with pressing and enduring questions
- recognize that true education lies in learning what questions to pose and how to pose them as much as how to answer them.
- challenge thought, shake up disciplinary boundaries, and engage students to bring their diverse perspectives to bear on enduring as well as emerging issues

And may also:
- create opportunity for high impact practices such as community-based learning, faculty-mentored research, and living-learning communities.
- provide an opportunity to explore transdisciplinary questions that engage scholars, thinkers, and doers from a variety of perspectives

A “Big Question” must thus be susceptible to approach from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, must be engaged throughout the semester, and must be of enduring interest to both students and faculty.
LOGISTICS:

Could any attributes of the BQ curriculum be taken in the major?
That will be entirely up to individual departments/programs, yet the GECIC hopes that various elements
of the BQ curriculum could either count for the major or could be taken in the major. For example,
perhaps one of the CC&U writing intensive courses could come in a department’s senior seminar. Or
perhaps a CC&U class could serve as a gateway to the major (just as many of our Fields of Study classes
do now). Or perhaps a Big Question class could be another gateway to the major. Indeed, there is nothing
to prevent any of a department’s courses being designated as CC&U and/or Big Question, thus easing
the distinction between major and non-major courses if a department should so choose.

Won’t the BQ curriculum be too complicated for both student and advisor to navigate?
It will take our community time to become knowledgeable about any new general education curriculum.
While it may present some challenges early on, it will become more comfortable over time, just as our
current general education curriculum has become. And the BQ curriculum offers far more variety and
flexibility than our field-of-study curriculum, for both faculty and students.

What kinds / types of support will be available to help faculty to transition to the BQ curriculum?
The GECIC recommends that training and stipends be made available to all faculty adapting or
developing courses as we transition to the BQ curriculum. Faculty will want to revise existing courses to
adapt to the new curriculum, or create new courses to fit into the new curriculum. Faculty may need
support and training for teaching courses that include the DEI CC&U, for example, or a refresher course
on offering a writing intensive course.

What kind of oversight of the BQ curriculum would be put into place?
The GECIC recommends that there be consistent, thorough, and prudent oversight of all aspects of the
BQ curriculum. We recommend the appointment of a Director of General Education, who could then
interface with various general education committees. One of the shortcomings of our current general
education curriculum is that there is no rigorous oversight of courses, in large part because the job is one
that takes time and attention. Thus the GECIC’s recommendation to create a position, or perhaps even an
office, reporting to Academic Affairs, to provide appropriate oversight.

What will the approval process be for BQ curriculum courses?
The GECIC expects that courses approved as BQ courses will be done through the a subcommittee of the
General Education committee. This subcommittee would also be responsible for determining the BQ
course questions.

How many attributes can be in a single course?
We recommend no more than two CC&Us per course. A Big Question course may add up to two
CC&Us. FYS courses may not add CC&Us or the BQ attribute.

What is the timeline? What comes next?
The GECIC will deliver the BQ curriculum to the Faculty Senate on January 22, 2021, in a final draft
proposal. There will then be ample time for community discussion on the proposal across the remainder
of January and throughout February. The members of the GECIC will be offering fora for discussion,
meeting with stakeholders to work through CC&U learning outcomes and to receive feedback, and
meeting with faculty of A&S, Business, and Jepson. It is the GECIC’s intention that we reach as many
people as possible in order to receive feedback on the BQ curriculum model, allowing us to then refine
the model prior to submitting our final proposal to the Faculty Senate by the beginning of March. Faculty
Senate will then determine next steps as regards voting on the proposal. If the proposal passes, the GECIC will then offer the charge for the Implementation Committee.

CORE COMPETENCIES AND UNDERSTANDINGS:

How do we define Deep Reading? DEI? Other CC&Us?
See Learning Outcomes in the appendix.

How much attention must a course give to a CC&U for the course to receive that attribute?
While this will be up to the implementation committee, the GECIC anticipates that courses receiving CC&U attribution will need to dedicate explicit instructional time to any attribute, and to build them into the learning goals for the course. In applying for CC&U attribution, an instructor/department would indicate the CC&U’s integration into the course by demonstrating its inclusion in the learning outcomes. We will provide draft implementation guidelines for all CC&U outcomes to suggest effective practices for integrating CC&Us into courses.

Will faculty be able to receive training necessary for teaching a course that addresses DEI?
Yes, this is something that the GECIC would expect to see as the BQ curriculum is brought online.

Why are there two DEI units in the CC&Us?
The GECIC is recommending two units of DEI in the CC&Us because our research into this element of a general education curriculum led us to this conclusion. An in-depth study of general education curricula with DEI included at other institutions made clear that this element should not be treated as a “one and done” course. In fact, there is doubt that a single DEI course was actually that effective. Our on-campus experts, as well as our AAC&U summer institute faculty, also concurred that DEI in general education could not be appropriately addressed in a single course. We include two units of DEI in our proposal so as to allow for scaffolded learning in this area; the student is exposed to the DEI learning outcomes not once, but twice, allowing for a deeper engagement with material and a more profound learning experience.

Why are there two writing intensive units in the CC&Us, in addition to the focus on writing in FYS?
One of the recommendations that came to the GECIC from the GECRC was to increase our students’ engagement with writing. Again, as with DEI, we hope to scaffold writing across the general education curriculum and, perhaps even beyond, if departments choose to bring one of the writing intensive CC&U units into one of their major courses, such as a senior seminar. A deliberate engagement with writing would, in that case, start in the FYS, build in another general education course, then move into the major, allowing for a writing intensive experience within the student’s chosen discipline.

Would there be an enrollment limit for writing intensive classes?
The GECIC recommends an enrollment limit of 12 for writing intensive courses, which research has shown offers optimum attention on writing within a class structure. We recommend further study of the issue, especially the impact on staffing, by the implementation committee. The FYS classes already have a 16-student limit on enrollment, and the GECIC supports that same limit going forward.

What is integrative learning? How does IL fit into the BQ curriculum?
Integrative learning is an understanding that students build across the general education curriculum, major, and/or various co-curricular programs. Students begin by making simple connections among ideas and experiences and progress by synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. Integrative learning requires students to reflect on specific elements of their
college experience, and construct a coherent narrative that draws on carefully selected learnings and signature work.

The curriculum as structured creates many opportunities for integration, and while there is at present only a pilot program planned for formal IL instruction and assessment, most students should experience the curriculum in a more integrated way than at present. For example, the curriculum is integrated through the “doubling up” of attributes. As courses combine attributes—for example, Deep Reading with Artistic Expression; Social Inquiry with DEI; Change Over Time with DEI; QDL with Logical/Structured Analysis; QDL with Experimental Reasoning—the curricular integration starts to happen right at the level of the course, with courses that literally integrate two (or more) elements of the curriculum.

We share a proposal for an Integrative Learning Pilot Program in the Appendix of this report.

Why do we need a Structured Reasoning CC&U? Isn’t the CC&U Quantitative Data Literacy requirement the same thing? Isn’t that two Math classes in the general education curriculum?

The QDL competency is a response to the results of the GECRC’s work, which suggests that numeracy is lacking in the curriculum. This is distinct from the Structured Reasoning CC&U. The Structured Reasoning CC&U requirement introduces students to a broad field of problem-solving built on abstraction and logic. The QDL competency, however, focuses on application, providing a specific set of skills that permeates multiple areas of inquiry. Similar to how Deep Reading and Writing span several disciplines, QDL is a fundamental competency for working with quantitative data in the social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities, as well as for understanding the plethora of quantitative information we live with today.

In the BQ curriculum, we anticipate that courses that fulfill the Social Inquiry and Experimental Reasoning CC&U requirements will contribute to the QDL competency as much as, if not more than, courses aligned with Structured Reasoning.

What about AP and IB? Could a student pass out of any of the BQ curriculum using AP or IB?

In our current general education curriculum, it is possible for a student to receive credit by examination for almost any given area of the general education curriculum at the University of Richmond. CC&Us and BQs are designed to expose students to a broad variety of disciplines through a different mechanism than the traditional distribution requirement, which makes exemption from any one area less likely in the BQ curriculum than in the current curriculum.

Decisions regarding which CC&Us must be completed at UR will be one of the important charges of the implementation committee. We recommend, however, that if a student brings in credit for a course that bears multiple CC&Us, no more than a single CC&U be completed via the AP/IB exam mechanism. Departments currently determine whether they want AP or IB scores to count for any courses in their area; the GECIC is not recommending any changes to that current policy, but the CC&U subcommittee would need to review courses satisfied by AP/IB exam for CC&U credit.

BIG QUESTIONS:

Can a FYS be a BQ?
No, though a BQ may have up to two CC&U attributes.

Do the BQs have a disciplinary emphasis? Can they count towards a major requirement?
Yes, we expect that BQs will cover a wide range of academic areas and disciplines.

Must students take both their BQ courses on the same Big Question?
No, but they may. Students may choose to focus on a single question in two different courses, or they may choose to explore two different big questions. The committee recommends that the two BQs be taken in two different departments or programs.

How long would the BQ questions be in rotation?
While this is likely a question for an implementation committee, the GECIC has suggested that a BQ should be in place long enough so that a course that is newly created for the BQ portion of the curriculum can be taught multiple times over several years. Perhaps the BQ committee could rotate one or two questions every few years, thus allowing some questions to continue while others are changed.

OTHER:

Could a student fulfill aspects of the BQ curriculum while studying abroad?
Yes, though, as with AP/IB, there are likely to be few one-to-one correspondences, and courses may not carry the same CC&Us in the abroad institution that they would at UR. Close examination of syllabi and assignments will be required to determine CC&U credit at non-UR study abroad programs. Students could complete any element of the BQ curriculum in UR-based study abroad programs as long as they meet the learning outcomes.

Could any Second Language Proficiency classes also include a BQ or additional CC&U attribute?
Yes, though it will be up to the individual departments to determine whether it is pedagogically appropriate to include a second CC&U or BQ attribute in their SLP general education classes.

How will faculty request approval for courses in the BQ Curriculum?
a. We recommend that the GEC have two subcommittees devoted to overseeing gen ed attribute proposals:
   1. One subcommittee for BQ requests
   2. One subcommittee for CC&U requests

How will attributes be handled for multiple sections of courses?
For multi-section courses, such as ECON 101, all sections must carry the same CC&Us (if they carry that attribute). In other words, in multiple sections of a single course, those courses must all carry the same BQ Curriculum attributes when it comes to CC&Us. However, the Big Question attribute could come at the instructor level. So, ECON 101 might have the same CC&U attribute, and, (say, the Oral Communication), for all sections of that class. However, an individual faculty member teaching ECON 101 could, if she so desired, also include a Big Question for her course.

How will attributes be handled for individual courses (without multiple sections of the same course)?
A faculty member can submit for any attributes from any either area of the BQ Curriculum; once the GEC has approved the request, the faculty member would need to submit a proposal to make any changes (switching to another BQ, or CC&U, for example).

Can a FYS course have any other attributes (CC&U, BQ)?
No, it cannot. Because FYS has its own learning outcomes that include writing and oral communication, as well as information literacy, adding more learning outcomes associated with other attributes would not be pedagogically appropriate.

What about a faculty member asking to teach a CC&U when they do not have a terminal degree in that area? For SACS accreditation, faculty need to have credentials in the subject area in which they teach. CC&Us combine an emphasis on course framework, pedagogy, and (in some cases) subject matter: for those in which subject matter is central to the learning outcome, faculty will need demonstrable expertise, as they would for any other course.

Could we possibly streamline new course approvals with BQ curriculum attributes at the same time? That process now takes two different steps. This would be something for the various schools to consider.

How will transfer students fulfill the general education requirements? Transfer students are exempt from the FYS requirement. All other requirements must be fulfilled. Transfer courses may be reviewed for CC&U requirements. BQ classes must be completed at Richmond.
Appendix A

GECIC Core Competencies and Understandings: Learning Outcomes

A. Artistic Expression
B. Change Over Time
C. Deep Reading
D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity
E. Experimental Design and Analysis
F. Structured Reasoning
G. Oral Communication
H. Quantitative Data Literacy
I. Social Inquiry
J. Written Communication
A. Artistic Expression

Artistic expression is marked by innovative, creative, and artistic thinking that fosters new and expanded habits of mind. Students thrive by engaging across difference and critically investigating the world through creative processes. The study of artistic expression raise questions about the forms, traditions, meaning, and historical contexts of works in a variety of artistic media and explore issues of method, process, and personal resources in those media. These courses examine the nature of artistic expression and involve students in the creative process, embracing, exploring, and analyzing a maker’s mindset. Courses satisfying the artistic expression CC&U are suffused with the notion that the arts are a powerful and profound influence on human perception and understanding.

Artistic Expression Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate a basic knowledge of the vocabulary and concepts required within the particular medium. They will be able to identify and discuss formal elements of artistic expression and to recognize traditions and conventions used in a variety of artworks within the medium studied.

2. Students will be able to analyze and interpret artistic media with a consideration of their cultural and historical contexts.

3. Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the artistic process as well as the acquisition of the skills necessary to implement their creative choices. This includes embodied learning as relates to the visual and performing arts; for other artistic disciplines, other modes of learning may be more appropriate.

B. Change Over Time

Courses that explore change over time study the construction of political, social, and/or symbolic worlds across a specific period or epoch. They analyze the ever-changing contexts that influence human thought and action, and challenge social institutions and systems. They also teach students about the nature of historical evidence and the claims that can be drawn from it.

Change Over Time Learning Objectives

1. Students will explore how people have made the world and lived in it, and how they have created and responded to change.

2. Students will draw on different objects of study to analyze change over time: social and legal structures, cultural beliefs and practices, political and economic systems, situating each within the context of time and place.
3. Students will use and evaluate historical evidence from diverse sources (both primary and secondary); this may require bringing large amounts of information into coherent focus or interpreting single artifacts and texts. Applying a critical evaluation of sources, students will consider the limits of evidence and use it judiciously to express clear and subtle insights about the objects of study.

C. Deep Reading

Good, careful readers should do more than comprehend, i.e. “get the meaning” of any written or visual work; they should think about its nuances, its implications, the questions it raises, and possible counter-arguments or alternative perspectives. “Reading”—which in this case may go far beyond processing written language—involves simultaneously constructing and apprehending meaning from the interaction with a text.

Deep reading thus requires students to engage substantively with texts of various forms and genres—written materials, visual and aural works, both primary and secondary sources—that require diverse strategies targeted to the specific qualities of the work under consideration. Deep reading requires a close and sustained engagement on the part of the student, involving three tiered and related practices:

1. **Identification**: Students will learn to place the source in the context of its production and circulation. This includes identifying a source within the following modalities:
   - **genre/discipline** (academic or non-academic, any relevant disciplinary conventions learned through academic discourse or a knowledge framework, etc.),
   - **format** (e.g. print, digital, live performance, physical object),
   - **type** (to identify the conversations that the source belongs to and engages with; for example, primary/secondary/tertiary) and
   - **tone** (irony, humor, satire, anger, authority, and so on)

2. **Analysis**: Students will recognize and use features of a text to build a more advanced understanding of its meaning, paying attention to how its parts interact to make sense (if they do), or what larger meaning they convey. By focusing on analytical reading goals, a student will
   - Articulate an understanding of how parts and wholes interact in a pattern of meaning
   - Demonstrate awareness of the relations among ideas, structure, and other textual features

3. **Interpretation**: Students will develop a clear understanding of what the source communicates, on multiple levels. By concentrating on interpretive reading goals, a student will
   - think holistically about the source overall, moving between the micro and macro levels of comprehension.
   - learn to read selectively as well as linearly. They will focus on the important sections that may allow them to see the whole. They will read these important sections more carefully.
   - think about a source rhetorically (i.e., what the source says or demonstrates), rather than solely as a repository of information.
   - read interpretively by constructing or interacting with the complexity of texts; they will apprehend and apply interpretive frames to a reading to gain deeper, more nuanced understanding
D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI)

DEI learning outcomes:

1. Students will systemically analyze the origins and dynamics of domestic and global structural power imbalances within and across groups as reflected through social, historical, and cultural forms and practices, and, if applicable, learn strategies to promote equity.
2. Students should demonstrate knowledge of similarities and differences in attitudes, beliefs, and experiences transnationally, cross-culturally, and across groups
3. Students should systematically analyze how their own and others’ attitudes and beliefs are shaped by context, including both their self-identification with particular groups and the way that they may be identified with particular groups (including, but not limited to, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, ability status, religion, class)

*Rationale for DEI learning outcomes: At the University of Richmond, we strive “to prepare students to contribute to, and succeed in, a complex, interconnected world.” In addition, we seek “to produce knowledge to address pressing problems faced by people around the globe,” while being aware of our socio-political-economic positions. Building on the Office of the President’s goal of “identifying inequities in the experiences and outcomes of students, faculty, and staff in order to address them systematically and ensure all members of our community can fully participate in the life of the institution,” we see inequities, exclusion, and a lack of diversity as systematic problems; therefore the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion must meet this problem at scale through systematic change. To say DEI must be systematic means that it is not an issue reducible to individual feelings of inclusion or exclusion, but an issue inseparable from power relations that disproportionately affect people based on their differing social-structuring positions.

DEI courses involve three interlocking elements: approach, delivery, and subject matter:

**Approach to the material:** DEI is woven into the fabric of the course, not included as a “diversity week” or “multicultural month.”

**Delivery:** the pedagogy of DEI courses should be informed by work in antiracist and/or inclusive pedagogy

**Subject matter:** instructors should have subject matter expertise in the proposed course topic. While DEI topics can vary broadly, some areas of investigation might include:

- The critical study of race, class, gender, sex, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, age, color, nationality and religion, and/or other identity categories, especially with regard to the experiences of historically marginalized populations;
- The analysis of laws, regulations, procedures, and policies that have enforced or opposed inequity and injustice;
- The exploration of theories that explain, analyze or critique inequality;
- The empirical examination of coalition and community-building, collaboration across difference, and other practices aimed at increasing inclusion.
o The analysis of how art, science, religion, and/or other cultural and institutional practices are implicated in (both shaped by and shaping of) historical and contemporary values and practices with regard to power, privilege, and disadvantage.

E. Experimental Design and Analysis

The ability to design, perform and analyze an experiment is a fundamental skill important for all of our students. The experience necessary to successfully construct a hypothesis, devise a plan for collecting data that proves or disproves that hypothesis, and analyzing the subsequent data, is key to being a professional in modern society. The importance of this skill is not limited to science, nor social science students. Anyone who has ever planned a trip, written a business plan, built a website, home, or business, or supervised a home renovation (to mention only a few examples), benefitted from the structured, step-by-step process that they learned in previous experimental design courses. Secondarily, the ability to utilize instruments and techniques helps our students to develop dexterity, patience and precision. Such experiences also help our students to think beyond the parameters of the “given”, and to imagine new tools and discoveries that will benefit humankind.

Experimental Analysis Learning Outcomes

1. **Design**: Students will gain experience constructing experiments based on testable hypotheses, focusing on the proper controls and measurable outcomes. Experimental design should address reproducibility, variability, bias, and sample size.

2. **Implementation**: Students will execute experiments, from initial set up to final measurements. This may include the use of specialized equipment for data collection, manipulation, and measurement.

3. **Interpretation**: Students will interpret the outcome of experiments as it relates to the initial hypothesis and place these results in the context of other results related to a particular topic.

F. Structured Reasoning

Structured Reasoning courses focus on cultivating the logical and procedural thinking skills essential to solving a wide variety of problems. In these courses, students develop the ability to understand and work within abstract structured logical systems governed by specific rules. Students should learn to translate information for use within a system as well as when and how to meaningfully and precisely apply the rules of the system. Such structured logical systems are commonly studied in mathematics, computer science, linguistics, philosophy, and music as well as other disciplines.

Structured Reasoning Learning outcomes

1. Students will translate problems into and out of a structured logical system.
2. Students will solve problems within a system by precisely applying the rules of the system.

3. Students will form and assess the validity of arguments within a given structured system.

G. Oral Communication

Oral communication focuses on the stewardship of meaningful communication and critical exchange. Oral communication efficacy demonstrates understanding of the interdependence between thought and oral expression, purpose and audience, and content and form. Effective oral communication is informed, integrative and iterative, and serves to build student speaking, listening and questioning skills, confidence and emotional intelligence.

Oral Communication Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop and deliver a central message with organization and clarity, drawing on a variety of supporting materials (explanations, examples, evidence, etc.) to inform and support.

2. Students will employ appropriate delivery and listening approaches and techniques, particularly as related to language, vocal expressiveness, and nonverbal communication choices.

3. Students will adapt delivery and content choices given different situations, contexts, audiences and interactions.

H. Quantitative Data Literacy (QDL)

QDL is a competency in working with data using quantitative methods. Beyond organization and analysis of this data, application is an essential component of QDL. Individuals with strong QDL skills can develop and execute appropriate quantitative approaches to problems coming from a variety of contexts. Furthermore, they can interrogate and communicate arguments supported by quantitative evidence in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).

QDL Learning Outcomes

1. **Representation:** Students will represent information and formulate questions in quantitative form.

2. **Calculation:** Students will apply relevant numerical approaches to solve problems and analyze data.
3. **Interpretation**: Students will evaluate assumptions, identify limitations, and recognize ethical implications of particular analytical frameworks and study designs.

4. **Application**: Students will assess outcomes, draw appropriate conclusions, and communicate findings using relevant numerical evidence.

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**I. Social Inquiry**

Social Inquiry is the study of human social behavior and its determinants. Different disciplines within this field focus on different phenomena, including the psychological mechanisms giving rise to social behavior, the ecological, institutional, economic, cultural, or political environments that shape and are shaped by social behavior, and the social behavior of groups as well as individuals. Irrespective of the discipline, Social Inquiry relies on (1) theory in order to predict patterns in social behavior, (2) systematic, empirical methods (whether quantitative or qualitative) to describe social behavior, and optimally (3) systematic analysis of social behavior to test and refine theory. Courses satisfying this competency should include the reading of or involve students in empirical research on patterns of human behavior.

**Social Inquiry Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will identify and describe theories of social behavior

2. Students will identify, and describe, and, ideally, employ appropriate empirical methods used to describe and analyze social behavior

3. Students will assess ability of theories of social behavior to describe and predict the observed world

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**J. Written Communication**

Students will employ writing effectively across the curriculum to communicate their understanding and analysis of course content while also developing original insights and ideas.

**Written Communication Learning Outcomes**

Students will produce effective academic writing that is generally:

1. contextually attentive to audience and situation

2. persuasive, claim-driven, and/or governed by a clear perspective

3. supported by thoughtfully chosen evidence, responsibly cited
Writing intensive courses are distinguished by the intentionality of the course design; they recognize and employ writing as a technology of thought. They are not simply courses that require a certain amount of writing; rather, they focus on enhancing the ability of students to communicate effectively as a core learning goal. They use writing as a primary means of understanding, exploring, distilling, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting and reflecting on what is being taught and learned. They draw on a range of pedagogies to develop writing capacities for a variety of learners at all levels.

Put in practice, writing intensive courses will . . .

1. Provide developmental instruction in writing.
   - Begin with short, low-stakes, writing-to-learn assignments and build toward longer, formal essay assignments and research papers, written in stages of development.
   - Short papers should be returned prior to subsequent deadlines so students can benefit from feedback before they write the next paper.
   - Longer papers should have preparatory assignments, such as proposals, annotated bibliographies, and literature reviews. Professor should meet with students about the various sections of the paper.

2. Require students to workshop works-in-progress and revising completed drafts—not simply fixing errors, but rethinking, reworking, and reorganizing entire papers.
   - This may be accomplished via peer review, working with a writing consultant, and/or collaborating with professors.
   - Assignments should therefore be spread throughout the semester rather than having one large paper at the end of the semester.

3. Teach students to view writing as a situated practice and style as dependent upon disciplinary conventions, audience, and genre.
   - Assignments should be reflective of the discipline in which they are assigned in terms of their format and subject matter.
   - Reflecting the goal of critical thinking, assignments should be open-ended, without predetermined answers.
   - Students should write using the appropriate authorial “voice.”

4. Demand that all written claims be supported with appropriate evidence and require that sources are used responsibly and properly cited.
   - Students should be introduced to methods of finding appropriate sources.
   - The mode of citation should be discipline-appropriate.

5. Provide individualized instruction to each student by limiting enrollment to no more than 12 students per class.
We recommend the establishment of a subcommittee of the General Education committee to review and vet new big questions on a regular basis. The Big Questions provide an opportunity for students to engage with pressing and enduring questions. This approach recognizes that a key element of education is learning what questions to ask and how to pose them. These questions challenge thought, shake up disciplinary boundaries, and engage students to bring their diverse perspectives to bear on enduring as well as emerging issues. Below are several sample questions that might be appropriate questions for the Big Questions curriculum:

- Can the human economy and the natural economy both thrive?
- Are inclusion and individualism really at odds?
- What makes change revolutionary?
- Does art help?
- Is change a constant?
- What are the origins of inequality?
- What does a just society look like?
Appendix C

GECIC PROPOSAL FOR AN INTEGRATIVE LEARNING PILOT PROGRAM

Part 1

General Education curricula have long been viewed as the foundation for lifelong learning. Our current General Education curriculum is reflective of this perspective. While there are many strengths, a pronounced deficiency of this approach is that it neglects to emphasize the importance of integrative learning.

Integrative learning is an understanding that students build across the general education curriculum, major, and/or various co-curricular programs. Students begin by making simple connections among ideas and experiences, and progress by synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. Integrative learning requires students to reflect on specific elements of their college experience, and construct a coherent narrative that draws on carefully selected learnings and signature work.

Leveraging the work of the two prior General Education committees, the GECIC promotes incorporating integrative learning in two separate and distinct ways. First, our General Education curriculum proposal incorporates integrative learning through the integration of three key elements: 1) Big Questions, 2) Core Competencies & Understandings and 3.) FYS and wellness. The integration of these elements allows for the creation and communication of the UR Learning Experience, which will serve to distinguish and differentiate the University of Richmond and our students. Second, the GECIC proposes the adoption of a pilot program to explore and examine the incorporation of formal integrative learning programming (e.g., piloting an ePortfolio program option, etc.).

The Integrative Learning component of general education provides students with an opportunity to step back and examine the many ways learning and growth have occurred throughout their journey at UR, to find connections between experiences, and to think about how all of this will translate beyond their undergraduate experience. Through integrative learning programming, students engage in the creative exercise of shaping and telling the unique story of their journey at UR. Integrative Learning develops in students the wisdom and confidence to tell their own story.

In fact, students are hungry for integrative learning; making connections between the various fundamentals that they study. Incorporating Integrative Learning into our UR learning experience will provide many of our students with “Eureka” moments; ideas that they feel are newly discovered. Integrative Learning will help our faculty to inspire an even greater segment of our student population as different students are drawn to different things, i.e. disciplinary, integrative, quantitative, qualitative, formal, informal, etc. learning. The ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of fields and perspectives will serve our students well in their post-baccalaureate studies and throughout their careers. Many institutions strive for this goal, but it is not easy to achieve. We have all of the necessary ingredients to be leaders in this space: bright students, talented faculty, rich resources.

Part 2

Integrative learning intends to change the way students direct their own learning and graduate with a richer understanding of all that they have accomplished.
Integrative learning can and should start as early as the first year, possibly in Roadmap, FYS, or UR 100, when students can begin to consider what papers, presentations, etc. they would like to drop into their folder, eportfolio, or other “container” the student would like to use for collecting and curating their work. Other additions, such as research work, lab work, artistic creation or performance, athletic performance, even experiences from having a job on or off campus, could continue over the four years. As students advance through their UR career, programs such as Endeavor or SSIR could also play a role in the student’s development of their portfolio. Study abroad experiences, service work, student leadership, and public presentations of signature work (such as the A&S symposium), all have the potential for making connections across seemingly unrelated parts of a student’s education. Finally, in the senior year, activities such as senior seminar, honors work, or other culminating experiences would also be included in the portfolio or other Integrative Learning repository.

Integrative learning programming can build in opportunities for students to reflect after each semester or academic year, and be selective about how and why these elements are meaningful. By asking questions like “Which classes and experiences was I most passionate about?” “What did I learn?” “Where did I feel challenged, and how did I meet that challenge?” and collecting signature work related to these questions, students begin to see interconnections and themes over time.

We recognize that synthesizing and connecting are skills that students will likely need to be taught to some extent. In order for them to feel directed and successful in integrative learning, students will need guidance, support, mentorship, and instruction. Reflection is a practice that must be developed over time. There is a balance to be struck here because these projects, portfolios, etc. should be student-owned and student-driven, and students should not feel that they are just another assignment. We want them to feel guided and supported but also independent and creative.

Yet questions remain unanswered concerning how much academic credit should be given for Integrative Learning work. We realize that colleagues are concerned with unknowns. This pilot would set out to determine: 1) How much academic credit would be attached to a class or classes, 2) Who would teach that course or courses, 3) How much extra time and effort would be added to our advising loads, and 4) Who would oversee the Integrative Learning work. A learning community of committed faculty and staff would be charged with charting the Integrative Learning curriculum goals, requirements and implementation; they would construct a model and then run it to amass the data and working knowledge from their experience over several semesters. We propose to pilot Integrative Learning both with various student cohorts, some that may be linked to an academic experience (such as Endeavor) and others that draw on students who are not part of an organized program.

While the work of collecting and curating evidence and artifacts -- examples of high impact practices, signature work, and pre-professional experiences -- is student-driven, the success of integrative learning depends upon mentorship and advising. As mentioned above, while we see a need for a credit-bearing course, perhaps in the third year, we also see the need to consider embedding Integrative Learning into classes early in a student’s academic career. We include our learning outcome rubric here, sharing the goals of an Integrative Learning program:

**Integrative Learning Learning Outcomes**

1. **Connection:** Students will combine ideas, knowledge and experiences, connecting them in creative ways to inspire questions, insights and/or answers.

2. **Synthesis:** Students will incorporate disparate forms of learning via transferable talents, skills and experiences, and synthesize them into a coherent whole.
3. **Reflection**: Students will collect and curate examples of learning and growth over time, articulating strengths and challenges, while recognizing influences that affect the development of the self.

Students can reach the learning outcomes for Integrative Learning through a number of ways, including but not limited to: the creation of an ePortfolio*; a personal narrative; a senior seminar or honors work; or any other department program that highlights reflection and integration across multiple areas.

*An ePortfolio is a common electronic/web-based platform to house a student’s signature work, reflecting ideas and crossing boundaries between disciplines and experiences. ePortfolios are student-driven and student-owned. Ownership is essential to a student’s investment in a high-quality and meaningful product that would be a key asset as they move beyond the University. The ePortfolio serves as an opportunity for students to envision a future trajectory, building on prior experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.

We propose a four-year pilot with at least one year of preparation to recruit and organize a group of faculty and staff to participate in the development and execution of this program.

We envision an individual who will oversee this pilot program, keeping track of the students involved, routinely collecting data, navigating any challenges, assisting with implementation and locating help for technical challenges. This individual could come on board at the beginning to be a part of the recruitment and organizing of faculty and staff in developing the program.

We offer a timetable and implementation plan here:
Initial year of planning and organizing, which will involve recruiting faculty/staff and bringing on board an individual who will oversee the pilot program.

Year One: Begin with students in 5 Endeavor classes (75 students) and 75 FY students who agree to participate and who are not in a living-learning program. Assess the work at the end of the academic year by surveying both student and faculty participants.

Year Two: Introduce Integrated Learning to new FY students, again splitting between Endeavor and those not in a living-learning program. Also, continue to track the 150 students who began the pilot program in their first year as they continue to collect work. Arrange for check-in points with the different cohorts so that support is readily available across the academic year. At the end of the year, gather data about what is being collected, average time spent on task, where students are storing their collections, and other areas that need review. Assess the work at the end of the academic year by surveying both student and faculty participants.

Year Three: Begin with another 150 FY students, again splitting between Endeavor and those not in a living-learning program. Also, continue to track the second and third year students by regular (monthly? Twice a semester?) check-ins. Senior participants should have at least one one-on-one session, or a session with the advisor and the program pilot director, to thoroughly assess the work collated across the four years and the growth and development of the student. Perhaps completing a survey as well that can get to the effectiveness of the program, the strengths of the program, and the benefits of the program. For
the other three classes, assess the work at the end of the academic year by surveying both student and faculty participants.

At the end of the fourth year, the pilot program director, along with an Integrated Learning pilot program faculty/staff committee, assesses the data collected across the four years and, ultimately, determines the viability of moving such a program university wide.
Appendix D

DEI requirements at other institutions

Pomona College
DEI is an “overlay” requirement (the other two are writing intensive and speaking intensive), called “analyzing difference”
Students must pass at least one Analyzing Difference course to graduate. Analyzing Difference courses “are primarily focused on a sustained analysis of the causes and effects of structured inequality and discrimination, and their relation to U.S. society. Such courses will make use of analyses that emphasize intersecting categories of difference. Examples include, but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, citizenship, linguistic heritage, class, religion and physical ability. The Critical Thinking Committee certifies approved courses. A course fulfilling the Analyzing Difference requirement may also be used to fulfill a Breadth of Study area requirement and/or a Writing Intensive or Speaking Intensive requirement.”

“An Analyzing Difference Committee certifies approved courses. The committee includes at least three faculty (appointed by the Executive Committee, in consultation with the President’s Advisory Committee on Diversity) and two students (appointed by ASPC). The Executive Committee may elect to appoint additional faculty based on their ability to support the charge of the committee. The committee maintains learning outcomes related to the requirement, provides sample syllabi of approved courses, and creates evaluative criteria and standards related to the approval of courses.”

Brandeis
Brandeis has a new general education curriculum as of fall 2019 that includes two DEI courses, as listed below. (Other requirements include a University Writing Seminar, courses that satisfy designations of writing intensive, oral communication, and digital literacy within every major, quantitative reasoning, world language/culture, and four “schools of thought” (creative arts, humanities, science, and social science). Courses may “double count.” Requirements for the DEI courses are outlined below (all material taken directly from the Brandeis website):

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Studies in the United States

Objectives
Contemporary U.S. society is marked by demographic and cultural changes that have both advanced and challenged the nation’s commitment to the realization of individuals’ unalienable rights as human beings. Scientific, technological, legal, political, and aesthetic developments have created significant opportunities throughout the U.S., even as they have also entrenched existing injustices. As part of the global engagement requirement, diversity, equity and inclusion studies in the United States courses prepare students to engage with the dynamics, developments, and divisions within U.S. society in the twenty-first century.

To be active and productive participants in a society undergoing significant ethno-racial, political, environmental and cultural change, students will need to understand the important role that a commitment to social justice has played in the advancement of the United States. They will also need to address the role that inequality has played in the country’s formation and continues to play in its development. Courses may draw on a variety of disciplinary approaches to address any of the following:
• The critical study of race, class, gender, sex, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, age, color, nationality and religion, with a specific emphasis on historically marginalized populations;
• The close assessment of laws, regulations, procedures, and policies that have enforced or opposed inequity and injustice;
• The analysis of theories that explain, analyze or critique inequality;
• The empirical examination of coalition and community-building, collaboration across difference, and other practices aimed at increasing inclusion.

Learning Goals
• Articulate evidence-based understandings of difference and how they work within frameworks of social hierarchy in the United States
• Increase one’s ability to learn from, and demonstrate respect towards, different peoples, cultures, and world-views
• Identify historical and contemporary strategies to address issues of social justice in the United States
• Examine US political, economic, legal, educational, environmental, social, religious, and cultural institutions, values and practices and their historical and contemporary impact in shaping power, privilege and disadvantage

How to Fulfill the Requirement
For students entering Brandeis beginning fall 2019, students will complete one semester course that satisfies the diversity, equity and inclusion studies in the United States requirement. Courses that satisfy the requirement in a particular semester are designated "deis-us" in the Schedule of Classes for that semester. A list of diversity, equity and inclusion studies in the United States courses is available in the Courses of Instruction.

Difference and Justice in the World

Objectives
Today’s world has been shaped by forces that cannot be understood without taking a broad global perspective. Human experience has been influenced by the expansion of democracy; technological, environmental, moral and aesthetic changes; greater attention to the protection of human rights; and the improvement of economic conditions for many. However, progress has not been equal, and for many, circumstances have worsened. Our world and its peoples continue to be deeply challenged by new forms of age-old problems. Religious, ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual differences are used as grounds for persecution, exclusion, and other forms of unequal treatment. The effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate already growing global economic inequality, food insecurity, and competition for natural resources. These phenomena are interrelated with the legacy of colonialism; world, civil and regional wars; diasporic migration; and terrorism.

As members of local and global communities, our students must be able to engage with the world’s greatest problems and issues with courage and resiliency by applying critical analytical skills and historical perspectives, and by developing empathy for, and a deep understanding of other cultures and perspectives, and how they have been formed and continue to evolve. By learning to appreciate diversity and communicate across difference, Brandeis students enter the world better prepared to replace conflict with cooperation.

As part of the global engagement requirement, difference and justice in the world courses will allow students to focus on the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic diversity of human experience within the global/transnational context. Looking beyond singular or dominant understandings
of the world, students will engage in the study of peoples outside the U.S., their histories, arts, cultures, politics, economies, environments, and religions. They will address problems such as:

- the ways in which different cultures, societies and social groups define and express themselves and are defined by others;
- how categories of difference are constructed, and how they intersect with one another;
- the production and mediation of social and cultural power in different contexts;
- the unequal effects of globalization and climate change on different cultures and groups in all spheres of human experience, across histories and geographies.

Learning Goals
- Increase one’s ability to understand different perspectives and learn from peoples, cultures, and world-views different from those that are familiar
- Develop skills to engage in comparative analyses of how historical legacies have shaped contemporary global and environmental realities
- Understand global, transnational and interconnected issues of social justice beyond the United States
- Evaluate strategies that address relevant challenges of global or local significance
- Promote alternative non-traditional ways of knowing that challenge conventional disciplinary logics

How to Fulfill the Requirement
For students entering Brandeis beginning fall 2019, students will complete one semester course that satisfies the difference and justice in the world requirement. Courses that satisfy the requirement in a particular semester are designated "djw" in the Schedule of Classes for that semester. A list of difference and justice in the world courses is available in the Courses of Instruction.

University of Virginia
UVA has three general education curricula running concurrently right now, though the traditional curriculum will likely be phased out in the near future. (It is a fairly standard distribution model.)

The other two are the Forums and the New College Curriculum. The Forums is a theme based curriculum, and all of the themes have the potential to incorporate DEI elements. Current examples include Corruption, Governance, and Institutions; Ideals & Injustices; The World Gone Wrong; Visions of the Good; Humans, Nature, and Evolution; Religion, Politics, and Conflict; and Via Asia.

The New College Curriculum involves a set of “Engagements” interdisciplinary seminars in the first year, followed by “literacies” (writing and foreign language) and disciplines (traditional distribution model). The Engagements include “Engaging difference,” but students are not required to take courses in all four engagements areas (the other three are Engaging Aesthetics, Empirical and Scientific Engagement, and Ethical Engagement).

Davidson
Students have abundant opportunities for exploring the complexities of a diverse, interconnected, unequal and changing world through academic coursework. Each student must complete a course that fulfills the Cultural Diversity Requirement (defined below), a course with a significant focus on the cultural experiences of a group differing from that of the dominant cultures and social identities of the United States and Europe. In addition, students must also complete a course that fulfills the new Justice, Equality and Community Requirement (defined below). These courses focus on the struggles for justice
and equality in various communities, locales, nations or regions of the world. Students also are strongly encouraged to supplement their education with high-impact learning experiences such as studying abroad, studying away (at other locations in the United States), community-based learning opportunities, internships, fellowships, shadowing and alternative breaks.

Starting with the class of 2021, each student must take one course that satisfies the Justice, Equality, and Community (JEC) requirement.

These courses (JEC) address the manifestations of justice and equality in various communities, locales, nations or regions, and focus on methods and theories used to analyze, spotlight, or remedy instances of injustice and inequality. Through these courses, faculty members guide students as they examine how justice and equality have been distributed, enacted, problematized and idealized in historical or contemporary settings.

Courses meeting this requirement will address justice and equality as they appear in various communities in local, regional, national, and/or global dimensions, and focuses on methods (i.e., legal, intellectual, creative, political, cultural, aesthetic, or scientific) that have been used to foster awareness of or to remedy inequalities and injustice. Depending on disciplinary affiliation, subject of study, and traditions of inquiry, a majority of the course content of a JEC course will:

- examine historical or contemporary manifestations of injustice or structural inequalities that have impinged on the political, cultural, medical, economic, moral, religious, or social well-being of persons and groups who have been subordinated, marginalized, or put in positions of precarity by others, and
- do so by exposing students to the relevant theories, methods, strategies, and ideas (i.e., ethical, juridical, religious, scientific, creative, philosophical, aesthetic, etc.) that make it possible to identify, analyze, and/or remedy structural inequalities and injustice.

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and/or evaluate assumptions (personal, disciplinary, cultural, etc.) regarding justice, equality, and community.
2. Identify, accumulate, and/or evaluate information related to historical or contemporary cases of justice, equality, and community.
3. Describe, discuss, interpret, and/or analyze competing understandings and applications of justice, equality, and community.

All students must complete 32 credits, earn a 2.0 GPA in their major and fulfill the requirements below in order to graduate.

Ways of Knowing Requirements

All students must fulfill the college's Ways of Knowing requirements. In these courses students will examine complex problems through diverse methods of inquiry, understand how different kinds of knowledge are generated, and identify appropriate standards for evaluating knowledge in different realms.

1. Writing Requirement

New students must fulfill the Writing Requirement in their first year.
2. Foreign Language Requirement

To fulfill the **Foreign Language Requirement**, students must successfully complete the third-semester level (201 or higher) of a Davidson foreign language course, by an approved transfer course at equivalent level, or by equivalent proficiency as determined and certified by the appropriate Davidson foreign language department. We strongly recommend that students complete this requirement before entering their senior years.

3. Cultural Diversity Requirement

   Students must complete one course satisfying the **Cultural Diversity Requirement**. Courses that satisfy the cultural diversity requirement focus on one or more cultures that differ from the main cultures of the United States or Western Europe. Through these courses, faculty members guide students as they explore cultural differences from an academic perspective.

4. Justice, Equality, and Community Requirement

   Students must complete one course satisfying the **Justice, Equality, and Community Requirement**. * Defined earlier in this document..

5. Physical Education Requirement

**Denison**

The General Education requirements ensure that students develop core liberal arts competencies and encounter a broad range of liberal arts inquiries — social, scientific, humanistic, and artistic — embraced by the Denison University faculty. In addition, the requirements expose students to a diversity of perspectives that enable them to interact more effectively in an increasingly interdependent world. Thus, the General Education program seeks to accomplish three goals:
   1. development of competencies,
   2. exposure to a broad variety of disciplines and,
   3. development of a global perspective.

**General Education: Summary of Requirements**

One W 101 - First-Year Writing Workshop (First Year writing intensive workshop)

Two courses from the Fine Arts

Two courses from the Sciences (one fulfilling a lab requirement)

Two courses from the Social Sciences

Two courses from the Humanities
One interdivisional course from one of the following areas: Black Studies, Data Analytics, East Asian Studies, Environmental Studies, International Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Queer Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies.

Foreign Language

NOTE: Only one course from a single department may be used to fulfill the divisional requirements.

**Five of these general education courses (or other courses) must fulfill these competencies:**

One power and justice requirement

One quantitative requirement

One oral communication requirement

Two writing intensive course requirements (one of which must be completed by the end of the sophomore year)

From the catalogue:

**p. 5 General Education**

The General Education Program is designed to provide intellectual breadth, through experience with a variety of disciplines and appreciation for the diversity of human culture. This program requires broad exposure to various fields and development of essential abilities: listening, reading, and observing; reasoning critically and quantitatively; and expressing ideas convincingly in oral discourse as well as the written word. Approximately one-third of the curriculum is reserved for General Education.

**Oberlin Cultural Diversity requirement.** At least nine credit hours in courses dealing with cultural diversity, including foreign languages, are required. These must be taken in at least two departments or programs and may also count toward the nine hours required in each division.

This requirement encourages students to understand cultural diversity in complex ways and in multiple contexts by taking courses that attend to questions of difference, imbalances in political and social power, diversity in cultures and the interactions among and between cultures, and methodological approaches to the study of diversity. In awarding Cultural Diversity (CD) credit for international study away programs and some U.S. study away programs, this requirement recognizes that study away is a profound pedagogical encounter with diversity that complements the engagement of diversity in courses across the Oberlin curriculum.

**Boston College** - 1 course in Cultural Diversity
Cultural Diversity courses could be designed as departmental offerings or as interdisciplinary courses and could approach the culture in various ways: through its religious or ethical values; from an understanding of its historical development; from the perspective of its social, economic and political systems; or from an appreciation of its literary, artistic or other cultural achievements.

- Can also satisfy a requirement of the Core or the major

Can be satisfied by:

- courses on Asian, African, Middle Eastern and Latin American cultures
- courses on minority cultures of the United States derived from these cultures
- courses on Native American cultures
- courses that address the concept of culture from a theoretical and comparative perspective either separately or in the context of the courses listed above

Examples of Major Courses Fulfilling the Core Requirement- Spring 2020

Communication
English
Arts
Slavic Studies
Sociology

**Colgate University** - Communities and Identities Course

- Part of the common core

Courses in the Communities and Identities (CI) component are designed to provide a textured understanding of identities, cultures, and human experiences in particular communities and regions of the world. They seek to examine critically the multiple forms of social life that contribute to the world’s cultural diversity, and to analyze the ways in which any one society functions as a unified whole and yet encompasses multiple, sometimes conflicting identities (based, for example, on gender, race, status, class, sexual identities, religion, and language).

**Georgetown University**

*Overview:* Georgetown’s “Engaging Diversity” requirement is a two course requirement: one domestic and one global. This is part of their Core curriculum in which courses are tagged to satisfy one or more requirements.

*Language from the Core Curriculum website:* [https://provost.georgetown.edu/academicaffairs/core-curriculum/](https://provost.georgetown.edu/academicaffairs/core-curriculum/)

“The engaging diversity requirement will prepare students to be responsible, reflective, self-aware and respectful global citizens through recognizing the plurality of human experience and engaging with different cultures, beliefs, and ideas. By fulfilling the requirement, students will be better able to appreciate and reflect upon how human diversity and human identities shape our experience and understanding of the world.

The two “engaging diversity” courses ensure the opportunity to engage with diversity issues in two different contexts: One domestic and one global. Courses fulfilling this requirement are indicated with the DIVG (global) and DIVD (domestic) attribute tags in the schedule of classes.
Note: Many courses that meet the diversity requirement also meet other curricular requirements (e.g., core, major, minor) in each school. Please note that while some courses may carry both tags (i.e., global and domestic), students are still required to take two engaging diversity courses in total.

Courses satisfying the requirements: I searched undergrad courses with these two tags on the Georgetown Course Catalog page to get an idea of what is included and what departments are represented. (Click on Fall 2019 or Spring 2020 Schedule links from this page: https://schedule.georgetown.edu/)

Departments that have one or more DIVD course: African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, Art History, Education, English, Global Health, Government, Human Science, Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish

Departments that have one or more DIVG course: Art History, Classics, English, Global Health, International Affairs, Medieval Studies, Portuguese, Spanish, Theology

Possible Contact: A possible future contact person for us at Georgetown if we want more info is Michelle Ohnona. She is both the Assistant Director for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives and the Diversity Requirement Coordinator. (https://cndls.georgetown.edu/people/mo607/)

University of Michigan
Overview: At University of Michigan, the Race and Ethnicity (R&E) Requirement has students take one course with the R&E tag. Here is a description of R&E courses which is also found at this link:

https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/lsa-requirements/race-and-ethnicity--r-e--requirement.html

“Race and Ethnicity (R&E) Requirement

At some point before graduation, students must receive credit for one course of at least three credits chosen from a list of Race and Ethnicity (R&E) courses offered each term in the LSA Course Guide. Credits transferred from another college or university do not meet the R&E Requirement except by successful petition to the Academic Standards Board.

These courses address issues arising from racial or ethnic intolerance and meet the following criteria:

Required content. All courses satisfying the requirement must provide discussion concerning:

- the meaning of race, ethnicity, and racism;
- racial and ethnic intolerance and resulting inequality as it occurs in the United States or elsewhere;
- comparisons of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, social class, or gender.

Required focus. Every course satisfying the requirement must devote substantial, but not necessarily exclusive, attention to the required content. Although it is hoped that many of these courses will focus on the United States, it is not required that they do so. Courses that deal with these issues in other societies, or that study them comparatively, may also meet the requirement.

Credits used to satisfy the R&E requirement also may be used to satisfy other College requirements.”
Specific Courses: I again searched the university’s catalog (http://www.lsa.umich.edu/cg/) for courses satisfying this requirement. There are many. Here are the departments that have at least one course: Afroamerican & African Studies, Applied Liberal Arts, American Culture, Cultural Anthropology, Armenian Studies, Asian Studies, Asian/Pacific Island American Studies, Communication and Media, Comprehensive Studies Program, Dutch and Flemish Studies, Education, English, French; Film, Television, and Media Studies; German, Art History, History, International Studies, Islamic Studies, Italian, Judaic Studies, Latino/a American Studies, Linguistics, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Middle Eastern and North African Studies, Middle East Studies, Nursing, Philosophy, Psychology, Polish, Public Health, Public Policy; Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; Religion, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Sociology, Women’s Studies

History of the R&E Requirement at Michigan: The university has a somewhat well-documented history regarding this requirement and events involving racism on their campus. The information available to us regarding the R&E requirement provides a lot of insight into how the requirement has evolved, the movements on campus that brought it into being, and the work being done more recently to assess and improve it.

Here are some links I found useful.

1. Road to the R&E Requirement Timeline: This graphic describes the formation of the R&E requirement and places it in the context of events on campus at Michigan. https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsa-site-assets/images/images/undergrad-ed-images/UGEDImages/Timeline052816b.png

2. Reviewing R&E: This website describes the committee that was active 2015-2016 reviewing the R&E requirement and making suggestions for the strengthening of the requirement and courses. https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/faculty-staff/undergraduate-education/academic-initiatives.html

3. DEI Strategic Plan: While I could not find a copy of the report from the above committee, this strategic plan seems to include a lot of the committee’s work. In particular, there is an Assessment plan for the R&E Courses starting at the bottom of p 30. https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsa-site-assets/documents/dei-documents/2018-Oct-UM-LSA-DEI-plan-full.pdf

DEI Courses at Peer Institutions

Brown University: Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

- DIAP Courses: Race, Gender, and Inequality  [https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/DIAPcourses]
- These courses “examine issues of structural inequality, racial formations and/or disparities, and systems of power within a complex, pluralistic world”
- Professors may apply to have their course included among those listed as meeting the DIAP requirements by providing a syllabus and highlighting the focus on these issues in terms of both course content and assignment. Verification is made by the College Curriculum Council, the senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion, and at least two faculty members who have appropriate expertise in the issues. DIAP courses are regularly reviewed to be sure they are meeting the goals.
- 151 courses being offered this semester meet the requirements. The majority of these are in social science/humanities department; there is, for instance, only one in biology, two in archaeology, and five in economics. (None showed up for chemistry or physics.)
• Brown’s recent report [https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-diversity/sites/oidi/files/Task%20Force-Diversity%20in%20Curriculum-September-2016.pdf] engaged the question of whether there should be a university-wide diversity requirement. The faculty task force decided against one, in part reflecting Brown’s longstanding commitment to an open curriculum. However, there were also concerns about whether a requirement would serve as a “disincentive” and whether it would, in fact, promote “deep and meaningful engagement with issues of inequity or racism.” Far better, the report concluded, to increase and make more visible the various opportunities that existed for students to learn about these issues.

• The task force also called for the creation and identification of courses in Race, Power, and Privilege (designated RPP). This seems not to have been followed.

• The task force called for ongoing commitments to developing courses that reflect this content, to fostering inclusive pedagogy, and to support scholarly engagement with these issues.

• Brown’s philosophy department signals courses in two different ways: Some courses are focused on diversity and inclusion (FDI); some courses are merely relevant to diversity and inclusion (RDI).

Bucknell University

• One of the core requirements at Bucknell is “Diversity in the United States,” which requires students to take a course that meets the following description: Students will acquire contextualized knowledge about some aspect of complex group interactions in the United States. Students will use concepts and tools of inquiry from at least one discipline to analyze issues related to the diversity of cultural experiences in the United States. Students will reflect critically on the ways in which diversity (broadly understood) within the United States shapes the experience of citizens and persons residing in the United States.

• Bucknell’s recent strategic plan about diversity calls for, inter alia, these things: [https://files.bucknell.edu/Documents/Diversity/DiversityPlan.pdf]

“3. Enhance students’ diversity-related educational opportunities and experiences to ensure that all students graduate with knowledge, skills and habits of mind necessary for living and working effectively as members of a diverse, global society.

• Track departments’ contributions to the understanding of diversity and increase training for faculty to address diversity effectively
• Articulate an integrated approach to diversity education from orientation through graduation, especially via first-year seminars and experiences and by sponsoring “undergraduate research on social justice issues” and “incentives for high quality diversity-focused IP [Integrated Perspectives, part of the core] courses”
• Develop and facilitate “diversity-focused student learning opportunities,” including regular assessments of the curriculum and evaluation of whether students are meeting this goal
• “Explore new majors, minors, and residential colleges focused on diversity”
• Inclusive pedagogy

“4. Reflect institutional commitment to diversity by establishing a culture of accountability around diversity initiatives, practices and policies”

• Monitor progress via various large-N data; focus on diversity in all reports; database of diversity efforts
• Establish/strengthen structures that promote diversity, including a special fund supporting research
• Revise existing structures to be sure they foster diversity
• “Review and revise/create policies that ensure a focus on diversity, inclusivity, equity, and compliance”

• Its new plan calls for “fostering an inclusive, diverse campus” and acknowledges that, despite making progress, the university fell short of the goals articulated in the prior plan. The initiatives mentioned have little to do with the curriculum:
  1. Realign residential and social spaces
  2. Revise Diversity Plan (Spring 2020)
  3. “Implement a program of ongoing, progressive education for faculty and staff that focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion”

[https://www.bucknell.edu/sites/default/files/offices_resources/president/strategicplan2025_0.pdf]
Appendix E

Sample Model Curricula, BQ Curriculum

In these seven examples, it is assumed that all BQ Curriculum attributes will be taken in general education courses; it is quite likely that, in reality, some of the BQ Curriculum attributes will be taken in the major or minor.

At the top of each model, it makes clear if any AP/IB credit has been awarded, and if so, what area has been covered.

**Student A:**
No AP/IB
FYS (1)
BQ + Writing Intensive (1BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
BQ + Changer Over Time + DEI (1 BA + 2 CC&Us, one class)
DEI + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
Artistic Expression + Deep Reading (2 CC&Us, one class)
Social Inquiry + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Experimental Reasoning + QDL (@2CC&Us, one class)
Structured Reasoning (1)
SLP (0–4)
Total units: 8 – 12

**Student B:**
AP: Calculus (Structured Reasoning)
FYS (1)
BQ + Social Inquiry (1BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
BQ + Experimental Reasoning (1 BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
Artistic Expression + DEI (2 CC&Us, one class)
Change over Time + DEI (2 CC&Us, one class)
Deep Reading + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
Writing Intensive (2)
QDL (1)
SLP (0 – 4)
Total units: 9 – 13

**Student C:**
APs: Biology, US History (Experimental Reasoning, Change Over Time)
FYS (1)
BQ (2) no additional attributes included
Artistic Expression + Deep Reading (2 CC&Us, one class)
Structured Reasoning (1)
Social Inquiry + QDL (2 CC&Us, one class)
DEI + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
DEI + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Writing Intensive (1)
SLP (0-4)
Total units: 9 – 13
Student D:
No AP/IB
FYS (1)
BQ + QDL + DEI (BQ + 2 CC&Us, one class)
BQ + Social Inquiry (1 BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
Artistic Expression + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Change over Time + Deep Reading (2 CC&Us, one class)
Experimental Reasoning (1) + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
Structured Reasoning (1)
DEI + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
SLP (0-4)
Total units: 8 – 12

Student E:
This student passes out of SLP, No AP/IB
FYS (1)
BQ + Artistic Expression (1 BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
BQ + Oral Communication + Social Inquiry (1 BQ + 2 CC&Us, one class)
Change over Time + DEI (2 CC&Us, one class)
Experimental Reasoning (1)
Structured Reasoning + QDL (2 CC&Us, one class)
DEI + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Deep Reading (1)
Writing Intensive (1)
Total Units: 9

Student F:
No AP/IB, almost all classes with two attributes
FYS (1)
BQ + QDL (1 BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
BQ + DEI (1 BQ + 1 CC&U, one class)
Artistic Expression + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
Change over Time + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Experimental Reasoning + Deep Reading (2 CC&Us, one class)
Structured Reasoning (1)
DEI + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Social Inquiry (1)
SLP (0-4)
Total units: 9 – 13

Student G:
No AP/IB
FYS (1)
BQ (1)
BQ + Deep Reading (1 BQ, 1 CC&U, one class)
Artistic Expression + Oral Communication (2 CC&Us, one class)
Change over Time + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
Experimental Reasoning (1)
Structured Reasoning + QDL (2 CC&Us, one class)
Social Inquiry + DEI (2 CC&Us, one class)
DEI + Writing Intensive (2 CC&Us, one class)
SLP (0 – 4)
Total units: 9 – 13
References/Resources Consulted

**University of Richmond general education review previous committee reports**
GECPC and GECRC reports – link on GECIC website

**Engagement with Off Campus Expertise**

AACU IGEA: UR team GECRC/GECIC June 2019

AACU IGEA: GECIC team, June 2020. Met privately with AACU IGEA faculty: Dr. Paul Hanstedt (our faculty mentor, W&L; also met with Paul on January 15, 2021); Kimberly Filer, (Virginia Tech); Sybril Brown (Belmont University); Helen Chen (Stanford); Jose Moreno (CSU Long Beach); Kate McConnell (AACU); Ashley Finley (AACU); Paul Gaston (AACU)

Other schools that we met with for discussion and feedback during the AACE IGEA 2020: La Verne University, University of New England, SUNY Old Westbury, Washington and Lee, NC A&T State University, North Central College


**ePortfolio:**

Eynon and Gambino: *High-Impact ePortfolio Practice*

ePortfolios@edu: *What We Know, What We Don't Know, and Everything In-Between*. edited by Mary Ann Dellinger and D. Alexis Hart


**General Education:**


https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247989970_Integrated_general_education_A_brief_look_back

Integrated learning at Connecticut College, William & Mary, and Davidson (pdf report available)

Jane Schmidt Prezi slideshow: https://prezi.com/2qmk1c6v6do/general-education-requirements/#

Madeleine F. Green, “In Search of Curricular Coherence,” The Teagle Foundation

Paul Gaston, General Education Transformed: How We Can, Why We Must (AACU publication)
http://blogs.rollins.edu/endeavor/2020/05/12/distinctive-learning-experiences-can-we-identify-the-signature-pedagogies-of-residential-liberal-arts-institutions/

AACU VALUE Rubrics: https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics


Data sets of general education classes at UR, other data documents

Ethics:


DEI:

https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/06/18/colleges-shouldnt-simply-focus-diversity-and-inclusion-also-attack-systemic-racism

https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/03/08/colleges-should-have-required-core-curriculum-racial-literacy-opinion

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Writing:
Selling Students on Gen Ed

For many students the term “general education” evokes visions of drudgery: mandated coursework on subjects that can feel remote. Professors wish students were excited to foray into philosophy or art or science, but in truth students don’t always see the big picture. They just know it has to be done.

So when Boise State University wanted to better explain the purpose of its general-education curriculum, it turned to an often-untapped source: students. One of them, Daniel Hopkins, spent three years on an undergraduate research project for the University Foundations Program, as Boise State’s gen-ed program is called.

Hopkins, whose major combined history, political science, and secondary education, says he was well-positioned to understand his classmates’ skepticism. As a freshman, he, too, didn’t understand why he had to take gen-ed courses. He felt they were irrelevant to his educational goals. “The purpose, the intent,” he says, “was never really communicated to me.”

Hopkins, who recently graduated, worked with a couple of other students under the direction of John Bieter, acting director of the University Foundations Program, to craft clear answers to three fundamental questions: What are these courses? Why do I have to take them? How are they going to help me? They studied how other colleges organize their general-education curricula, reviewed academic literature, interviewed undergraduates, and experimented with a variety of communication strategies.

Just because the questions were elemental, the group found, doesn’t mean they were easy to answer. For one, Hopkins says, Boise State had a confusing course-labeling system. As a freshman, he thought there were just two courses in the program, because they were the only ones labeled University Foundations. Interviews with other students revealed that many were similarly puzzled.

One of the first changes the team made was to integrate the word “foundations” into every course in the program. “Disciplinary Lenses in Literature and Humanities,” for example, was renamed “Foundations of Humanities.”
“To have even the names linked, you can start to see connections between courses more easily,” Hopkins says. “These aren’t just bundles of information we’re throwing at you. This is a coherent plan.”

The “why” question proved more complicated to answer. A year and a half into the research project, Hopkins and Bieter, a history professor, began visiting each section of University Foundations 100, the first course in the program, to talk about the purpose of general education to first-year students. They explained how the courses teach “ways of knowing,” to stress that they’re designed to teach students how to think differently: like a scientist, for example, or a historian.

Hopkins illustrated that idea with stories from his own experiences with general education. “My go-to is my Theater 101 class,” he says. He told students that even though he was part of the research project, he had fallen into the trap of thinking, What am I doing here? Once he realized he had been resisting involvement in the class, he committed himself to learning about the history of theater, appreciating plays, and analyzing playwriting. “I was like, OK, I might as well take full advantage of it, to help me think more creatively or differently.” He began applying concepts he learned in the course, like rising action and climax, to the TV shows and movies he watched.

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He and Bieter also presented statistics on the percentage of college graduates who hold a job related to their major (only 27 percent) and how the average person will hold 12 jobs over the course of his or her professional lifetime.

That information, Hopkins says, helps students see value in the notion that general education teaches people how to become better learners. As the statistics show, people continue to learn and adapt as they move through life. Knowing something about a wide range of disciplines can ease that process.

Hopkins, who is working on an article about his experience that he hopes to publish in an academic journal, says his team also developed recommendations for incorporating more experiential learning into the general-education curriculum. Connecting classroom and hands-on learning, he says, can help answer the final question: How are these courses going to help me?

Throughout the process, Hopkins says, he learned a lot. For one, confusion over general education seems to be universal. He also learned the value of clarity and connection. In addition to the course renamings, the group also reached out to student-government representatives and trained students in the University Foundations 100 course to act as learning assistants and ambassadors for the program on campus. They will continue the communication work that Hopkins and his peers started.

His advice to other colleges hinges on these experiences: Include students in general-education reform. Communicate the value of the programs clearly. Be uniform in describing courses. Connect the program to students’ future lives.
“So much of it is communication, and so few students truly grasp or are able to understand the philosophy behind it,” he says. “That’s why I was so lucky to participate in this research project.”

Have you worked with students to help revamp a course or a program? What difference did their participation make? Drop me a line at beth.mcmurtrie@chronicle.com and your story may appear in a future newsletter.