The mission statement of the University of Richmond’s new strategic plan envisions a Richmond education that “prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world.” This requires that we “ensure that our curriculum provides students with the best possible preparation for lifelong learning, success in their chosen profession, and meaningful contributions to addressing the world’s problems.” With a new strategic plan just underway, we have an opportunity to consider what type of general education curriculum (GEC) can best support a distinctive Richmond education in the years ahead.

This committee will review our GEC and make recommendations on whether our current GEC is best suited to fulfill Richmond’s mission in light of the University’s strengths. The committee will produce a final report of its findings by the end of March 2019 to the full Senate. It will present interim reports as needed.

The Product. The Committee will prepare a report of their findings and recommendations, with respect to the questions outlined in this charge. To the extent the current GEC does not serve the objectives of a Richmond education, the committee report to the Senate will include a suggested charge for a new committee that will work to generate possible revisions/reform of the GEC. This committee will build on the best practices outlined in the GEC Process Committee’s final report in the spring of 2018.

The Questions. The committee should address the questions below:

1. What are the fundamental skills, abilities, and perspectives that every student should develop during the course of a Richmond education?

2. How does the current GEC serve the objectives of a Richmond education, as articulated in the current UR mission statement, values statement, and in the outcomes of question 1? The current GEC is understood to include today’s First-Year Seminars, six fields of study, second language, oral communication, and wellness.

3. Among the GEC models this committee examines in the course of its work (including UR’s current model), the committee is asked to make note of which models might best serve our mission and support the outcomes of question 1 above.
Report to Faculty Senate on General Education Curriculum Review, March 21, 2019

Presented by the ad hoc General Education Curriculum Review Committee (GECRC):

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Erik Craft (RSB)
Sharon Feldman (School of Arts & Sciences)
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Eugene Wu (A&S), chair

Prepared for the Faculty Senate meeting on March 29, 2019

Executive Summary

The ad hoc General Education Curriculum Review Committee evaluated University of Richmond’s General Education Curriculum over ten months from May 2018 to March 2019. The review covered the First-Year Seminar, Fields of Study, Wellness, and Second Language requirements. We sought to determine if the requirements fulfilled the university’s mission statement and if they taught essential skills, abilities, and perspectives to our undergraduate students. The committee read extensive literature on general education, met with directors of general education programs, held discussions with the vast majority of departments on campus, spoke with and invited leaders of reform efforts at nearby institutions of higher education, gathered data on our own general education curriculum and that of 25 other institutions, and elicited opinions from faculty, staff, and students. The committee determined that our general education curriculum contained a number of weaknesses, particularly in teaching writing, numeracy, and wellness. In addition, the curriculum is fragmented, with each portion not well integrated with other portions and with the rest of the university. We advocate that a new committee be assembled for the 2019-20 year to sculpt a proposed curriculum. That new curriculum should bring purpose, coherence, and integration to the curriculum and address the specific weaknesses of the current curriculum.

I. The Purposes and Goals of a General Education Curriculum

The general education curriculum (GEC) of an institution of higher education is the required portion of a student’s academic courses that is shared by all undergraduates at the institution. Typically, the general education curriculum constitutes one-quarter to one-third of the courses that an undergraduate student takes during a four-year college career. The general education curriculum establishes essential skills, abilities, and perspectives important for success after graduation. In addition, courses slotted early in the curriculum (i.e. first year) can form the foundation for student success during college.
What are those essential skills and abilities, and to what perspectives must students be exposed? These questions must be answered in the context of the strengths and identity of the college or university that asks them. When asked about what abilities are important in their lives five years after graduation, large majorities of University of Richmond alumni (classes of 2010 & 2013) reply that the abilities to write and speak effectively, to collaborate with diverse teams, and to apply knowledge to solve problems are most important (2015 & 2018 Alumni Outcomes Surveys; Appendix I). The vast majority of the hundreds of higher educational institutions belonging to the American Association of College & Universities (AAC&U) reported writing skills, critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, and quantitative reasoning skills as learning outcomes for their students (Hart Research Associates, 2016). The same report showed that most colleges and universities want students to graduate with knowledge of science, mathematics, humanities, global world cultures, social sciences, and the arts. It is incumbent on the general education curriculum to ensure that students graduate with these skills and perspectives.

At many colleges and universities, the general education curriculum pushes students to take a broad set of courses in disparate fields. Many, though not all, liberal arts colleges use a general education curriculum based on a traditional liberal arts curriculum. “Liberal arts” was coined by the Greeks and Romans for education appropriate of a “free” person. A liberal arts education has evolved over the past century to encompass a broad selection of courses ranging from the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and languages. Students are generally required to take at least a class from each primary discipline, although the definitions of the disciplines differ slightly from institution to institution. The majority of AAC&U institutions employ this “distribution” model to provide breadth of knowledge in their students’ curricula, but most add elements such as capstones or common intellectual experiences to round out their GECs. Such a broad collection of knowledge is meant “not to teach that which is peculiar to any one of the professions; but to lay the foundation which is common to them all.” (Yale Report of 1828) Thus, an ideal liberal arts education imparts essential skills and abilities by showing students how they can be applied in any of the major disciplines of academic scholarship.

General education can also be, in some ways, defined by what it is not. Because general education is required of all undergraduates, regardless of their chosen majors, it does not belong to any one field or discipline. Its core purpose is not to train students in the practices of a particular field; that is the role of a major curriculum. “The ability to conduct scholarly research using methods in your field of study” ranked last in both aforementioned alumni surveys in importance for alumni five years after graduation. Some departments and programs want general education courses to lead undecided students toward selecting their majors, but that is not a core purpose of general education. Instead, that is a by-product of a well-taught and interesting general education course. In addition, general education is distinguished from general electives, which also comprise up to approximately a third of a UR student’s required units. General education, therefore, must be focused on imparting essential skills and abilities through a broad, but well-defined, curriculum.

An ideal general education curriculum should produce a knowledgeable global citizen who is
capable of applying critical, analytical, and/or quantitative reasoning skills to complex problems and communicating their solutions. A surprisingly large proportion of college graduates with baccalaureate degrees do not work in the field in which they are trained (Plumer 2013). For many of our students, general education, not their majors, provides the main preparation for future employment. When UR’s student leaders (e.g. members of Richmond College and Westhampton College student government associations) told us about what they thought of as the purpose of UR’s general education curriculum, they used the words “holistic,” “liberal arts,” and “well-rounded” (Survey for Students on UR’s General Education, Appendix II). The University’s mission statement calls for “the holistic development of students” through a Richmond education that “prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world.” (Strategic Plan Mission and Values Statements). This report, produced by the GECRC, assesses whether our curriculum is achieving the goals laid out in the preceding paragraphs, and documents where we are falling short.
II. The current GEC at University of Richmond

According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, University of Richmond (UR) is a 4-year, private not-for-profit university with high undergraduate enrollment and Arts & Science Focus. UR is also classified as a Community Engagement institution, which points to the University’s efforts to reach out to its local and global communities and incorporate those communities into the educational experience. *U.S. News & World Report*, publishers of a popular college ranking list, classifies University of Richmond as a “national liberal arts college,” which follows the Carnegie Classification, Baccalaureate College—Arts & Science Focus, and denotes a school’s emphasis on undergraduate education. UR’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness lists Barnard College, Colgate University, College of William & Mary, Davidson College, Elon University, Furman University, Oberlin College, Rice University, and Washington & Lee University, among others as schools with similar size, scope, and resources, and University of Virginia, Boston College, UNC-Chapel Hill, Wake Forest University, and Georgetown University, among others, as institutions that compete with UR for undergraduate admissions.

At UR, the GEC is a combination of required courses in different disciplines (Fields of Study, or FS), First-Year Seminars (FYS), a second language (COM II), and Wellness. When undergraduate students enroll, they start as students in the School of Arts & Sciences. First-Year Seminars are taken in the Fall and Spring semesters of the first year as part of general education requirements. The FYS program, established in 2009, aims to establish foundational skills in critical reading and thinking and information literacy and to offer ample opportunities for students to sharpen their written and oral communication skills in a small class setting with close faculty contact. The other components of the GEC can be taken anytime during a student’s career prior to graduation, except for the WELL 085 URAWARE course on alcohol consumption, which must be taken during the first two years.

We commissioned a recent alumna, Jane Schmidt, to collect structural information and opinions about 25 peer and competitive colleges and universities as a basis for comparison to our own curriculum (Appendix II). A majority of these institutions require courses in (in order of popularity from most to least) natural sciences, writing, social sciences, foreign language (competency requirement) visual & performing arts, mathematics, humanities, diverse perspectives, and history. Likewise, UR’s GEC requires Fields of Study courses in Natural Sciences (FSNS), Social Analysis (FSSA), Visual & Performing Arts (FSSP), Symbolic Reasoning (FSSR), Literary Studies (FSLT), and Historical Studies (FSHT) in addition to the second language requirement and a writing-intensive First-Year Seminar. Ms. Schmidt’s analysis indicates that our own general education curriculum is a mainstream curriculum, similar to those of our peers and competitors.

Descriptions of our general education curriculum can be found on the UR Registrar’s Office website.
III. Methods

Members of the GECRC met regularly from late-April 2018 through March 2019. Over the summer of 2018 members familiarized themselves with the committee’s charge, learned UR’s General Education Curriculum and policies, read reports from previous GE curricular revisions that had not garnered approval, studied recommended publications on best practices for undertaking GE revisions (passed on by the previous committee), and read books on historical, theoretical, and practical approaches to liberal arts curricula in the U.S. Members of the committee also participated in a summer retreat to sketch out the goals for the coming school year. The committee further commissioned recent alumna, Jane Schmidt, to collect information and opinions from 25 peer and competitive colleges and universities (see Appendix II). Additionally, we invited Chad Wellmon from the University of Virginia to present a keynote on curricular histories during the opening faculty Colloquy of the 2018-2019 school year.

The committee met bi-weekly throughout the fall 2018 and spring 2019 semesters and maintained ongoing correspondence through Blackboard forums and email discussions. As noted throughout this report, they worked to collect as much information as they could from a variety of sources, including institutional data sets and verbal and written feedback from faculty, students, staff and alumni. Accordingly, enrollment numbers, course offerings, and assessment outcomes were collected for each of the four areas of the GEC with the help of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Lori Schuyler, Vice President of Planning and Priorities. Individual members of the committee met or exchanged email correspondence with faculty and staff from every campus department and program invested in the GE curriculum. Student feedback was solicited through various “listening tours” with the Westhampton College and Richmond College Student Government Associations, freshmen focus groups in Lora Robins Court and Marsh Hall, and invitations to participate in an online survey. Alumni input was aggregated from survey responses collected from the “Alumni Outcomes Surveys” sent by the institution to graduates over the past ten years.

In February 2019, the committee hosted a town hall that provided an overview of UR’s current GE offerings and featured two representatives from The College of William & Mary who explained the challenges and strengths of their own recent curricular changes. Students, staff, and faculty in attendance were invited to ask questions and to fill out surveys addressing their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current UR curriculum (see Appendix IV). That same month, the chair of the GECRC, attended the American Association of Colleges and University’s national conference and brought back information about nationwide approaches to GE reform.

Throughout the year, the committee invited key staff and faculty to discuss GE processes and governance during their meetings. This included the chair of the General Education Committee, David Brandenberger; the Director of Advising, Anna Young; the Dean of International Education, Martha Merritt; Associate Provost for Student Academic Initiatives, Scott Johnson; Director of First-Year Seminars, Mary Tate; Executive Director of Admissions, Marilyn Hesser; Associate Director of Admissions, Tom Nicholas; and Chair and Member of the GEC Process Committee, Laura Runyen-Janeky and Doug Winiarski.
IV. Criteria for evaluation of the GEC

The GECRC is primarily interested in whether UR’s GEC is well-suited to educate students about essential skills, abilities, and perspectives in the context of the strengths and characteristics of the university. It is also tasked to determine if the GEC “prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world,” as described by UR’s mission statement. In order to assess the GEC, the GECRC met with numerous staff and faculty affiliated with the various portions of the GEC, spoke with several thought leaders in higher education outside UR, obtained data and reports from the university administration, and elicited feedback from students, staff, and faculty.

After gathering information, the members of the GECRC created rubrics to assess whether the goals of an excellent GEC were being met by our current GEC and whether each portion of the GEC was performing well. Our two complementary rubrics coalesced into two approaches that provided structure to our assessment.

**Approach 1: Overall goals of general education**

The general education curriculum should:

- prepare students to use common modes of academic inquiry
- help students improve their English verbal communication skills
- help students communicate verbally in a second language
- help students develop skills in basic numeracy (i.e., the ability to understand and work with numbers)
- help students understand one or more modes of artistic expression
- complement the students’ courses in their major field of study
- help students identify a suitable major field of study
- provide a common experience that helps unite all UR undergraduate students
- not present an unreasonable impediment to study abroad
- support students’ physical, mental, and emotional health

**Approach 2: Performance of portions of the current GEC**

In excellent First-Year Seminars, students:

- demonstrate proficiency in writing through intentional interventions, including revision
- demonstrate critical thinking skills
- have writing assignments vary from descriptive/creative, to argument-based, to synthetic, research-based, to reflective writing about what a student has learned
• engage in interesting topics clustered around themes, big questions, or shared texts
• interact closely on projects with faculty committed to writing across the curriculum
• are assessed using validated instruments
• have ample opportunities for writing as part of the curriculum
• can locate evidence for claims
• demonstrate critical reading and thinking
• explore a variety of topics
• Faculty undergo rigorous oversight

An excellent Second Language (Com II) requirement:
• teaches intercultural competency
• students are able to demonstrate fluency (reading, writing, conversation) in a second language
• or students at least achieve a proficiency level that will give them confidence to study abroad in non-English speaking countries
• connects international education with curriculum
• has strong assessment with externally validated tools
• has proficiency testing in all languages upon entry and exit
• has a variety of languages integrated across Gen Ed using C-LAC and CBL components

In an excellent set of Fields of Study courses:
• Courses aren’t introductory surveys nor are they gateway courses to a major, but can be appreciated by students at every level.
• Courses focus on developing ways of knowing and modes of inquiry
• Students learn in an integrative manner, connecting content from disparate fields
• Students are able to reflect on their learning
• Courses take advantage of breadth and talents of faculty
• Faculty and students are deeply engaged
• Students see intersections between arts, sciences, humanities, and their own lives
• Courses provide moral/ethical foundation
• Courses teach skills in intercultural literacy and numeracy across the disciplines
• Courses are assessed using validated tools
• Students learn oral and written communication skills throughout
• Courses provide breadth of fields
• Students enjoy courses in fields they otherwise would not take
• Courses define a mode of inquiry that cannot be easily translated into “the history class” or “the calculus class”

An excellent set of Wellness courses:
• Connects students with campus resources
• Contains impactful teaching on key problems (e.g. sexual assault, alcohol abuse, time management)
• Student engage deeply with topics of import to their lives
• Includes practicum and experiential learning to model mindful practices and habits for healthy and thriving lifestyles
• Meets requirement for accreditation
• Connected with the rest of the general education curriculum

V. Evaluation of UR’s general education curriculum

a. An Identity for the General Education Curriculum

Using the approaches developed in the previous section of this report, the committee evaluated the four component parts of the General Education Curriculum. We formed our conclusions after drawing on a wide range of data and a variety of opinions. Our discussions focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum within its component parts: 1) FYS, 2) Fields of Study, 3) COM-2/Second Language, and 4) Wellness.

As discussed in Section II, our four-component curriculum is a functional structure and not atypical of similar institutions, but that does not mean it is best-suited for UR. The committee consensus is that overall, the current GEC is not meeting the needs of our students in some specific areas, particularly in regards to written communication, numeracy, and wellness. Furthermore, there are numerous opportunities for improvement in all areas of the GEC, for an institution that aspires to academic excellence as defined in the Strategic Plan: “to stimulate intellectual and personal growth, connect theory with practice, and offer the inspiration of the
liberal arts and the ability to approach problems thoughtfully, critically, ethically, and creatively.”

The GEC comprises roughly one-third of the graduation requirements for the University of Richmond undergraduate degree programs. When the unit system was implemented, the total number of courses students need for graduation was reduced, but the number of courses in the GEC was not reduced proportionally. Students have less opportunity for the exploration that a liberal arts education should provide. The committee considered each required component in the GEC as “valuable real estate,” and evaluated the contribution of each GEC unit versus potential alternative uses of faculty resources and focus of our students’ efforts.

The committee found a consistent theme that too often, faculty and students do not understand the purpose of the GEC. We found the need to address, in a deliberate and purposeful way, how our general education program is packaged, implemented, and disseminated to students and faculty. This “repackaging” of a sort would form a clear identity for the GEC.

Our GEC, as a whole, does not offer ways for students to see the purpose for their learning, to explore various areas of knowledge, habits of mind, and ways of seeing, as well as to acquire a set of basic competencies. There are few opportunities for students to integrate their learning from one course to another outside of their major. We have consistently heard the complaint that students see the curriculum as a something “to get out of the way” or as a “series of boxes to check,” comments that describe curricular fragmentation and incoherence. An incoherent curriculum may have parts that make sense, but those parts do not fit together, and the large variety of courses becomes an unrelated jumble (Green 2018). Bringing a clear purpose, a strong identity, and intentionality to our fragmented curriculum can increase the level of student and faculty engagement in our general education courses and better lead students toward the “lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership” described in our mission statement.

The following evaluation of each component part of the GEC summarizes the committee’s review of input from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Supporting detail is found in the Appendices to this report.

**b. First-Year Seminars**

Goals for the GEC:

Our committee evaluated the FYS on the basis of the following goals for the GEC from our Section IV of this report:

- The general education curriculum should help students improve their English verbal communication skills. The first-year seminars are the only existing general education courses that include explicit writing and oral communication components, although other courses in the Fields of Study and majors develop communication skills as well.
- The general education curriculum should provide a common experience that helps unite all UR undergraduate students. FYS should inculcate students to the close interactions and discussions with faculty and fellow students central to the UR experience.
Strengths:

The FYS Program is a disciplinary-based, writing-intensive general education program for first year students. Instructors are drawn from across the University. Students have some flexibility in choosing their seminars. According to student evaluations of instruction (Fall 2010-Spring 2013), the courses are generally well-liked by students, with high opinions of their instructors and the in-class discussions. Students also indicated that the courses stimulated their critical and analytical thinking. An external review of FYS by Professors Elizabeth Ciner (Carleton College) and Lindsay Whaley (Dartmouth College) in 2014 noted the high level of faculty engagement in the FYS courses they teach.

Challenges:

Reiterating the conclusion of the 2018 report of the FYS Committee to the UR Faculty Senate, the FYS program is not designed solely to be a writing program. In multiple departmental feedback sessions, faculty expressed dissatisfaction with students’ current formal writing skills. Some current first-year students want a more interesting selection of FYS, particularly those with interests in the sciences. Student feedback from Fall 2010 to Spring 2013 indicated only moderate success in achieving the five pillars of the FYS experience:

1) Expand and deepen students' understanding of the world and of themselves,
2) enhance their ability to read and think critically,
3) enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms,
4) develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research, and
5) provide the opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor.

Internal (2018) and external (2014) reviews noted a lack of consistency across FYS sections and a lack of scaffolding from first to second semester of FYS. Students were not able to articulate the difference between the first and second semesters of FYS. Opinions expressed in multiple departments included:

- The quality of student writing has declined.
- While developing writing skills is not the sole goal of the FYS Program, it is a key goal.
- The GEC needs a writing course taught by qualified faculty.
- FYS is not meeting the writing needs of many students.
- FYS does not take into account the different writing levels of students as they arrive on campus (unlike course options for students studying foreign languages or mathematics).
- The present program does not provide the first-year class with any unifying experience, such as reading common texts.
- FYS does not encourage (or is not integrated with) ongoing development of writing skills after the first year.
- The variability of student experiences in FYS results in variable outcomes.
- Fully staffing FYS courses remains difficult (also noted in 2018 internal review). Several departments indicated challenges with staffing their own courses given student demand, implying that FYS is lower on the priority list.
Furthermore, the 2015 and 2018 alumni survey identified writing proficiency as the most important skill for post-graduate success, underscoring the importance of instilling a “culture of writing,” especially at an early stage.

Potential Reforms:

The committee sees a need, and significant interest in, a University commitment to a thorough reform of the writing requirements. This commitment to writing should not be limited to the FYS program, but should be integrated at all levels of the curriculum. Courses designated as “writing intensive” should be taught by professors committed to seeing students develop habits to improve writing skills through a combination of assignments, implemented uniformly across FYS, Fields of Study, and the majors. Writing intensive courses are especially needed at the upper-division where students should be writing longer pieces that demand greater organization, topical focus, library research (where appropriate) and elements of style. The University needs to commit resources to develop a culture of writing.

Several options for reforming FYS that were mentioned in discussions with the academic departments and within the committee are listed in Section VI.

c. Wellness

Goals for the GEC:

The committee considered input about whether and how the non-credit Wellness requirement in the GEC is fulfilling the following goals set forth in the assessment criteria:

- The general education curriculum should support students’ physical, mental, and emotional health.
- The general education curriculum should provide a common experience that helps unite all UR undergraduate students.
- Wellness courses must continue to meet accreditation requirements
- Ideally, Wellness courses should engage students in topics important to student well-being and connect students to campus resources and the rest of the curriculum.

Strengths:

Students are required to learn about alcohol awareness and other important aspects of the college experience that would otherwise be difficult to communicate to all students.

Challenges:

Inconsistency and scheduling of Wellness courses are challenges. Few members of the faculty expressed much familiarity with or support for the “PLUS2” (WELL 090) Wellness courses. Many (but not all) students expressed dissatisfaction with the current Wellness courses. Student engagement is low, and Wellness courses are entirely disconnected with any other part of the curriculum. Students build their academic schedule first, and place priority on their graded courses.
Potential Reforms:

The ad hoc First-Year Experience Committee, headed by Associate Provost Scott Johnson, is gathering input on how to improve Wellness courses in conjunction with efforts to better transition students into the college experience at UR.

d. Fields of Study

Goals for the GEC:

The committee gathered substantial data and information to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Fields of Study (FS) requirements. This included examining aggregated data from the past 10 years that included enrollment numbers, course offerings, and assessment outcomes. Committee members also consulted with faculty, students, staff and alumni to solicit feedback through surveys, small group meetings, and a town hall meeting. Additionally, the committee invited various key players to discuss the FS processes and governance, including the chair of the General Education Committee, David Brandenberger, the Director of Advising, Anna Young, and the Dean of International Education, Martha Merritt.

The collected information demonstrated that the FS did have strengths, including the variety and breadth of course offerings within certain areas. However, there was also a general consensus that specific aspects of the FS requirements necessitate revision. These ranged between department and program areas and sizes. Refer to Appendix V for a list of specific suggestions.

The committee evaluated the Fields of Study as currently defined in terms of each FS contribution to the following goals in our criteria in Section IV:

- The general education curriculum should prepare students to use common modes of academic inquiry.
- The general education curriculum should help students understand one or more modes of artistic expression.
- The general education curriculum should help students identify a suitable major field of study.
- The general education curriculum should help students develop skills in basic numeracy (i.e., the ability to understand and work with numbers).
- The general education curriculum should complement the students’ courses in their major field of study.
- The general education curriculum should not present an unreasonable impediment to study abroad.
- Students should learn in an integrative manner, connecting content from disparate fields to their own lives
- Students should reflect on their learning
Courses should take advantage of breadth and talents of faculty
- Faculty and students are deeply engaged
- Courses should provide moral/ethical foundation
- Courses teach skills in intercultural literacy
- Students should learn and practice oral and written communication skills throughout
- Courses are assessed using validated tools

Strengths:

We did not hear widespread demand to eliminate any of the existing field of study requirements or add any new field of study requirements. The existing field of study requirements expose students to at least six modes of academic inquiry:

- Observing physical phenomena (natural science)
- Reading texts (literary studies)
- Investigating the past using primary and secondary sources (historical studies)
- Building models (symbolic reasoning)
- Studying how other people think and behave (social analysis)
- Developing and practicing modes of artistic expression (visual and performing arts)

Challenges:

The current Fields of Study structure essentially was designed 30 years ago. The committee received input from multiple faculty in multiple departments that the boundaries or definitions between different fields of study are either too broad or too restrictive. Multiple departments recommended that the Fields of Study allow exploration of fields that now are more porous and interdisciplinary, and allow all forms of creativity.

Specifically, the existing FSSR requirement emphasizes symbolic reasoning, but not necessarily numeracy. Linguistics and logic courses currently qualify for FSSR credit; statistics courses do not. Expansion/change of this requirement to a numeracy or data analytics requirement is indicated, to prepare graduates in all majors for problem-solving using data and data visualization.

Staffing Fields of Study courses has also become difficult for some departments. While many of the courses of some departments and programs also count for Fields of Study credit, some departments must devote teaching units to teaching “non-majors” classes while staffing their own major. These non-majors courses, while engaging, are often filled entirely by seniors during registration. This is a particular problem with Field of Study Natural Science courses. Departments understandably prioritize staffing their own majors, but this leaves few teaching units for Field of Study courses.
The 2015 alumni survey asked respondents to rank 12 abilities according to how well UR had prepared them to perform each ability. “The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics” received the lowest score among the 12 abilities. There was a sizeable gap of 0.6 between the perceived importance of being able to work with numbers (4.1) and the perceived ability gained at UR (3.5).

Potential Reforms:

The definitions and boundaries of the Fields of Study should be examined in detail to provide the appropriate breadth and scope for learning in the 21st Century. Inclusion of statistics courses in the GEC, and other options, are listed in Section VI.

e. Communications Skills II – Second Language.

Goals for the GEC:

Language study has traditionally been an important component of a liberal arts education, for it inspires empathy and cultural insight in our students, in addition to offering substantial intellectual and cognitive benefits. Second language proficiency is also valuable preparation for students who study abroad, which constitutes the majority of UR undergraduates. UR’s programs in languages, literatures, and cultural studies (offered by in the departments of Classical Studies; English; Languages, Literatures & Cultures; and Latin American, Latino & Iberian Studies) already uphold many of the core values of our current strategic plan; namely, “inclusivity and equity,” as well as “diversity and educational opportunity.” Languages are the crucial medium that enables us to think globally; indeed, they are the very lifeline through which globalization is achieved. It is our obligation to prepare our students to thrive in a world that is increasingly multilingual and globalized. The study of languages thus empowers our students as emancipated individuals; it endows them with the ability to respond to the needs of others with compassion, understanding, empathy, and creativity. Monolingualism, in contrast, encourages ethnocentrism and isolationism. As Ludwig Wittgenstein famously put it, “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, “Language learning has been shown to greatly enhance student performance across the curriculum,” improving cognitive functions that include, but are not limited to:

- Enhanced problem-solving skills
- Improved verbal and spatial abilities
- Improved memory function (long & short-term)
- Enhanced creative thinking capacity
- More flexible and creative thinking
- Improved attitude toward the target culture

In general terms, the Com II requirement at UR is a proficiency-based requirement and, as such, is not tied to any specific number of class hours, semesters, seat time, or course credit. The
minimum accepted level for fulfillment of the requirement is a score of “medium-low,” as per the proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Students at UR are able to fulfill the requirement through several ways, including AP scores and other forms of testing.

**Strengths:**

The effectiveness of second language education is assessed using externally validated instruments (the Standards-based Measure of Proficiency (STAMPS 4S) or ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages). As our assessment data indicate, we are currently meeting the standard of “medium low” (on the ACTFL scale) in all the modern languages, with the exception of Arabic. Students also passed the Classical Studies Department’s separate assessment.

**Challenges:**

Despite the success of our language programs, a substantial portion of the committee expressed concerns that fulfillment of the Com II requirement may, for some students, amount to coursework in as many as four units (i.e., 10% of their coursework at UR). For some, such a weighty requirement is difficult to justify in light of other curricular priorities. Still, in practice, relatively few students enroll in a full four units of coursework at the Com II level. Recent data obtained from the Office of the Registrar with regard to the study of Spanish (the most popular language choice at UR), demonstrate that during the five-year span of 2013 to 2018:

- 1,965 students completed 2 units of Spanish in fulfillment of Com II (on average: 393 students per year),
- 480 students completed 3 units of Spanish in fulfillment of Com II (on average: 96 students per year), and
- only 191 students completed 4 units of Spanish in fulfillment of Com II (on average: only 38.2 students per year).

Although the target of two-thirds of students attaining medium-low proficiency overall is achieved by most languages, “sub-scores” from the external assessments, or scores broken into proficiencies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, indicate that the target for listening proficiency is not regularly being met by most of the language programs.

Education in a second language can provide critical insights into the national and cultural perspectives of peoples communicating in other languages. The Com II requirement, however, requires no assessment of student learning about the cultural practices of people speaking that language. It is difficult, therefore, to determine the effectiveness of Com II in regards to intercultural competency.

**Potential Reforms:**

Given the foregoing observations, the majority members of the General Education Review Committee believe that the Com II requirement plays an essential role in our general education
program and is important to the identity of the University as a leader in international education. Thus, its structure need not be altered. A minority of members believe that second language proficiency is not essential for all students and that departments and programs with curricula in which proficiency in a second language is critical adopt a specific requirement for their majors.

A small cosmetic modification has been suggested in the form of a name change; that is, for improved accuracy, we might change the name “Com II” to “Second-Language Proficiency” or “Second-Language Acquisition.” The name “Communications II” was predicated on the existence of “Communications I,” a requirement that no longer exists, and such a change would thus represent an improvement in clarity.

Adding an assessment in intercultural competency to the second language requirement could improve our understanding of the positive outcomes of learning a second language. These data would be useful for future debates on the merits of Com II.

f. General Education and its connections outside of the curriculum

UR’s general education curriculum exists as an important entity in the academic careers of all its undergraduates, but does not exist as an important entity outside of the curriculum. Despite its outsized stature as the centerpiece of undergraduate education, very little attention is paid to it by faculty, staff, students, and prospective students who aren’t directly participating in the courses. From Admissions, to Orientation, to Academic Advising, the General Education Curriculum serves as a forgettable backdrop to an otherwise excellent university.

A student’s interaction with the University begins prior to enrollment, during the application and admissions process. Students are attracted to UR’s because of its excellent academic reputation as a top national liberal arts college, its beautiful campus, and the wide array of extracurricular activities, but general education is not among the top items students ask about with admissions staff when they visit, according to multiple admissions staff members we spoke with. The Admissions Office displays fact sheets about every major on campus, but offers no equivalent information on our general education curriculum, despite the fact that each of those students will take general education classes upon enrollment. Prospective students do not think much of the broad education they will receive here, despite our identity as a liberal arts college.

Once a student enrolls at UR, the attention paid to helping students understand the purpose and importance of general education on their academic careers is insufficient. As far as we could tell, the GEC is not addressed during student orientation, leaving the task of explaining the GEC to academic advisors. While advisors are generally well-versed in the curricula of their own departments and programs, they might not explain general education to undeclared undergraduates. According to our survey of student leaders, only approximately half of respondents thought that the GEC’s purpose, methods, and requirements are effective understood and communicated (Appendix II). The lack of understanding about our GEC leads to apathy and some antipathy. Of the 19 respondents to our student survey, dissatisfied students
outnumbered satisfied students, and nearly all of them wanted to see the GEC changed. Students commonly complain about taking classes in fields have no interest and view them as “just boxes to check” (Appendix II). This “checkbox mentality” was a common refrain encountered at the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ 2019 “Creating a 21st-Century General Education: Responding to Seismic Shifts” conference and certainly not unique to UR.

Our GEC is generally assessed through rubrics designed around competencies and then assessed by the faculty who teach them. These assessments almost uniformly indicate that ~90% of students are competent in all of the skills tested in Fields of Studies courses (competencies are described in SACSCOC accreditation materials; the assessment scores and accreditation materials can be obtained from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness). FYS also employs similar rubrics, which students pass with flying colors, but the internal FYS review from 2018 also takes a dim view of these rubrics:

“When one hundred professors a year assess their own students based on largely independent criteria (determined by those same professors), the data have little objective value (a failing that would be true even if every professor took the assessment with utmost seriousness and rigor, which many FYS instructors privately admit that they do not).”

FYS did undergo an external review in 2013-14, which also noted the need for better assessments. The weakness of our assessment tools may also contribute to the inconsistencies from course to course seen in FYS, as stated above. The Second Language requirement stands in contrast in that language proficiency is based on an external (ACTFL) set of guidelines. Our GEC is in need of stronger, more informative assessments than those currently in use if we are to use them to improve the curriculum and the courses in the curriculum.

The responsibility of overseeing UR’s GEC lies with the General Education Committee, a university-level committee. The General Education Committee, under the purview of the Faculty Senate, consists of faculty across all five schools, and is mainly responsible for maintaining the general education curriculum and resolving requests or conflicts that relate to the curriculum. It has the ability to recommend changes to the curriculum, but that ability is rarely exercised. Curricular committees, instead of driving innovation, serve to maintain the status quo, and this problem is not unique to UR nor new (Green 2018, p. 6) While each department and program is in charge of its own curriculum, the general education curriculum belongs to no single department or school, making review and revision considerably more difficult. General education also has no ability to staff its own curriculum, in contrast to departments, and staffing problems are spread throughout the curriculum, from FYS to Fields of Studies courses.
VI. Recommendation to the Faculty Senate

In light of the numerous discussions the GEC Review Committee had with departments and directors of programs and internally, we crafted and discussed a motion that distills our collective opinions about UR’s current general education curriculum. The motion is as follows:

“We, the General Education Curriculum (GEC) Review Committee, after having done a thorough review, have determined that the University of Richmond’s current undergraduate GEC is not well suited to teach essential skills, abilities, and perspectives for undergraduates, or to fulfill our university’s mission. Therefore, we recommend that the Faculty Senate form a new committee that will revise the general education curriculum.” The motion passed unanimously, 6-0, with three members absent.

VI. Recommended revisions and suggestions for the GEC revision committee

LIST OF SUGGESTIONS/CHANGES RECEIVING CONSENSUS SUPPORT

1. Wellness requirement should be changed to make it more relevant to students.
2. Consider disallowing or capping the number of Advanced Placement credits for general education requirements. The committee as a whole does not consider high school courses to be good substitutes for college courses. It is therefore critical that the experiences offered courses in general education be distinctive of the content taught in high school courses.
3. Increase the number of required writing-intensive courses. The National Survey of Student Engagement data (available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness) indicates that while first-year students at UR have more writing assignments than at other liberal arts colleges, seniors at UR have fewer writing assignments than LAC peers, suggesting that our commitment to writing throughout the curriculum drops off after FYS. The committee advocates designating some Field of Study courses as “writing-intensive”, and requiring a certain number of those courses for graduation.
4. Replace Field of Study Symbolic Reasoning with a required course on math, statistics, or data analysis to improve numeracy. Students should be able to handle numbers and organize data for future employment in many different fields. Alumni surveys from 2010 and 2013 indicated that there existed a gap between how important the ability to work with numbers and understand statistics and how well UR prepared them to do those things.
5. Decrease First-Year Seminar requirement from two units to one unit. This would reduce redundancy, as the goals and implementation of first and second semesters of FYS are substantially different, and make FYS easier to staff.
6. Strengthen oversight of FYS. Both faculty and students are dissatisfied with the variation
between FYS sections in implementation. The 2018 internal FYS review revealed that there’s little accountability for faculty teaching FYS.

7. Revisit guidelines for Fields of Study courses.
8. Consider allowing FYS courses to count for an appropriate Field of Study.

SUGGESTIONS/CHANGES RECEIVING STRONG, BUT NOT CONSENSUS SUPPORT

1. Wellness should be a for-credit course folded in the First-Year Experience.
2. Add a senior capstone for general education so students can reflect on their college experience.
3. Offer FYS courses in different languages.
4. Align or cluster Fields of Study courses around common themes or texts.
5. Improve communication of goals and value of general education.

Additional ideas for improving general education can be found in Appendix V.
VIII. The charge for the General Education Curriculum Revision Committee

Draft of the Charge to the General Education Curriculum Improvement Committee
prepared by the GEC Review Committee, March 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.
IX. Conclusions

Our committee finds UR’s GEC in an unhealthy state. It has been institutionally neglected. At the same time, many faculty, staff, and students care deeply about the quality of teaching and learning. We want to see a better, healthier curriculum. This curriculum is mediocre, and mediocrity should not be good enough for an institution as ambitious and well-resourced as ours.

The problems with the curriculum are numerous, but the GEC Improvement Committee should approach the reform effort with a sense of optimism. The vast majority of faculty that attended our town hall in February 2019 came wanting to see changes made to the GEC, and left feeling even more willing to see change enacted. Even as many of the faculty are overwhelmed by responsibilities, the members of the committee heard more than enough encouraging words about the review effort to convince us that the faculty stand ready to join us on the reform.

Reform efforts that succeed are the results of careful deliberation, openness to change and input, and a supportive administration. We hope that the next committee is able to take the time to debate the controversial issues and build consensus around their proposed changes. We found that inviting external colleagues that have been through the gauntlet of curricular reform to speak with us was very useful, not just to show us an alternative model, but to show us that reform can be done and to help us reflect on our own curriculum. These discussions and events take time and resources, and thus far, the Provost’s Office has been entirely supportive of making time and resources available. Reform efforts that have failed elsewhere stem from discord and apathy among the ranks of the faculty, protectionism by departments, and upheaval or turnover in the administration. To succeed, the next committee must keep the topic of general education front and center and communicate effectively and consistently with the rest of the faculty.

The GEC Review Committee was charged to find the gaps and weaknesses of the curriculum, as well as to see if the GEC was fulfilling UR’s mission statement, which is a more holistic approach. A new proposed curriculum should try to do both. Simply filling the gaps and addressing the weaknesses does not solve the “checkbox mentality” problem. Similarly, creating a more purposeful curriculum could leave existing deficiencies in writing, numeracy, and wellness unsolved. The new committee should keep both approaches in mind to create a proposed curriculum that is as rich and complete as possible prior to presenting it to the faculty. Two members of the committee created different models of the curriculum that might serve as initial frameworks for the next committee (Appendix VI).

All this effort may seem daunting, but the next committee, next year’s Faculty Senate, and all of the faculty should remember that the GEC lies at the heart of the educational experience. It deserves our hard work. If done right, a new curriculum can instill a sense of common purpose and identity to our liberal arts university. As one faculty said during one of our department/program visits, when you think of UR, you should “think about liberal arts first!”
Considerations for the next committee:

- The chair of the GEC Improvement Committee should be a tenured faculty member. The chair should request a unit release from teaching. General education curriculum reform is a big job, and takes a lot of time and energy.
- The committee should have representation from all five schools with numbers representative of the size of the faculty of each school. The size of the committee should not exceed 15 so as to not be unwieldy or discourage participation by members.
- Include one member from the GEC Review Committee for continuity and memory.
- Include at least one non-tenure stream director who has been heavily involved in teaching general education.
- Students have expressed interest in participating in the reform effort. They can provide valuable insight from different perspectives. Consider inviting a student or two to meetings in a non-voting capacity.
- Read “Revising General Education – And Avoiding the Potholes” by Paul L Gaston and Jerry G. Gaff. This pamphlet contains lots of dos and don’ts during the curriculum reform effort.
- Consider sending a five-member team to the Association of American Colleges & Universities 2019 Institute on General Education and Assessment, June 4-7. The AAC&U Summer Institutes can provide valuable consultation and feedback on curriculum design in a single intensive workshop.
Works Cited


2015 University of Richmond Alumni Outcomes Survey: Class of 2010

The University of Richmond annually surveys graduates to find out what they are doing five years after graduation. The Alumni Outcomes Survey was administered online and by phone to alumni who graduated in May 2010 with a bachelor’s degree from the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Jepson. The response rate was 42% (242 out of 582 alumni).

1. Which of the following best describes your current enrollment status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in or have completed a degree or certificate program since</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduating from University of Richmond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled, but not toward a degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled, but applying to graduate or professional school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently enrolled in any courses</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What degree or credential are you pursuing or have you earned from this institution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master’s (MA, MS)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Master’s (MSN, MPH)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Master’s (MBA, MPA)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Master’s (MEd, MSW, MDiv)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Doctorate (PhD)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Medicine (MD)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Doctorate (DDS, DO)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juris Doctor (JD)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Doctorate (DBA, EdD)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Bachelor’s (BA, BS)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Credential</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. When did you earn the degree or certificate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet earned</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, but actively looking for employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed by choice, not actively looking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing another full-time activity, not including school, such as</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteering, traveling, military service, homemaker (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If you are employed full-time, please indicate your annual salary range. This information will be used only to summarize the salaries of all respondents. For example, “the median salary range for recent graduates is $30,000 to $35,000.” Your individual response will not be reported nor will your identity be associated with your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $44,999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $54,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $64,999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$65,000 - $69,999</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $84,999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$85,000 - $89,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 - $94,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$95,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Which one of the following categories best describes your current field of employment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising/Public Relations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism/Publishing/Media</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Sales</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit &amp; Social Services</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy &amp; Law</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Research</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with your undergraduate education at the University of Richmond?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Dissatisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Each item below describes abilities you may have developed as an undergraduate at the University of Richmond. Tell us how important each ability has been to you since graduating from the University of Richmond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to speak clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to write clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze complex problems</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to collaborate effectively with others as a team member</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to develop solutions to complex problems</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to be innovative and creative</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to understand the global context of situations or decisions</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to conduct scholarly research using methods in your field of study</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Each item below describes abilities you may have developed as an undergraduate at the University of Richmond. Tell us to what extent your undergraduate experiences at University of Richmond prepared you to perform each ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abilities</th>
<th>Importance (Mean)</th>
<th>Preparation (Mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to speak clearly and effectively</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to write clearly and effectively</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze complex problems</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to collaborate effectively with others as a team member</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to develop solutions to complex problems</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to be innovative and creative</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to conduct scholarly research using methods in your field of study</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2018 University of Richmond Alumni Outcomes Survey: Class of 2013

The University of Richmond annually surveys graduates to find out what they are doing five years after graduation. The Alumni Outcomes Survey was administered online and by phone to alumni who graduated in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree from the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Jepson. The response rate was 29% (241 out of 822 alumni).

1. Which of the following best describes your current enrollment status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in or have completed a degree or certificate program since graduating from University of Richmond</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled, but not toward a degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled, but applying to graduate or professional school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently enrolled in any courses</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What degree or credential are you pursuing or have you earned from this institution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master’s (MA, MS)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Master’s (MSN, MPH)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Master’s (MBA, MPA)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Master’s(MEd, MSW, MDiv)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Doctorate (PhD)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Medicine (MD)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Doctorate (DDS, DO)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juris Doctor (JD)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Doctorate (DBA, EdD)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Bachelor’s (BA, BS)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Credential</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. When did you earn the degree or certificate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet earned</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, but actively looking for employment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed by choice, not actively looking</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing another full-time activity, not including school, such as volunteering, traveling, military service, homemaker (specify)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If you are employed full-time, please indicate your annual salary range.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $44,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $54,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $64,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$65,000 - $69,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $84,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$85,000 - $89,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 - $94,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$95,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Which one of the following categories best describes your current field of employment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts (Design, Performing, Visual)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services/Insurance</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare (Clinical)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare (Administrative/Research)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Affairs/Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Journalism/Publishing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums &amp; Libraries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/Business Development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/Information Technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with your undergraduate education at the University of Richmond?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Dissatisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Each item below describes abilities you may have developed as an undergraduate at the University of Richmond. Tell us how important each ability has been to you since graduating from the University of Richmond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to collaborate effectively with others as a team member</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to speak clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to develop solutions to complex problems</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to write clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze complex problems</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to be innovative and creative</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to understand the global context of situations or decisions</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to conduct scholarly research using methods in your field of study</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Each item below describes abilities you may have developed as an undergraduate at the University of Richmond. Tell us to what extent your undergraduate experiences at University of Richmond prepared you to perform each ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to write clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to collaborate effectively with others as a team member</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze complex problems</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to speak clearly and effectively</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to develop solutions to complex problems</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to conduct scholarly research using methods in your field of study</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to understand the global context of situations or decisions</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to be innovative and creative</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey for Students on UR's General Education
19 responses

What do you believe is the purpose of the undergraduate general education curriculum at the University of Richmond?
17 responses

to prepare students to engage with people different from themselves, to stimulate intellectual criticism and social activism, to promote students’ passions and prepare them for careers that will better the world, to make students competitive in the workplace and for higher education, to expose students to different subjects they may not be interested in/be able to take otherwise.

To allow for a diverse and well-rounded student curriculum that engages in all aspect of University requirements and liberal arts experience

To make sure that all Richmond graduates have a base-line level of education in a wide range of disciplines and to expose students to disciplines outside their comfort zones.

The purpose of gen eds is to create well rounded students and citizens.

To help provide a liberal arts education that provides a robust mode of inquiry across several academic disciplines

The purpose is to provide a liberal arts education that encompasses all parts of academia ranging from humanities to natural sciences. As an international student from the UK, this was THE MOST important aspect of US liberal arts colleges that attracted me to come here. At University of Richmond, especially as a Bschool major, I’ve had some great liberal arts classes and actually learned a lot from them including my Fall Semester FYS. Going into the world of business, UR’s gen Ed system has allowed me to think across schools when it comes to projects, internships and classes in general.

I think that the purpose of the gen ed curriculum is to ensure that everyone receives a full liberal arts education at UR that allows them to develop necessary skills to help them in their careers and futures at the school.
To gain holistic education on various subjects.

Students to obtain a holistic education

To learn a variety of topics to prepare for a career as well as improve oneself

To have students be able to look at and tackle problems in a variety of ways across a variety of disciplines.

To give all students the opportunity to explore different classes and to garner a wide range of information and experience.

The purpose of GE is to push students to learn and engage with academic interests outside their major

For all students to experience all facets that the university has to offer as a major or subject of majors at the university.

to make sure students have a well rounded liberal arts education

To introduce students to new topics

I believe that the university intends them to help provide students with a broad perspective on life and to be able to approach problems from a variety of view points.

Do you think that the GE curriculum’s purpose, methods, and requirements are effectively understood and communicated?

19 responses

- Yes: 47.4%
- No: 47.4%
- Unsure: 5.2%
How satisfied are you with the current general education curriculum?
19 responses

What do you think about the selection of courses under the General Education curriculum?
19 responses
In your experience, do First-Year Seminars fulfill their purpose in effectively sharpening writing skills through a specific disciplinary lens?

19 responses

- Yes: 47.4%
- No: 42.1%
- Unsure: 10.5%

Do you believe that the second language requirement (COMII) in the general education program is an appropriate part of your education? Why or why not?

18 responses

- Yes: 42.1%
- No: 57.9%

Yes because I think all Americans should be required to know a second language. however, if a student comes out of a school with less resources where they were not able to learn a second language, this may disadvantage them in relation to more privileged students.

As a person interested in the nonprofit industry, I feel COMII too is unnecessary. I feel like my requirements could be better spent through service or real-world internship experience opportunities.

Yes; I think foreign language learning and the associated cultural education/interaction with the international center are important for general student development/betterment. Four credits is extremely demanding, though, especially if someone struggles with language learning. I personally think I would have enjoyed it (I was able to AP out) but I can see students’ frustration when taking a two credit language they miss out on taking two passion classes. I think that it should be expanded to include American Sign Language so as to 1. be more inclusive 2. encourage more people to learn ASL

No it is too hard of a requirement to fulfill here. It is taking me three semesters here to finish my language requirement, which is too many.
Com2 seems stuck in an awkward position where it seems much more than the baseline benefits (e.g. appreciating another culture, phonetics, grammar), but not enough to create fluency, etc. Either it should be more (preferably) or less. This just feels awkward. There's also a clear difference in the outcomes for different languages relative to their relative difficulty... a student who completes Arabic 202 might have less communication ability than a student who completes German 102 for example (note: I have taken Latin, German, and Arabic courses at UR as well as SDLC classes). SDLC courses should also count under special circumstances.

Yes I think that language skills are an important element of a well rounded education. However, I think that the current ComII requirement may be too strenuous of a requirement

I got this exempt having Hindi as my mother tongue.

I do not think so because I know that students who are language major or minors will work much harder in that class, whereas others will work just to pass it so that they can get the gen ed credit. I think this becomes an issue then for the professors teaching it and in some situations because there is such a disparity in the level of participation among students between those who are more dedicated to the class and those who are not. Therefore, I think it makes the most sense to eliminate it as a gen ed requirement, or lower the required level to an intro level so that students are exposed but so that it doesn't limit their options. For example, I am limited this semester to only three classes due to my extracurricular commitments and the fact that the required spanish class, 221, takes two credits and a significant amount of work and time that I could spend working on my major classes, or other gen ed requirements.

Yes since in the world today, knowing two languages is very common and it is important to know more than one language to be able to respect other cultures and be able to standout from those who only know one language.

Yes, mastering a 2nd language is useful on a practical level, but also open-minding on a personal level

Yes because it is important to Develope an aptitude in another language to promote creativity as well as diversity of thought and understanding of other cultures.

Not really however it did get me interested in continuing with Spanish, something I had previously not considered doing.

Yes I believe that the second language requirement is appropriate to our education here at Richmond because students are challenged to understand a new culture in order to learn something foreign to them.

I believe it is important since we live in a word dominated by English speakers. It is nice to be able to connect with other cultures.

Yes because although it is good to focus on your major as a whole, it is more important to be well-rounded and a language requirement helps that initiative.

No, i think learning a language is important but COM2 is way too intense for a gen-ed.

Absolutely not. Understanding that an international perspective is valuable, I believe courses about other cultures would be just as appropriate for COMII. Additionally, I believe a computer science course should also count towards COMII. As someone who wants to work in academia within the United States, while a second language may be handy, it shouldn't be required - I should be focusing on my major & deepening my understanding of what I'd actually like to study.

No, while I believe that learning a second language is important the language requirement is merely a box to check for most. One or two classes isn't enough to effectively learn a language or broaden ones.
cultural perspective. As they stand now the COMII requirement just has students memorize a bunch of words and grammar that they will forget a month later and probably never use again. If the objective of the GE requirements is to provide alternative perspectives to problem solve with I don't really see how the COMII requirement helps with that in any way.

Would you like to see changes made to our general education curriculum?
19 responses

If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)
18 responses

FYS - i would like to see a different system put into place. perhaps a one semester writing course with a faculty advisor with consultation with the writing center, and you can choose the essay topics you want (like an independent study?). if FYS's are to be kept, more relevant topics must be chosen, there must be a study done to see interest in the freshman class between subject areas, and the FYS's created must be according to the interests of the first years. also, FYS teachers must all go under training that requires their classes to be similar difficulties and rigor. also , I want more classes that bring in topics of inclusivity and diversity, and also that discuss discrimination (gender, race, LGBTQ+).
Take away COMII, 1 FYS (with the 2nd semester being a course about history of RVA), Take graduate classes as an upperclassman, have labs count for separate units, service-based learning

I strongly believe in the concept of a core curriculum - common experiences create community and characterize a Richmond education. However, I did not benefit from taking core classes that simply mimicked high school. Many students have echoed this sentiment. I see the current core curriculum as a missed opportunity to characterize a Richmond education as innovative, unique, valuable, and inclusive. College is a time to expand horizons and shift perspectives. There must be some implementation of social justice education. There are many classes that I see as prototypes for this sort of requirement (the leadership school has a class on diversity. I am forgetting the professors name). In the same way that Colorado College is characterized by one class terms, Richmond could be characterized as a leader in social justice education. I think Richmond students need to be educated on 1. how to talk to those who come from different backgrounds than themselves 2. why doing so is important 3. structural inequality 4. the history of Richmond and UR. Also - excel and sustainability. These could be wound into departments in unconventional and interesting ways. I would also like to see credit for labs in Gotty (or at least poll students, student government has been thinking about conducting this poll ourselves, and can share the data with you. I am aware of the most commonly cited pros and cons, but students I have spoken to support credit for labs emphatically. Additionally, I think adding credit for labs would be a heathy disincentive for students who attempt 4 lab classes in a semester. )

Also I really would have appreciated being able to AP out of my English gen-ed (especially having taken both lang and lit)

Take away the first year seminars as the varying level of difficulty is way too much

More intentionally with respect to Com2. Ethics requirement. Critical thinking requirement. Perhaps a Com1? requirement (i.e. able to communicate orally effectively... perhaps could be satisfied w/ participation in debate/mocktrial/mun/etc or through classes with strong oral communication)

I would like to remove the wellness requirement. Also, I want to restructure the visual and performing arts requirement because I did not find it to be that academic or engaging

Firstly, I would give .25 credit for each Wellness class. From a students point of view, receiving credit not only motivates you to participate in class but also to study outside of class about the material and encourages critical thinking about the topic.

Secondly, I would make a change in the advising system or some sort of track method so people can see FYS' related to their intended major. Or, you could develop a category system of interests and then it shows you the FYS you should take in accordance to your interests.

The biggest change I would like to see is to the COM2 requirement discussed earlier. Additionally, I also do not understand the need for the FSVP requirement. Lastly, I think the gen ed requirement would better fit students interests and flexibilities if you needed a certain amount of credits out of a set number of fields of studies, like it is now. However, you only need to take classes in a number of those fields, rather than all of them. For example, you would need the same amount of gen ed credits, but could do it through just taking FSSA, FSN/sciences, FSLT, and FSSR or something like that. Personally, as a leadership studies and political science major, I do not see how FSVP or COM2 classes help me now or in my future, and see them more as an obstacle for me to take the classes I want to take/need to take for my major.

Keep only one gen ed requirement for literature or history and remove the arts requirement

Add more course options counting for Gen Eds, so maybe frequent review of new courses added to the catalog whether they could qualify for gen eds

Page 7, Appendix II
Make one or two requirements a free subject area to pursue subjects of more interest as well as usage. I am unable to do so otherwise and still meet all my graduation requirements in Accounting. Additionally taking some of the general education requirements pass fail or not for a grade would really allow students to just focus on learning and not worry about how badly the class might hurt them which forces the students to take the “easy” options

Add more options that blend disciplines. Someone doing nothing in their future with STEM should be able to take a class that blends the math or science requirement and still has undertones of English or history.

I am NOT a science or math person and I am dreading having to take those classes in order to fulfill my gen ed's. If students were given the option to take extra classes in a specific field instead of taking classes in a field that they are not skilled at, then I believe campus engagement would also increase.

I would group science and math together. For those that are not STEM, taking a science or math class is extra time and helps in no way for A&S majors and some Bschool majors. There should be some exceptions such as Econ counting for Math and Science.

Make all FYS courses evenly challenging. I know some friends who have had their GPA's diminished because of a harshly graded and rather rigorous FYS class. This should not be the case with first-years. This tactic scares them into not wanting to take nay more classes with that professor or likely in that field of study. Although, some FYS courses are simple and raise GPA's i believe level of difficulty should be even across the board.

CHANGE MATH REQUIREMENT! Stats/other non-calc classes should be included!!! Also art courses all have labs which is super time consuming for a non-major class. Also as mentioned above, com2 is super intense.

Significantly alter the COMII requirement (include Comp Sci, cultural courses, or get rid of it all together) Review all gen-ed courses (specifically Stagecraft is an abhorrent class which is a facade to make students work in the woodshop and attend the university's plays - I didn't learn anything insightful from the course and didn't feel as if I was introduced to anything new or that it helped me, I felt like the fact that it counted as a gen ed was abused to force students to work for Modlin. If there are any other courses like this, they should at least not count towards gen ed [let Modlin majors do this, they actually are interested in it!] or just cut the course in general)

I would eliminate the language requirement as I don't think it is helpful or necessary. Unless a student is committed to learning a language a class or two is pointless. Additionally, having gone abroad I have realized the value in language but the limited value it holds for Americans. The main reason is that you need to practice a language to learn it, which is very feasible in Europe. In the U.S. though even if you really want to learn a language, unless it is spanish, you will have few people to practice with and will ultimately forget it unless you make a conscious effort to retain you skill. I would also reduce the number of requirements by one to 5 and allow students to pick any 5 of the 6 FOS to complete. Most students have that one area they just have no interest in studying (for me it was science) either because of their interest in the subject or aptitude. Unfortunately, GE's act as GPA anchors for many students which is unfortunate and hinders them in the job search. Though some like to push the outlandish idea that GPA doesn't matter, for getting your first job it absolutely does especially for highly selective industries. Additionally, I would try and add more courses that are relevant to students of different majors for GE. I could imagine a science student enjoying English classes on scientific writing or a history class about the history surgery. As a bschool student I would be interested in an arts class on photoshop, graphic design, or a history class on the economy of early America. The gen eds as they are now are kinda dry and limiting.
What are the most important higher thinking skills and competencies that you are gaining in your gen ed courses?

19 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>10 (52.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective writing</td>
<td>15 (78.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercultural skills</td>
<td>3 (15.8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information literacy</td>
<td>7 (36.8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative reasoning</td>
<td>5 (26.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking and analytic thinking</td>
<td>12 (63.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical reasoning</td>
<td>3 (15.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td>11 (57.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>6 (31.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please use this space to expand on any of your responses above or add any other perspectives/opinions about general education.

8 responses

Less red tape for undergraduate students who want to take graduate course, allows service opportunities to count for units

I think Richmond promotes oral communication skills very well. I think that information literacy is super important and could be more explicitly incorporated. I actually did not have this vocabulary until taking this survey, but it is helpful is verbalizing why I like certain classes so much. I have found that there is a reciprocal relationship between the motivation to learn theory and the ability to know, explain and meaningfully understand facts. Students are more motivated to learn theory when they can apply it. Knowing facts has motivated me to learn theory which has empowered me to learn more facts.

Ethical reasoning could be improved by incorporating social justice. I have had 2 classes that incorporated ethics, but I could have avoided them (so not everyone is faced with ethics at some point in their UR career).

It would be cool if you were required to do community service based learning for a requirement.
Going back to FYS's - my reservation there was that they are not consistent in their effectiveness. My fall FYS has proved fundamental to my UR experience and truly made me a more analytical thinker and a better writer. However, I have heard students with experiences completely opposite to mine. This is so painful to me because I know how impactful FYS's can be. I can't imagine how hard the program must be to coordinate, and I don't see any flaws at the administrative level. However, professor execution of the classes and communication of the learning objectives could be improved and standardized (in terms of how much work is demanded)

Looking back as a senior, I have been trying to decide to what extent I think I maximized by time at Richmond. I wish I had taken more passion classes. This would have been possible if the gen ed requirements were modified.

Thanks so much for collecting and going through all this feedback!

Frankly, I think that the general student body views the education they receive at UR as a means to get a fancy piece of paper (or, perhaps more generously, to gain skills for their future careers), which is frankly contrary to my view of education and I think the mission of a liberal arts college. As a result of this, I think that most student responses you will get will be some form of complaining without actually understanding "why."

Should someone with no future in a science or language really be compelled to invest the massive time commitment of class and lab/drill? This is in place of a class that could go towards a major. Further, should they be using resources and creating costs in a field they have no desire to be part of?

I don't believe it's fair that students are required to take classes in which they might lack knowledge or skills in and have to suffer the consequences of a lower GPA.

Certain FYS classes should fulfill GE's. For example, I am in History of Eugenics FYS that is based off a writing and teaching style similar to a 199 History class. Yet, this FYS does not account for a GE's.

It may be worth looking into whether courses taken solely for the purpose of gen-ed can be graded the same as a wellness course (pass/fail). If something isn't your major, it may turn out to be that the course you're taking a leap of faith on for your gen ed requirement put your out of your comfort zone & tanks your GPA. You shouldn't be punished for courses in fields you don't intend on pursuing if you don't do well in them.

As they are now Gen Eds are just boxes to check. I think there needs to either be a greater variety of classes or classes students actually get value from. By value I mean knowledge or skills that students could take back and utilize in their major of choice that would also ideally help make them more employable. Dr. Galgono's his199 class does a pretty good job of that in that he heavily emphasized the importance of double checking sources, not taking information on face value, and looking at multiple perspectives.
Class of (optional)

18 responses

- 2019: 33.3%
- 2020: 27.8%
- 2021: 16.7%
- 2022: 22.2%
Email (optional)

10 responses

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Methods of Research

A variety of methods were used to gather information on the general education programs at peer schools of the University of Richmond. Methods of research include:

- Program descriptions from the general education websites of 25 different colleges and universities, covering a total of 27 general education programs. General education programs were sorted into three categories - fields of study, thematic, and open curriculum - and other details such as subject requirements, transfer policies and any changes made to the programs were recorded on a spreadsheet found here:
  https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CFd08oqDqBn3vtkGIbTisV_Dp1dKPmT
  0KCx6SDVpz7JA/edit#gid=0
- Information on some of these schools’ past general education programs and their modifications from school websites and related articles.
- Articles from The Chronicle of Higher Education on specific schools’ programs as well as general opinions and suggestions on the structuring of core curriculum programs.
- Relevant student opinions on Unigo.com, an online school reviews site often used in the college selection process.
- Information from a similar study done by Wake Forest in 2017:
  Curriculum Best Practices: A Look at Wake Forest’s Peers

Program Types

General education curricula were organized in three categories: fields of study, thematic, and open curriculum. Fields of study programs include all schools that require a core or distribution curriculum across a set of subject areas. Thematic programs include schools that organized the curriculum around a set theme, often selected by students, rather than specific subject areas. Programs with an open curriculum have no specific course requirements outside of the major.

- Fields of study curriculum: 23 out of 27 programs
- Thematic curriculum: 3 out of 27 programs
Subjects of Study Included in General Education Programs

This section looks at the different subject areas of study included in each school’s general education curriculum and groups them from most common to least common. Note that some of these categories by be required in conjunction with another category (ex: literature combined with writing as one distribution area requirement).

1. Natural Sciences - 24/27 programs
2. Writing - 23/27 programs
3. Social Sciences - 22/27 programs
4. Foreign Language - 19/27 programs
   *note: Foreign language includes language competency test requirements that students can pass or credits they can transfer without taking an actual university course
5. Visual & Performing Arts - 18/27 programs
6. Mathematics - 17/27 programs
7. Humanities - 16/27 programs
8. Diverse Perspectives - 15/27 programs
9. History - 14/27 programs
10. Philosophy - 11/27 programs
11. Literature - 10/27 programs
12. Quantitative Reasoning - 9/27 programs
13. Communication and Rhetoric - 8/27 programs
14. Theology - 4/27 programs
15. Ethics - 4/27 schools
16. Environmental Science - 3/27 programs
17. Economics - 1/27 programs
18. Justice - 1/27 programs
19. Liberal Studies - 1/27 programs
20. Empirical and Scientific Engagement - 1/27 programs

Unique Features of Programs

This section includes several features of schools that stood out as different from the rest. It includes an example of a school that had a faculty specifically dedicated to general education with a description of how they structured it, a school with general education options for students to choose between, examples of First Year Seminar programs that structured differently from the rest of programs or different from the FYS program at U of R. Finally, there are also several course subject requirements that stood out because they were unique to only one school.
a. **UVA’s Dedicated Faculty.** Two of UVA’s general education programs, the New College Curriculum and Forums Curriculum, have dedicated faculty for the programs. The New College Curriculum is led by 14 faculty members selected in their fields of expertise, and the Forums Curriculum is led by dedicated scholar-teachers who are experts in their prospective forum topics. While most colleges and universities have distribution requirements dispersed among faculty throughout their schools, it is possible that the uniquely concentrated nature of three distinct and smaller general education programs makes having a dedicated faculty more feasible. We can determine, however, that student-to-faculty ratio was not a factor in making the dedicated faculty possible because UVA’s student to faculty ratio of 15:1 is the highest ratio of all schools studied (the average student to faculty ratio was 10:1).

b. **UVA’s General Education Options.** UVA’s latest general education program format, implemented in 2017, allows students to choose between three different general education curriculums: the New College Curriculum, the Forums Curriculum, and the Traditional Curriculum.

   i. In the New College Curriculum, a fields of study program added in 2017, students select courses under the categories of "engagements" (aesthetics, empirical and scientific, engaging difference, and ethical), "literacies" (world languages and fields of modern expression), and "disciplines" (varying across many departments). These add up to a total of 41 credits, plus a variable number of world language credits (0-14).

   ii. In the Forums Curriculum, a thematic program, students explore relevant topics in depth that are led by scholar-teachers. They can choose between four different forum topics which change each year. Each topic admits 40 students. During their first two years, Forum students will enroll in liberal arts and sciences courses (24-27 credits) hand-picked by the forum faculty to directly address the forum topic. Specific requirements outside the forum topic include writing and language requirements.

   iii. The Traditional Curriculum, the original fields of study program, consists of 30 credits that provide an extensive base of intellectual content and skills includes “competency and “area” requirements over a variety of areas.

c. **Examples of FYS Programs:**

   i. **“Davidson 101” at Davidson College.** All students, including transfers, must complete Davidson 101 during their first semester at Davidson. This course curriculum includes a combination of in-class and web-based topics: alcohol education, career and life planning, diversity, human sexuality, library information, psychological health issues and resources, and "realizing your risk.”  

   *Note: Rice University also has a “Rice 101.”
“Moreau First Year Experience” at the University of Notre Dame. The Moreau First Year Experience is a two-semester FYS program inspired by Blessed Basil Moreau, professor, priest, and founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. In the First Year Experience, students are oriented to student life on campus and study multiple themes such as health, community standards, cultural competence, spiritual life and discernment, all of which build upon the five pillars of the Holy Cross: mind, heart, zeal, family, and hope.

“Critical Inquiry” at Pomona College. Pomona College requires a critical inquiry seminar required for all first year students. This seminar encourages students to engage the ideas and work of others, to articulate nuanced, reflective positions of their own, and to present their ideas in a sustained, persuasive manner.

d. Unique course requirements. These are requirements unique to only one school in the study.
      *Note: This is separate from their diversity requirement, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Studies in the United States.”
   ii. Economics - An economics course is offered at Elon University as part of their “society” distribution requirement.
   iii. Liberal Studies - A liberal studies course is required at Davidson College for the Classes of 2018, 2019, and 2020 only.
   iv. Empirical and Scientific Engagement - This is a requirement as part of UVA’s New College Curriculum.

Examples Program Reform at Other Schools

This section is not an exhaustive list of changes at every school. Rather, it includes several examples of changes schools chose to make when revising their general education curriculum. A complete list of reforms can be found on the comparative study spreadsheet.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CFd08oqDqBn3vtkGlTisV_Dp1dKPlmT0KCx6SDVpz7JA/edit#gid=0

● Boston College: In 2016, new requirements were added in cultural diversity, mathematics and the arts. According to one article, students had demanded changed the curriculum was too “Eurocentric.”

● Brandeis University: Starting in the fall of 2019, writing, digital literacy and oral communication will now be satisfied within the major. Diversity and justice courses now replace the “Non-Western and Comparative Studies” course.

● Bucknell University: The new program approved in 2009 and launched in 2010, introduced learning goals to assess whether they have fostered the desired values and
educational outcomes. New courses added included diversity in the U.S., environmental connections, global connections, and quantitative reasoning.

- **College of William & Mary**: In 2015, William & Mary introduced the new "COLL" - College Curriculum program. This program emphasizes the integration of liberal arts studies across all four years of the college’s curriculum rather than a “checklist” approach of requirements to check off. The COLL also emphasizes the aspect of inquiry, such as how to frame questions, reason, and solve problems, along with writing and other forms of communication. The new program also reduces the number of requirement categories from seven to three.

- **Pomona College**: In 2006, Pomona College changed their curriculum to include fewer requirements.

- **George Washington University**: In 2009, George Washington University reduced the number of required credits. In 2015, they also approved outside courses (AP, IB, abroad) to count under the gen. ed. requirements and removed the cap on courses from other comparable schools that could count towards gen. ed. requirements.

- **UNC Chapel Hill**: UNC established the "Making Connections Curriculum" in 2006. Its first revisions, made 2016-2017, will be in place for the freshman class entering in 2019. This new revision includes designing and specifying categories like general education course availability and scheduling, student learning outcomes, first year scheduling, junior/senior communication-intensive course design, a student affairs cohort program, assessment and amendment practices, experiential education opportunities and organization, general education for transfer students, and the design of a new course called Ideas, Information, and Inquiry (III).

- **University of Notre Dame**: This new program for students enrolled fall 2018 or later was developed as part of the school's "decennial core curriculum review," a routine review of the curriculum. One change was that the FYS program was changed from 2 credits to a 1-credit, 2-semester course. For more information on the committee for core curriculum review, see: https://corecurriculum.nd.edu/pre-fall-2018/policies/

- **University of Virginia**: The new program introduced in 2017 included stricter writing requirements. Students will no longer be able to test out of writing requirements but instead will take advanced courses if they place out of placement tests. The dean of arts and sciences says he hopes to have students test up, and not out of writing requirements.

**Trends and Recent Reforms**

1. **Diversity.** Many colleges and universities have added new diversity courses as part of their recent reforms, including Bucknell University in 2010 and Boston College in 2016. Overall, 15 out of the 27 programs recorded had some version of a diverse perspectives requirement, making it the eighth most common subject area required among the general education programs in this overview.
Examples of general diversity requirements include:
  a. “Engaging Diversity” at Georgetown University
  b. “Analyzing Difference” at Pomona College
  c. “Cultural Diversity” at Boston College and Oberlin College
  d. “Diverse Perspectives” at Brown University
  e. “Race and Ethnicity” at the University of Michigan
  f. “Communities and Identities” at Colgate University
  g. “Integrated Perspectives” at Bucknell University

Others requirements concentrate on a specific location or topic such as:
  h. “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Studies in the United States” (Brandeis University)
  i. “Diversity in the U.S.” (Bucknell University)
  j. “Non-Western Perspectives” (University of Virginia Traditional Curriculum)
  k. “Black Studies,” “East Asian Studies,” “Environmental Studies,” “International Studies,” “Latin American and Caribbean Studies,” “Queer Studies,” or “Women’s and Gender Studies” (Denison University)

2. Reduction of credits. Another theme in general education reforms was to reduce general education credits. Schools like George Washington reduced the number of overall credits required for their program while other schools like William & Mary reduced the number of required categories in their curriculum. While several schools added new courses for the sake of adding that particular course, there were no schools in this overview that added course credits merely for the sake of adding credits in their general education program. Instead, most reduced the credits.

3. Periodic Review. Some schools, such as the University of Notre Dame, have a routinely scheduled review of their general education program regardless of whether there have been complaints or specific needs of change in the program. This review can happen every 10 or 15 years, for example, and is usually accompanied by an established review board or committee.

4. Other reasons for reform may include:
   a. Adding new courses. For example, Colgate University added “The Western Experience” and “A Grounding in Science and Technology” classes in 1995
   b. Introducing new learning goals. For example, Bucknell University introduced new learning goals in 2010 to see whether they had fostered the desired values and educational outcomes in their students.
   c. Improved sequencing of courses. William & Mary restructured their program give the courses a more meaningful structure sequence in 2015.

*The Chronicle of Higher Education Articles*

Common Knowledge: The Purpose of General Education
Synopsis: Harvard’s new proposed core courses for their Arts & Sciences Core curriculum include new multidisciplinary courses and standard distribution with selection from 5 or 6 subject areas. The idea is add choices for students seeking more course options, making the distribution areas “virtually unbridled.” However, this means students have less in common through what they study and get less of the traditional general education effect.

Now, instead of being the model program for other colleges around the nation, others question whether Harvard’s strategies are becoming too broad and abstract.

Key point introduced:
There are pros and cons to both the distribution and core curriculum models. While distribution models can become too broad and incomprehensive, core curriculum models can exclude important aspects of diversity in education.

Questions posed in the article:
● “Should general education provide a common foundation of knowledge for students to share?”
● “Should general education expose students to the most important ideas, readings, and events?”
● “Should general education seek to provide a common foundation to facilitate teaching of advanced courses?”

Distribution Requirements vs. a Core Curriculum (In response to above article)

Comments from a retention consultant:
● “What student-consumers want in education is value for their tuition dollars. Do we need to treat students like customers?”
● “Retention research clearly indicates the power of peer-to-peer connections. Not only does a core program value common knowledge, but a common experience offers the opportunity to explore ideas across all majors, classes, interests, etc.”
● There is also the problem of faculty “territorialism,” i.e. promoting interesting but obscure courses.
● “Along the way, the path to common knowledge has been obscured, and many students find themselves lost on a journey that has no guideposts.”

General Education Gets an ‘Integrative Learning’ Makeover
Synopsis: Northern Illinois University had a distribution model, but students found the core “irrelevant, unrelated to their major, unrelated to their career aspirations.” The solution? Integrative learning. In integrative learning, students normally choose one specific core theme or question that guides their studies over the next four years, often through broader disciplinary categories or clusters of courses. The question may be presented to the students in their chosen theme or designed by students themselves. However, converting this curriculum idea into a reality comes with some challenges such as institutional inertia, turf battles, and competing priorities. It is still unclear how students will select their pathways and courses at Northern Illinois, or how the courses will link to one another. Connecticut College, Appalachian State University, and Dallas County Community College also have examples of integrative learning programs.

Key quotes:
- “Students and faculty need to be able to practice making these connections among ideas, synthesizing multiple perspectives, and translating that learning into new situations” … “Most institutions have left that up to the students.”
- “Employers also report that they want college graduates who have not only specific professional skills, but also generalizable ones like the ability to think, write, make presentations, work in groups, and solve open-ended problems. Ultimately, that’s what integrative learning is supposed to foster, too.”

The Case for a New Kind of Core

The author was a professional-school dean at Columbia University’s graduate school of journalism where they had to define core curriculum for the school. He proposes a design for a new kind of core curriculum that includes the following qualities:
- Liberal arts that are “stronger, clearer, and more sustainable”
- A stronger movement toward “critical thinking skills” or “education for citizenship”
- General-purpose courses that can help the students who are struggling with the transition from high school to college
- A methods-based rather than canon-based, using content to support the method
- A core curriculum for 1st and 2nd year undergrad students in a 4-year program with 8 one-semester courses:
  1. **Information acquisition** - Locating usable information, sociology of knowledge (who creates information, under what conditions, and subject to what distorting pressures), basic guide on how to use libraries, online databases and other resources, distinguish among sources, and performing a basic literature review
2. **Cause and effect** - Basics of scientific method for students who will not necessarily go into the science field but need to understand it
   a. Ex: It can be used to teach journalists using news stories as the main material such as, why has violent crime decreased so much more in NYC than in Chicago?

3. **Interpretation** - The close reading of texts which can be taught from different disciplines, learning to read for meaning and connection to other texts, analytic papers
   a. Ex: elements of an English class, or social-science class, law, religious studies, film or drama

4. **Numeracy** - Familiarization with the quantitative world for all students, can include examples from everyday life besides just math, a basic understanding of probability and statistics
   a. Ex: Poll results, sports statistics, stock-market indicators, government economic data

5. **Perspective** - Understanding of different worldviews, although it is impossible to entirely avoid conflict of perspectives
   a. Disciplines: sociology, anthropology, literature, psychology, client-oriented aspects of professional education

6. **The Language of Form** - Because information increasingly comes in the form of digital displays rather than texts or numbers, students require deep understanding of charts and graphs. This could also include space and volume, as well as intelligently seeing and producing visual information.
   a. Elements: design, architecture, planning, art, ecology
   *Note: this is different from “design thinking,” which is specifically the process of making things

7. **Thinking in Time** - A course on historical method, opening people’s minds to unfamiliar ways of thinking outside of generally expected outcomes, and the study of historical documents could be included. The primary aim is not to teach students the procession of specific events in a certain time and place but rather, how to think.

8. **Argument** - This course would teach students to make a compelling and analytically sound argument, both written and spoken.
   a. Possible elements: philosophy, law, theology, drama

Key quote:
“My proposed curriculum would be aimed, in effect, at taking the student from seeing the word in two dimensions to seeing it in three: coming to understand the limits of one’s knowledge and experience and learning how to transcend them, in ways that are both rigorous and subtle, so that the world is no longer divided into a comfortable realm of
things that feel true and an uncomfortable realm of the unfamiliar. This transition should empower people who have gone through it to operate with greater confidence in new environments and to avoid some of the most obvious kinds of mistakes and misunderstandings...

Ways that this program is different from others today:

- No assumption that entering students need a high level of direction
- Methods above subject matter

Cons of other programs in comparison:

- “Learning outcomes” can put the emphasis on devising an end-of-course assessment rather than on the course itself.
- Offering broad disciplinary subjects like “justice” or “ethics” can fail to identify fundamental methods of understanding or analysis in the attempt to approach the subject.

For Some Elite Colleges, It’s Advanced Placement vs. Gen. Ed.

Synopsis:
W&M recently announced new general education courses and also made sure all of its students would take them by erasing AP credits for core requirements starting the fall of 2015. The new W&M curriculum is supposed to integrate disciplines and areas of knowledge more intentionally by “thinking beyond the discipline.” W&M students will still receive an average of 16 credits from AP courses that they can use for electives and certain departmental requirements. However, some supporters of AP and IB transfer say that (small) advanced-level courses from high school can offer better support than some of the (large) introductory courses required of students in college. Other schools like Vanderbilt have also chosen to restrict their AP acceptance policy, and Dartmouth College said it would not give credit for any AP exams starting fall 2014.

*Author’s point to consider: When thinking about AP courses and their credits, colleges should consider not only what the courses are teaching but also their educational strategies and how they are teaching students to think critically.

4-Year College’s View of Transfer Credits May Hinder Graduation

- A loss of academic credits among transfers from community colleges is hindering graduation.
- Policies are inconsistent from state to state and sometimes even within states.
● Many students are required to retake courses that they’ve already completed at their two-year university.
● 14% of students in one study “essentially began anew after transferring.”
● Another 28% lost between 10 and 89% of their community college credits.
● 58% were able to keep 90% or more of what they earned in community college.
● Lack of transfer could be attributed either to the institution or the student, the study does not specify.
● Even with these setbacks, transfer students persevered and graduated at about the same rate as students who attended the same institution for all four years.
● Suggestion: community colleges could invest more in transfer-counseling services.
● A new bill was proposed in 2012 but unsuccessful.
● Policy makers are acting more on hunches than actual evidence.

Themes: Disconnect between 2-year and 4-year institutions, community college transfers often have to retake many credits they have already earned, even so most still graduate on time

Informative Student Opinions

Student opinions were included in this category if they provided meaningful or informative information about the quality of a program. In other words, they provide information not only about whether a student liked or disliked the program but why. After each quote is a brief summary or explanation of what made the quote meaningful.

1. Boston College Student: "BC is unique in that you have to fulfill a core of 15 or so classes in all the departments in order to graduate which is cool, esp. for people like me who have no idea what they want to major in: it's a good way to explore your options."
   a. According to this student, core requirements are a good idea to explore and figure out what they want to major in.

2. Brown University student: How do you feel about Brown ’s academic requirements? - "They are minimal, and it's great."
   a. This student enjoys the benefit of having minimal requirements.

3. Davidson College student: "I think the requirements to graduate are very manageable. You basically need one class in every department including a lab science. In your major, you will most likely have to take 10 courses that fall into specific categories. By taking a class in every department, you are able to get a feel for all different subjects. You don't have to declare your major until spring of your Sophomore year which gives you time to try out different classes and departments before then."
a. Davidson general education requirements are manageable and a good opportunity to experience different subject areas before declaring a major.

4. Denison University student: "Denison students have to fulfill so many general requirements by the time they graduate that you get a whole other wealth of knowledge about subjects that you may never have considered taking. This is both good and bad. It’s good because coming out of college you have a lot more opportunity at getting different kinds of jobs, not just in one specific field, and lots of Denison alums go on to grad schools. Sometimes it’s annoying having to fulfill so many GE’s because you might have to take classes that you have no interest in, and these classes might pull down your overall GPA (for me it was the three semesters of French I was forced to take). Overall I think GE's are good, however, because a lot of students go into Denison not knowing what their interests are or what they want their major to be, and by taking these different classes, they find it."
   a. For this Denison student, lots of gen. ed’s can be annoying, but they also see the value of using them to figure out their interests.

5. Georgetown University student: "Being a Jesuit liberal arts university, all students are required to take 2 philosophy, 2 theology, 2 history, 2 social science, 2 math/science, 2 humanities and up to advanced level in a foreign language. While the core requirements are sometimes frustrating (I'm looking at you history requirement) there are generally so many classes offered that people generally enjoy the variety. Another option to get those pesky requirements out of the way is during study abroad."
   a. Core requirements can be frustrating yet generally an enjoyable variety.

6. Oberlin College student: "Oberlin's academic requirements are definitely one of the best parts of getting an education here. They don't really "require" so much as "encourage" you to explore diverse fields of knowledge. You have to take at least 9 credit hours in the departments of Humanities, Sciences, and Cultural Diversity. You have a Lot of freedom in what you want to do and where you want to go (the sky is the limit) and it's a lot of work but it's definitely manageable and you have an adviser and other great resources to help you out."
   a. Oberlin’s program consists of 27 credits over three broad categories in nine credits each, leaving a lot of opportunity for choice up to the students, which this student appreciates.

7. Pomona College students. This comparison of three different opinions demonstrates the variety of opinions that can exist within one university, both positive and negative, toward the general education program:
   a. Student 1: "The requirements can be annoying, because there are five areas of study in which you have to take at least one class each, in addition to a foreign language requirement."
   b. Student 2: “Pomona’s academic requirements are easy to fulfill and it's not hard to find a class you like in each breath requirement."
c. Student 3: "Pomona has the best graduation requirement ever- 5 breath of study requirements that are really easy to fill (I'm a sophomore and I have finished all of mine without even trying) and a foreign language requirement (that you can test out of) and a PE requirement (best ever!)."

*Note: Pomona offers less distribution requirements than most schools (a minimum of 1 course each within 5 categories), making them easier to fulfill.

8. Rice University student: "In terms of general education, the requirements at Rice are relatively light, and many students already have them waived from AP; the requirements for majors vary much more, with engineering majors having their schedules almost predetermined while arts and social science majors have the freedom to take on two or three majors if they want to."

a. At Rice, students are required to complete 17 courses for the general education requirement, which is “relatively light” according to one student.

9. Villanova University Student 1: "There are a lot of core classes that have to be accomplished which kind of is a nuisance, especially ones like theology and philosophy even when you're a business major with no interest in either of those subjects."

a. This first Villanova student finds having lots of core classes a nuisance.

10. Villanova University Student 2: "The academic requirements are tedious but truly do help you find direction within the university; however, sometimes obtaining a job seems to be the top priority rather than actually capturing the information."

a. The second Villanova student also finds requirements tedious but appreciates the help finding direction while discouraged about the lack of focus on capturing actual information.

11. Wake Forest University: The first student describes the credits as “strenuous” and “tedious” but thinks it makes students well-rounded appreciates the variety of thought, the second student agrees that requirements make students better-rounded, and the third student does not appreciate the amount of core classes or how students cannot receive AP credits. (Note: the year this comment was written is not certain.)

a. Student 1: "Wake's academic requirements are strenuous and tedious, but do make for a well-rounded liberal arts student. When someone comes in to Wake knowing what they want to study, the divisional requirements seem annoying. However, these required classes allow students to think in different ways than they might be used to."

b. "...Since Wake is a liberal arts school, students are required to complete a series of divisional courses that extend to all the major areas of study provided at Wake. Sometimes this can be a little frustrating when it requires an English major, like me, to take classes like statistics and physics, but I think it also requires you to be more well-rounded, which in turn makes you more eligible in job markets."

c. "For older students Wake has required a ridiculous amount of core classes. The students just coming in don't have to take nearly as many, but also don't receive
credit for their AP's anymore. I personally would have rather not received hours for AP exams and had less core classes to take."
The general education curriculum at University of Richmond is the set of required courses that all students take prior to graduation. It consists of two units of First-Year Seminars, up to four units of a second language, up to six units of Fields of Study courses (Historical Studies, Literary Studies, Natural Sciences, Social Analysis, Symbolic Reasoning, and Visual & Performing Arts), and zero unit courses in Wellness.

Prior to the start of the town hall, please answer the following questions:

Are you:

✓ Faculty   ___ Staff   ___ Student   ___ Other

I (audience member) consider myself well-informed about UR’s general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

Too many students opt out due to AP courses. Not sure if they fit the field of study.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

Redesign FYS; think harder about managing field of study requirements.
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

should include a "true" writing class.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
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(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

Introduce multi-disciplinary courses

Offer more options to students from the opposite side (for example, survey courses in sciences to students who are afraid of it).
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  * Disagree
  * Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

See comment below - more thoughtful connections but also full faculty buy-in & attention to holistic development as a university course with committed writing & skills development taught criticalacies

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

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  * Agree
  * Neutral
  * Disagree
  * Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

More cohesive & coordinated connections between the classes - thinking about transfer & linking of courses/knowledge across curriculum.

Enhanced literacy & attention to writing & research across the curriculum.
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The general education curriculum at University of Richmond is the set of required courses that all students take prior to graduation. It consists of two units of First-Year Seminars, up to four units of a second language, up to six units of Fields of Study courses (Historical Studies, Literary Studies, Natural Sciences, Social Analysis, Symbolic Reasoning, and Visual & Performing Arts), and zero unit courses in Wellness.

Prior to the start of the town hall, please answer the following questions:

Are you:

___ Faculty   ___ Staff   ___ Student   ___ Other

I (audience member) consider myself well-informed about UR’s general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

Near the end of the town hall, please answer the following questions:

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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree   ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

Enjoyed interaction described between disciplines.
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  X ___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.
  ___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  X ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.
  ___ Strongly agree  X ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

Near the end of the town hall, please answer the following questions:

I (audience member) consider myself well-informed about UR’s general education curriculum.
  ___ Strongly agree  X ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.
  ___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  X ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

W&M's sounds more fun!
I like that it's more broadly focused and allows more interdisciplinary learning + exploration + the Big Thoughts course sounds really neat.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.
  ___ Strongly agree  X ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

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☐ Strongly agree  ☑ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

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☑ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

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I love our general education curriculum.

☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

must be revisited + expanded

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

☑ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

Add, distribute throughout the undergraduate career
The general education curriculum at University of Richmond is the set of required courses that all students take prior to graduation. It consists of two units of First-Year Seminars, up to four units of a second language, up to six units of Fields of Study courses (Historical Studies, Literary Studies, Natural Sciences, Social Analysis, Symbolic Reasoning, and Visual & Performing Arts), and zero unit courses in Wellness.

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☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☑️ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☑️ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☑️ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

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✓ Strongly agree  ____ Agree  ____ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

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✓ Strongly agree  ____ Agree  ____ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

Wellness needs improvement

Writing needs improvement

FYS should be reduced or eliminated.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

✓ Strongly agree  ____ Agree  ____ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

should be spread over 4 years
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- Strongly agree
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- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

- Really excited what they are doing at work.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

- Liked the tiering / Gen Ed Through all 4 years
- No AP/counts! &
- IB
- CLA is a cool idea.
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[ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Neutral  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.  
[ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Neutral  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.  
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I love our general education curriculum.  
[ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Neutral  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

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- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

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- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

I would like to find an alternative to the Fields of Study, though we want to keep the breadth of exposure. I would prefer a general distribution requirements or perhaps something like W&M has. Keeping Com 2 critical.
The general education curriculum at University of Richmond is the set of required courses that all students take prior to graduation. It consists of two units of First-Year Seminars, up to four units of a second language, up to six units of Fields of Study courses (Historical Studies, Literary Studies, Natural Sciences, Social Analysis, Symbolic Reasoning, and Visual & Performing Arts), and zero unit courses in Wellness.

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___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ✓ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.
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I love our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ✓ Strongly disagree

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I love our general education curriculum.

___ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ✓ Strongly disagree

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- [x] Faculty
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- ___ Student
- ___ Other

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- [x] Strongly agree
- ___ Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

- ___ Strongly agree
- [x] Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- ___ Strongly agree
- [x] Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

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- [x] Strongly agree
- [x] Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.

- ___ Strongly agree
- [x] Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- ___ Strongly agree
- [x] Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

Rearrange First-Year Program.
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Less subject-based focus, more content focus, better explanation to students about the purpose/benefit of the curriculum.
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- ___ Strongly agree
- ✔️ Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

I love our general education curriculum.
- ___ Strongly agree
- ___ Agree
- ___ Neutral
- ✔️ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.
- ✔️ Strongly agree
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- ___ Disagree
- ___ Strongly disagree

**(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.**

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- ✔️ Strongly agree
- ___ Agree
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I dislike wellness intensely

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

☑ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

A first year, one semester "transition to college" writing class focusing on critical thinking, use of evidence (sources), analysis & synthesis. This could replace one semester of FYS. It must be taught by full-time faculty with degrees in rhetoric & composition, not teachers.
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

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(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

I think that our fields of study may be outdated. I would be interested in skill categories, ways of knowing, or other ways of organizing. I also see a need for greater emphasis on self-knowledge and insight.
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

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(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

[Handwritten note: "I would like to see? - Perhaps. Depends on proposal"]
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____ Strongly agree  ____ Agree  ✗ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

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I love our general education curriculum.

____ Strongly agree  ____ Agree  ✗ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

Curriculum not necessary

Set up for interdisciplinary work and preparing for the future

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

____ Strongly agree  ✗ Agree  ____ Neutral  ____ Disagree  ____ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

More interdisciplinary options

Focused on big questions
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- Strongly agree
- Agree
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- Disagree
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I love our general education curriculum.

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I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

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(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

- [ ] drop wellness
- [ ] more rigor on FYS requirements across courses uniformly
- [ ] more offerings in GenEd requirements - especially Reasoning
- [ ] math, statistics should count as empirical reasoning --
- [ ] a course of use in multiple disciplines
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I see so many other ways to shape Gen Ed there are!

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

✓ Strongly agree  ___ Agree  ___ Neutral  ___ Disagree  ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

I like so well the idea that a discipline/department does not "own" a part of the Gen.Ed curriculum.
necessarily mean linked content, but it does mean intentionally scaffolded assignments across the semesters. I taught the sequenced FYSE pilot and this was one of the best teaching experiences I had—knowing what student had already done when they came to my class (on their previous FYSE) was a real boon.

I also love the element of W+M’s that persisted throughout the 4 years, and the focus on long-term, faculty-led culture change.
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

What example is inspiring you to love the big thinking and the sustained culture change.

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.

- Strongly agree
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(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

I would like to see a more coherent FYS experience. The FYS pilot “101” “102” courses that ran 2x several years ago was on the right path — we need to more clearly articulate skills/emphasis of each semester and cultivate sequenced courses so students can build on what they’ve learned in the fall in the spring semester. This doesn’t
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(optional) Please explain your answer to the previous question.

I dislike Wellness - intensely

I would like changes made to our general education curriculum.  
✓ Strongly agree  ___ Agree   ___ Neutral   ___ Disagree   ___ Strongly disagree

(optional) If you would like to see changes made to our curriculum, what would you like to change (e.g. take away or add a requirement, rearrange requirement, etc.)

A first year, one semester "transition to college" writing class, building on critical thinking, use of evidence (sources), analysis + synthesis. This could replace one semester of ENG 1010. It must be taught by full-time faculty with degrees in rhetoric & composition, not TAs.
Adjuncts, as was the case of our old English, it also needs a tenure-stream writing program. Administrators who teaches. Finally, it must be connected to the rest of our curriculum.
BRAINSTORMING IDEAS FOR IMPROVING GENERAL EDUCATION FROM INDIVIDUALS ON THE COMMITTEE

1. Improve advising and First Year Experience to better perception of Gen Ed
2. Reduce or eliminate the COM2 requirement and encourage relevant majors to adopt it instead
3. Explore ways to improve students’ English verbal skills
4. Look for opportunities to use the general education curriculum to unite the students through a common experience
5. Consider alternative means to promote students’ physical, mental, and emotional health
6. Look for ways to help undecided students explore multiple subject early in their studies
7. Revamp Writing Center with full-time staff hired as experts in pedagogy of writing, perhaps aligned with proposal for “The Hub” from the Teaching and Scholarship Initiative Committee
8. Establish faculty writing fellows with the goal of improving writing pedagogy
9. Develop a more rigorous FYS program assessment that includes 1) regular submission and review of syllabi, 2) a more incisive student evaluation instrument that reviews the number and type of writing assignments in a given course, and 3) an entry (pre-test) and exit (post-test) assessment of student writing to see where students have met certain learning outcomes.
10. Encourage intellectual risk-taking by students through general education
11. Allow more interdisciplinary courses to count for general education
12. Improve and strengthen oversight of GEC by placing under the purview of the School of Arts & Sciences
13. Reclassify distribution courses as “experiences” or “perspectives” instead of “Fields of Study”
14. No longer allow study abroad credit for Fields of Study requirements

Popular suggestions specifically for Fields of Study:

1. Revising and/or widening the FS names and descriptions to allow for greater flexibility in course offerings, assessment, and outcomes. This would allow faculty to expand their offerings and feel less constrained by the current guidelines.
2. Revising and/or widening the FS names and descriptions to allow multiple departments and programs to contribute to each area—that is, breaking down the “silos” and sense that specific disciplines “own” specific FS areas.
3. Expanding the current FS model (or adding a FS) to more obviously include (or perhaps better signal) intersectional approaches to diversity and inclusivity, ethics, cultural difference, citizenry, and sustainability.
4. Expanding the current FS model to include opportunities for interdisciplinary studies.
5. Re-examining which departments teach in each FS and considering how to more equitably distribute the load and/or resources. Examples include small departments not having the resources to teach needed FS’s in addition to their own majors. Another, includes FS areas that are not fulfilled/shared by many departments.
6. Revisiting the number of IB and AP credits that students should be allowed to apply towards the FS requirements to encourage their engagement with these topics at the university.
7. Improving advising and communication to students (and faculty) about the purposes of each FS, their modes of inquiry, and larger roles in the UR liberal arts education.
8. Expanding/adding a FS that improves and increases skills in numeracy, data analysis, and logic.
9. Considering how writing, literacy, and communication skills can be improved within the FS model to continue the work begun by the FYS. Perhaps adding a writing FS.
10. Reconsidering the consequences/effects of moving from credits to units.

Areas of Dissent:

1. Many faculty were concerned about students who “save” the GEs for Study Abroad. However, some students and International Education advocates saw this as an opportunity to learn skills at other institutions.
2. There was varied feedback about the appropriate pedagogical point that student should take GEs. Some advocated for the first two years to allow student exploration. Some departments intend for students to take them early because they use the FS to recruit for majors and minors. Others advocate for taking them junior or senior year, believing that they can better appreciate and engage with the materials. Still others suggested that they take them throughout their four years.
3. Some preferred the previous Core model, while others do not think the current structure differs that much from the Core.
4. Some liked the modes of inquiry, while others suggested changing to thematic areas.
5. Some think the FS should be completely restructured and others find minor changes preferable.
6. Opinions about unit load vary widely. Some like it the way it is, some would be fine with more (in the case of a diversity FS), others think it should be reduced.
7. Both students and faculty suggested incorporating new (or better designating) specific requirements for diversity, inclusion, and/or intercultural literacy. The GEC Review committee did not come to a consensus around this topic.

Commented [EYW1]: I don't recall anyone really advocating for more units of gen ed.
Commented [EYW2]: Both students and faculty brought up adding a "diversity" requirement, so I think it's justified.
Eugene’s thoughts

I recommend that UR’s General Education Curriculum undergo substantial changes. The curriculum is neither exciting nor well-loved by either students or faculty. The existing structure is faculty-centric, making sure that the faculty of all departments and schools can contribute, but doesn’t focus on student outcomes. It serves as the forgotten backdrop of an otherwise excellent university. University of Richmond is nominally a liberal arts college, yet we’ve really neglected the liberal arts part of the liberal arts college. If we recommit to the liberal arts and provide purpose to the general education curriculum, it could serve a central role in the life and identity of the university.

To fulfill the promise of the university’s strategic plan to “prepare students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world,” I believe we need to intentionally infuse purpose into the general education curriculum. Liberal arts education is meant to educate future global citizens and broaden students’ perspectives. While our curriculum does those things, it is not intentional about doing those things. Our curriculum itself lacks purpose, so it is hard to imagine leading students towards lives of purpose with it. I propose that we make preparing students for lives of purpose as a central goal for the general education curriculum. In doing so, we must give our curriculum purpose. At the same time, it could increase student engagement in these courses.

I propose that we guide students to take their Fields of Studies courses in tracks that educate them about the big issues and topics of the day. In addition, we should structure the curriculum so that students take courses over all four years. Students should also be given the chance to reflect on their educational experience during their senior year so they see the value of general education and we get assessment data back. Lastly, the First-Year Seminars should be pared back to make them more sustainable. In place of a FYS unit, students could take two half-unit courses that better prepare them for college in their first semester. One could be focused on intentionally teaching writing skills, and the other blending student wellness topics with academic/scholarly topics. The intended result of these structural reforms is increased engagement with a curriculum that is more meaningful to the everyday lives and interests of the students.

I have no proposed changes to the COM2 requirement. The (up-to) 12 unit restructured curriculum, viewed year by year:

**First-year:** (see Integrated Learning Experience Subgroup Report Idea #1)

*Fall:* UR 100 & 101, taken in either order. Both courses can be graded pass/fail. UR 100 is a half-unit course focused on writing instruction, taught by expert writing instructors. Students already strong in writing skills can test out of this course and move straight into FYS. UR 101 moves student orientation into an academic realm by teaching topics important for student wellness and success using academically rigorous instruction. If we and students are to treat student wellness seriously, then wellness classes must be graded and treated as a real class. Alcohol awareness can be taught through an academic lens by combining messages on alcohol consumption with scientific knowledge about how alcohol affects different people, how alcohol...
is broken down in the liver into less toxic chemicals, or how alcohol affects the brain. Faculty in Biology or Chemistry can work with URWell staff to bring science into the wellness classroom. Health instruction can be improved through collaboration with faculty in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. The list can go on. The point is, to make wellness and student preparedness matter, we have to make it count, and we have to make it meaningful.

**Spring:** First-Year Seminar (or Fall for students who pass out of UR 100)
FYS can be kept as is, but rolled back to one semester instead of two. This make FYS less redundant, and easier to staff. The courses are well-liked, and provide the close interaction with faculty that leads to student engagement, but are difficult to staff. By providing the basic writing instruction before FYS in UR 100, FYS instructors can better implement the “writing throughout the curriculum” model of writing instruction.

**Sophomore & Junior Years:** (see Integrated Learning Experience Subgroup Report Ideas 2, 4)

**Themed Concentrations**
To intentionally provide breadth and purpose to students’ academic experiences, the Fields of Study courses should be intentionally scaffolded and vertically integrated. These courses constitute the core of the general education curriculum, and as such, must be coherent. Curricular coherence and purpose can be achieved by organizing each student’s Fields of Study courses around thematic concentrations. If a student has interests in social justice, for example, why not tailor a general education curriculum so that all of their Fields of Study courses provide context for understanding social inequities and show the student how different fields can contribute scholarly knowledge to an important issue? This approach differs from a minor in that it is intentionally not field-specific, but topic/theme specific.

Possible themes:

War and peace, ethics and law, entrepreneurship and creativity, exploring the self, social justice, sustainability, disease and health, community engagement, life’s big questions, the great works

The themes should be chosen by the faculty to match student interests with faculty strengths. For example, a student who chooses a theme of community engagement could work it into their curriculum in consultation with faculty in the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. In addition, they can link students with disparate high-impact practices that increase retention and enrich student experiences. Sophomore Scholars in Residence courses could be linked with general education, leading to a stronger sense of community for participants.

I propose that the existing six Fields of Study be reduced to five academic perspectives so that one unit can be devoted to the new Senior Seminar (see below):

Humanities
Social Analysis
Natural Sciences
Visual & Performing Arts
Cultural Perspectives
These academic perspectives courses would generally be taken in the sophomore and junior years of a student’s career, with some students taking them as first-years and some as seniors. Most of the courses in the current Fields of Study courses would count in the new structure, with the exception of the Symbolic Reasoning courses (FSSR). The Cultural Perspectives course could be fulfilled by a UR course focused on the works of other cultures or a course taken during Study Abroad. We might encourage students to take two of these courses in the sophomore year and two in the junior year by giving registration preference to two academic perspectives each year (e.g. Humanities and Social Analysis for sophomores and Natural Sciences and Visual & Performing Arts for Juniors). This registration preference spreads the general education courses over students’ four-year careers at UR. The implementation of the concentration would need to accompany strong training on advising.

The intentional scaffolding of a four-year curriculum can help students learn and maintain critical skills. Alumni rank the abilities to speak and write clearly as the two most important abilities being developed during their four years at UR (Alumni Outcomes Survey, 2015). While UR first-year students report that they have longer and more numerous writing assignments than students at top national liberal arts colleges, seniors report they have shorter and fewer writing assignments (2018 Survey of Student Engagement for UR), indicating that our commitment to writing falls behind other schools during a student’s career. I disfavor providing faculty with strict rubrics for these courses, but I would like to see that oral or written communication assignments/performances be incorporated into these classes to help students hone speaking and writing skills.

This restructured curriculum retains breadth while providing a sense of purpose to general education.

**Senior year:** (see Integrated Learning Experience Subgroup Report Bold Idea #3)

**Senior Seminar**
I propose that we add two half-unit courses to the general education curriculum that students take during the senior year, each of which take 7 weeks. These two half-unit courses can be taken in either order, during either the Fall or Spring semesters.

**UR 300:** A 0.5 unit course that teaches important life skills for success after graduation. Financial awareness, budgeting, resume preparation, etc. Again, collaboration of URWell with faculty, say from School of Business, can enrich these courses and put them on an academically sound footing.

**UR 399:** A 0.5 unit course that brings students of similar interests together to work on projects and to reflect on how their coursework has prepared them for life beyond college. The project would be supervised and mentored by faculty, but student-driven. To create a cohesive and integrated curriculum, UR 399 would follow the same themes as the themed concentrations in the previous section, and students who choose a theme are encouraged to take the corresponding UR 399 course. The projects, which could be a real-world problem, scholarly research, or a performance/exhibition, would form the capstone experience for students and ask students to
apply the knowledge and skills they’ve gained from their general education and majors course work. Each student would work in a diverse team, bringing a distinct perspective to accomplish the project. The students would then present their work at a small symposium attended by fellow UR 399 students and faculty for a grade. The course would also require an essay that asks students to reflect on their college career, the courses they’ve taken, and how they’ve changed over the four years. This essay serves as important assessment data for the general education curriculum and for the university as a whole. The act of reflection and thinking about what and how you’ve learned is a valuable activity in itself, giving students a chance to see that they are capable of change and capable of making change in the world. This short course ties the general education curriculum together, completes training on oral and written communication throughout the curriculum, and adds purpose, intentionality, and cohesion to the educational process.
Alternative Models

a. 4-3-2-1 Model

4th Year: 1 unit Capstone Project

3rd Year: 2 units of engagement (study abroad, community engagement, experiential learning)

2nd Year: 3 units of disciplinary exploration (FoS)

1st Year: 4 units of skill-based/transfer knowledge courses (writing, how-to, statistics, symbolic reasoning, reading comprehension, aesthetics, research design, causal inference) or 2 units of skills (e.g. writing and statistics) and 2 units of disciplinary exploration (e.g. core or FoS)

i. Advantages

• Cohort System
• Includes independent knowledge production, experiential learning, and a focus on skills while still providing an opportunity to engage with the liberal arts.

ii. Disadvantages

• Potentially infeasible given the existing dynamics of the university.
• Does not include as much breadth of knowledge of fields in the liberal arts.

b. Minerva

I am very interested in Minerva University which is described in “Building the Intentional University.” Though UR is very different from Minerva, I think we can learn something from their curriculum.

• Every year, students complete their coursework in a different country.
• Year 1: Foundation
  o Students take four cornerstone courses that are focused on developing habits of mind that aim at four core competencies
    ▪ Critical Thinking
    ▪ Effective Communication
    ▪ Effective Interaction
    ▪ Creative Thinking
  o These courses include:
    ▪ Formal Analyses
    ▪ Multimodal Communication
Empirical Analyses
Complex Systems

- Year 2: Direction
  - This year, students select a major:
    - Arts and humanities
    - Computational sciences
    - Business
    - Natural Sciences
    - Social Sciences

- Year 3: Focus
  - This year, students continue study in their major and begin a capstone project

- Year 4: Synthesis
  - This year, in addition to coursework in the major students must complete a self-directed capstone that must contribute to their field.