Self-Review Report of the General Education Curriculum at UCLA

Submitted to the Undergraduate Council, Academic Senate
by the General Education *Ad hoc* Committee
June 2021

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

Executive Summary
Self-Review for UCLA General Education Comprehensive Review
2020-21

Overview

In Fall 2018, Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, Patricia A. Turner, called for a comprehensive or "Consolidated Review" of all General Education at UCLA – an evaluation of all Foundation Areas of GE and the Cluster Program. The proposal was endorsed by both the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) and the Undergraduate Council (UgC) in Fall 2018. By Fall 2020, GEGC and the Cluster Program Faculty Advisory Committee charged the *Ad hoc* Committee to complete a self-review of the General Education by the end of AY 2020-21. This Committee is composed of ten distinguished faculty members from across the university and includes former GEGC chairs, GEGC members, Cluster FAC members, department chairs, and faculty with decades of experience in General Education.

Dean Turner's call for a comprehensive review is timely: the current iteration of the General Education program is nearly two decades old, and this is the first time that it is being reviewed as a holistic whole. The *Ad hoc* Committee believes this is an opportunity to reimagine GE to better prepare students for 21st-century challenges and opportunities.

Background

The current GE program is based on what is commonly referred to as a "distribution model" (versus an "integrative model"). The distributed approach segregates required courses into traditional disciplinary categories, which at UCLA are known as Foundation Areas: Arts & Humanities, Society & Culture, and Scientific Inquiry. The first-year Cluster Program was inaugurated at the same time as this new model and allows students to satisfy multiple GE and writing credits. Previous eight-year reviews of the four different Foundation Areas and the Cluster Program express consistent areas of concern, ranging from coherent messaging to accountability, that result from our distribution model of General Education.

Committee Findings

Ad hoc Committee members were provided GE data collected over the past twenty years, previous eight-year evaluations, and information about GE programs at peer institutions (Sections 4, 5, and 6). The Committee supplemented its deliberations throughout the year with guest presentations and data collected from focus groups with department chairs, counselors, and students (Section 7). The Committee's findings across four main areas are as follows:

1. **Administration of GE and Responsibilities**: While the Committee sees positives in the cross-campus commitment to GE and general support for the flexibility of the program, there are a number of areas of concern that include: governance structure; communication about the program among various constituencies; apprehension about the current and

potential future budget model; mission statement clarity and relevance; department buy-in for the Cluster Program; department support for GE in general; and space and financial support for GEs with labs.

2. **The Cluster Program**: On the whole, the Committee is impressed by the continued popularity and relevance of Cluster courses. The Committee finds that the program helps first-years acclimate well to the university; is helpful in fulfilling GE credits in a timely fashion, helps with time to degree; and the interdisciplinary approach remains extremely popular among students as a valuable way to tackle complex ideas in the classroom and beyond. In terms of concerns, the Committee recognizes an inequity in the fact that only a portion of the student body enrolls in this beneficial program; funding issues plague support for the program; and some faculty members are discouraged from participating. Another concern is that some students may avoid the program and its benefits because they perceive Cluster courses as more difficult than other GE courses.

3. **GE Curriculum**: The Committee sees strengths in the connections some students are able to make among their GE courses; the overall variety of courses in the catalog; the exposure to new ideas and disciplines the courses can provide; and the preparation GE courses offer new students for their major and later courses. In terms of shortcomings, the Committee finds that clear pathways through the program is an issue; departments feel pressure to make all of their lower-division courses GE; many students still cannot get access to the GEs they want despite the large catalog; there is a lack of clarity about how writing should fit into GE classes; and there is a messaging problem when it comes to explaining to students the value of taking GEs.

4. **Student Experience**: Looking at the overall experience of students, the Committee finds that students do find value in GE classes, and in particular the Cluster courses, in helping them acclimate to the university and explore new subjects. At the same time, the Committee feels that there is a lack of coherent GE experience for students that provide them with a beginning, middle, and end to the journey. Committee members also find that the GE mission needs to be reformed to speak to the specific needs of students and our world in this new era.

Committee Recommendations

The findings above have informed the following recommendations for the GE program. First, the Committee is pleased to offer an **overall recommendation**:

> *With the goal of preparing UCLA graduates to address the challenges faced by society in the 21st century, design and implement a new model for General Education at UCLA. This model should build on existing strengths but should incorporate substantial changes to governance, program structure, and mission. The process to achieve this goal should begin with the formation of a GE Taskforce by Fall 2023.*

Against the backdrop of this overall recommendation, the Committee provides the following five **specific recommendations** for the future of GE at UCLA:

1. **Responsibility and Governance: Recommendation:** *Create a centralized organization devoted to General Education at UCLA, which will take responsibility for creating, evaluating, and maintaining a coherent General Education experience for undergraduates at UCLA.* This unit would be overseen by a Dean or Provost level position explicitly charged with ensuring the quality of interdisciplinary and General Education across the departments, College Divisions, and professional Schools.

2. **Global Goals and Mission**: *Craft a new mission statement for GE at UCLA.* The challenges facing 21st century society require rethinking how we do GE. We should clearly articulate the set of transferable skills, sensibilities, and capabilities that all UCLA students are expected to acquire through the completion of their GE experience.

3. **Integrative Model**: *The university should eliminate the current distribution model for GE in favor of a new integrative model.* Developing an integrative model for GE provides a range of pathways for students to follow their interests while gaining knowledge and experience that meet the goals of UCLA GE.

4. **Cluster Model**: *Expand Cluster courses to all incoming first-year students and make it a required program for all.* The first-year Cluster Program is an incredibly successful outcome from the previous reform of GE at UCLA. Expand this program to make the Cluster Program the first step along an integrative pathway through GE.

5. **Integration of College and School Requirements**: *Integrate other universal requirements like Writing and Diversity into the GE curriculum in a more cohesive manner.*

2. Introduction

General Education is the foundation of undergraduate studies of UCLA, allowing students to explore how human beings think, grapple with complex problems, communicate and express themselves, and produce knowledge. The current iteration of General Education (GE) at UCLA has been on a two-decades-long journey since its inception in 2002 (see Appendix A). This journey has included the enrollment of tens of thousands of students in hundreds of GE courses in a multitude of fields of study. Similarly, thousands of students have participated in the Cluster Program, a GE flagship that provides first-year students with the chance to take a year-long interdisciplinary team-taught course on a "Big Idea" topic. There is no doubt given the dynamism and hard work of UCLA faculty that our GE courses have made a meaningful impact on students' education, career paths, and civic lives.

Twenty years after its inception, UCLA's General Education is at an inflection point for two reasons. First, there are limitations to the cycle of internal/external 8-year reviews of the GE program and its constituent parts. The reviews repeat the same specific critiques and, given the limited scope of the reviews, are often unable to provide a global assessment of the entire GE

curriculum. As a result, there is a pressing need for a larger review to ensure that GE can evolve to meet the changing goals of Undergraduate Education at UCLA. Second, these internal assessments and related concerns are also reflected in how major research universities across the country are revisiting General Education. In the past decade, colleges and universities, including many members of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), have begun to reassess the principles and goals of their General Education programs to better prepare students for a changing world in terms of career opportunities, civic responsibility, and economic landscape. Several leading institutions have even overhauled their programs.

With these concerns in mind, in fall 2018, Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, Patricia A. Turner, called for a comprehensive or "Consolidated Review" of all General Education at UCLA (Appendix B) – a review of all Foundation areas of GE at UCLA and the Cluster Program. The proposal was endorsed by both the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) and the Undergraduate Council (UgC) in fall 2018. Prior to fall 2020, GEGC and Cluster Program Faculty Advisory Committee charged the *Ad hoc* Committee (Appendix C) and UEI completed an administrative report, which became sections 2 to 6 of this report. The Committee members were:

- Troy Carter, *Chair* (Department of Physics & Astronomy)
- Scott Chandler (Department of Integrative Biology & Physiology)
- Robert Fink (Department of Musicology)
- Michael Hackett (Department of Theater)
- Chris Kelty (Institute for Society and Genetics, Department of Anthropology, Department of Information
- Studies)
- Muriel McClendon (Department of History)
- Rashmita Mistry (Department of Education)
- Alex Purves (Department of Classics)
- Ertugrul Taciroglu (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering)
- Abel Valenzuela (Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Department of Urban Planning)

The *Ad hoc* Committee met twice per quarter throughout the 2020-21 academic year. This final report prepared by the Committee with facilitation by the UEI Administrative staff has been submitted to GEGC and Cluster Program Faculty Advisory Committee, who will vote on the report and then submit to UgC.[1] The following 2021-22 academic year will entail an external review of the GE program.

To appreciate the stakes of the Consolidated Review, it is important to understand the current GE system. In 1997-98, Vice Provost Judith L. Smith oversaw a reform of GE that included the creation of a General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) and the Cluster Program. The Cluster Program allows first-year students the unique experience of taking a year-long interdisciplinary course that satisfies a number of these GE requirements at once. The GEGC then worked with the Vice Provost to develop a 10-course GE curriculum (most with a 5-unit

[1] Special thanks to Jared McBride, Brooke Wilkinson, Leigh Harris, Tony Friscia, Charlotte Vo, and Ivy Ebuen.

value to reflect the increase in academic rigor) centered on three foundation areas of knowledge: (1) Foundations of Arts and Humanities; (2) Foundations of Society and Culture; and (3) Foundations of Scientific Inquiry, which was implemented in 2002. Over the next four years, Undergraduate Council initiated a campus-wide GE framework and all the professional schools adopted GE. By 2006 all incoming first-year admits were taking courses in the three foundation areas.

The GE program at present can be described as a "Distribution Model." This model typically requires students to choose a certain number of courses from prescribed classifications, often disciplinary in nature. There are many variations on this model, as schools choose different ways to distribute these courses, sometimes mixing disciplines with categories of intellectual ability (quantitative reasoning is a popular one). All schools using this model integrate some combination of requirements for writing, languages, and other competencies, but the core remains the distribution of the content-based courses in a way that is similar to the system at UCLA. This model privileges flexibility for students to choose courses to their liking across any number of departments, which is why it is often referred to as the "a la carte" model. This model is by far the most popular model used by elite institutions.

In recent years, there has also been the proliferation of what are deemed "integrative" or "big idea" models for General Education. These models organize GE courses around broad themes and intellectual concepts that seek to hone students' skill sets and academic abilities and ensure the courses are as flexible and dynamic as possible, rather than tying student performance solely to specific disciplinary learning outcomes. As such, these models often move away from exclusively departmental or even disciplinary organization of course selections for students, and encourage more cross-disciplinary formats and responsive inquiry-based learning approaches, similar to what is currently done in UCLA's Cluster Program. These models also encourage students to develop coherent, self-directed pathways through their General Education experience. These pathways help students take ownership of their journey and provide for continuity across their studies. The integrative model also provides an opportunity for faculty to identify as part of an educational community within the larger university setting. The review will have to take into account the present system in place at UCLA and weigh it against new emerging models across the country. For more discussion of both models, see section 6, "General Education Best Practices."

No matter the direction and scope of recommendations from the *Ad hoc* Committee, this review provides the occasion for faculty to ensure that General Education remains in line with the 21st century institutional goals at UCLA. In particular, the most recent Strategic Plan calls for growth in four specific elements of the university: research priorities, teaching innovation, local and global community engagement, and institutional efficiency. A refreshed and revamped GE program can certainly contribute to all these areas. Further, after a successful accreditation review in 2020 by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), UCLA's commitment to a similar evaluation in 2030 is partly conditioned upon attention to their five core competencies (writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking) (Appendix D). General Education again should play a crucial role in ensuring these competencies.

Integral to these institutional goals is also reimagining a GE program that speaks to the 21st century student and incorporates innovative teaching practices that will allow them to become adaptable learners. A state-of-the-art GE program is dynamic, able to adapt to the evolving needs of learners. National organizations like AAC&U, among others, that have devoted time to researching General Education and mapping its future, view GE as essential to high-quality college education, enabling all students to navigate the complexity of the world within and beyond the university. They also flag the importance of GE as being a vehicle for closing equity divides. Given that GE invites students into the intellectual life and habits of the university from the very start, often in the first quarter of their first year, GE is key to acclimating students and fostering their sense of academic belonging at UCLA. This function of GE is of paramount importance, as one-third of our students are first-generation, more than 30% are Pell Grant eligible, and 60% arrive from often overburdened California public high schools (apb.ucla.edu). Systemwide and campus commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion are being realized in part through the work of teaching centers and initiatives,[2] which aim to narrow equity gaps and enable our most vulnerable students to succeed. Transformational teaching and GE design are crucial to our campus' mission-critical inclusive teaching imperative.

This is not just a unique opportunity to reform GE itself, but an opportunity to reform and fine-tune Undergraduate Education at UCLA on the whole. Given the increasingly competitive environment of national and global higher education, even more so following the current pandemic, UCLA needs to provide an inspired and innovative curriculum to ensure that students and families continue to choose UCLA at the state, national, and international scale.

3. The History of GE at UCLA

In 1994, a faculty-student workgroup was organized to examine the General Education curriculum at UCLA. After two years of research, this group issued a report in June 1997 entitled *General Education at UCLA: A Proposal for Change.* The document called for GE requirements that were "simpler, fewer, more coherent, and clearer in purpose;" a common campus-wide GE curriculum and course list; first year Clusters; and a permanent GE oversight authority.

In 1996, Judith L. Smith was appointed Vice Provost (VP) for Undergraduate Education and given authority over General Education at UCLA. The following year, Vice Provost Smith received permanent money from Chancellor Charles E. Young to support curricular initiatives aimed at improving GE. She worked with university administrators, deans, faculty, and Academic Senate committees throughout 1997-98 to draft and then implement plans for GE reform.

In 1998-99, Vice Provost Smith launched a pilot GE Cluster Program with the aim of developing ten Clusters over five years to enroll up to 45% of the incoming freshman class. During the same academic year, UCLA's Undergraduate Council established a General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) jointly appointed by the Chair of UG Council and the VP for UG Education.

[2] At UCLA, see the Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, the Social Science's Teaching Innovation Program, the Humanities-based EPIC Program, as well as teaching innovations in the Schools and across campus, and, of course, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

UCLA's new GEGC worked with both the VP for UG Education and her staff during the summer and fall of 1998 to propose a common campus-wide GE curriculum and course list. Together these elements would: (1) provide lower division students with an ample spectrum of learning in the natural and social sciences, arts, and humanities; (2) introduce them to interdisciplinary approaches to learning; (3) foster responsible citizenship; and (4) strengthen intellectual skills.

These deliberations culminated in a formal proposal by the GEGC in January 2001 to replace the UCLA College's divisional based GE requirements with a 10-course GE curriculum (most with a 5-unit value to reflect the increase in academic rigor) centered on three foundation areas of knowledge: (1) Foundations of Arts and Humanities; (2) Foundations of Society and Culture; and (3) Foundations of Scientific Inquiry. This GE framework was approved by the College faculty at the end of 2001. Throughout the winter and spring of 2002, three foundation area faculty workgroups evaluated all GE courses—both old and new— for certification and then inclusion in the new curriculum. This new curriculum was implemented in Fall 2002 (Appendix E).

On March 7, 2003, the Undergraduate Council unanimously adopted a proposal by GE Governance for a campus-wide framework, based on the "foundational area of knowledge" model. It included a common GE course list. In 2004, both the School of Arts & Architecture and the School of Theater, Film and Television adopted this same framework and course list. The Henry Samueli School of Engineering & Applied Sciences followed suit in the spring of 2005, as did the School of Nursing at the beginning of 2006. By Fall 2006, all incoming UCLA freshmen were satisfying their GE requirements with a requisite number of courses across three foundation areas of knowledge. Beginning in 2017 and ending in spring 2020, GEGC created specific learning outcomes for each individual Foundation Area (Appendix F).

4. Summary of Previous Assessments of General Education

Since 2002, the three foundation areas of General Education (GE), and the Cluster Program, have all undergone two rounds of 8-year reviews. The 8-year review process entails an internal review in the first year by an *Ad hoc* Committee appointed by the Undergraduate Council and the Dean of Undergraduate Education. The Committee produces a Self-Review Report that is endorsed by General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) and submitted to the Undergraduate Council. In year two, the Academic Senate forms an external review committee, which includes internal and external reviewers. The external review includes a site visit by the external reviewers and a report is issued by the end of the year to the Senate.

Below is a condensed summary of the concerns and recommendations articulated in the last round of reviews of each foundation area and the UCLA Cluster Program. The reviews were conducted as follows: Cluster Program (2011-12); Scientific Inquiry (2013-15); Society and Culture (2015-17); and Arts and Humanities (2017-19).

- **Communicating the Importance of General Education**: Reviews have shown that some faculty from across the three foundation areas are unaware they are teaching GE courses. For those that are aware, they do not always have a clear understanding of the mission of General

Education at UCLA and/or their Foundation Area expectations, and are therefore unable to provide students with this information. On the other side of the classroom, while students are aware of the GE requirements, they often see GE courses as just another hurdle in the race to graduation and are unable to convey their significance or intellectual goals, or delineate between the foundation areas. In recent years, GEGC has undertaken measures to target the issue of faculty awareness.

- **Maintaining Quality**: There have been concerns in two main areas: "catalog bloat" and "curricular drift." Bloat refers to the ever-expanding number of courses in the GE database, some of which have not been taught in years. Curricular drift speaks to the fact that some GE courses have veered from their original aim over time and consequently drifted away from the spirit of General Education. These courses typically were certified as GE courses many years ago and have been passed from instructor to instructor over time. In recent years, GEGC has taken a host of measures to alleviate these concerns. For instance, there is a much more rigorous submission process which ensures only the highest quality courses become GEs. In addition, in 2019-20 a trial recertification process in which courses are recertified on a 5-year basis was rolled out to address both bloat and drift. After a successful trial, the recertification of all existing courses will begin in Fall 2020 and will continue in perpetuity.

- **Sharing Responsibility of the GE curriculum:** The GEGC is the essential committee that is responsible for all matters pertaining to UCLA's common GE curriculum and course list. However, all GE courses are offered and maintained through their home departments, and reviews have cited a lack of clarity from departments with regard to their role in the GE curriculum, including issues with both communication and maintenance. To that end, the Chairs of the Undergraduate Council and GEGC provided information to the Vice Chairs and Directors of Undergraduate Education on the departmental role in ensuring quality among GE course offerings, as well as ensuring faculty are aware of the GE mission. Internal reviews have also routinely pointed out that there are dwindling numbers of ladder faculty who are teaching GE courses. Ultimately, the growing number of contingent faculty on campus is beyond the control of GEGC and departments, nor is this unique to GE, but reviews routinely reflect the aspiration that GE's be predominantly taught by ladder faculty. Departments would likely play a role in ensuring this is the case.

- **TA Training:** Reviews have expressed concerns that the training TAs receive is not adequate to teach GE courses and that, in some cases, their workload is unreasonable. At present, departments are responsible for TA training, which can lead to an uneven preparation across campus. Feedback shows that TAs want more pedagogical training, and in particular, guidance on how to teach writing effectively. In terms of workload, growing class sizes alongside inadequate training has led to stressful situations for some TAs. GEGC is hopeful that the Universal TA Training currently in development in the Center for the Advancement of Teaching will help address these concerns.

- **Scientific Inquiry and Labs:** An issue unique to the Foundations of Scientific Inquiry (FSI) for almost a decade has been the question about how many labs are required in the GE curriculum. There has been a "temporary" suspension of one of the Lab GE requirements since 2009. Under this suspension students currently only take one Lab course out of two subcategories, Life or Physical science (as opposed to one lab in each without the suspension). Several *Ad hoc* committees have looked at this issue in terms of capacity and pedagogy, along with the Deans of Life and Physical Sciences. The Center for the Advancement of Teaching is currently running an assessment of the FSI GE curriculum and assessing the impact of the number of courses on science literacy. In addition, the full faculty will be voting this Spring 2020 on the issue which will put an end to any further temporary suspension.

- **The UCLA Cluster Program:** The Cluster Program, while it has consistently received positive reviews, has its own unique challenges. Related to the communication issues mentioned above, it is often challenging to get departmental participation in the Cluster Program. Department chairs are reluctant to let their faculty teach in the program, especially since it is often unclear how that teaching will count towards departmental teaching credits. Despite this obstacle, there has been an increase in faculty interest in teaching Clusters in recent years. Another communication issue is that incoming students often hear that the Clusters are difficult and are thus hesitant to enroll. Similarly, students are hesitant to "double-up" on GEs that they may overlap with their major requirements, even if a particular Cluster is interesting to them. The Cluster Program has been working with Undergraduate Admission and New Student & Transition Programs to address some of these student perception issues.

5. Analysis of Data on General Education at UCLA

Director of Statistical Analysis for Academic Planning and Budget, Kelly Wahl, collected data on General Education at UCLA over the past decade (2010 to 2019). The data provided by Wahl covers three main areas:

1) **Distribution of Courses across Foundation Area and Subcategories**: this data focuses on how the three Foundation Areas and their subcategories are represented in the GE curriculum. In particular, it looks at how many courses have been offered to students in the three main Foundation Areas and those Area's subcategories; subcategories based on enrollment; and distribution of Foundation Areas and subcategories across departments.

2) **Enrollment**: this data provides a window into how many General Education courses departments offered across campus.

3) **Clusters**: this data looks at the enrollment in the Cluster Program relative to incoming first-year class size.

4) **Teaching**: this data looks at the breakdown between ladder and non-ladder instructors in terms of courses and students taught.

The data is helpful in providing a bigger picture of how General Education has functioned over the past decade and helps highlight potential areas of focus for the *Ad hoc* Committee. The data is too voluminous to present and examine in full here, so instead this section will highlight three salient observations. The full data set will be available upon request by the Committee for future discussions.

Four key observations on the data:

1) **Integration across GE Categories**: this survey looks at the distribution of credits among GE courses in terms of both the three Foundation Areas (Society and Culture; Arts and Humanities; and Scientific Inquiry) and the seven subcategories (Historical Analysis; Social Analysis; Visual Analysis; Literary Analysis; Philosophical Analysis; Life Science; and Physical Science).

   The main takeaway from this data is there is limited overlap or integration of these Areas and subcategories in GE courses. The most ambitious level of connection within a GE course would bridge the North and South campus geographic and disciplinary divide: specifically, Arts and Humanities and Society and Culture for North campus, and Scientific Inquiry for South campus. The data shows that this type of connection rarely occurs. For example, the Scientific Inquiry courses are almost entirely self-contained to South campus (see Figure 1 for Physical Science courses). North campus courses have a roughly 50% integration rate with other subcategories, but this integration is far more likely to be within the same Foundation Area than to another one (see Figure 2 for Visual Analysis courses). For instance, a course carrying the Social Analysis subcategory is more likely to carry a Historical Analysis subcategory also from Society and Culture Foundation Area, rather than a subcategory from another Foundation Area (Figure 3). It should be noted that this sort of cross-campus integration does often occur in the Clusters, which are not included in these data.

   The lack of connection is also true in the most highly enrolled GE courses. In a survey of the 51 courses that each enrolled more than 3,000 students since 2010-11, only three courses (or 6%) crossed the North-South campus divide in terms of Foundation Area credits (see Appendix K). Further, only 12% of the 51 courses had credits in more than one Foundation Area. In terms of subcategories, 71% of these courses carried only one subcategory. And of the 29% that carried more than one subcategory, more than half had subcategories within the same Foundation Area.

   It is reasonable to argue that given the design of the Distribution Model, the lack of integration across Foundation Areas or subcategories is a feature, rather than a flaw in the system. Still, even though instructors can apply for multiple GE credits for a singular course, the data nonetheless supports the conclusion that is unlikely to occur. It is important to highlight that the data supports the claim that Distribution Models can lead

to a “a la carte” approach to General Education that disincentivizes cross-campus approaches to learning.

Figure 1: Physical Sciences courses integration with other subcategories. % of Total Course Offering Count for each Academic Year. Abbreviations: *Foundations of Scientific Inquiry sub-areas:* **LS**: Life Sciences, **PS**: Physical Sciences; *Foundations of Arts & Humanities sub-areas:* **L**: Literary & Cultural Analysis, **P**: Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis, **V**: Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice; *Foundations of Society & Culture sub-areas:* **H**: Historical Analysis, **S**: Social Analysis

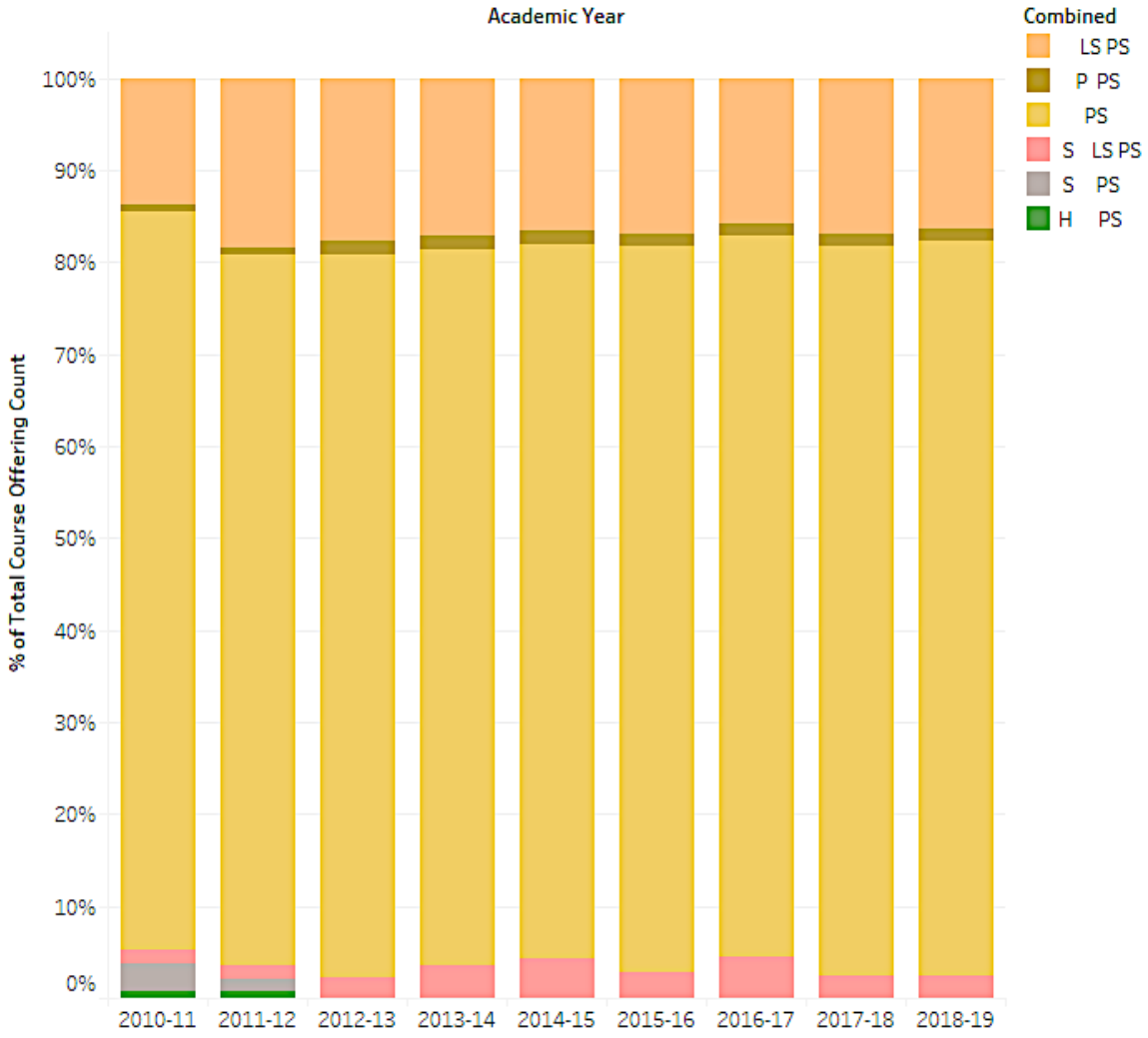


Figure 2: Visual and Performance Arts courses integration with other subcategories. % of Total Course Offering Count for each Academic Year. Abbreviations: *Foundations of Arts & Humanities sub-areas:* **L**: Literary & Cultural Analysis, **P**: Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis, **V**: Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice; *Foundations of Scientific Inquiry sub-areas:* **LS**: Life Sciences, **PS**: Physical Sciences; *Foundations of Society & Culture sub-areas:* **H**: Historical Analysis, **S**: Social Analysis

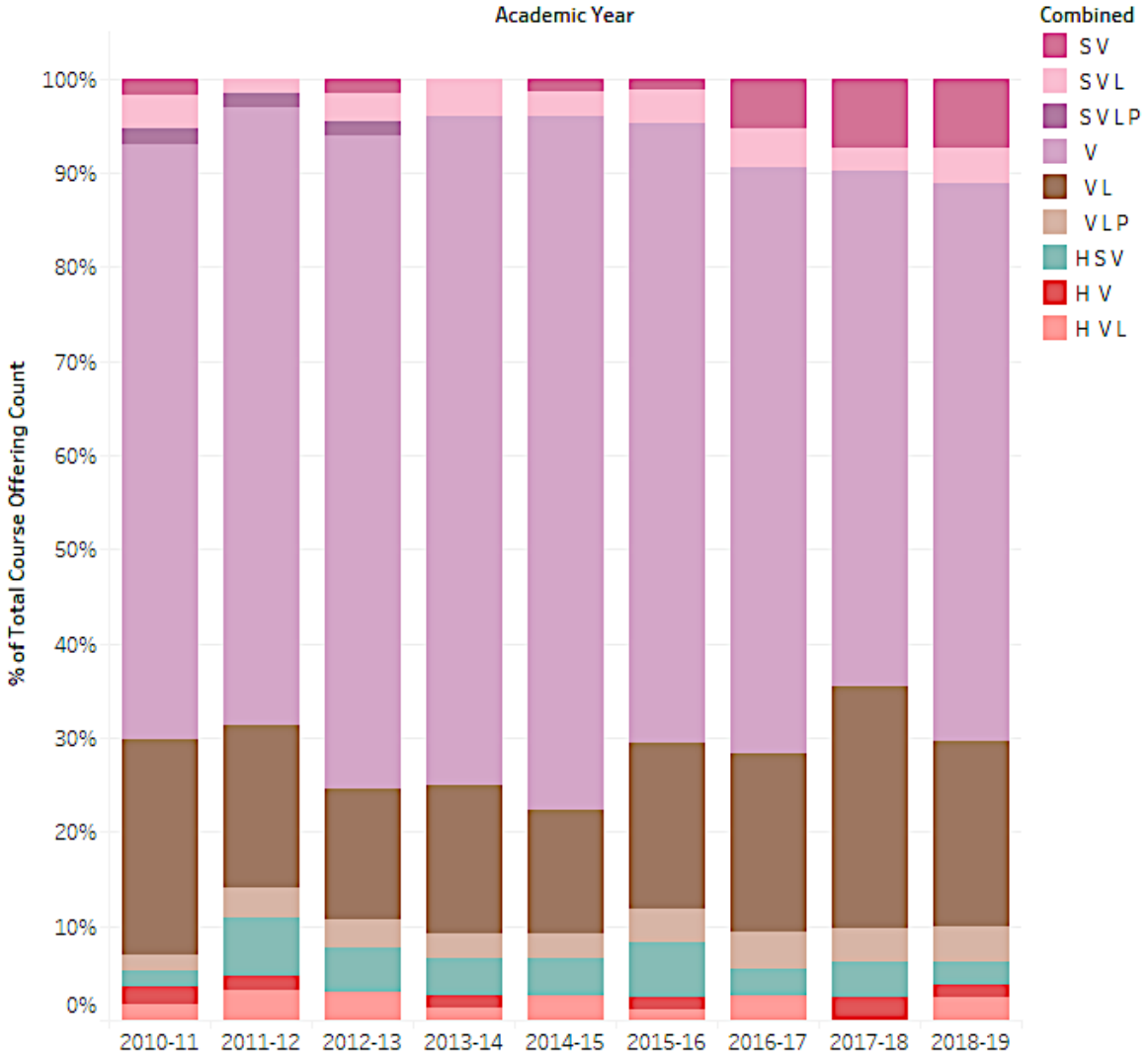
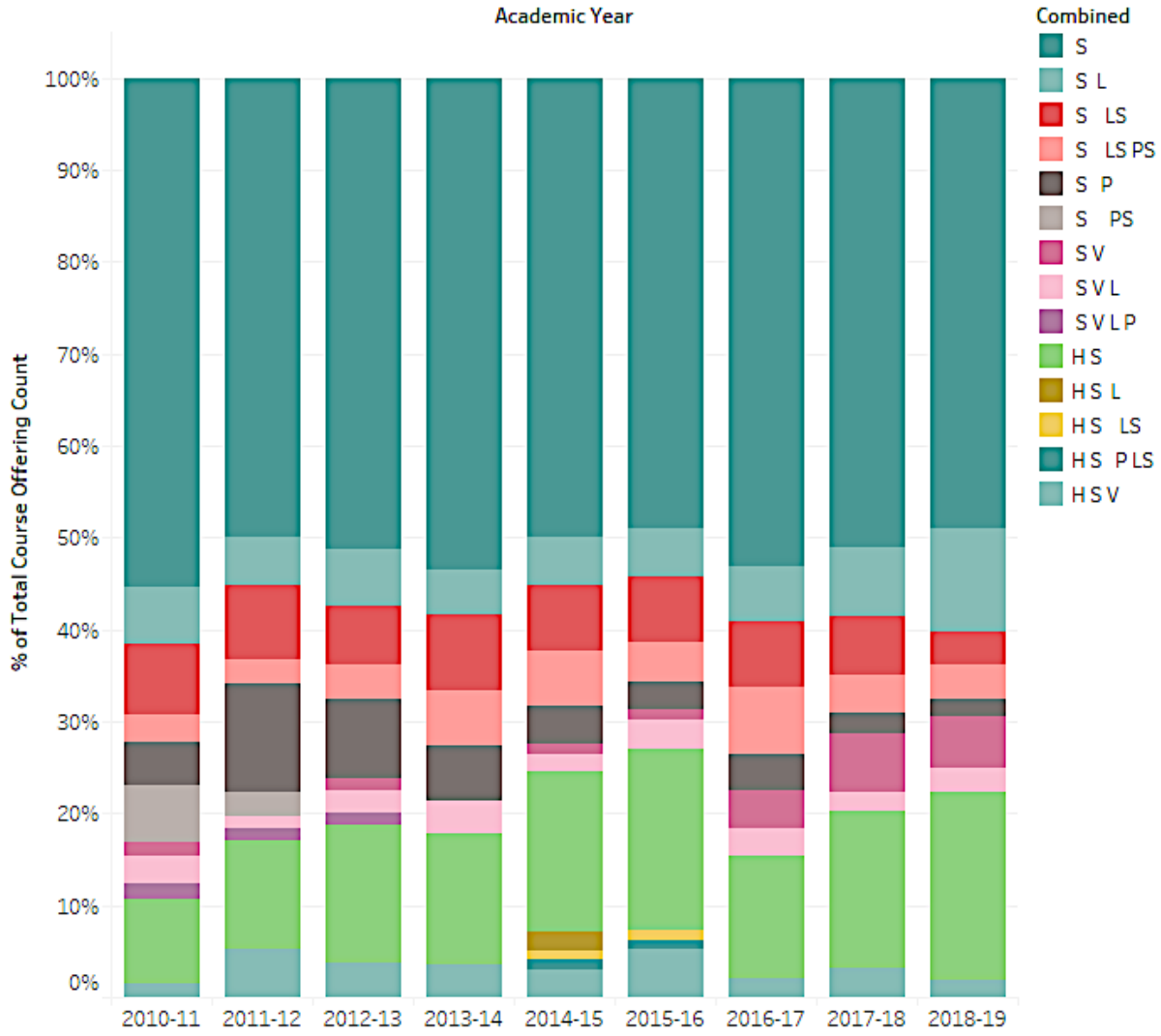
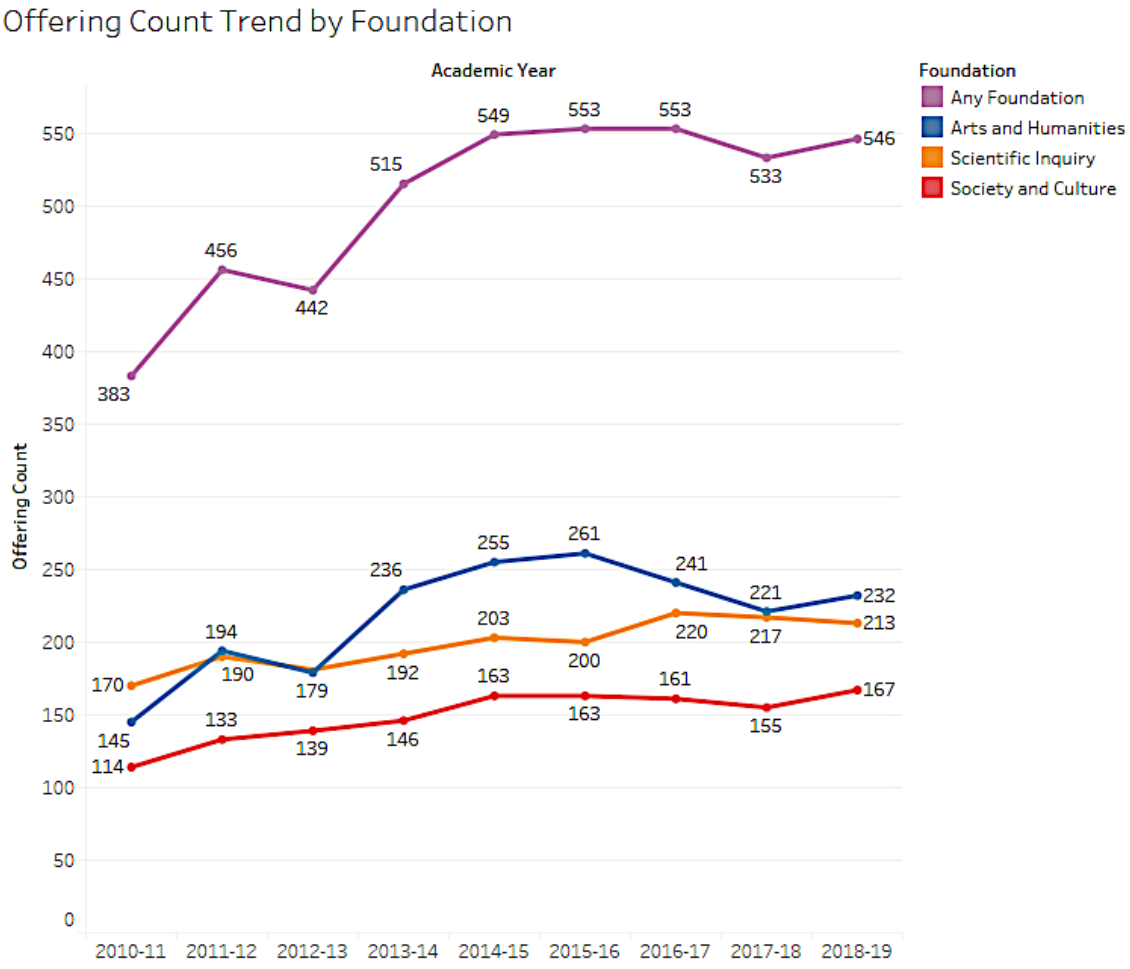


Figure 3: Social Analysis integration with other subcategories. % of Total Course Offering Count for each Academic Year. Abbreviations: *Foundations of Society & Culture sub-areas:* **H**: Historical Analysis, **S**: Social Analysis; *Foundations of Scientific Inquiry sub-areas:* **LS**: Life Sciences, **PS**: Physical Sciences; *Foundations of Arts & Humanities sub-areas:* **L**: Literary & Cultural Analysis, **P**: Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis, **V**: Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice



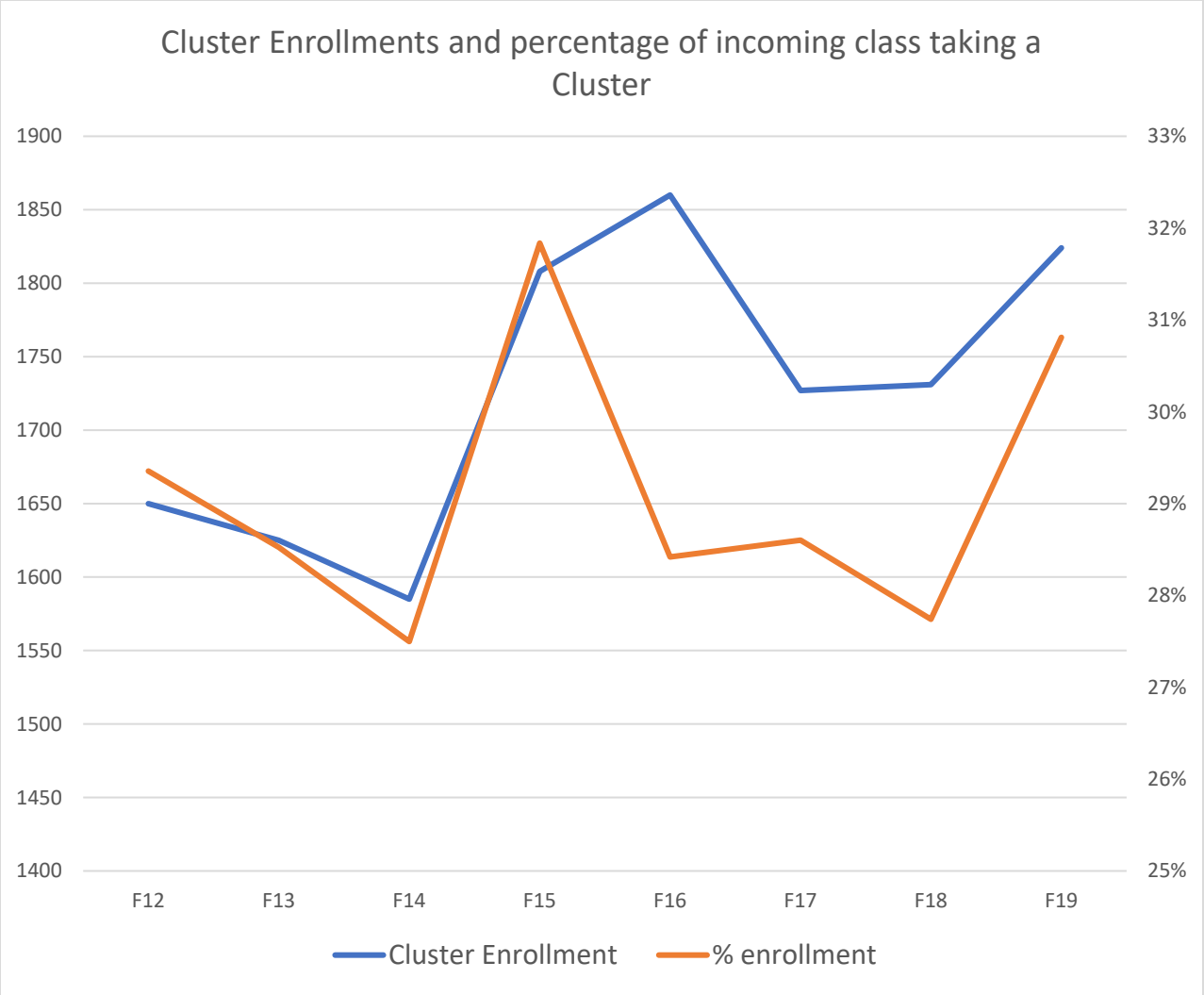
2) **Exponential Growth of GE Courses**: In Figure 4, we can see the growth in GE courses since 2010-11. As of 2018-19, there were 546 courses, an increase from the 383 courses offered in 2010-11, which represents a 40% increase (* note that when counting courses by Foundation Areas you will not reach this total since some courses carry multiple credits). Over this period, Society and Culture saw roughly a 50% increase in courses, Arts and Humanities an over 75% increase, and Scientific Inquiry a roughly 25% increase. The growth charted here certainly reflects concerns about "catalog bloat" in the GE catalog, as discussed in the "maintaining quality" section in the "Summary of Previous Assessments of General Education" portion of this report. A related list of the top ten courses per Foundation Area can be found in Appendix G.

Figure 4: Growth of GE Courses, 2010-19



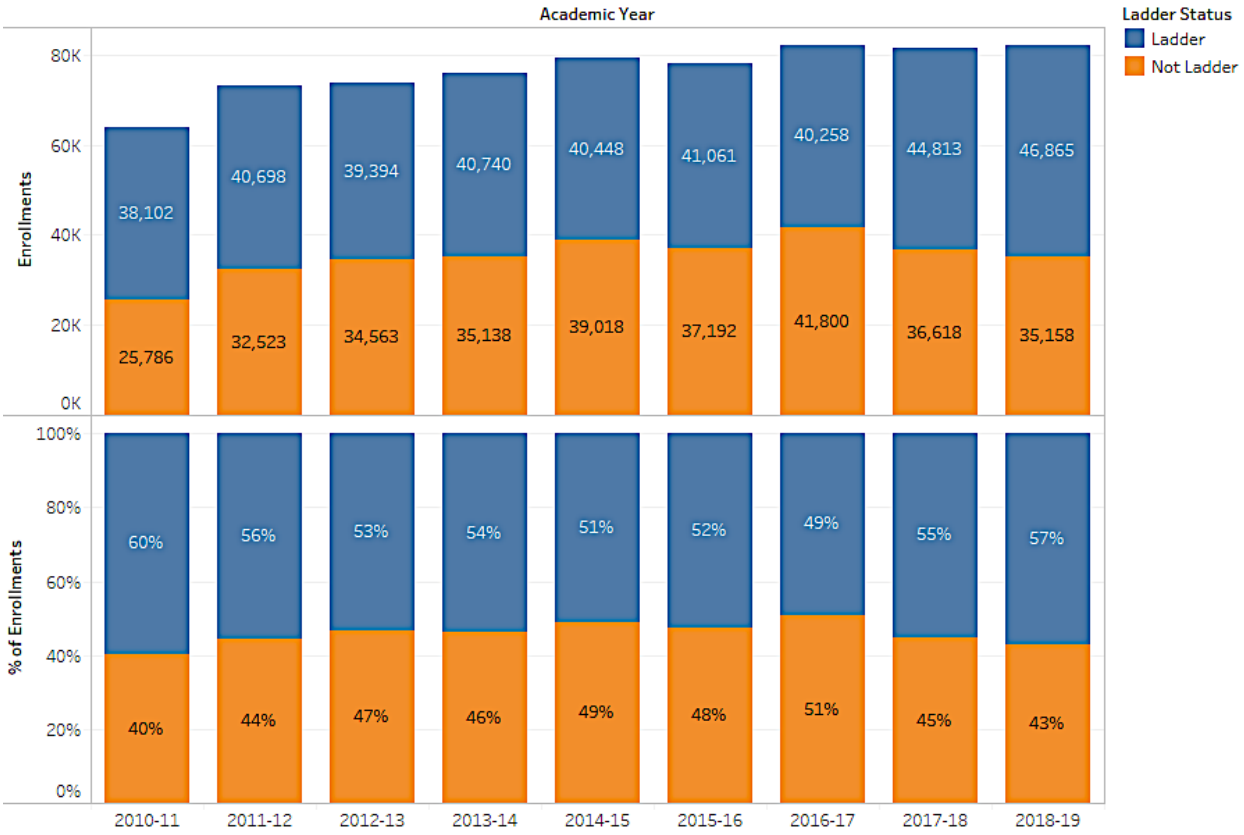
3) **Cluster Contribution to GE**: The Cluster Program fills a key role in the GE curriculum. Students that complete a Cluster course satisfy 40% of their GE credits. In addition, the Cluster courses exemplify the interdisciplinary approach to GE that is becoming the standard around the country. Over the past 8 years the enrollment in the Clusters has increased from ~1650 first-year students to ~1850 students (Figure 5 – blue line, left axis). At the same time, the size of the incoming class has also increased, so the percentage of first-year students who take a Cluster has stayed around 30% (Figure 5 – orange line, right axis). When the program started 20+ years ago, the Cluster Program would help return to that percentage while exposing more students to an exemplary integrative curriculum.

Figure 5: Cluster enrollments 2012-19



4) **Teaching Balance**: The data reflects the fact that non-ladder faculty teach roughly 46% of UCLA students taking a GE course (see Figure 6 – orange portion of bottom bar graphs). Over the past nine years, the percentage of non-ladder faculty teaching courses has ranged from 40 to 51% depending on the year. Of the three Foundation Areas, Society and Culture GE courses are most likely to be taught by a ladder faculty member, whereas Scientific Inquiry courses are the least likely (for the data on teaching by subcategory see Appendix H). The data presented here speak to repeated concerns about shared responsibility in teaching GE courses in previous assessments.

Figure 6: Ladder Status of Instruction across all GE courses, 2010-19



6. General Education Best Practices Survey

To evaluate the state of General Education beyond UCLA, this section surveys General Education programs at twenty-two universities, of which fourteen are public and eight private universities (see Figure 1). The public schools include the entire UC system, in addition to well-known state universities across the country. The private schools surveyed include a mix of Ivy League schools and other elite private universities. The goal of this survey is first, to explain briefly the two main types of GE programs; second, highlight the innovative GE programs of three schools; and third, isolate characteristics found in cutting-edge programs.

Understanding GE Models

General Education is taught in a myriad of models across the country and there is an expansive and often confusing vocabulary used to describe many of the components in these models. A simplified breakdown of the most prevalent models includes two main archetypes: Distribution and Integrative Models. What follows is a brief explanation of these new models.

By far, the most prevalent model is what is commonly referred to as a "Distribution Model." This model requires that students take a specific number of courses from a range of different categories (typically three to ten). These categories often are comprised of a mix of traditional areas of knowledge (e.g. Humanities, Life and Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, etc.), and sometimes include categories also based on intellectual skills or activities (e.g. writing skills, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, ethical reasoning, research skills, etc.). This model typically includes other "competencies" to complement the course requirements, which can include core curriculum courses, common intellectual experiences, thematic required courses, writing courses, diversity requirements, and learning community experiences. There are numerous variations on the Distribution Model, but what remains constant across the model is the "a la carte" approach in which students choose courses from prescribed categories.

UCLA currently employs a Distribution Model in which students must take three courses each from three different "foundation areas": Scientific Inquiry; Arts and Humanities; and Society and Culture, and then within these areas there are further requirements, such as historical analysis and social analysis requirement within the Society and Culture foundation area. To complement the foundation area requirements, UCLA also requires diversity courses, foreign language, and Writing II, alongside the GE distribution requirements. UCLA also provides an optional Cluster course experience during the first year that can be used towards GE credits. UCLA is not unique in employing the Distribution Model, as 18 of the 22 schools surveyed use some form of this model.

In recent years, a new vision for the General Education model has emerged, which can be loosely termed a "Integrative Model," sometimes also referred to as "big ideas" or "common intellectual" models. While the Integrative Model lacks one common structure as seen with the Distribution Model, a typical conceptual framework can be found in programs who use this new model. There are three typical attributes to this model: first, they often eschew the traditional areas of knowledge (hard sciences; social sciences; humanities) categories seen in the Distribution Model in favor of conceptual or thematic categories that merge skills and knowledge together in new ways. These categories then have various requirements nested within them. For instance, rather than traditional areas of knowledge, UVA's "Engagements Pathway" model (described in more detail below) ensures that students take various courses within the three conceptual areas of Engagements (cross-disciplinary courses); Literacies (writing and reading courses); and Disciplines (more traditional courses).

Second, they favor and highly incentivize "integrative" learning experiences, such as interdisciplinary and team-taught courses and highly specialized learning experiences like

capstone courses or even campus-wide themes courses. Our current Cluster Program would be representative of such an experience, though it is not required at UCLA. Third, the Integrative model emphasizes flexibility in how students move through the GE courses often providing students with at least two different "pathways" through the GE curriculum to fulfill their requirements, in contrast to more static path offered in the Distribution Model. The argument is that the "pathway" approach provides more options to establish conceptual continuity among the GE courses, as well as with the student's major. A deeper exploration of these models through various examples will follow in the analysis below.

Highlighting New Models

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing shift towards more integrative GE models.[3] Some of the reasons hypothesized for this change include, but are not limited to, the changing dynamics of the workplace, complexity of students' lives in the 21st century, exponential growth in various academic fields, and challenges to civic responsibility. Schools have begun to make the argument that the "siloed" approach to General Education found in the Distribution Model is not suited to adequately address these complexities.

To highlight these new approaches to GE, it is worth a closer look at the recently created integrative models at University of Virginia, University of North-Carolina, and UC Merced. Of the 22 schools surveyed, these were the three schools to employ a predominantly Integrative approach to GE.

- **University of Virginia**: ***New College Curriculum***

  In fall 2020, UVA has introduced a "New College Curriculum" that represents a complete overhaul of their previous traditional distribution model. UVA describes their new program as follows: "Leveraging interdisciplinary approaches to enduring and emergent questions, courses in the College of Arts & Sciences rigorous liberal arts Curriculum foster our capacity to engage new ideas, make new discoveries, and challenge our preconceived notions." The university informs students that they will be "active contributors not only in your own education, but in the intellectual work of the University – the first step towards engaged citizenship." The new GE program is undergirded by six "guiding principles" that can be found on their General Education website (Appendix I).

  Under this new GE model, students choose one of two "pathways" upon acceptance to UVA, the Engagements Pathway or the Disciplines Plus Pathway. **The Engagements Pathway** entails three components: 1) Engagements: students take four 2-credit courses in their first year on a spate of subjects that are taught by a select group of faculty chosen for the "College Fellows" program 2) Literacies: students take a suite of courses from either World Languages; Rhetoric for the 21st Century; or Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis. 3) Disciplines: students take 3 credits in each of the seven defined discipline categories. The **Disciplines Plus Pathway** entails two components: 1) Literacies: the same

[3] For more discussion see "The Trend in General Education" discussion in Paul Hanstedt, *General Education Essentials: A Guide for College Faculty* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), pgs. 15-23.

procedure as in Engagements pathway and 2) Disciplines: students complete 3 credits across the 7 disciplines as in the previous pathway, but an additional 9 credits across three grouped categories. Though the timeline is unclear, UVA plans on phasing out the Disciplines Plus Pathway altogether at some point, leaving Engagements as the only GE pathway. In contrast to a typical distribution model, the Engagements pathways requires a year-long first-year experience for every student, and then provides extensive flexibility and ability to customize in how they meet additional reading and disciplinary requirements.

- **University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill: *New IDEAs in Action***

  UNC started a review of their GE program in 2016 and is currently near the end of a three-year unveiling process of their new General Education program. The new program, titled IDEAs in Action (Identify, Discover, Evaluate and Act), will launch in fall 2021 (Appendix J.[4] The proposal states that a graduate of this program "should be able to think critically, define and frame questions, work collaboratively, solve problems, make reasoned judgments based upon facts and evidence, respond creatively to changing and uncertain situations, take risks, and be resilient." The IDEAs program is comprised of three main components: 1) **First Year Foundations**: special courses designed for first-year students to acclimate them to college 2) **Focus Capacities**: nine courses to promote a range of skills and engagement with various topics 3) **Reflection and Integration**: a range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences through which students can implement their discipline and GE skills.

  The **First Year Foundations** consist of four course requirements. First, students must take a first-year seminar taught by a faculty member that is meant to represent a deep dive into a research topic of the faculty's choosing. Second, students also take a more standard writing requirement course. Third, students take a course from the "Ideas, Information, and Inquiry" suite of courses, each of which represents a team-taught (3 faculty members) interdisciplinary approach to a singular topic. Fourth, students take a course called "College Thriving" that focuses on charting their educational journey for the remainder of their time at UNC and learning about campus resources to aid them.

  The main component of the new program is "**Focus Capacities**." Moving away from traditional areas of knowledge, "focus capacities" are nine types of courses that are organized around particular intellectual concepts or skills. Examples of these capacities include Quantitative Reasoning; Global Understanding and Engagement; Power, Difference and Inequality; and Engagement with the Human Past. The Capacities are meant to present students with a range of subject matter across the nine categories in both breadth and depth. In words of the Coordinating Committee Chair, "Focus capacities take learning beyond the organization of knowledge by disciplinary subjects; they are disciplinary-agnostic. They are flexible, allowing students the opportunity to mold their own educational pathways, while also requiring that they encounter new and challenging ideas." These courses can be introductory or mid-level and are offered by all departments.

[4] Their review and revamp of GE resulted in a 28-page report titled, "IDEAs in Action Curriculum: General Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill" (see Appendix J).

The final component, **Reflection and Integration**, enables students to apply their skill sets in several courses and experiences. These experiences include taking a course that focuses on a research project, a "high impact" experience such as study abroad, community service, an internship, and lastly, a communications course that emphasizes communication skills, collaboration, and listening skills in environments outside the university. This phase also requires a fitness course and a campus life experience that may include attending campus performance, workshops or talks.

- **UC Merced: *General Education***

  UC Merced, the newest school in the UC system, also provides a General Education program that can be deemed "integrative," though it is less ambitious than the previous two examples. Like the other programs, Merced includes a first-year experience, an interdisciplinary requirement, and a culminating experiential component.

  In this model, the **Sparks seminar** for first-year students is the introduction to General Education. The goal of the seminars is to probe the "nature of inquiry by exploring a particular topic over the course of the semester, engaging with campus and local resources, generating research questions, and presenting original ideas in writing and other forms of communication." Students have a similar seminar experience in the required upper division **Crossroads** course; however, these specialized research courses are taught from an interdisciplinary approach.

  The bulk of courses taken in the Merced model are through the **Approaches to Knowledge** and **Intellectual Experience Badges** courses. Approaches to Knowledge is a more traditional organization of courses across two areas: one for life and natural sciences, and the other, social sciences and the humanities. The Badges requirement provides for more thematic and intellectual skill-based course requirements, such as Global Awareness, Diversity and Identity, and Leadership, Community, and Engaging the World (three examples out of eleven). Finally, the program ends with **Culminating Experience** that can include a capstone source, advanced seminar within the major, service-learning portfolio, thesis project, and or other means decided by the student with a faculty member.

Significant Features of New GE Programs

These examples of integrative models show the range of approaches and creativity that can be applied to General Education. Some of the most salient features of these programs include:

- **First Year Experience (FYE)**: Some type of seminar, interdisciplinary course, year-long interconnected course, or college preparation course required of all first-year students is an important feature. Of note is UVA's Engagements program in which faculty apply and are selected to become "College Fellows" for two years. In the first year they develop new courses for this program and in second year teach their Engagements course.

- **Non-Traditional Categories**: Another common feature is the effort to move away from the traditional areas or categories for course requirements typically seen in the distribution

model. UNC and UVA attempt to break this mold with their Engagements pathway (UVA) and Focus Capacities (UNC) categories. To a lesser degree, UC Merced attempts this with their Intellectual Experience Badges. Whether this shift towards more creative and integrated categories represents a substantive move away from the traditional disciplinary approach and not simply semantic window-dressing is certainly up for debate and would require a deeper probe into the course offerings.

- **Pathways**: A prominent argument for integrative models is that they often empower students to take greater ownership over their General Education experience. This principle is reflected to varying degrees in these models. From the start, UVA's model allows students to choose which GE model they want to follow (though this allegedly will be phased out). Within the UVA model, students have significant power to choose their path within each of the program's components, namely, in choosing the set of Engagements courses in their first year, the path within the Literacies component, and which Disciplines course they'd like to take. The UNC model incorporates similar such pathways. Notable is that in the UNC model students can tailor the final part of the program, the Reflection and Integration requirement, to their interests, whether it is an internship or studying abroad, for example.

- **Interdisciplinarity**: The importance of interdisciplinarity is clear from these models. All three programs integrate interdisciplinary courses in some manner. UVA's year-long Engagements courses are team-taught and provide different approaches to broad topics. Similarly, UNC's first year Ideas, Information, and Inquiry courses are team taught and focus on a single topic from different angles. And the mid-program Crossroads Course at Merced also represents an interdisciplinary approach to research and learning.

- **Holistic GE Experience**: One final important attribute to these GE programs is how they are structured. Though organized differently, all three programs are composed in such a manner as to have a clear beginning, middle, and end throughout the undergraduate's entire four-year experience in GE. The beginning, as already discussed, focuses on foundational experiences for first-year students, the middle portion focuses on coursework across different themes and fields, as well as a writing component, and the final part includes some type of course, signature assignment, internship, portfolio, or co-curricular experience (perhaps in coordination with Student Affairs) that allows students to apply and demonstrate the skills they've developed throughout their Undergraduate Education.

- **Transparency and Assessment**:

  These three models aim to dismantle the "checkbox mentality" for GE and, accordingly, also share similar approaches to GE program assessment, emphasizing review as a tool to continuously improve student learning and success.

  To varying degrees, these GE programs: 1) systematically review the curriculum for quality and the extent to which GE is achieving program- and course-level student learning outcomes; 2) act on recommendations to refine curriculum and practices in light of

assessment findings and subsequently verify whether adjustments improve student learning (i.e., "close the loop"); 3) make GE assessment a foundational consideration in course/program planning and resource allocations; 4) meaningfully engage students in ongoing GE assessment and design, via direct and indirect measures; and 5) provide opportunities for students to showcase their GE learning experiences (some integrating co-curricular experiences or extending across all four years of study) in distinctive coursework, such as e-portfolios, which simultaneously allow for effective assessment of competencies and outcomes.

Table 1: Schools Surveyed in Best Practices Review

Public	Private
UC Berkeley	Boston University
UC Davis	Brown
UC Irvine	University of Chicago
UC Merced	Harvard
UC Riverside	NYU
UC San Diego	Princeton
UC Santa Barbara	Stanford
UC Santa Cruz	Yale
University of Illinois	
University of Michigan	
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	
University of Texas	
University of Washington	
University of Virginia	

7. Focus Group Data Report

This section provides an independent evaluation of the current General Education model at UCLA. After a consultation with the GE *Ad hoc* Committee in late fall, the Center for Educational Assessment completed focus groups and interviews in early winter. There were four focus groups with students (three with ASK Peer Counselors and one with Inquiry Specialists), one focus group with seven academic counselors (four from CAC and three from AAP), and five one-on-one interviews with current and former Department Chairs. The summaries are based on the primary questions (listed below) posed by the GE *Ad hoc* Committee. Interview protocols for each group are included as a separate document (see Appendix L).

Primary Questions

Is the existing model adequate for the needs of our students in terms of:

- Perceived value of the current model?
- Experience within and satisfaction of the current model?
- What is missing or should be included in a future model?
- Is the current model functional (from an administrative standpoint)?

Students

- **Perceived value of the current model:** Students identified several elements in the existing GE model that are valuable to their education. First, students recognize that it makes them more well-rounded and allows them to gain experience outside of their major. Second, GE courses were seen as opportunity to explore options for students who were unsure about a major. Finally, they acknowledge that GE courses help them learn skills that are useful more broadly at UCLA.

  The students with whom we spoke recognized that students perceive GEs this way but, at the same time, "they don't always treat it this way." For many, it was less of an opportunity and more of a box to fill.

- **Experience and satisfaction within the current model:** Respondents reported that students often select courses based on word-of-mouth. When they think GEs are "slowing [them] down with their classes," they register for ones they are told are easy. Others look for courses that sound interesting but are unrelated to their major. This leads some to declare a major or minor they may not have considered previously. This seems to be the dual nature of GEs: they can be seen as extra baggage or a great opportunity.

  Clusters, in particular, gain popularity (or are avoided) through word of mouth. Some students encourage others to explore different options and recognize the "economic interest" of a GE Cluster (four courses worth of credit, instead of three). Students are also drawn to the community aspect of the Cluster, particularly as incoming freshman, when UCLA can seem overwhelming.

  STEM majors report that GE courses encourage a different way of learning. These students recognize that GE courses require more thinking, discussing, and engaging with classmates compared to courses within their major.

  Students noted that they also appreciate the diversity requirement and diverse perspectives in GEs because they bring in "a social aspect and [cultural] understanding why different things that we see in society have risen from possible, like, injustices." They note that this way of thinking carries over to other courses (i.e., the consideration of cultural implications).

- **Future model:** Students recommended reforming the messaging behind GEs. It may help to frame GEs "as for exploration" not for checking a box. This was further supported by their recognition that they like the emphasis on an interdisciplinary education: "you start to see that even within these like seemingly completely distinct disciplines, there are…things that define what it means to learn…or to do research in a certain area."

  A second recommendation was to build in more support for students in GE courses. Students appreciated learning about appropriate ways to reach out to professors and the benefits of office hours, for example. One described this as "the unwritten…code in terms of how to succeed at UCLA."

Finally, students would like to see increased access to specific GEs, particularly for first year students who may want to take GEs in a way that is exploratory. Many students wait until senior year to fulfill requirements, but they recognize this defeats the purpose of many GEs.

SAOs/Academic Counselors

- **Perceived value of the current model:** SAOs and counselors echoed the students' sentiment that many see GEs as "a checklist that they need to fulfill." As such, they note that, "it's important to give students that why." That is, the purpose of GEs needs to be clarified. They find it's not always made clear to students that GEs are an opportunity to gain a broad, liberal arts education, so "it feels like a big waste of time."

- **Experience within the current model:** Although many students recognize the benefits of GEs once they are complete, they often push back or take GEs at a community college. Other students recognize they excel in GE courses and they are a way to circumvent external expectations (e.g., "I should go like into medicine, but I really like to read the classics.")

  The two primary benefits that counselors noted are that GEs (1) encourage students to engage with new fields and (2) they "introduce them to college-level coursework." According to the counselors, this latter point was particularly important for first-generation and transfer students. They become a good way to explore courses they would not otherwise take and prepare them for UCLA.

- **Satisfaction within the current model:** One counselor noted that GE options are like "a Cheesecake Factory menu." Students get "overwhelmed when they sit down to…so many choices." Although these options are largely viewed positively, it can lead to a path dependence where students look to others for recommendations. This leads to a focus on course difficulty rather than course content.

  There is a perception that Clusters, for example, are difficult and many students are told to avoid them. Students who take them, however, tend to perceive them positively. They like the sense of community and "realize like, 'oh, this prepared me to be tough in my upper division classes, and I'm confidently able to go to office hours and have prepared questions…because I've been trained." Students also like the feeling of being in a cohort and working on year-long projects. Despite such positive experiences, the counselors worried that messaging from peers impacts perceptions of all GE courses negatively.

- **Future model:** Counselors had three primary recommendations for a future model. First, they recommend broadening the philosophy and linguistics requirement to help students see its value. Second, they think more courses should include a service learning component "to let them see [the subject] in action." Finally, they thought it would help to organize GEs across themes creating "guided pathways." For example, "if you want to explore race and ethnicity across all of the GEs, here is a blue Cluster… If you want to explore like how science is described…in different disciplines have a green list."

Chairs (Current and Former)

- **Perceived value of the current model:** Department chairs recognize that GEs are important because these courses enable them to reach students beyond their own school. Many noted that GE serves a mission-oriented purpose of creating a more informed public. In particular, while one chair noted, "we need a population who better understands the process of science," another said that GEs on north campus force students to engage in critical reading, writing, and thinking.

- **Experience with Cluster:** Although the discussions around Clusters emphasized the positive components of the program, several chairs noted that it is both a large time commitment for individual faculty members and they can be difficult for smaller departments. In particular, "it seems like they're taking my faculty and not giving me enough money to replace their courses in return."

- **Satisfaction and Functionality within the Current Model:** Logistically, GEs can be difficult. First, the size of the department plays a role in the satisfaction and functionality of the current model. Second, it can be challenging to teach GEs that are also a major requirement. Third, figuring out who can teach a GE can create issues for a department.

  For small departments, it is difficult to serve more students because it requires "more and more instructors" to teach existing GEs and major courses. A question often becomes, "do I hire someone to teach the GE or do I hire someone to teach my upper division course?" This can also be challenging if a small department is trying to expand its undergraduate majors. If they offer a GE, they may have to reduce courses that focus on a subject matter closer to the major.

  Some departments have had success launching GEs as a way to highlight their specialty. This draws students in as they satisfy a GE. This can be hard to maintain because departments want to commit to GE over several years to create continuity. In small departments, however, faculty may have other commitments or go on sabbatical, "and then you lose momentum."

  GEs that are also a requirement for a major can be particularly difficult. For majors, they want to prepare students for upper division courses. For the GE, they want to grab students' interests broadly, so a lot of topics are covered in these introductory courses. Thus, departments grapple with depth and breadth.

  Some departments ask recent graduates or lecturers to teach GEs, while others prefer that ladder faculty take on these courses. When ladder faculty are able to develop GEs or find something existing they can make their own, there tends to be less "grumbling." Alternatively, faculty can "cycle in and out" of a course so they "don't get bored" and the department can "offer variety."

  Committing to a Cluster is one way to address these issues. Team teaching may take some of the time commitment away, and there are more opportunities to find TAs. It can also bridge some of the divides on campus (e.g., North/South campus).

- **Future model:** There were three recommendations for a future model. First, one chair believed there needs to be an audit of some older GEs. Second, "if departments are monetarily incentivized," it may encourage prioritizing GE courses. Third, chairs like the flexibility of the current model. They think a too-rigid structure would increase pushback from students and faculty.

8. Committee Findings

In this section, the Committee provides its findings across four key areas of inquiry: Administration of General Education and Responsibilities, Cluster Program, GE Curriculum, and Student Experience. These findings were informed by information and data in sections 2-6, previous eight-year evaluations, guest presentations to the Committee, and focus groups. These findings helped shape the Committee's recommendations in the final section.

Administration of General Education and Responsibilities: The Committee considered broadly how General Education is administered across campus. This review included evaluating the role of the main body responsible for GE, the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC), which is a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Council (UgC) and receives administrative support from the office of Undergraduate Education Initiatives. Importantly, the *Ad hoc* Committee consisted of the current and former GEGC chairs, as well as current and previous members of the Committee. The *Ad hoc* Committee also considered how responsibility for GE courses and communication about the program is maintained between GEGC/UgC and individual departments. Related to questions about governance, the Committee also met with Jeff Roth, Associate Vice Chancellor, and Gregg Goldman, Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, to discuss the new budget model and considered how funding affects GE at UCLA. In addition to a wealth of GE experience from *Ad hoc* members, the Committee also gained insights from the focus groups, previous evaluations of the Foundation Areas, and a history of the GE program provided in sections 2-6.

Strengths:

- **Commitment:** The GE program currently involves many parts of campus and a range of staff and instructor roles, including TAs, faculty, and lecturers. In particular, department chairs in focus groups acknowledged the importance of GE noting that it serves a mission-oriented purpose of creating a more informed public. To this end, one chair commented, "we need a population who better understands the process of science," while another said that GEs on north campus help students to engage in critical reading, writing, and thinking.

- **Flexibility:** Department chairs liked the flexibility built into the program in terms of choosing which courses can be developed and taught for the GE program. One chair remarked, "It's the flexibility that makes it less problematic. If there weren't that flexibility of the choose-your-own adventure kind of way of going about it, then I think there would be more pushback." Another commented, "Faculty enjoy being able to own a class and to develop it and make it their own. I think it makes it better."

Weaknesses:

- **Governance:** The decentralized structure of GE in which departments are given an undefined role and GEGC does not have the agency nor time to devote to more extensive GE oversight and development has hampered the administration of GE in many areas from the maintenance of course quality to messaging. These concerns appeared in previous eight-year reviews of the Foundation Areas and were echoed by *Ad hoc* Committee members.

- **Communication:** There are many independent channels of information about GE (informal student networks; New Student Orientation; departments; GEGC) and as a result, there is a lack of a consistent and managed message. For example, the 2018 Senior Survey showed the 27% of all students who did not enroll in a Cluster did so because they heard it was more difficult than other GEs. Of note is the fact that there is no online location for such messaging about the mission and practicalities of GE apart from the UEI and Registrar's Office pages.

- **Budget Model:** The primary concern with the budget relates to incentivizing interdisciplinary teaching, as some departments find the funding from the Cluster Program to be inadequate. Further, it is also unclear how the new budget model will affect General Education. In particular, this clarity will be needed to avoid further harming the Cluster program, perhaps the most distinctive interdisciplinary GE initiative at UCLA.

- **Mission**: The current mission statement is broad and, at parts, imprecise. In many ways, it is an artifact of the previous era of General Education (20 years old). The Committee feels that there needs to be a better framing of the importance of GE and its value to undergraduates.

- **Department Buy-in to Clusters:** At times, departments are reluctant to let faculty participate in the Cluster Program (and other IDPs). Departments may benefit from more support to administer GE courses and to enhance interdisciplinary engagement in GE that benefits both them and the university.

- **Departmental Support for GE:** From the focus groups, chairs claimed that is difficult for smaller departments to serve more students because it requires "more and more instructors" to teach existing GEs and major courses. For many departments, the question often becomes, "Do I hire someone to teach the GE or do I hire someone to teach my upper division course?" This can also be challenging if a small department is trying to expand its undergraduate majors. If they offer a GE, they may have to reduce courses that focus on a subject matter closer to the major. However other departments have had success launching GEs as a way to highlight their specialty. This draws students in as they satisfy a GE. Still, this can be hard to maintain because departments want to commit to GE over several years to create continuity. Small departments again face challenges when faculty have other commitments or go on sabbatical, "and then you lose momentum" according to one chair.

- **Space and Finances:** Chairs with GEs that have labs noted that they're expensive and there is a lack of space to hold them. Additionally, it's more difficult to expand their capacity.

Cluster Program: Given the Cluster Program plays an integral and large role in the GE experience of many undergraduates, the Committee evaluated the program in detail. Through previous eight-year reviews of the Cluster Program, data from the 2018 Senior Survey (see

Appendix M), and feedback from focus groups conducted by the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) and *Ad hoc* Committee members, the Committee looked at how the program is perceived and experienced by students, faculty, staff, and chairs/departments. In particular, the Committee considered questions about the size and scope of the program (that services roughly one-third of all incoming first-year students) and the possibilities for expansion. They also evaluated issues around individual department support for the program and questions around funding (current and future). The *Ad hoc* Committee consisted of current and former faculty who have taught in the program, and the current program director served as a resource person on the Committee.

Strengths:

- **Acclimation:** Cluster courses help students orient to the university experience effectively and garner a sense of academic belonging during their first year. In many ways, it informally serves the function of a college intro course or program that many universities offer (e.g., how to use the library, interact with faculty, find resources on campus, study, write, etc.). In a focus group, one student spoke to this point noting how they realized "This prepared me to be tough in my upper division classes, and I'm confidently able to go to office hours and have prepared questions…because I've been trained." Students also routinely commented on this sense of community and how they liked the feeling of being in a cohort and working on year-long projects. Students also enjoyed the sense of connection and role-modeling they saw in the instructors. One student reflected on this: "It was…a really amazing opportunity to come to UCLA and have a course like this be offered that's not only a year-long course but it's taught by four professors who are…women of color who are…at the top of their fields and…being able to sit in that kind of space and learn about ethnic studies from a very diverse perspective is very a very, very unique and valuable experience that I am personally so grateful for. I know many students are also really, really grateful…." These accounts are backed by the 2018 Senior Survey in which over 85% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Cluster provided an intellectual challenge in their first year of college, gave them a better understanding of a topic from different disciplinary perspectives, and helped them develop their writing and critical thinking skills.

- **Utility in GE Program:** Some students were aware of the incentives to take a Cluster course rather than four standalone GE courses. One commented, "You know it's in your economic best interest…because you take three quarters of the class, you'll get four courses worth of credit and you get your Writing II satisfied and that's very attractive to students."

- **Student Satisfaction and Success:** Previous evaluations and reviews have shown both quantitative (improved time to degree and GPA) and qualitative (course satisfaction as shown in Senior Survey data) correlational benefits.

- **Interdisciplinarity:** Being able to link topics across disciplines and make connections between them is one of the goals of a GE curriculum, which is typically where a student gets to have a liberal arts breadth before diving in to the major. Students in the focus groups spoke to this experience and one commented how they "get opportunities, at least for us to write four completely different papers…from four disciplines, but still with these…core ideas that we explore throughout the course…we tend to see that…students who take a Cluster have

much more confidence going into more…technical writing." Importantly, a first-year interdisciplinary experience for all incoming students seems to be where many other leading GE programs at peer institutions are heading, as was highlighted in the Best Practices report.

Weaknesses:

- **Structural Inequities:** Given that only one-third of the student body takes a first-year Cluster, there is a built-in structural inequity for first-year students. As noted, Cluster students receive extensive support to adapt to the university, which will benefit them long into their time at UCLA. The fact that half of the students miss out on this experience can unwittingly exacerbate pre-existing inequities in the student body. It is important to note that transfer students also miss out on this experience.

- **Funding:** Clusters are in potential danger because of lack of funding and buy-in from departments, especially with uncertainties surrounding the new budget model.

- **Faculty Participation:** Departments are often reluctant to allow faculty, in particular, junior faculty, to participate in a program that should be open to faculty at all levels.

- **Scheduling:** It can be difficult for some students – athletes, for example – to enroll in Clusters because of scheduling commitments and unpredictability. If students do have to drop a Cluster it can be discouraging and frustrating since they lose their additional GE credit for not completing the three-course sequence. SAOs noted these frustrations: "I've seen a lot of students, especially working with student athletes who the time commitment is just impossible for them to stay with the Cluster right so they'll start, and then they can't finish the Cluster and then it was like a detriment to their start at UCLA just because they weren't [able to get] really into the Cluster and it almost like made them appreciate a normal GE." The 2018 Senior Survey also showed that about one quarter could not fit a Cluster into their schedule or that they did not want to commit to a year-long experience.

- **Science GE Overlap:** A SAO focus group member remarked, "I think a lot of times STEM students are reluctant to do the Cluster because they know that they're going to knock out all their science GEs, science being the biggest part of GE, and so you know they would rather either save those other non-science to use to kind of balance out their heavier loads as they move through their curriculum."

- **Perceptions of Difficulty:** Students perceive Clusters to be more difficult than standalone GE courses. One SAO focus group member started, "There is perception as well, that certain Clusters are much more difficult than others, and so some students will opt to, they'll take the first quarter, and then they'll say I would rather just stick it out and take the individual classes and have more autonomy over the type of class I take." However, data has shown that students, in fact, have the opposite experience. The Senior Survey from 2018 showed that from students who took a Cluster, nearly 75% agreed or strongly agreed that looking back, what they got out of the Clusters outweighed the time investment and level of difficulty. It also important to remember that Clusters count as 6 credits per term – a point that could be communicated during orientation.

GE Curriculum: The *Ad hoc* Committee reviewed perceptions of the General Education curriculum from a wide range of groups on campus. The source for this evaluation was the focus groups with students, counselors, and department chairs, as well as focus groups conducted in previous eight-year reviews of the Foundation Areas and Cluster Program and the 2018 Senior Survey. In terms of student experience, the Committee was interested in how students choose GE courses, their understanding of the three Foundation Areas, their experiences in GE courses, and their overall satisfaction with the offerings. The Committee also considered how the current GE distribution model guides and incentivizes student pathways through the program from their first to last year on campus, as well as how well this model integrates other relevant requirements on campus, such as Writing II. A number of these topics were targeted in the focus groups.

Strengths:

- **Connections:** Focus groups show that students are often making connections across the curriculum, especially if they chose thematically related courses.

- **Variety:** There is a healthy offering of roughly 500 GE courses from which students can choose on a regular basis.

- **Integration of Requirements:** Students like being able to complete other requirements when taking GE courses (e.g., the Diversity requirement). For example, the 2018 Senior Survey showed that students viewed the package of GE/Writing II credits as valuable parts of the Cluster experience.

- **Exposure:** Academic counselors felt that students like to use GEs as an "excuse" to take courses that sound fun. Some recognize that they really excel in GEs and "…think they have to give themselves permission to be, 'okay that's really what I want.'" It's a way for them to circumvent external expectations, e.g., "I should go like into medicine, but I really like to read the classics."

- **Preparation:** Academic counselors argued that for many first-generation students GEs are "going to introduce them to college level coursework sort of like to prepare them like prep courses." They become a good way to explore course they would not otherwise take, but they also prepare them for UCLA. In this sense, taking GE courses become part of their Bruin identity because they recognize it is something that everyone at UCLA does. Students also thought GEs can make them, "feel more confident in [their] own abilities."

Weaknesses:

- **Pathways:** It can be difficult for students to choose from the overwhelming "Cheesecake Factory menu" of GE courses and independently structure their own "pathway" through the experience if that is their desired goal (a pathway could be a focus on a particular theme or skill set important to them as a person or a part of their career trajectory). One wider outcome of this confusion is a shadow curriculum of perceived "easy" courses (or shadow pathway) many students follow, which does not demonstrate the strengths of our offerings and is antithetical to the GE mission.

- **Department Offerings:** Some departments have limited opportunity to offer lower-division courses that do not satisfy GE or major/minor requirements. (This sense that all large lower division classes must be GEs in order to draw enrollment may well be a driving factor in the "GE bloat" diagnosed above). *Ad hoc* Committee members remarked that from experience departments feel that every undergraduate course needs to "do something" for their students, which does not leave room for other types of courses.

- **Accessibility:** Students would like to see increased access to specific GEs, particularly for first years who are undecided and may want to take GEs in a way that is exploratory (they fill up too fast though). Many wait until their senior year to take GEs, particularly because of enrollment times, but that defeats the purpose of many GEs (incentivize to take earlier; maybe save some enrollment).

- **Writing:** Writing instruction in GE courses (not related to Writing II) also varies greatly across the curriculum partly because of issues of oversight (discussed earlier in this section) and partly because of a lack of clear expectations of how writing should tie into GE. For example, there are no clear guidelines regarding page length, writing support, and types of writing assignments that are deemed appropriate across GE courses. GEGC does its best to maintain the quality of the writing assignments, but there are inconsistences across the large catalog of courses. A lack of consistency in TA training to teach writing (outside the Clusters and Writing II courses) is also a related problem here. Some TAs are given more robust training than others when it comes to teaching writing and many can find themselves teaching writing in GE classes without the adequate training. The issue of TA training appears in previous eight-year reviews of the Foundation Areas.

- **Messaging:** SAOs and counselors echoed the students' sentiment that many see GEs as "a checklist that they need to fulfill." They note that, "it's important to give students that why," implying that the overall purpose of GEs needs to be clarified for students. Counselors note that students can miss the message that GEs are an opportunity to gain a broad, liberal arts education, so to them "it feels like a big waste of time."

Student Experience: The Committee sought to understand the broader impact of the GE program on students. In particular, they were interested in how GE courses affect their overall experience at UCLA and what impact the program may have career choices or their post-graduation trajectory. Again, the work with the focus groups provided important insights into these themes.

Strengths:

- **Value:** Students find value in many individual GE course experiences, opening them up to new topics, some of which may become their minors. One student remarked, "Coming to a research university I was kind of concerned about…pigeonholing myself very quickly…but getting to take multiple courses and getting more of that…liberal arts education has always been really important to me rather than…coming in as major and just exclusively focusing on those courses for four years." Another student commented, "GEs can…kind of be like an excuse to take…fun classes or things you have…an interest in but don't really see yourself…professionally in pursuing." As noted above, students also benefit from Cluster

courses that help acclimate them to the university and prepare them for both their major and further GE experience.

Weaknesses:

- **Holistic Program Design:** At present, the GE program varies from student to student (e.g., as discussed with the Cluster experience), partly because there is a lack of cohesive experience with a beginning (first-year experience), middle (coherent choice of courses across the three Foundation Ares), and end (some type of culminating experience). A more holistic program anchored by a clear mission statement as demonstrated in new GE programs from peer institutions (Best Practices report) may be an attractive goal for UCLA.

- **Lack of a Clear GE Mission:** A lot of students were unclear (beyond creating a well-rounded student) about the benefit of GE. Students recommended reforming the messaging behind GEs. They commented that it may help to frame GEs in terms of "exploration," as opposed to checking a box. This view was further supported by their recognition that they like the emphasis on an interdisciplinary education: "you start to see that even within these like seemingly completely distinct disciplines, there are…things that define what it means to learn…or to do research in a certain area".

9. Committee Recommendations

Overarching Recommendation: *With the goal of preparing UCLA graduates to address the challenges faced by society in the 21st century, design and implement a new model for General Education at UCLA. This model should build on existing strengths but should incorporate substantial changes to governance, program structure, and mission. The process to achieve this goal should begin with the formation of a GE Taskforce by Fall 2023.*

The findings identify the many successes of the current UCLA General Education model, including the nationally-recognized and innovative Cluster Program. However, many shortcomings are also identified and, more importantly, the Committee recognizes the opportunity to re-imagine General Education with the needs of 21st century society in mind. It has been 20 years since the last major revision of GE at UCLA, and the time is ripe to reconsider this important piece of the undergraduate experience. Some of our peer institutions have begun to undertake GE reform and their efforts help point the way toward a new model at UCLA. Our ultimate goal should be to create an innovative new GE model at UCLA that will be the gold standard for others to follow.

We recommend that a process begin, starting with a GE Taskforce in the 2022-2023 academic year, with the goal of deploying a new GE curriculum by mid-decade. In order to be successful, this process must engage all stakeholders, including faculty, administration, staff, students and alumni. Below we offer five recommendations in key areas where we believe the taskforce should focus their efforts.

1. Responsibility and Governance

Recommendation: Create a centralized organization devoted to General Education at UCLA, which will take responsibility for creating, evaluating, and maintaining a coherent General Education experience for undergraduates at UCLA. This unit would be overseen by a Dean or Provost level position explicitly charged with ensuring the quality of interdisciplinary and General Education across the departments, college divisions, and professional Schools.

The GE Program at UCLA has been a successful and often acclaimed platform for undergraduate interdisciplinary education. This is especially true of the nationally recognized Freshmen Cluster Program.

Nevertheless, the governance of the program is confusing. There is no office or director of General Education whose responsibility extents to all undergrads (in the College as well as the professional Schools). The Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE), together with Undergraduate Council (UgC) of the Academic Senate oversee undergraduate education at UCLA, but the only dedicated oversight for GE is the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC, created in 1998). The GEGC serves an evaluation function through committee review of syllabi. In turn, the GEGC sends its evaluation of proposed syllabi to the UgC for final approval.

As a result, the various departments serve as 'stewards" of the GE Program. It is the responsibility of each department to instill GE values including the core goal of interdisciplinary study. Often departments are confused about their role as stewards and without a clear understanding of what constitutes a GE course. In some cases, professors teaching the courses have not even been informed by their departments that their course has GE status, because GE courses are reviewed at different intervals, and may pass from one educator to another. Confusion can arise in this process, because it is not fully certain whether the GEGC recommendations to the departments and to the UGC are advisory or regulatory. In addition, the chair of the GEGC, who serves for three years, reports to three consecutive one-year chairs of the UGC, which has implications for continuity of oversight.

There are some benefits to this current system: departments are primarily responsible for the content and quality of GE courses, decide when they are taught and by whom. Individual departments thus retain a high degree of curricular control, but it is uncoordinated across the University. Departments gain the benefits of large enrollments (where those are valued either economically or culturally) because of the external incentive for students to take GE courses.

There are also significant drawbacks: the level of quality and commitment to GE courses across the campus is highly variable; departments have no incentives, nor capacity, to communicate with students generally (only with their own majors or minors), and hence departments cannot match GE offerings to a desired student experience at the University level. Funding for GE courses (including funding for TAs or contingent faculty) is determined in the same relatively opaque way as funding for regular courses and thus department budgeting priorities from year to year also affect the number of GE courses and their staffing. Often departments use major preparatory courses as GE courses, which can blur the line between the GE experience and the goals or preparation for a particular major. And faculty and departments are often unaware that the courses they teach carry GE credit and decisions about curriculum design and year-to-year staffing may or may not include criteria related to GE.

Departments and faculty are usually rewarded for large GE enrollments, while students prefer smaller courses. The disciplinary focused GE system binds certain departments to offering courses in those foundation areas, even if the faculty are interested in creating inter- or cross-disciplinary courses. Departments often have an incentive to create GE courses that serve majors, which doesn't necessarily serve the goals of a GE system. Students also have no formal oversight of the GE System, but do have considerable power to sway the popularity of courses through their discussion with each other and review of courses on sites like Bruinwalk, or in other formal and informal advising situations.

The governance of the GE system is further confused by the existence of other entities with a stake or role in GE education. The most significant of these is the Cluster Program, which provides a third of entering students a particular GE experience. The governance of the Cluster Program is not coordinated with departmental GE offerings, however, and often Cluster courses are in competition for ladder faculty who may already be committed to teaching departmental GE courses, or core major requirements (refer to the section on Clusters for more detail).

Given the limitations outlined above this Committee makes the following recommendation for the reform of the General Education system at UCLA: *Create a centralized organization devoted to General Education at UCLA, which will take responsibility for creating, evaluating and maintaining a coherent General Education experience for undergraduates at UCLA. This unit would be overseen by a Dean or Provost level position explicitly charged with ensuring the quality of interdisciplinary and General Education across the departments, college divisions, and professional Schools.*

The role of this organization might include:

- Design, planning, and organization of GE pathways, and alternatives from year to year, for both entering students and transfer students,
- Maintain integrity and inclusiveness across GE courses through systematic course design, coordination of existing GE courses, and regular evaluation.
- Coordinate with departments, divisions, and professional Schools to establish needs and opportunities for GE-relevant departmental teaching, assist with design of courses were necessary, evaluate existing courses, and remove untaught or otherwise unneeded courses from the offerings.
- Communicate the value of GE program to incoming and current students, but also equally to faculty and administration as well.
- Coordinate with admissions, orientation (new students), Residential Life, Student Affairs, and other student organizations, and with academic departments to ensure that the mission, goals, and offerings of the GE curriculum are clearly communicated to all.
- Ensure equity of participation across the University, especially in terms of the balance of ladder faculty and contingent faculty, across steps (Assistant to Full), with respect to discipline and profession, and with respect to faculty racial, ethic, gender diversity.

An organization such as this would go far beyond the oversight role of the current GEGC, to become a unit of its own. It should have the responsibility for the GE experience at UCLA, without necessarily displacing existing GE courses, or overly limiting departmental freedom to offer them, but rather help coordinate, normalize, and fill gaps in the GE experience.

Because of concerns about the untested new activity-based budget model, a decanal or provost level position may be necessary to counter-act the incentives this model might produce to concentrate teaching or resources at the college or professional School level. Such incentives could run counter to the goal of a high-quality General Education experience for undergrads. As such, this position should have the capacity to set incentives and limits for divisional, or departmental, GE offerings. In order to do this, it may also be necessary for such a unit to have the capacity to fully staff and oversee some courses that have no obvious departmental home, especially those with teams from multiple Schools or departments, including Cluster Program courses, which this report advises expanding.

Though this Committee cannot outline the precise structure such a unit should take, we nonetheless layout here some possibilities for consideration.

Possibility 1:

> An administrative body within the Division of Undergraduate Education. This could be a body like Undergraduate Education Initiatives (UEI), which currently oversees the Cluster Program. Advantages would be that it could build on and extend its experience of administering the Cluster Program and that it would be independent of any department, disciplinary division or School, and overseen by the Dean of Undergraduate Education. At an administrative level the unit might have more flexibility in staffing than a department or division, but significantly, it would lack both the ability to hold ladder faculty positions and Senate oversight of its operations. Such an office would serve only a coordinating role, and like the Cluster Program now, would be dependent on the departments and Schools to provide faculty and courses. It could run the risk of being perceived as a non-academic unit with undue oversight over teaching within departments, although that has not been an issue to date with its interdisciplinary programs and minor.

Possibility 2:

> An independent department, modeled loosely on the Life Sciences Core, such as a General Education Core department. The advantage of such a model is that it would be roughly equivalent to a department, with its own staff and teaching faculty, and a focus on the educational mission of GE. The unit would need to have the capacity to hold ladder faculty lines, however (which the Life Sciences Core cannot, for instance), and if it did, it would also be under Senate oversight. However, in the absence of a Dean/Vice Provost for interdisciplinary or General Education, such a unit would need to be housed *within* another school or division, and thus be subject to the interests and capacities of that unit.

Possibility 3:

A "Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction" (CII) of which there are currently three at UCLA (the Institute for Society and Genetics, the International Institute, and the Institute for Environment and Sustainability). A CII would be equivalent to a department, with its own faculty lines, staff, and administration, with Senate oversight, and the ability to hold ladder positions. Such a CII could be conceived as one focused on General Education (with possibilities for research on GE and college experience as well as coordinating a GE system). However, as with the case above, absent an interdisciplinary Dean, it would need to be housed within a School or division.

Across each of these possibilities, several key issues remain a challenge:

- First, such a unit will need to have oversight across multiple divisions, because undergraduate General Education occurs in all divisions and nearly all the professional Schools. Lack of communication and coordination in GE has been frequently noted by the GEGC and other stakeholders, and any new entity would need to address these issues directly.

- Second, such a unit would likely benefit from the ability to hold permanent teaching faculty who contribute to the GE core (such as LSOE positions, if not full faculty FTEs), and who are evaluated by the Academic Senate. Additionally, it would require the ability to, at least, incentivize, if not require that most GE courses be taught by ladder faculty, perhaps by coordinating more directly with departments or deans. The dwindling number of ladder faculty teaching GE has been frequently noted.

- Third, such a unit will need to be subject to Academic Senate oversight and have an appropriate governance structure, given that its core mission falls within the responsibilities of the Undergraduate Council, among other Senate roles.

- Fourth, funding for such a unit would need to be balanced with the needs of the departments and divisions that actively provide GE teaching. It will be necessary to devise a system that allows coordination and flexible incentives for GE teaching where needed, while balancing the responsibilities of all units to contribute. A common concern about the Cluster Program has been the lack of adequate remuneration for faculty who teach in the Cluster. Thus, a system that rewards departments for contributing high quality General Education teaching is clearly preferred to one that punishes them for doing so.

Upon review, this Committee found a strong need for a dedicated position devoted to interdisciplinary and General Education. This finding is bolstered by the recent report of the *Ad hoc* Committee on Interdisciplinary Education which found (consistent with several previous such committees) the need for a decanal or provost level position overseeing interdisciplinary issues, including interdepartmental programs, centers for interdisciplinary education, freestanding minors, and organized research units that engage in educational activities (a report from this committee is forthcoming as of June 2021). Instead, the current tendency appears to be to strengthen the discretion of the existing divisions and Schools, without providing clear channels for coordination, or paths for the creation of new units which can more flexibly address

cross-divisional or cross-School needs. If the vision for high-quality General Education promoted by UCLA is to be achieved, such changes will be essential.

2. Global Goals and Mission

Recommendation: Craft a new mission statement for General Education at UCLA.

The current UCLA GE mission statement states that the GE curriculum aims to offer UCLA students, "diverse perspectives on how human beings think and feel, solve problems, express ideas, and create and discover new knowledge," and to "help students acquire the skills essential to university-level learning: they challenge students to assess information critically; frame and deliver reasoned and persuasive arguments orally and in writing; and identify, acquire, and use the knowledge necessary to solve problems. While this statement is laudable, the GE program would benefit from a revised and updated mission statement that better reflects the world and challenges students face in the 21st Century.

The complexities and challenges to be addressed by future generations of Bruins – climate crises, economic and racial inequalities, globalization, public health pandemics – do not have simple solutions. Solving them will require technical skills and innovative problem solving. Solutions will also demand critically interrogating information and harnessing critical media literacy skills to help differentiate between more and less trustworthy sources, especially in a digital era where data and truth can be easily manipulated and where fake news permeates. UCLA students will be entering a society in which swift technological advances will open up forms of communication while making other forms quickly obsolete. Gaining rapid fluency in new communication channels alongside preservation and archiving skills will be valuable commodities in this new world. Addressing the grand challenges of the 21st Century will demand new ways of interacting and engaging with others: cooperation, collaboration, and social action will be critical for enacting change and improving the health and welfare for the most vulnerable and disenfranchised communities and members in the United States and in the majority world. Solutions will require a new world view – one that draws explicit connections and interconnections between the micro and macro context, the local and global. These are the critical knowledge bases, perspectives, and skills sets that future Bruins will need to have opportunities to develop during their time at UCLA, starting with their GE courses and curriculum.

To better orient and prepare UCLA students for this brave new world, the updated and revised mission statement needs to extend well beyond "university-level learning" and clearly articulate the set of transferable skills, sensibilities, and capabilities all UCLA students are expected to acquire through the completion of their GE experience. These skills, sensibilities, and capabilities should be viewed as foundational to students' academic and experiential experiences at UCLA. The updated mission statement, and in particular, the key outcomes identified with respect to knowledge, perspectives, and skill sets, should further inform, organize, and drive new curricular design of the GE program. A more unifying, holistic, humanitarian and global-oriented mission statement would help orient students to a grander purpose and aim of the GE program. It

would help them to see the GE requirements less as a transaction, a check-list, and side-bar to their major program of study and more as an enriching and rewarding experience

3. Integrative Model

Recommendation: The university should eliminate the current distribution model for General Education in favor of a new integrative model.

The sometimes seemingly arbitrary division of all courses into a discrete set of Foundation areas should be deemphasized, and in its place, there should be a model that promotes coherent and flexible pathways through a General Education curriculum that underscore critical knowledge bases, perspectives, and skills sets. This change will ensure that the undergraduate experience of General Education is more unified. The overall goal should be to wean students from a "cafeteria model" of General Education, and to create structures in General Education more like best practices in the Freshman Clusters (which fosters interdisciplinary synchronicity and thematics) and the Capstone initiative (which promotes logical sequencing, integration of skills and knowledge, enhances student empowerment).

In principle, the notion of foundational areas of inquiry is powerful, and corresponds to the way most faculty understand the general field of knowledge. Division into Literary/Performing Arts Analysis, Social Inquiry, and Scientific Inquiry seems so basic as to be (a) unimpeachable; (b) instantly legible to faculty and students. But members of the *Ad hoc* Review Committee have personal experience of the fact that departments often disagree amongst themselves and with the GE Governance Committee about which Area their GE-designated coursework falls into. And for students, these Foundational Areas are *only* encountered within the context of the GE distribution model, which makes them seem arbitrary. We suggest that the Foundational Areas be replaced with another classification, perhaps theme or issues driven.

The current model of General Education can at times encourage students to think of GE requirements like items on a menu, to be ordered *a la carte.* Students try to get the best deals they can, ticking off the most boxes at the lowest "price" (in time and effort). It is difficult to advise students on *how* to choose, or to make sure that they consume "courses" in an optimal order. Our findings shows that UCLA students find the sheer amount of choice overwhelming, and at the end only rarely report that their GE coursework has hung together in a coherent way.

As a result, we suggest that the university commit to a four-year integrative model for General Education per the models previously outlined in the Introduction to this report that would, in principle, have as much integrity as the typical major curriculum. It should be noted that the Committee acknowledges the fact that some departments rely on the current GE model as a vital funding stream and that such a change may be difficult for these departments. With a lot of hard work and input from various constituencies on campus, the Committee feels that this important change should happen.

The specifics of this structure would need to be negotiated, but the basic building blocks are already there. Here is a provisional outline of three forms this new GE model could take:

Possibility 1:

Phase 1: In the first year, all students would take a First-Year Cluster which fulfills basic GE learning objectives and does the work of enculturating students to college life. This integrated GE experience would, as now, provide students with a significant fraction of their total GE requirement, but might not, as now, force all the credits into one or two Foundational areas. Also, since all students will now take one, there should be, per the Mission statement section above, a basic set of learning outcomes and techniques shared across the Clusters, as well as a small set of required skills (writing/speaking, computation, textual analysis, collaboration, etc.) that all Clusters teach. The designated oversight body might decide to maintain popular and successful Clusters, or to "prime the pump" to make new ones, rather than allowing Cluster courses to wax and wane based on the availability and predilections of individual faculty.

Phase 2: In years two and three, students might be encouraged to choose a GE Pathway that builds on the Cluster they chose in year one. More specialized GE courses in the disciplines would need to be revamped in light of the expanded and refocused Cluster Program. If the faculty can assume that all students have taken a Cluster, and that all Clusters hold some basic techniques, issues, and learning objectives in common, then it should be possible to guarantee continuities between the GE Cluster coursework and department-sponsored GE coursework. In approving (or re-approving) GE courses, the Governance Committee will ask departments to nominate specific Clusters (not areas) as foundational to various courses offered, so that students can choose GE courses that explicitly build on what they learned as freshmen.

Phase 3: Building on the successful model of the Capstone major, students would complete their GE requirements with a GE Culminating Experience, such as a thesis, portfolio, or community project. Experiential learning would be emphasized at this stage and could include co-curriculars, and, since the student would have significant agency in designing this experience, it will be possible for students themselves to tie together their GE work to date. There may be good ways to integrate this into the major Capstone experience, so as not to put them in competition with one another or bog down the students with more work.

Possibility 2:

Phase 1: All incoming students take a First-Year Experience that has common learning objectives geared toward orienting students to the academy and college. The experience would not necessarily need to be as big in scope as the current Cluster Program, but still accomplish similar goals of teaching them crucial skills necessary to succeed at the university. It could be one or two quarters long.

Phase 2: In their second and third years, students take one or two team-taught interdisciplinary courses similar to our Cluster Program now. The courses would be broad and thematically organize courses just as they are now in the Cluster Program. The Cluster course could be complimented by other course requirements if necessary. (Note that if the new Cluster-like course can be taken in the third year, it becomes available to transfer students, who are mostly left out of the current GE experience).

Phase 3: A final GE Culminating Experience of some sort similar to what is outlined in Option 1.

Possibility 3:

Phase 1: A scaled up First-Year Cluster for all incoming students outlined in Possibility 1.

Phase 2: For the bulk of the required GE, courses UCLA could employ a "strands" model that brings together elements from both the distribution and integrative models. In this model, students would still have Foundation Areas (Arts and Humanities, Natural Science, etc.), but rather than simply choose from an endless list of courses, they could choose a specific pathway through these foundations. For instance, they might choose a Nature and Technology or Race and Society pathway that includes courses in each of the three Foundation Areas. This creates pathways which students can choose that will automatically cohere in a more meaningful way than our current model, while at the same time preserving the functional essence of traditional disciplinary organization. For an example, see an image in Appendix N.

Phase 3: A final GE Culminating Experience of some sort similar to what is outline above.

To conclude, these are examples informed both by the existing strengths of UCLA's current program and of other newly designed GE programs across the country evaluated in the best practices report in this Self-Review. These examples are meant to demonstrate the manifold possibilities that exist for new integrative models and are in no way meant to limit future discussions in this area.

4. Cluster Model

Recommendation: expand Cluster courses to all incoming first-year students and make it a required program for all.

The Cluster Program at UCLA is considered a "true gem" in the General Education curricula by students, faculty, and university administration and has obtained substantial acclaim from other universities and past review committees. As mentioned, it offers students a unique opportunity to explore "Big Idea" topics from an interdisciplinary perspective including humanities, social, biological and physical sciences. Its design inherently fosters intellectual curiosity and cultivates the student's sense of academic adventure. By bringing together faculty across multiple fields to tackle one big topic, students are exposed to a range of approaches and viewpoints. Importantly, Clusters also provide students with the skills important for success in college, such as how to navigate office hours, study groups, academic resources, the library, etc. as part of that "hidden curriculum."

The structure of the Cluster Program promotes creativity without imposing strict limitations on a student's course curriculum, thus encouraging a more relevant student ownership of their education without imposing limits on student intellectual exploration. Furthermore, the Cluster

model promotes a sense of community for students and faculty through collaborative projects, a better appreciation for diversity, and development of communication skills through an enhanced writing experience and oral presentations. In the short term, this type of programmatic structure helps enculturate students to college life (especially important for first-generation and non-traditional students), and better prepares students for their majors – but in the long-term provides them with the essential tools expected for successful entry into a 21st Century workforce and diverse society, including writing, information literacy, and the ability to bring together multiple points of view.

After careful deliberation, the Committee's overarching recommendation is to expand Cluster courses to all incoming first-year students and make it a required program for all.

A major expansion of the Cluster Program would require three important developments. First, the number of Clusters offered would have to expand greatly. To accomplish this, the Cluster Program would need to be embedded in the new GE governance structure as discussed in the first recommendation above, and the Cluster Program would have to work closely with departments and faculty to develop a number of viable interdisciplinary courses. Second, there would have to be an expansion of teaching and administrative support for Clusters. Having dedicated teachers and administrators with pedagogical training working alongside our ladder faculty has been shown to be a good model for making successful Clusters. In order to meet teaching demands, a new GE and Cluster Program should explore the ability to engage faculty of different ranks (ladder and non-ladder) and to make joint appointments between GE and academic departments that focus on Cluster course development and course coordination. Third, a new Cluster model would necessitate a funding model to support department and faculty buy-in across the system. The model at present has shown limitations in received department cooperation in allowing faculty members to participate in Cluster courses. In a new GE system where there are potentially twice as many Clusters, questions around funding and access to faculty would have be resolved.

In addition to the importance to exposing all first-year students to dynamic interdisciplinary approaches to key topics, the expansion of this program also represents a clear equity issue. As it stands now, the fact that only a portion (less than half) of incoming students are exposed to this "hidden curriculum" that gives students tips, supports, and insight on how to succeed at the university is problematic. Students from focus group spoke to this situation, noting how GE classes in general help them learn appropriate ways to reach out to professors and the benefits of office hours, for example. One student described this as "the unwritten…code in terms of how to succeed at UCLA." This foundational experience should be expanded to the entire incoming class to put everyone on a level playing field and allow everyone access to this "unwritten code."

It is important to note the value of the Clusters for graduate education as well. The structured training in the teaching of writing, the ability to work with the same students for, in some cases, an entire year, and the opportunity to design and deliver one's own seminar, are uniquely valuable experiences for Cluster TAs, which may well not be reproducible in their home departments. Cross-disciplinary advising relationships fostered in the Clusters also benefit doctoral students

working on interdisciplinary topics. An expansion of the Clusters would spread these benefits to a much larger percentage of the graduate student population.

Many these developments would certainly be contingent upon the new GE governance model (see section on "Responsibility and Governance") and affected by the new Budget Bruin Model, as well. Recommendations that respond to challenges related to the current model can be found in Appendix O.

5. Integration of College and School Requirements

Recommendation: Integrate other universal requirements like Writing and Diversity into the GE curriculum in a more cohesive manner.

We have known for some time that students like to adopt the "kill-several-birds-with-one-stone" approach to GE – i.e., fulfilling multiple College requirements by taking a single course, whenever possible (See Appendix P). Our findings show that students routinely try to couple requirements with their GE courses (e.g., finding a needed GE course that carries diversity). While their motives are usually to dispense with those requirements as quickly as possible, there are compelling reasons to consider a similar approach to a re-imagined GE that more consciously integrates these requirements.

Existing requirements like Writing I, Writing II, Quantitative Reasoning, and Diversity would be obvious candidates to build into a new GE program. All students would benefit, for example, from understanding that the ability to make thoughtful rhetorical choices and write clear prose is important to all, regardless of their major or, later, their chosen profession. Explicitly linking these writing practices to GE classes, as is done currently with the Cluster courses, would help both simplify and enrich students' experience. The same could easily said for the Diversity requirement, which we hope encourages students to view all their subsequent academic experiences through the lens of diversity. Beyond the more obvious requirements, other institutional priorities like community engaged learning could also play a larger role in a reimagined GE curriculum. For instance, a remodeled GE curriculum might also join with other programs on campus that are growing in popularity and importance, such as those from the Center for Community Engagement. A future committee could explore other priorities that may fit into this new model.

Broadly speaking, embedding a broad set of skills, practices, capacities, and subjects more coherently across GE courses would demonstrate their (critical) importance to a variety of disciplines; it would also follow the research about the effectiveness of skill building when meaningfully incorporated into content-based courses as a vehicle for deepening students' engagement with the subject matter. The emphasis on a broad set of conceptual, rhetorical, and technical abilities would also offer support to students as they transition from GE into their majors. The emphasis on a broad set of conceptual, rhetorical, and technical abilities would also offer support to students as they transition from GE into their majors and encourage them to adopt a more holistic approach to their education.

Appendix A

Creating New Communities of Learning at UCLA: An Institutional Transformation in Progress, 1993-2002

Creating New Communities of Learning at UCLA:

An Institutional Transformation in Progress, 1993-2002

M. Gregory Kendrick
Lucy Blackmar
Marc Levis
Arianne Abell Walker
Judith L. Smith

Higher Education Research Institute

University of California, Los Angeles

Table of Contents

Foreword

This report is one in a series produced as part of a national project sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation entitled The Kellogg Forum on Higher Education Transformation (KFHET). The forum was a collaborative effort that brought together academic leaders, researchers, and higher education institutions in an attempt to enhance our understanding of institutional change and transformation. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA was one of the partners in this collaborative effort and, as such, conducted research, carried out site visits to institutions that had undertaken various transformation projects, offered a year-long graduate seminar on institutional transformation, and organized a national research symposium.

Early on in our work with the KFHET project we recognized that a very interesting and challenging attempt at institutional transformation was taking place in our own backyard. Given the pioneering nature of this effort—to transform the general education program at a major public research university—we invited the authors to prepare this report to be included as part of our series of KFHET monographs on institutional transformation.

Faculty and staff at HERI became interested in this UCLA transformation project even before the advent of KFHET, and during the past four years we have come to see ourselves as partners and strong supporters of the effort. During the early planning stages, doctoral students from our Division of Higher Education and Organizational Change, under the guidance of Professor Helen S. Astin, conducted focus groups with UCLA undergraduates to record their experiences with the traditional general education program and to determine how freshmen might respond to the proposed changes. Subsequently, doctoral students enrolled in our

first general education clusters. In addition, Professor Astin was a participant in the Workgroup on General Education Assessment which conducted the evaluation of the first clusters.

Vice Provost Judith Smith was a guest presenter in our transformation seminar and provided us with many insights about the transformation process from the perspective of someone "in the trenches." Arianne Walker, who is currently working with the general education cluster evaluation project as a postdoctoral fellow, was a member of our original transformation seminar and later conducted her dissertation research on the impact of cluster participation. Finally, both Vice Provost Smith and Provost Brian Copenhaver were participants in the KFHET seminar on transformation research that we hosted here at UCLA during the summer of 2000.

We welcome this important contribution to our HERI series on transformation and hope that it encourages other large research institutions to undertake similar efforts.

Alexander W. Astin
Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education and
Director, Higher Education Research Institute

Helen S. Astin
Professor of Higher Education and
Associate Director, Higher Education Research Institute

July, 2001

This paper is a collaborative effort by members of the general education administrative and assessment teams within UCLA's College of Letters and Science to reflect on a decade-long initiative to change the College's general education curriculum.[1,2] Specifically, it is a response to an invitation by the directors of UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin, to document and analyze the process of institutional change that accompanied this project of curricular reform. Given the fact that this endeavor is far from complete, what follows should be viewed as a study in-progress that explores the many factors which have informed one research university's attempts to change its lower division curriculum.

The authors have organized this study around a conceptual framework advanced by Alexander Astin (Astin & Associates, 2001). As such, it views institutional transformation as the development of new understandings of *what* needs to be changed and *why*, and the implementation of strategies for *how* such change can occur. A fourth element of transformation assesses *what's happening* throughout the change process.

[1] Leading these teams for UCLA's College is Judith L. Smith, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. She is joined by two members of an administrative team, Lucy Blackmar, Director of Undergraduate Education Initiatives, and M. Gregory Kendrick, General Education Cluster Instructional Coordinator, as well as by two members of the assessment team, Marc Levis, Director of Undergraduate Evaluation and Research, and Arianne Abell Walker, Postdoctoral Fellow.

[2] The authors wish to acknowledge the substantial contributions of the following individuals to our efforts to improve general education in the College: Brian P. Copenhaver, Provost, College of Letters and Science; Edward Berenson, former Chair of General Education; Mark Morris, Chair of the General Education Workgroup, Phase II; Paula Lutomirski, Associate Vice Chancellor; and Maryann Gray, former Special Assistant to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chair of the Workgroup on General Education Assessment. In addition, we are grateful to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for their grant support of our efforts to improve general education at UCLA.

Accordingly, the discussion that follows begins with an historical narrative that examines the values and the vision underlying UCLA's effort to conceptualize a new approach to general education. This chronological account also includes an implementation section that explains the various plans and strategies employed by the College to institute desired changes in the university's general education curriculum. Finally, a section on assessment asks how well the effort has gone and suggests a method for investigating in greater depth what has actually changed at UCLA and whether these changes are having their intended effect.

This monograph concludes with a brief reflection on whether or not this process of general education reform points to a substantive institutional transformation at UCLA. In answering this question, we use a number of critical indicators suggested by Astin and his associates (2001). These include such considerations as the degree of systemic transformation experienced by UCLA as a result of its efforts to reform its general education curriculum; the resistance generated by that reform effort; changes to the original plan for curricular change; and the time taken to effect the changes in general education that actually occurred between 1993-2002.

Setting the Stage for General Education Transformation at UCLA

UCLA is a public research university in an urban setting enrolling over 25,000 undergraduates and 7,300 graduate students. The University received over 41,000 applications in the past year, more than any other college or university in the nation. In 2000-01, the admitted students had an average grade point of 4.05 (weighted for honors and advanced placement) and an average combined SAT I score of 1277. The College is the largest academic unit of UCLA enrolling 84% of the undergraduate students, with the remaining undergraduates distributed among the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of the Arts and Architecture, and the School of Theater, Film, and Television.

The decade chronicled in this narrative, from 1993 to 2002, coincides with a heightened national consciousness toward improving the quality of undergraduate education in the nation's large public research universities.[3] In California, voters and their representatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s increasingly demanded greater accountability in higher education and a renewed focus on the mission of public universities to prepare undergraduates for their future roles as citizens, consumers, and workers in a multicultural democracy. University of California (UC) administrators and faculty were sensitive to these concerns, but attempts to launch initiatives aimed at improving undergraduate teaching and learning at UC campuses were stymied by the onset of a recession in the early 1990s that resulted in severe cutbacks throughout the UC system. As the state emerged from this recession, new resources again became available to the UC system for efforts aimed at reforming their undergraduate curricula. Collectively, these national, state, and institutional pressures created a climate that was favorable to general education reform at UCLA.

[3] *The decade of the 1980s was characterized by extensive debate on issues of undergraduate education in public research universities and produced a plethora of national reports as well as reports from committees within the UC System and locally at UCLA that called for reform in undergraduate education. Among these are the following:* Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education, *presented to the Secretary of Education and the Director of the National Institute of Education, by the study group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education (1984);* Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. *Washington D.C.: Association of American Colleges (1985); and* Lower Division Education in the University of California, *a report from the Task Force on Lower Division Education, University of California (1986).*

Conceptualization Period: 1993 to 1996

Taking the Pulse of General Education at UCLA

Institutional change is often triggered by the confluence of a widespread perception that some aspect of an institution's life is in need of reform and with the hiring of an administrator who shares that conviction and tries to do something about it. In the case of UCLA in the early 1990s, many faculty members believed that the general education portion of the undergraduate curriculum was not providing students with a common body of skills, knowledge, and values that extended beyond their premajor and major courses.[4] This perception was shared by the new Provost of the College, Brian Copenhaver, who was appointed in 1993 and charged, for the first time in UCLA history, with ensuring the quality of lower and upper division education for all of the University's undergraduate students.[5] Towards this end, Provost Copenhaver met with the Concilium on

[4] Prior to the events recounted in this paper, two other faculty committees examined general education at UCLA in the early 1990s. In the summer of 1992, Edward Alpers (Dean of Honors and Undergraduate Programs in the College) prepared a general review of general education for the Undergraduate Education Concilium in which he reviewed the history of the program and advanced ten recommendations for change. Vice Chancellor Richard Sisson then appointed a General Education Evaluation Committee, chaired by Dean Alpers, which, in a report dated November 12, 1992, confirmed several of these recommendations. Though Dean Alpers proposed a set of specific steps aimed at implementing these recommendations in 1993, the Concilium declined to take action on them. A separate task force on general education was appointed in the summer of 1993 by Executive Vice Chancellor Andrea L. Rich to recommend ways of strengthening the relationship between general education and the professional schools. Chaired by Professor Robert Edgerton (Psychiatry), this group submitted a report on April 12, 1994.

[5] Brian Copenhaver served as a Dean or Provost at a number of institutions prior to UCLA and played an instrumental role in reforming general education at all of them. His previous academic and administrative appointments were at Western Washington University (1971-1981), Oakland University (1981-1988), and the University of California, Riverside (1988-1993).

Undergraduate Education during the spring of 1994 to identify a number of topics critical to UCLA's efforts to improve undergraduate education.[6] It was agreed that the Concilium should constitute five faculty workgroups charged with the task of making broad recommendations for improvement in the following areas: general education; the evaluation of teaching and learning; education in the sciences, math, and engineering; technology and teaching; and scale and delivery of instruction.

The workgroup dealing with general education concluded in April 1994 that a fresh look at UCLA's general education programs was warranted. Consequently, Provost Copenhaver, in consultation with Academic Senate Chair Carole Goldberg (Professor of Law), appointed a workgroup to undertake a first phase review of UCLA's general education program and to suggest improvements. The charge of the workgroup was to review the state of general education at UCLA and other research universities in the United States, and to explore broad approaches to improving UCLA's general education curriculum.

Workgroup Phase I (1994 -1995)

The workgroup membership included faculty from the College and the professional schools, as well as four undergraduate students from the College. Its first task was to undertake an extensive examination of the history, nature, and quality of general education at UCLA and throughout the country. During this fact-finding phase, the workgroup discussed the state of general education at UCLA with the University's Executive Vice

[6] Chancellor Charles E. Young established the Concilium on Undergraduate Education in 1990 as a "single forum where faculty, students, and administrators representing the broad range of interests related to undergraduate education convene to discuss, coordinate, recommend and pursue courses of action to enhance the education we offer our undergraduate students" (Charge Letter of Charles E. Young to Concilium, September 15, 1992). Provost Copenhaver disbanded the Concilium in September 1995 following the establishment of the Undergraduate Council by the Academic Senate.

Chancellor, the deans and most department chairs in the College, as well as the deans and associate deans of the three professional schools with lower division students. Participation in the UCLA Forum on General Education, which was funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, also allowed members of the workgroup to engage in substantive discussions about the meaning and practice of general education with a number of notable educators.[7]

Following this extensive analysis of the history and practice of general education at UCLA and elsewhere, the workgroup concluded at the end of 1995 that the University's general education program was a large, overly complex set of departmental offerings that lacked coherence and a strong intellectual rationale. The group also noted that UCLA had failed to provide a systematic basis for ensuring that courses would complement each other and prepare their students for the intellectual challenges of a research university. In addition to identifying shortcomings in UCLA's overall general education program, the workgroup's phase I report recommended that general education requirements be simpler, fewer, more coherent, clearer in purpose to students and faculty, and designed specifically to achieve the aims of a common liberal education.

Workgroup Phase II (1995 - 1996)

Upon receipt of the first report, Provost Copenhaver enlarged the faculty-student workgroup and charged it to undertake a wide and thorough consultation with students, faculty, chairs, deans, and others with the aim of recommending a fundamental reform of the general education program at

[7] The UCLA-Hewlett Forum on General Education was a two-year series of events (1994-1996) that featured lectures on the intellectual aims and consequences of general education by such scholars as Joyce Appleby (UCLA), Alexander W. Astin (UCLA), Leon Lederman (Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory), Richard Light (Harvard University), Elizabeth Neufeld (UCLA), Frank Rhodes (Cornell University), John A. Warden III (Venturist, Inc.), Cornel West (Harvard University), James Q. Wilson (UCLA), and Robert Winter (UCLA).

UCLA. During this second phase of its work, the members of the workgroup came to the conclusion that the University's patchwork of departmental general education offerings should be replaced at least in part by a common requirement for all undergraduates at UCLA. There was also some degree of consensus in the workgroup that this common core should be comprised of a series of three course sequences in each of three broad curricular areas such as the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. These sequences would be organized around broad themes of timely importance and would be designed to foster responsible citizenship, factual knowledge of a broad spectrum of subject areas, critical thinking, and strong communication skills. There was also agreement among the members of the workgroup that instruction in these sequences should provide students with a wide range of small class experiences, e.g., intensive discussion sections and first-year seminars.

By the summer of 1996, there was a growing consensus on the part of the workgroup with regard to the general aims and structure of a common general education requirement at UCLA. Two distinct, albeit related, challenges, however, continued to stymie the progress of the group. The first of these was concerned with the actual requirements and courses that would comprise a new sequential, university-wide general education program, and the second was related to the question of how such an ambitious program would be implemented at UCLA.

Initial Implementation and Review Period: 1996 to 1998

Administrative Restructuring and a Proposal for Change

To address the challenges posed by the creation and implementation of a new general education curriculum for UCLA, Provost Copenhaver appointed Professor Judith Smith, a distinguished scientist, teacher, and

former chair of the UCLA Academic Senate, to serve as the College's first Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education in August of 1996. The new Vice Provost was given authority to oversee and administer all educational initiatives aimed at improving undergraduate teaching and learning at UCLA. This charge included the reform of the University's lower division curriculum, which brought Vice Provost Smith into the deliberations of the general education workgroup.

During their initial discussions, both Vice Provost Smith and the members of the workgroup agreed on the need for a formal proposal outlining a plan for general education reform that could be shared with the campus community. To facilitate and oversee the production of this proposal, as well as the implementation of its recommendations, a member of the workgroup, Edward Berenson (Professor of History and Chair of European Studies), was appointed Chair of General Education during the fall of 1996. Following this appointment, Chair Berenson and Vice Provost Smith, with the assistance of Special Assistant Lucy Blackmar, worked throughout the fall of 1996 to complete a first draft of a proposal that could be shared with the College's departments and the professional schools of the University.

This first draft was circulated among the members of the workgroup, the College's deans, and the chairs of many of the College's departments. Feedback from these meetings (covered in *Campus Review and Reaction*) resulted in a second draft of the proposal that was also reviewed informally by many of the same groups that considered the first one. Out of these discussions, a third draft, which included a proposed budget prepared by Vice Provost Smith, and a letter of endorsement and promise of new funds from UCLA Chancellor Charles E. Young, was unanimously endorsed by the faculty/student workgroup and printed in June 1997 under the modest title, *General Education at UCLA: A Proposal for Change.*

In the *Proposal for Change*, the workgroup recommended that UCLA undertake a fundamental change of its general education curriculum by making its requirements "simpler, fewer, more coherent, and clearer in purpose than is currently the case" (Berenson et al., 1997). The proposal also called for courses that would strengthen the basic skills of first-year students (e.g., writing and critical thinking), introduce them to the research and ideas of ladder faculty, and expose them to such "best practices" in teaching as inquiry-based learning, seminars, and interdisciplinary study.

The centerpiece of the *Proposal for Change* was the "first-year cluster," a year-long, team-taught, interdisciplinary course that would be open only to entering freshmen. As envisioned, each cluster course would be devoted to a broad topic, such as the "global environment" or "interracial dynamics," and would be organized to demonstrate to freshmen how different disciplines working together address a common problem. During the fall and winter quarters, students would attend lecture courses and small discussion sections/labs taught by faculty and advanced TAs from different disciplines.

During the spring quarter, these same students would enroll in one of a number of small satellite seminars (limited to 20 students each) dealing with topics related to the overall theme of their cluster. In these small learning forums, cluster students would be able to expand the knowledge and skills acquired during their first two quarters by intensively engaging subjects, issues, and questions that were the actual focus of research by UCLA faculty and advanced graduate students. Moreover, these seminars would also provide first-year students with yet another set of opportunities to engage in intensive discussion, debate, research, and writing.

In addition to exposing first-year students to a whole range of best practices, the workgroup also envisioned the clusters as a means of establishing a learning community that would bring together students, TAs, and faculty in a common intellectual enterprise throughout the whole of an academic year. Towards that end, the workgroup recommended situating

the proposed clusters in the residence hall area of campus and training counseling assistants, peer facilitators, and others responsible for student support to work directly with cluster participants. Other recommendations for cluster-centered residence hall events included presentations and debates by journalists, political leaders, artists and UCLA students; visits to museums and other cultural centers; and trips to concerts, plays, and films, as well as social events such as dinners.

Finally, to ensure that both regular general education course offerings and clusters would adhere to a clearly defined and consistent set of general education goals and practices, the workgroup recommended that some kind of campus-wide general education "authority" be established. This authority would be comprised of faculty who would be responsible for the monitoring of general education courses at regular intervals. To assist this body in its task, the workgroup recommended the establishment of a systematic means of assessing the new general education curriculum. As envisioned in the proposal, information gathered from such an assessment would provide useful feedback and guidance for the improvement of courses, as well as to inform the ongoing campus discussion and decision-making about general education reform.

Campus Review and Reaction to the *"Proposal for Change"*

As previously mentioned, faculty reviewed the different iterations of the workgroup's proposal in College departmental meetings and in the Faculty Executive Committees for the professional schools. This review process also included undergraduate student focus groups and conversations with alumni, Academic Senate committee chairs, and national experts on general education. During this period of campus-wide deliberation, it soon became evident that the idea of requiring all first-year University students to enroll in year-long cluster courses was the most contentious of the proposals

put forth by the workgroup. Of particular concern to faculty were a number of economic, pedagogical and logistical issues.

Many of the economic issues grew out of a concern that departments, particularly small humanities departments, would be adversely affected by a first-year curriculum that was largely focused on interdisciplinary cluster courses. In particular, these units were concerned that a cluster-based curriculum would force them to reduce or even eliminate their general education offerings, which would subsequently reduce the departmental teaching workloads that provided the funds to support graduate students with teaching assistant appointments. Additionally, there was considerable angst about using new funds for an unproven program that many considered unrealistic when departments lacked funds to sustain excellence and innovation in their own premajor and major courses of study.

Most of the pedagogical concerns—which were often secondary to the aforementioned fiscal issues—were rooted in skepticism about the idea of teaching interdisciplinary material to incoming freshmen lacking any substantive foundation in a particular discipline. Even among those faculty who endorsed the idea of exposing incoming students to interdisciplinary work, there was a concern that cluster teaching teams might not be able to provide freshmen with coherent, well-integrated courses that clearly demonstrated how different disciplines working together address common problems. There was also concern that interdisciplinary teaching and the reduction of departmentally-based general education courses would reduce the exposure of freshmen to discipline-based instruction and substantially reduce the breadth of general education in the College.

The proposed clusters also raised a host of logistical questions and concerns. Some faculty argued that the teaching teams of the new clusters

would never be able to attract the necessary complements of tenured faculty or experienced graduate students. Others were concerned that these courses would draw away many departments' best faculty members and negatively impact their programs of study. In the College's science divisions, faculty members argued that clusters would occupy too much "curricular space" during the freshman year when their students were required to take a considerable number of pre-major courses. And finally, there were questions raised about first-year student demand exceeding the enrollment capacity in the new cluster courses.

From a Proposed Requirement to an Elective Pilot Program

The seriousness of these concerns might well have doomed the workgroup's first-year cluster proposal to the landfill of well-intentioned university committee reports and recommendations. However, a number of developments ensured that this would not be the case. The first of these was a joint decision by Chair Berenson and Vice Provost Smith during the summer of 1997 to establish a College-based, five-year pilot cluster program that would be optional for students and aimed at gauging the feasibility of this kind of lower division interdisciplinary teaching.

Two considerations figured prominently in the decision to launch an experimental cluster program. The first of these was the fact that a pilot cluster course was already in the process of being developed and organized during the spring quarter (1997) by UCLA's newly organized Institute of the Environment. The Institute needed to develop general education courses to fulfill its mission as a center for interdisciplinary instruction, and the faculty responsible for developing the Institute's lower division courses believed that

a year-long cluster for first-year students perfectly suited their needs. With the support of the College, faculty of the Institute presented this pilot cluster to the Academic Senate at the end of spring 1997 and secured that body's approval to offer it in 1997-98.[8]

Provost Copenhaver and Vice Provost Smith were also successful at this time in obtaining funding for the purpose of launching a larger five-year cluster pilot program. On June 30, 1997, the last day of his 29-year tenure as Chancellor of UCLA, Charles E. Young formally pledged an annual allocation of new permanent money (up to three million dollars) that would be available at the beginning of the 1999-2000 fiscal year for the specific purpose of supporting the College's new general education program. Vice Provost Smith arranged to borrow against these pledged funds to pay for the inaugural cluster courses during the two intervening years.

One final development that proved critical to the launching of the cluster pilot program was the decision in 1997 by UCLA to choose general education as one of three topics (along with diversity and performance indicators) to test a new method of reaccreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). During the WASC review sessions on general education, there were intensive discussions about the proposed pilot cluster program among College administrators, members of the general education workgroup, faculty engaged in cluster development, and Academic Senate leaders. This interaction helped to heighten institutional awareness of and support for the College's plan to develop and offer a number of cluster courses aimed at exploring the strengths and weaknesses of first-year interdisciplinary courses for freshmen students.

[8] *Entitled* The Global Environment: A Multidisciplinary Perspective, *this year-long cluster course was designed by faculty from Civil Engineering, Geography, Atmospheric Sciences, History, and Biology, with an eye toward introducing freshmen over the course of a year to the ways in which a number of different disciplines address the problem of environmental degradation.*

The final report by the WASC team praised UCLA's efforts to improve general education. In particular, they singled out the proposed cluster program as an example of the ways in which the College was moving in directions recommended by the Boyer Commission in its report *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*:[9]

> It is impressive to see how much UCLA's new model of undergraduate education has anticipated the recommendations of the Boyer Commission Report, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education.* Both that report and the UCLA proposal focus on the importance of a strong freshman foundation of interdisciplinary courses taught by teacher-scholars. Both also emphasized the need for teaching undergraduates critical thinking and writing and the importance of engaging in active learning with strong academic communities (Rawlings, 1998).

In addition to providing important external validation for the College's efforts to launch a pilot cluster program, the WASC report urged the Academic Senate to implement the workgroup's recommendations for a general education governance body and some way of integrating assessment into the reform effort. With these recommendations in hand, Vice Provost Smith was able to convince the Undergraduate Council of the Academic Senate to approve the formation of a General Education Governance Committee on May 8, 1998. During this same period, Vice Provost Smith also established a workgroup on cluster assessment (see *Assessment of the Pilot Cluster Program*).

[9] Members of the WASC team who focused on general education at UCLA were Frederick Campbell, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education at the University of Washington; Louis Albert, Vice President of the American Association for Higher Education; and Sandra Kanter, Director of the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The First Years of the Pilot Cluster Program: 1998 to 2002

Four Inaugural Cluster Courses (1998 – 2000)

Following the launching of the *Global Environment* cluster in the fall of 1997, General Education Chair Ed Berenson solicited proposals from faculty for a series of clusters to be offered on a pilot basis during 1998-99. The faculty response was enthusiastic, and from the twelve proposals submitted, three cluster courses, in addition to the *Global Environment* cluster, were selected. By the spring of 1998, the Academic Senate had approved a total of four cluster courses, and the official pilot cluster program was inaugurated in 1998-99.

Each of these courses enrolled an average of 120 students during the two initial years of the pilot, spanned three quarters (with a five-unit course each quarter), were interdisciplinary in nature, and were taught by teams of three to four faculty members and an equal number of experienced TAs. The four clusters, their subject matter, and the number of faculty, TAs, and students who participated in them are summarized in the following table.[10]

The Four Inaugural Cluster Courses: Data from 1998-1999 and 1999-2000

Cluster	Description	Students	TAs	Faculty
The Global Environment	An introduction to the ways in which different disciplines address problems of environmental degradation.	235	7	7
Interracial Dynamics	A multidisciplinary introduction to the nature and meaning of of race in American society.	251	8	6
The History of Modern Thought	A "great books" course that introduces students to the major works that have shaped western intellectual history over the last 400 years.	309	12	8
Evolution of Cosmos and Life	An introduction to the ways in which the earth, the solar system, the universe, and biological organisms have evolved from primitive early states to the complexity they reveal today.	290	6	7
Totals		**1085**	**33**	**28**

[10] For additional information on these courses and other aspects of the pilot cluster program, see the following web site: http://www.college.ucla.edu/ge/

The average annual cost of one of these cluster courses was about $180,000. Nearly 80% of the costs of mounting one of these courses directly supported TA salaries and reimbursements to departments for faculty teaching in the clusters. The remainder covered administrative expenses, including staff salaries, supplies and expenses, assessment activities, and TA training.

The Development of Additional Cluster Courses (1999 - 2002)

Vice Provost Smith planned to develop at least 10 cluster courses during the five-year pilot program. This was to ensure that at least half of the College's entering freshman class would have the opportunity to take a cluster course, as well as to guarantee that when cluster courses were phased out there would be new clusters to take their place.

The development of these cluster sequences has proven to be a challenging task involving at least a two-year process. During this period, faculty interested in developing a cluster must identify colleagues from different departments and schools to explore a topic of mutual interest that might lend itself to a collaboratively taught course. Once these faculty "affinity groups" are assembled, cluster course proposals have to be drawn up and vetted by Academic Senate committees. Following Senate approval of the proposed cluster, a teaching team is selected for the course and the TAs responsible for the cluster's discussion sections and seminars are hired and trained during the spring quarter before the course is offered.

This cluster course development and implementation process requires a considerable measure of systematic and ongoing support for the faculty and graduate students engaged in it. This support was provided by a cluster administrative team that included two full-time career staff members, a full-time academic administrator serving as instructional coordinator for cluster

courses, and two part-time graduate research assistants. In addition to this administrative support, funds from a Hewlett Foundation grant were used to support the activities of the aforementioned faculty affinity groups.[11]

During the period of 1999-2001, 161 scholar-teachers participated in 14 of these Hewlett-sponsored affinity groups. As a result of this effort, four additional cluster courses were developed: *The United States 1963-1973: Politics, Society, and Culture*; *Perception and Illusion: Cognitive Psychology, Literature, and Art*; *The Frontiers of Human Aging: Biomedical, Social, and Policy Perspectives*; and *Towards a World Economy - The Perils and Promise of Globalization*. Approaching the beginning of year four of the five-year pilot program, the College continues to develop new cluster courses, with the expectation that some of the original ones will drop out for a period of time (or be permanently retired). In this way, the College can continue to offer 8 to 10 clusters to entering students.

While the College's administrative and financial support made implementation of a pilot cluster program possible, it was the largely positive experience of the program's participants that ultimately ensured the ongoing interest in and support for these unique courses over the last four years. In the following section, we turn to the College's efforts to assess some of the particulars of that experience and what that assessment tells us about the impact of clusters on the students, faculty and TAs who have participated in them.

[11] *Chair Berenson left UCLA at the end of the summer of 1999 to take a position at New York University. Instead of appointing a new General Education Chair, Vice Provost Smith opted to assemble an administrative team. Services provided by this team include: budget and personnel management; assistance to faculty in course development; orientation and training of cluster TAs; assessment; and class scheduling.*

Assessment of the Pilot Cluster Program

Assessing the general education clusters was always regarded as a central element of the College's efforts to reform its general education curriculum. Both the WASC review team and the authors of the *Proposal for Change* called for some kind of assessment process that would inform UCLA about *what was happening* in the clusters and also would address the aims and assumptions of the proposal. To achieve these ends, Vice Provost Smith established the Workgroup on General Education Assessment in 1998 and invited Special Assistant to the Executive Vice Chancellor, Maryann Gray, to serve as its chair.

This workgroup was asked to initiate a five-year assessment plan aimed at assessing the experiences of cluster freshmen, TAs, and faculty. After lengthy deliberations, the group elected to focus on seven areas. Of these, four are specifically addressed in this paper:

1. Who elected to *participate* in the clusters and why did they do so?
2. How demanding and rigorous was the *workload* of these courses?
3. Did these year-long courses facilitate a *sense of community* among participants?
4. To what extent did clusters employ *best practices*?

The methodology that the workgroup adopted to answer these questions included the use of surveys, individual interviews, focus groups, and an analysis of a student database.[12] To date, two of the five-year assessment reports have been published and discussed by Academic Senate groups charged with the oversight of general education.[13]

[12] *The student database captured demographic information about each cohort of freshmen (cluster and non-cluster), such as gender, major, and GPA.*

[13] *For a more detailed account, see the assessment report for year one (Gray et al., 2000) and year two (Levis et al., 2001). For year two (1999-00), responsibility for the cluster assessment was transferred to the College's new Office of Undergraduate Evaluation and Research, which was established in 1999 by Vice Provost Smith. The transfer coincided with Dr. Gray's taking a new position at the University of Southern California.*

Assessment Findings for the First Two Years

Participation. With regard to the question of who elected to participate in clusters, the initial assessment found that these courses attracted UCLA's best-prepared freshmen. Cluster students boasted exceptionally good high school grades and SAT scores,[14] and almost half were enrolled in College Honors. Of the 1,083 first-year students enrolled in the clusters, about half were undecided with regard to a major, while the remainder were divided between those who had declared a natural science major and those who had opted for a concentration in humanities or social sciences. [15]

Students identified several reasons for enrolling in a cluster. Aside from being able to satisfy a number of general education requirements, students were drawn by the fact that these courses offered honors credit. Interest in the course topic and the opportunity to participate in a year-long class were also frequently cited reasons for enrolling in the cluster program.

Clusters also attracted some of UCLA's most distinguished faculty and advanced graduate students. Members of the cluster teaching teams noted a variety of reasons for electing to participate in the cluster program. The two major incentives for TAs were the opportunity to teach a seminar in the spring quarter and the offer of year-long employment. TAs were also

[14] *Cluster students' mean high school GPA was 4.19 (weighted) and mean combined SAT I score was 1301.*

[15] *Nearly 47% of first-year students in the College enter as 'undeclared'; students must declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. At the end of the freshmen year, 14% of the cluster students surveyed agreed that the "taking a cluster has helped me select a major" (Table 15 in Levis et al., 2001).*

drawn to these courses because they offered them the opportunity to work with distinguished faculty and exceptional first-year students. For faculty, these courses held out the prospect of intellectual stimulation and the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues in other departments. The excitement of designing a new course and the prospect of working on interdisciplinary issues were also given by faculty as reasons for their decision to engage in cluster teaching.

Workload. On the question of workload, the overwhelming majority of students felt that the clusters required more work than other courses in their first year. Not only did they report that clusters required more time and effort than their non-cluster courses, but students also noted that these classes engaged them in more discussions, writing exercises, and group projects. Students also indicated that they interacted considerably more with TAs outside of class than in other courses during their freshman year.

TAs and faculty reported that the workload for cluster teaching was high compared to more traditional general education courses. In particular, they noted the need to devote more preparation time to clusters than to non-cluster courses because of the interdisciplinary nature of the material they were addressing and the collaborative teaching format. Furthermore, since these were new courses, everything from course syllabi to reading lists and assignments had to be created from scratch.

Sense of Community. Clusters were envisioned to be a kind of academic community that would bring together students, TAs, and faculty in a year-long common intellectual enterprise. The initial assessment indicated that all of the participants in these courses did indeed feel that they were part of a unique communal enterprise. Students in particular felt that cluster courses offered a sense of community that was lacking in the other courses they took in their freshman year. They reported that they not only

had more opportunities to work with one another in the clusters, but also enjoyed more contact with their cluster TAs than with the teaching assistants that they encountered in other courses. Furthermore, in their focus group discussions, TAs also confirmed that there were more community building activities and far more student involvement in clusters than in other general education courses they had taught.[16]

Best Practices. Clusters were intended to introduce students to a wide range of best practices in teaching such as inquiry-based learning, intensive writing, discussion, and seminars. The initial assessment indicated that this goal was achieved. A majority of students reported that clusters engaged them in more class discussions, writing, research, and seminars than other courses they took during their freshman year. They also felt that these practices strengthened their writing, analytic thinking, library skills, and understanding of current events. TAs concurred with these findings, reporting that their cluster students improved in a variety of areas such as writing, scientific knowledge, and critical thinking throughout the year.

Both TAs and faculty noted that they gained insight into curriculum development and classroom pedagogy as a result of their experience in the clusters. TAs, in particular, were impressed by the fact that their ability to teach writing and to explain terms and ideas improved as a result of their involvement in guiding cluster discussion sections. The spring seminars also proved to be a particularly rich intellectual experience for the faculty and TAs who designed and taught these courses.

[16] Several of the clusters have included social events such as dinners, academic-related events, and a film series in the residential halls where most of the freshmen reside. Cluster lectures, however, have been conducted on the main campus because the construction of a cluster lecture room in the new commons building in DeNeve Residential Hall has been greatly delayed. The lecture hall was to be available by the fall of 1999, but due to construction problems and litigation, the lecture hall is not expected to be available until 2002.

In summary, the initial assessment efforts have provided a summative[17] report of *what's happening* in the clusters. The data suggest that clusters are a positive experience for their students, TAs, and faculty. While workload is heavy for all participants, there appears to be a sense that the benefits from the clusters justify the additional effort. The assumptions of cluster proponents that these courses would encourage the development of an academic community among their participants also appear to have merit, as does the idea that they would introduce students to best practices. Finally, fears that experienced TAs and distinguished faculty would not participate proved unfounded.

The initial assessment has also been formative in that it has been used by the College to improve the quality of the cluster courses.[18] Based on feedback from the participants, for example, the cluster administrative team changed TA training from the early fall to the spring so as to give teaching assistants more time to prepare themselves for the unique challenges posed by cluster courses. Faculty have involved TAs more in course development and organization as a result of assessment reports which indicated that this would be a good way of building more cohesive cluster teaching teams. Assessment data have also helped to identify and eliminate logistical problems that proved particularly burdensome for the faculty and TAs mounting these courses.

[17] Summative evaluation is "designed to present conclusions about the merit or worth of an intervention" (http://www.nsf.gov/search97cgi/vtopic).

[18] Formative evaluation is "designed and used to improve an intervention, especially when it is still being developed" (http://www.nsf.gov/search97cgi/vtopic).

A Comparative Study

While the annual assessment of student experience is designed to document whether cluster students perceived differences between cluster courses and non-cluster courses, it does not consider the experiences and perceptions of non-cluster students. This kind of assessment requires both comparative and longitudinal studies. One promising approach in this area comes from a recent doctoral dissertation by Arianne Abell Walker (2001) who analyzed survey responses from a matched sample of cluster and non-cluster students.[19]

Walker found that cluster participation was positively associated with a change in students' individual beliefs about and expectations of their own abilities. Specifically, students' self-reported growth in critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as problem solving, reading, and writing abilities was significantly greater if they participated in a cluster. These findings help support some of the assumptions set forth by the *Proposal for Change* about students' increased academic abilities being fostered through a year-long cluster experience that emphasized best academic practices.

Second, Walker's work investigated how cluster participation affected student engagement in academically-centered activities outside of the classroom. She found that spending increased amounts of time discussing

[19] Walker (2001) used data from two surveys. The first was a freshman survey (Student Information Form - SIF) which has been administered across the nation to incoming students since 1966. This survey is part of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) that is sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. At UCLA, the SIF is administered to incoming students during the Freshman Summer Orientation Program. The second survey was the College Student Survey (CSS), which Walker administered to the students at the end of their freshman year. The CSS asks students about their perceptions of and experiences in college; it also provides a post-test for many items on the SIF, which makes it possible to study changes in student's values, attitudes, goals, self-concept, and career aspirations. Cluster and non-cluster students were matched on high school GPA, SAT scores, and gender. These particular matching variables were selected to ensure that cluster students were not better prepared (as defined by GPA and SAT scores) than the non-cluster students and so there would not be a significant gender imbalance between the groups. Students were unaware that their responses would be used to investigate the impact of clusters.

course content with peers was positively affected by cluster participation. Cluster participation, however, was not associated with increased interactions with faculty nor with the amount of time students spent studying.

Third, the study explored the impact on students' collective values and beliefs about the college experience for students participating in clusters as compared to non-cluster students. At this early stage (end of the freshman year), perceptions about faculty, the institution, and social issues generally did not show effects. However, there was an indication that cluster participation strengthened the belief that faculty were intellectually stimulating and challenging.

Finally, Walker looked at the issue of whether clusters expose students to best practices more often than do other first-year courses. Cluster students reported being exposed more to best practices; specifically, cluster students were more likely to report working on group projects, taking interdisciplinary courses, and enrolling in seminars.

Overall, Walker's results suggest that the cluster experience enhances involvement and a perception of learning among highly prepared students during their first year at UCLA. These findings indicate the beginning of a transformation of the student experience. However, there is a need to include additional variables in future studies to understand better *why* the clusters have the impact that they do.[20]

[20] *For a discussion of the mediating variables in the study, see Walker, 2001.*

Is Institutional Transformation Occurring at UCLA?

In this concluding section, we reflect on what this account tells us about our process of general education reform and address the question, *Is institutional transformation occurring at UCLA?* Astin and Associates (2001) indicate that a critical indicator of institutional transformation is the degree to which the overall system of an organization has been changed by a particular reform effort. A truly systemic transformation is one in which changes in an institution affect its governance, allocation of resources, and cultural attitudes and values. Based on the evidence presented in the foregoing narrative, we submit that UCLA is undergoing a systemic transformation.

During this period, substantial University resources were specifically allocated to the improvement of general education. Curricular change in the form of a series of highly experimental, year-long, interdisciplinary, and collaboratively taught clusters was initiated. Faculty members who had never taught freshman students elected to participate in these courses and were enthusiastic about their experiences. New structures of academic governance and oversight were established to administer and evaluate lower division programs and courses at UCLA. An Office of Undergraduate Evaluation and Research was instituted for the purpose of assessing both clusters and other efforts to improve the undergraduate curriculum. And finally, universities inside and outside of California have shown considerable interest in UCLA's effort to reform general education.[21]

[21] *The Reinvention Center at SUNY Stony Brook—a national center inspired by the Boyer Commission Report,* Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities *(1998)—featured UCLA's cluster program in the inaugural conference hosted by the Center and it is now featured on the Center's* Spotlight *web page (http://www.sunybb.edu/reinventioncenter/spotlight.html). The Center sponsors studies, programs, web sites, and research focused on the improvement of undergraduate education.*

Our account also indicates that a number of factors appear to have played a critical role in effecting UCLA's readiness for institutional transformation. Among these were a fortuitous confluence of events that included:

- a national, state, and local climate conducive to the reform of general education;
- a shared perception among academic administrators and faculty that general education was in need of substantial reform;
- an upturn in the state economy that made new resources available for undergraduate education reform initiatives; and
- a willingness on the part of the academic leadership at UCLA to address the issue of general education reform, and most importantly, to commit funds and other resources to achieve that end.

The implementation section of this narrative also attests to the validity of a number of observations by Astin and his associates (2001) with regard to institutional transformation. This process is time-consuming, painful, contentious, and requires not only considerable patience, but also a marked willingness by all the involved parties to compromise. Indeed, even though the cluster initiative at UCLA has proven to be remarkably successful, critics still voice concerns about this approach to undergraduate education. Nevertheless, as a result of the process that has been outlined in this paper, those voices are fewer in number and have less of an emotional edge.

By the end of 2002, the College will have substantially changed its general education curriculum. In addition to the clusters, the College has launched an innovative Writing II program in 1999-2000,[22] and is currently seeking approval for a new general education curriculum that will go into effect in 2002-2003.[23] While we believe that all of these initiatives have improved the College's general education program and transformed many aspects of UCLA's institutional life, we have also learned over the last decade that curricular reform is an ongoing, continually evolving process. In the end, both the effort to create new communities of learning for lower division students and the institutional transformation that accompanies that endeavor remain works-in-progress.

[22] *The Proposal for Change recommended that a new writing program be vested in each cluster-course sequence. Because the cluster program was developed as an option (not a requirement) for first-year students, Vice Provost Smith appointed a faculty group to design a requirement for an additional writing course that all students would take. Writing II, the College's version of a "writing-across-the-curriculum" program, was approved in the spring of 1999 and implemented for freshmen in 1999-2000.*

[23] *Vice Provost Smith worked with the General Education Governance Committee to propose a new system of general education electives. In the spring of 2001, the Faculty Executive Committee of the College and the Undergraduate Council approved a new plan that closely reflects several of the recommendations advanced by the Proposal for Change. The proposed requirement for general education electives is simpler and more coherent; it also features some of the best practices employed by cluster faculty and TAs. The faculty is slated to take a final vote on these changes in the fall of 2001; if approved, the new general education curriculum (which includes clusters as one of its cornerstones) will be initiated in the fall of 2002.*

Selected References

Astin, A. W., and Associates (2001). *The Theory and Practice of Institutional Transformation in Higher Education.* University of California, Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute.

Berenson, E., Blackmar, L., Morris, M., and Smith, J. L. (1997). *General education at UCLA: A proposal for change.* College of Letters and Science, University of California, Los Angeles. URL: http://www.college.ucla.edu/ge/1998-1999/proposal.htm

Gray, M., Walker, A. A., Kendrick, M. G., and Levis, M. (2000). *Assessment of the general education cluster course experience: Year one of a five year study.* College of Letters and Science, University of California, Los Angeles. URL: http://www.college.ucla.edu/ge/9798assess.pdf

Levis, M., Walker, A. A., and McKinney, K. (2001). *Assessment of the general education cluster course experience: Year two of a five year study.* College of Letters and Science, University of California, Los Angeles. URL: http://www.college.ucla.edu/ge/0001assess.pdf

Rawlings, H. R. (1998). *Report of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges review team for UCLA.* Association of Senior Colleges and Universities.

Walker, A. A. (2001). *The impact of general education clusters on first-year university students.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Appendix B

Proposal for Comprehensive Eight-year Review of UCLA's General Education Curriculum, November 7, 2018

MEMORANDUM

Office of the Dean and Vice Provost
Undergraduate Education
College of Letters and Science
2300 Murphy Hall
143801

Date: November 7, 2018

To: Robert L. Gould, Chair, Undergraduate Council

From: Patricia A. Turner, Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education

Re: **Proposal for Comprehensive Eight-year Review of UCLA's General Education Curriculum**

In 2002, the College of Letters and Science inaugurated a comprehensive reform of its General Education (GE) curriculum, creating a framework based on three foundation areas of knowledge: Arts and Humanities, Society and Culture, and Scientific Inquiry. The General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) was established in 1998-99 to oversee the implementation of this new GE curriculum, including the re-certification of existing courses and the development of new ones. Faculty from departments and interdisciplinary programs across campus have developed courses that receive GE credit, introducing students to academic disciplines and providing them with foundational skills for university success. The GE curriculum provides our undergraduate students with rigorous classes that expose them to university thinking and make up approximately a quarter of their undergraduate coursework.

The UCLA Cluster Program, established in 1998, has provided a slate of interdisciplinary course sequences that were certified as part of the new GE framework. These year-long courses are designed to offer a multi-disciplinary look at a "big idea," while creating a learning community and fulfilling a number of College/School requirements, including GE, Writing II, and in some cases Diversity. Cluster courses now enroll approximately one-third of our incoming College freshmen and satisfy nearly half of their GE requirements. As such, the Cluster Program has become an integral part of the GE curriculum, and its interdisciplinary approach has been cited as a model for the instruction of general education.

Over the years, the GEGC has worked with academic units across campus to extend the GE framework and develop a common course list for all undergraduate degree programs (*i.e.,* Arts and Architecture; Engineering and Applied Science; Music; Nursing; Public Affairs; and Theater, Film, and Television), while allowing variations in the required number of courses to satisfy each foundation area. All units responsible for undergraduate education have worked to contribute new courses.

To maintain and strengthen the quality of UCLA's GE program, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Undergraduate Council (UgC) worked closely with the GEGC in 2002 to establish a process for the systematic review of course offerings. The plan was to have each of the foundation areas and the Cluster Program reviewed separately in two-year intervals over an eight-year cycle. As with departments, these GE curricular reviews include a self-review, a site visit by campus and extramural scholars, and a response to the Senate recommendations.

This plan has yielded two full reviews of each of the three foundation areas and the Cluster Program since 2003. Each of these reviews has been the result of the year-long deliberations of an *ad hoc* faculty committee convened to look at a particular area and has involved extensive compilation of data and analyses of assessment findings. An examination of the recommendations from these reviews suggests a great deal of overlap across the GE areas:

- The need to ensure that faculty are aware when they are teaching a GE course and help them understand how their course fits into the larger GE curriculum
- The need to help students understand the purposes and importance of the GE portion of their curriculum and to know when they are enrolled in a GE
- The need to manage the drift in quality and appropriateness for GE certification that can occur over multiple instructors
- The lack of archival systems for collecting and storing the syllabi of GE courses that would allow for ongoing monitoring of quality and longitudinal assessments

The two Cluster self-reviews (June 2003 and August 2011) have provided detailed documentation of this pedagogical model and the "best practices" it supports, including three in-depth case studies that capture the complex inner workings of individual Clusters. The reports also provide extensive assessment findings showing the Cluster impact on faculty, undergraduates, and graduate student instructors. The external reviewers of both these reviews were laudatory, calling UCLA's Cluster Program "a true gem in the crown of undergraduate education at UCLA."

What we do not see from these separate reviews is any broader understanding of how the GE curriculum fits together and its impact on the education of our undergraduates. The data collection seems largely repetitive and in some cases not useful to the faculty committees for making recommendations. Additionally, in compliance with WSCUC reaffirmation of accreditation commitments, there is an expectation that well-organized and assessable learning outcomes have been developed for each institution's GE curriculum. While we cannot predict the recommendations of the site visit team or the WSCUC Commission, we anticipate that this missing element of our GE curriculum may be a Line of Inquiry that we receive in Winter 2019.

In order to understand and examine where GE at UCLA needs to go in the future, I believe the time is right to combine the four reviews into a single comprehensive review of GE as a whole on an eight-year cycle. This would have the following advantages:

- Illuminate the big picture of how we ensure quality in this critical portion of the undergraduate curriculum, and through comparisons, identify any weaknesses in the individual components
- Develop a better understanding of how Clusters fit vis-a-vis the stand-alone GE courses as we look at enrollment patterns, learning outcomes, interdisciplinary connections, best practices, and overall satisfaction, along with other measures of success
- Create a framework that would ensure the self-review is collecting the useful data and asking the right questions

I propose to use the next two academic years (2018-19 & 2019-20) to complete the following projects that will lay the groundwork for a comprehensive GE curricular review:

- Complete the creation of student learning outcomes in Foundation Areas of Arts & Humanities and Society & Culture to go along with recently created outcomes for Scientific Inquiry

- Complete the external review and Senate recommendations for Arts & Humanities (2018-19) and GEGC's response to the recommendations and closure of the review (2019-20)
- Launch the assessment of the Scientific Inquiry Foundation Area, as initiated by the UgC, including the development of a comprehensive assessment plan (2018-19) and implementation of the assessment and preliminary findings (2019-20)
- Receive the WSCUC visit team report (December 2019) and Commission action letter (February 2020)

We would present a framework to the UgC for the self-review before the end of the 2019-20 academic year for feedback and suggestions on areas that should be addressed. Based on this input, we will establish the data categories and broad questions to form the basis of a comprehensive self-review. I will then work with UgC to appoint an *ad hoc* faculty committee from across the College and undergraduate programs in the professional schools to deliberate and produce the self-review during the 2020-21 academic year. The Senate would then conduct a site visit and review during the 2021-22 academic year.

I believe this approach will help sustain the highest quality GE curriculum and achieve the stated goals of the Academic Senate Program Review process. It will allow us to recognize the strengths and achievements of our GE curriculum, establish new goals for the program, and identify areas in need of attention. Professor Tornell, Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee, and Professor Hackett, Chair of the GE Governance Committee, both support this proposed consolidation of the GE review process.

I look forward to discussing this proposal with you.

Cc Professor Michael Hackett (Theater, Film and Television), Chair of GE Governance Committee
Professor Aaron Tornell (Economics), Chair of the College Faculty Executive Committee

Appendix C

Charge Letter for the Ad hoc Committee

UCLA

MEMORANDUM

General Education
A265 Murphy Hall
157101

REVISED January 2021 [new Chair and Member]
September 21, 2020

Troy Carter, *Chair* (Department of Physics & Astronomy)
Scott Chandler (Department of Integrative Biology & Physiology)
Robert Fink (Department of Musicology)
Michael Hackett (Department of Theater)
Chris Kelty (Institute for Society and Genetics, Department of Anthropology, Department of Information Studies)
Muriel McClendon (Department of History)
Rashmita Mistry (Department of Education)
Alex Purves (Department of Classics)
Ertugrul Taciroglu (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Abel Valenzuela (Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Department of Urban Planning)

Dear Colleagues:

We write to welcome you as members of the *ad hoc* committee for the consolidated review of General Education at UCLA, and to thank you for your willingness to participate in this critically important academic workgroup. The Undergraduate Council has requested that the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC) and the Cluster Program Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) prepare a self-review report in advance of the 2020–21 program review site visit of General Education; as GEGC Chair and Cluster Program FAC Chair, we have delegated the development of the self-review report to this *ad hoc* committee.

The committee's charge is to conduct a self-review during the 2020-21 academic year of all General Education at UCLA, including its three foundation areas: Arts and Humanities; Society and Culture; and Scientific Inquiry, as well as the Cluster Program. During this review, the *ad hoc* committee is expected to explore the totality of General Education at UCLA. Beyond more basic questions of operation and maintenance typically taken up in previous individual foundation area reviews, this committee should ask the principal question of whether the current General Education program design is capable of preparing our students to meet the unique challenges and demands of the 21st century.

Ad hoc committee member Troy Carter has kindly agreed to serve as the chair. Jared McBride, an Academic Administrator with Undergraduate Education Initiatives, will provide resource support for the committee. To further assist the *ad hoc* committee in its review of General Education, the administrative support team of the General Education Governance Committee will provide you with an administrative

report that includes a synopsis of the General Education program and its development over the past two decades; a summary of Senate recommendations related to the GE program over the past 8 years; a data report and analysis of GE in terms or enrollment, distribution of GE credits in the catalog, and shared responsibility of teaching GE courses; and finally, a "best practices" report on the state of General Education around the country and how UCLA fits into this picture. This information will be provided to you before the first meeting of the committee in October 2020.

The *ad hoc* committee's work will take place during the 2020-21 academic year and involve six meetings across the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. During the spring quarter, the committee will prepare a self-review report that addresses its findings about the conceptual framework, pedagogical aims, and student experience in General Education. The self-review report should follow the sections required by the Academic Senate, as outlined in the Guidelines for the Self-Review.

The self-review report should be submitted to the GEGC for their review and approval, and then submitted to the Undergraduate Council. The due date for GEGC to submit the approved self-review report to the Undergraduate Council will be communicated by the Council in Fall 2020. Please allow sufficient time for the GEGC to review and approve the report, and send it to the Undergraduate Council by the due date. This report will be followed by an Academic Senate program review of General Education by the Undergraduate Council during the 2021-22 Academic Year.

Administrative support staff for the General Education Governance Committee will be contacting you regarding your availability for meetings in the upcoming academic year. If you have any questions, please contact the resource support person, Jared McBride (mcbridejg@ucla.edu).

Thank you in advance for your commitment to support the important work of this committee. The efforts of this group will further strengthen UCLA's commitment to General Education.

Sincerely,

Michael Hackett
Chair, General Education Governance Committee

Scott Chandler
Chair, Cluster Program Faculty Advisory Committee

cc: Megan McEvoy, Chair Undergraduate Council
Adriana Galván, Dean of Undergraduate Education
Aileen Liu, Committee Analyst, Undergraduate Council
Brooke Wilkinson, Director of Academic Initiatives, Academic Initiatives
Jared McBride, Academic Administrator, Academic Initiatives
Leigh Harris, Director of Curricular Initiatives, Academic Initiatives

Appendix D

WASC Senior College and University Commission Core Competency FAQs

WSC Senior College and University Commission

Core Competency FAQs

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, Criteria for Review 2.2a states:

> Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning. These programs ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, **written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.**

Component 4 (Educational Quality) of the Institutional Review Process asks for institutions "to describe how the curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies, explain their learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and demonstrate, through evidence of student performance, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved."

The purpose of these FAQs is to provide additional information to institutions regarding the five core competencies.

1. How did WSCUC come up with these five competencies? Why were writing (W), oral communication (OC), quantitative reasoning (QR), information literacy (IL), and critical thinking (CT) singled out for such focused treatment in the institutional report?

These competencies have been part of Standard 2 for undergraduate degrees (criterion for review 2.2a) since 2001. The language of CFR 2.2 states that "all degrees . . . awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of . . . levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits." Now, at a time when there is widespread concern about the quality of graduates' learning, and when assessment practices have emerged that are able to address these outcomes in nuanced ways, the Commission is asking for documentation of actual achievement.
While CFR 2.2a mentions additional outcomes beyond the five core competencies – e.g., creativity, appreciation for diversity, and civic engagement – the five that are the focus of component 4 were deemed generic, fundamental to students' future success, and assessable. The focus on these five does not in any way limit institutions that wish to address additional competencies.

2. What are the definitions of these five core competencies? Who gets to define them?

Institutions are free to define each core competency in a way that makes sense for the institution, its mission, its values, and the needs of its student body. The assumption, however, is that these are generic competencies – that is, applicable across multiple programs – that will be approached in an interdisciplinary, integrative way. Institutions have a lot of latitude in deciding how they will do that.

3. Are these core competencies supposed to be institutional learning outcomes (ILOs)?

That is one way to approach them. For many institutions, there is a lot of overlap between their ILOs and the five core competencies. For very large, complex institutions, it may be more appropriate – and manageable – to approach them at the college, division, or department level.

4. Can institutions assess the core competencies in the major?

Because most students take major courses right to the end of their studies, there are advantages in embedding core competencies into the assessment of the major or professional field. Many majors use capstones, senior projects, e-portfolios, or other methods of collecting student work for assessment, and these can provide evidence of students' mastery of the competencies. Assessing core competencies at the degree level allows expectations and types of evidence to be adapted to the degree. For example, depending on the field, oral communication skills might be demonstrated through debating, interviewing, negotiating, counseling, or presenting ideas.

In some cases, assessing students' level of achievement in a particular competency through the major assessment might not seem appropriate (e.g., quantitative reasoning in an English or dance major) or feasible, where faculty are reluctant to integrate them into their assessment of the major. In that case, the institution can look at other options such as upper-division GE; signature assignments across a range of upper-division courses that students may be taking as electives; or a core competency portfolio that students assemble with artifacts that illustrate each of the core competencies. The benefit of this last approach is that it can also include items from the co-curriculum or internships.

So the answer to the question about "having" to assess core competencies in the major is no. The major is probably the easiest place to do it, but not the only place, and it is definitely not required.

5. Do institutions need to assess and support transfer students' development of the CCs?

Yes. The diploma that students receive, whether they are native students or transfers, will look the same. It is the institution's responsibility – as well as in the student's interest – to ensure that the degree represents high-quality learning for every graduate.

6. Academic programs are all so different. Does this mean there are different definitions of the core competencies and different assessment processes for each program?

Program-level learning and assessment results are very important; they are a key part of program review, which also has a place in the 2013 institutional review process, or IRP (see Component #6: Quality Assurance and Improvement). But with the core competencies, the goal is a higher level of aggregation: the institution level, or at very large and complex universities, the school or college or division level. Institutions should develop processes that allow for differences while at the same time focusing on commonalities across disciplines.

7. Is it necessary to document how much students learned and developed from entry to exit? Should there be pre- and post-testing?

No. While it can be useful to know the trajectory of students' learning over time, so faculty can see where they improved or plateaued or even became less proficient, the focus is on their level of

proficiency at graduation. Think of assessment that measures growth as a tool for enhancing the final result. Pre- and post-testing is one approach to assessment, and it may be useful. But it can also be costly, it is methodologically challenging, and the results can be difficult to interpret. In some contexts, it can be inauthentic and self-serving.

8. What about institutions that award AA or AS degrees? Should core competencies be assessed for students as they leave with an associate's degree? What if they transfer to a baccalaureate program?

Yes, the Commission cares about students' mastery of competencies in all degree programs, from associate to graduate levels. Institutions that award AA or AS degrees should also set standards, report results, and document plans for improvement when necessary at those levels.

9. Does this core competency requirement mean that institutions have to show 100% of students meeting the standard? Or that a student who doesn't meet the standard gets a failing grade – for example on their capstone – or doesn't graduate?

No. What is important—to the institution as well as the Commission—is the distribution: what proportion of your students is meeting the standard or even exceeding it? What proportion is below the standard, and how far below? And what do you plan to do to raise overall performance and shift the distribution upward, if you are dissatisfied with the results?

10. How can such extensive and complex findings be documented for the institutional review process, particularly at large institutions with hundreds of programs, multiple divisions, and several degree levels?

As an element of their institutional reports, institutions are asked to describe and provide evidence of how they assess students' achievement of core competencies. Institutions are free to decide how best to organize the setting of proficiency standards, assessment, documentation, and reporting of results, but it must be clear that this work is documented as it occurs throughout the institution. For large, complex institutions a narrative summary might be provided to include where responsibility for this work lies; general information on the definition of these proficiencies and how they were developed; general information on cycles and timelines for reviews across the institution; systems or processes for reviewing data/information obtained through reviews; and locus of authority for taking action based on results. A matrix providing specifics could be created to demonstrate the pervasiveness and effectiveness of this work throughout the institution. Depending on the size and structure of the institution, this might be done through a selection of examples that represent all of the institution's programs, divisions, and degree levels.

Adopted by the Commission, June 2014

Appendix E

Campuswide GE Requirements Overview

	ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE / MUSIC	LETTERS AND SCIENCE / PUBLIC AFFAIRS	ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE	NURSING	THEATER, FILM, AND TELEVISION
	Courses/Units	Courses/Units	Courses/Units	Courses/Units	Courses/Units
FOUNDATIONS OF THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES					
• Literary and Cultural Analysis	1 course	1 course		1 course	
• Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis	1 course	1 course	2 courses each from a different subgroup	1 course	5 courses with not more than two in any one subgroup
• Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice	1 course	1 course		1 course	
Total Units for Arts and Humanities	**15 Units Minimum**	**15 Units Minimum**	**10 Units Minimum**	**15 Units Minimum**	**25 Units Minimum**
FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY AND CULTURE					
• Historical Analysis	1 course	1 course	1 course	1 course	1 course
• Social Analysis	1 course	1 course	1 course	1 course	1 course
	3rd course from either subgroup	3rd course from either subgroup		3rd course from either subgroup	3rd course from either subgroup
Total Units for Society and Culture	**15 Units Minimum**	**15 Units Minimum**	**10 Units Minimum**	**15 Units Minimum**	**15 Units Minimum**

FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY					
• Life Sciences	2 courses total: if both are from same subgroup, must be in different departments	2 courses (1 with laboratory)	1 course from Life Sciences	2 courses	1 course
• Physical Sciences		2 courses (1 with laboratory)		2 courses	1 course
Total Units for Scientific Inquiry	8 Units Minimum	18 Units Minimum	4 Units Minimum	18 Units Minimum	8 Units Minimum
TOTAL GE UNITS / COURSES	8 COURSES (38 UNITS MINIMUM)	10 COURSES (48 UNITS MINIMUM)	5 COURSES (24 UNITS MINIMUM)	10 COURSES (48 UNITS MINIMUM)	10 COURSES (48 UNITS MINIMUM)

Appendix F

Learning Outcomes for all three Foundation Areas

Student Learning Goals with Nested Learning Outcomes for All General Education (GE) Foundations in Arts and Humanities (AH) Courses

Course Goals (1-4) and samples of possible Student Learning Outcomes (a, b, c, etc.) for all "GE AH" courses:

1. **Students will gain knowledge in the Arts and Humanities.**
    a. Students will recognize the varying historical, social, political, and economic conditions that shape human action.
    b. Students will identify how individuals relate to or diverge from particular social norms through the creation of artistic and expressive forms.
    c. Students will examine "texts" in any language or structure, and/or art forms in one or more media.
    d. Students will account for how different worldviews and challenges are expressed in the arts and humanities as a product of interaction among diverse groups.

2. **Students will engage in complex analysis and reasoning.**
    a. Students will analyze works in the context of an aesthetic movement, critical theory, philosophy, rhetoric, or languages/linguistics.
    b. Students will articulate perspectives and priorities found in expressive forms.
    c. Students will describe how insight can inform constructive change and ethical action.
    d. Students will develop and evaluate an argument informed by evidence.

3. **Students will demonstrate media and information literacy.**
    a. Students will locate appropriate resources to support an argument.
    b. Students will evaluate resources for their reliability and significance.
    c. Students will use resources effectively and ethically.

4. **Students will communicate effectively.**
    a. Students will make arguments and express perspectives through a wide range of media or performance (i.e. written, digital, storytelling, visual arts).
    b. Students will learn how to collaborate with others to express perspectives in diverse media.
    c. Students will tailor communication to their perspective audiences.

Student Learning Goals with Nested Learning Outcomes for All General Education (GE) Foundations in Scientific Inquiry Courses

Course Goals (1-7) and Student Learning Outcomes (a, b, c, etc.) for all "GE FSI" courses:

1. Students will acquire an informed appreciation of scientists, scientific research, and technology.
    a. Students will value their academic experiences in a science course that is outside their primary field of study.
    b. Students will recognize the benefits of science to society or their everyday life.
    c. Students will express interest in contributing to the sciences (e.g., engaging in research or scientific discourse with others).
    d. Non-science students will see scientists as role models, helping them to identify as scientists themselves.
2. Students will experience the interdisciplinary nature of science.
    a. Students will investigate topics from a variety of scientific fields.
    b. Students will explore the perspectives of multiple diverse scientists.
    c. Students will make logical connections between key concepts from multiple scientific disciplines.
3. Students will develop information literacy.
    a. Students will be mindful of information they encounter, recognizing contexts or situations when it is necessary to seek out other sources or data.
    b. Students will identify, locate, and critically evaluate information sources and datasets to ensure they are reliable, validated, accurate, and scholarly (i.e. associated with citations in peer-reviewed, public research studies).
    c. Students will explain the peer-review process in science and its role in critical evaluation and validation of published, scientific findings.
4. Students will actively engage in the scientific process of inquiry, analysis, problem-solving, and quantitative reasoning.
    a. Students will explain how scientists answer scientific questions, test a hypothesis, or solve a problem.
    b. Students will make reasonable predictions of experimental outcomes based on observation, measurements, and/or prior knowledge surmised from the scientific literature or other reliable, validated, accurate information sources.
    c. Students will break down, reason through, and solve complex quantitative problem sets.
    d. Students will be confident working with numerical data.
    e. Students will estimate and complete calculations to solve a quantitative problem.
    f. Students will recognize different objects and apply units of measurement at relevant scales (quantity, size, time) and orders of magnitude.
5. Students will make evidence-based decisions in a wide array of science and non-science contexts.
    a. Students will distinguish between opinion and fact (i.e. recognize data-supported conclusions).
    b. Students will use reliable, validated, accurate, and scholarly information sources and datasets before accepting or formulating a conclusion.
    c. Students will draw conclusions or make judgements about experimental results informed by critical thinking, that is, a comprehensive exploration of ideas and systematic engagement with the scientific process.
6. Students will develop scientific literacy by addressing current, critical issues and topics in science that are personally meaningful in daily life and/or connected to the needs of society (e.g., climate change, vaccination, GMOs, evolution).
    a. Students will clearly state the significance or relevance of a research question or problem (i.e. state why scientists are motivated to study the issue or topic).
    b. Students will discuss societal impacts by citing examples of the ways in which scientists and scientific research contribute to society.
    c. Students will describe the interactions between humans and their physical world and the positive and negative effects of this interaction.
    d. Students will explain why issues perceived as "controversial" in the public domain are not considered "controversial" in among scientists.
7. Students will recognize fundamental scientific principles and the connections between different domains of science.
    a. Students will describe the nature, organization, and evolution of living systems.
    b. Students will explain the origin and physical processes of the planet earth and the surrounding universe.
    c. Students will differentiate between a scientific theory, hypothesis, fact, or law.

Student Learning Goals with Nested Learning Outcomes for
all General Education (GE) Foundations in Society and Culture (SC) Courses

Course Goals (1-4) and samples of possible Student Learning Outcomes (a, b, c, etc.) for all "GE SC" courses:

1. **Students will learn about varying historical, social, cultural, political, and economic processes that shape and are shaped by human interaction.**
    a. Students will be able to identify how culture develops and changes over time and explore the multi-dimensionality of culture.
    b. Students will understand how diverse societies are structured and organized and recognize internal and external differences both within and across societies.
    c. Students will analyze historical development and change with an emphasis on understanding the causes and consequences of these changes.
    d. Students will consider how different disciplines examine society and culture, including their principal theoretical and methodological approaches.

2. **Students will learn how to analyze sources and data.**
    a. Students will learn to identify and use different types of primary and secondary sources.
    b. Students will engage actively in the social-scientific processes of inquiry, analysis, and problem-solving, as well as quantitative and qualitative research and data collection.
    c. Students will evaluate sources and data for their positionality, significance, reliability, and validity.

3. **Students will engage in critical interpretation and reasoning.**
    a. Students will evaluate and develop arguments informed by evidence.
    b. Students will gain critical reading skills, including media literacy.
    c. Students will reflect on how history and the social sciences have been used, and can be used, to inform positive or negative social change.

4. **Students will communicate effectively.**
    a. Students will develop the ability to summarize, synthesize, and analyze scholarly literature.
    b. Students will practice writing clearly in appropriate/relevant disciplinary styles and marshal evidence in support of an argument.
    c. Students will learn how to communicate with non-expert audiences.

Appendix G

Top 10 Courses in Each Foundation Area

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Scientific Inquiry 2010-2019

COURSE	SUB[1]	10-12	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	TOTAL
CHEM 14A	P	1643	2041	2115	2159	2009	1954	2523	2025	2185	18654
STATS 10	L,P	1281	2083	1550	1657	1874	1998	2144	2066	2051	16704
CHEM 14B	P	1420	1764	1768	1777	1741	1690	1994	1609	1899	15662
LIFESCI 2[2]	L	1792	1985	2021	1972	2140	1988	2149	596		14643
LIFESCI 1[2]	L	1237	1724	1600	1904	2110	2045	2183	653		13456
LING 1[3]	L	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494
CHEM 20A	P	1322	1289	1243	1248	1178	1144	1149	900	1070	10543
PHYSCI 5	L	879	1247	1230	1207	1235	1206	1230	1153	1111	10498
PHYSICS 1A	P	983	1294	1117	1081	1125	1112	1156	1210	1286	10364
CHEM 14BL	P	882	969	927	1257	1123	1140	1271	1275	1412	10256

[1] Subcategory: L – Life Sciences, P – Physical Sciences
[2] No longer offered as of 2018
[3] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis) credit

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Scientific Inquiry 2010-2019, excluding service courses for B.S. majors

COURSE	SUB[1]	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	TOTAL
LING 1[2]	L	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494
PHYSCI 5	L	879	1247	1230	1207	1235	1206	1230	1153	1111	10498
GEOG 5	L,P	824	1021	910	830	888	693	899	764	727	7556
ASTR 3	P	997	789	731	810	795	775	793	796	845	7331
LIFESCI 15	L	431	716	721	715	922	907	922	701	681	6716
EPS SCI 15	L,P	701	354	849	468	771	823	470	910	703	6049
ANTHRO 7/1[3]	L	634	690	642	776	581	472	461	522	544	5322
PSYCH 15	L	189	615	535	568	660	648	509	736	523	4983
A&O SCI 1	P	379	519	473	403	481	472	717	718	559	4721
A&O SCI 2	P	452	397	518	495	518	512	663	405	224	4184

[1] Subcategory: L – Life Sciences, P – Physical Sciences
[2] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis) credit
[3] Course was renumbered in 2017

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Arts & Humanities 2010-2019

COURSE	SUB[1]	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	TOTAL
LING 1[2]	PL	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494
FILM TV 106A/6[3]	V	527	713	691	817	791	814	752	674	590	6369
CHICANO 10A	LC,PL, V	340	352	401	402	399	804	808	881	725	5112
PHILOS 7	PL	744	611	253	502	550	451	584	508	583	4786
SCAND 50	LC	296	600	652	627	680	330	215	450	312	4162
CLASSIC 30[4]	LC	546	696	457	328	546	302	420	473	360	4128
ART&ARC 10	V	523	529	264	735	696	261	452	411	206	4077
AN N EA 10W[5]	LC	312	346	464	386	596	452	558	481	444	4039
LING 20	PL	356	351	377	463	525	502	514	488	463	4039
PHILOS 8[6]	PL	356	192	307	412	345	411	404	507	452	3386

[1] Subcategory: LC – Literary & Cultural Analysis, PL – Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis, V – Visual & Performance Arts Analysis and Practice
[2] Also grants Scientific Inquiry (Life Sciences) credit
[3] Course was renumbered in 2016
[4] Also grants Society & Culture (Social Analysis) credit
[5] Also grants Society & Culture (Historical Analysis) credit
[6] Also grants Scientific Inquiry (Physical Sciences) credit

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Society & Culture 2010-2019

COURSE	SUB[1]	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	TOTAL
SOCIOL 1	S	879	1103	1156	1238	1205	1188	1272	1175	1209	10425
POL SCI 20	S	513	668	652	716	530	565	537	829	741	5751
COMM 10	S	759	651	556	621	657	667	605	602	506	5624
POL SCI 10	S	651	656	665	631	596	535	577	537	759	5607
ANTHRO 8/2[2]	H,S	463	658	654	602	696	514	572	586	589	5334
ANTHRO 9/3[2]	S	486	662	595	568	602	645	623	562	552	5295
ANTHRO 33/4[2]	S	520	675	650	572	596	512	577	478	457	5037
CLASSIC 30[3]	S	546	696	457	328	546	302	420	473	360	4128
AN N EA 10W[3]	H	312	346	464	386	596	452	558	481	444	4039
CHICANO 10B	H,S	358	394	187	330	170	795	693	502	592	4021

[1] Subcategory: H – Historical Analysis, S – Social Analysis

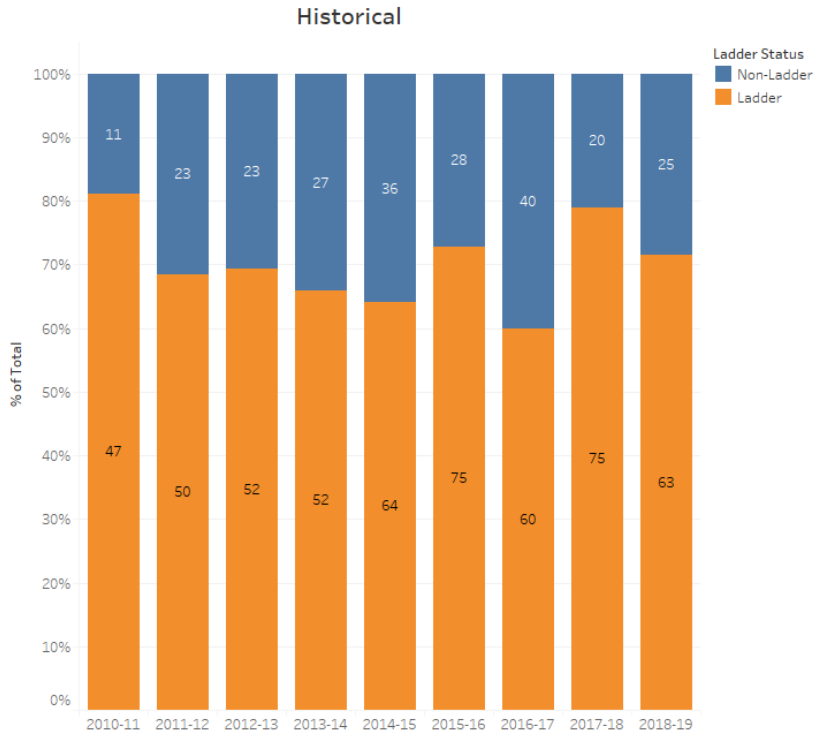
[2] Course was renumbered in 2017

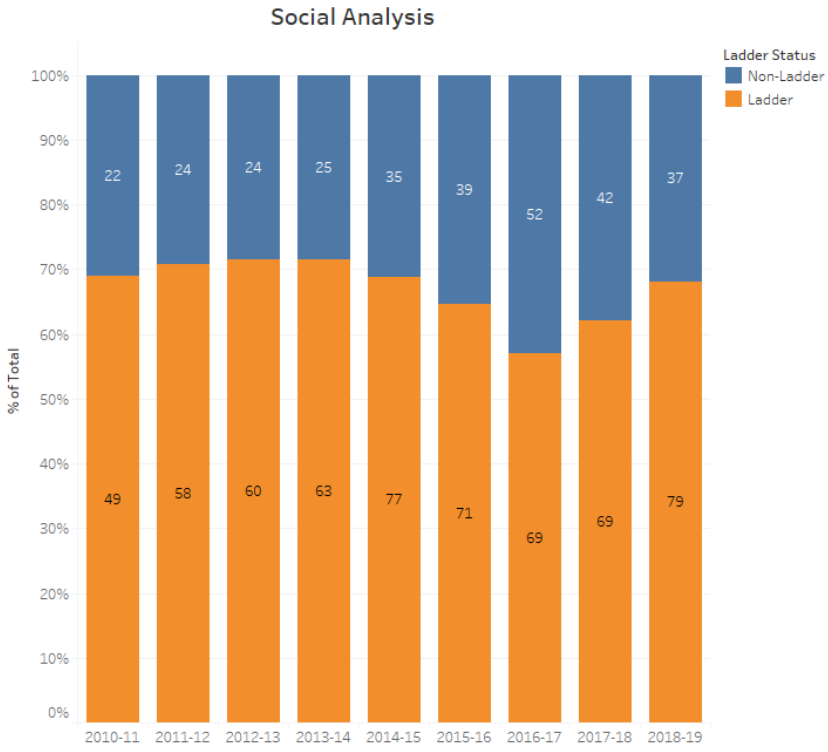
[3] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Literary & Cultural Analysis) credit

Appendix H

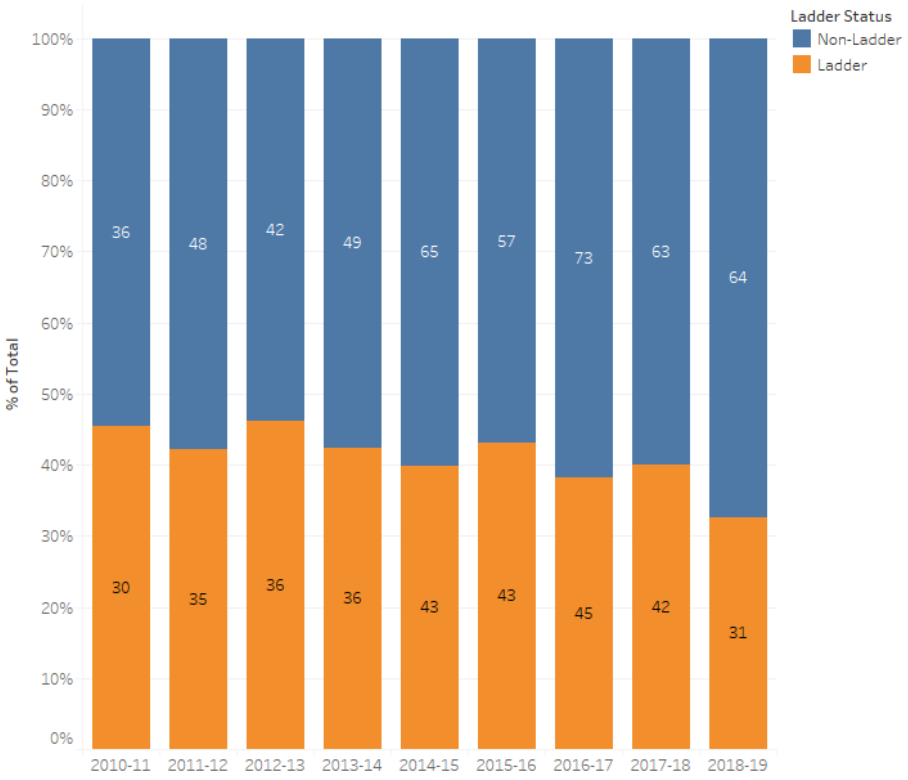
Teaching Distribution by GE Sub-Categories

Teaching Breakdown by Sub-Categories

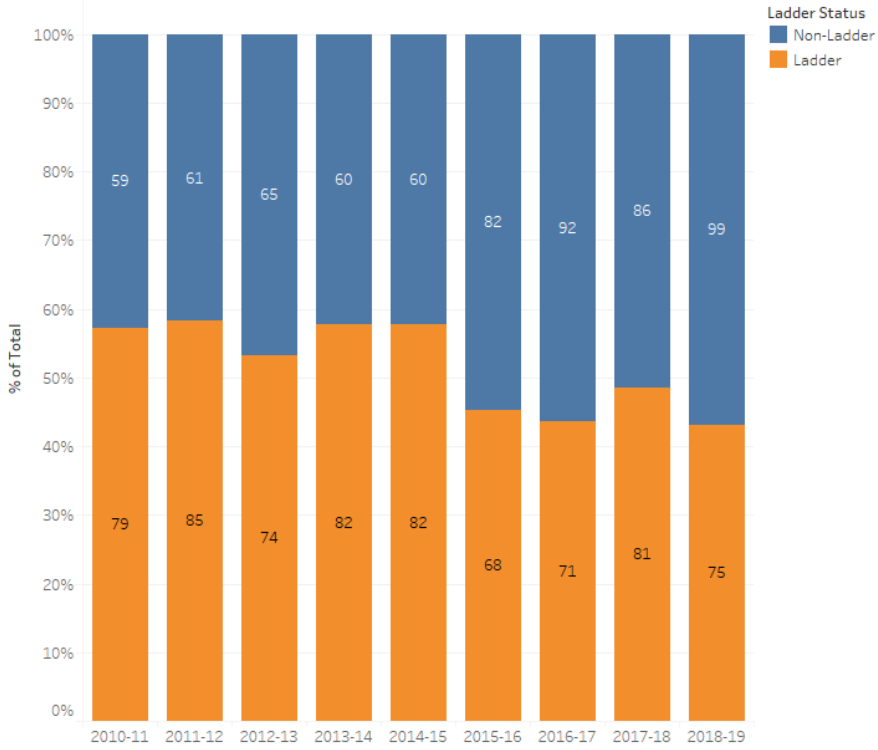




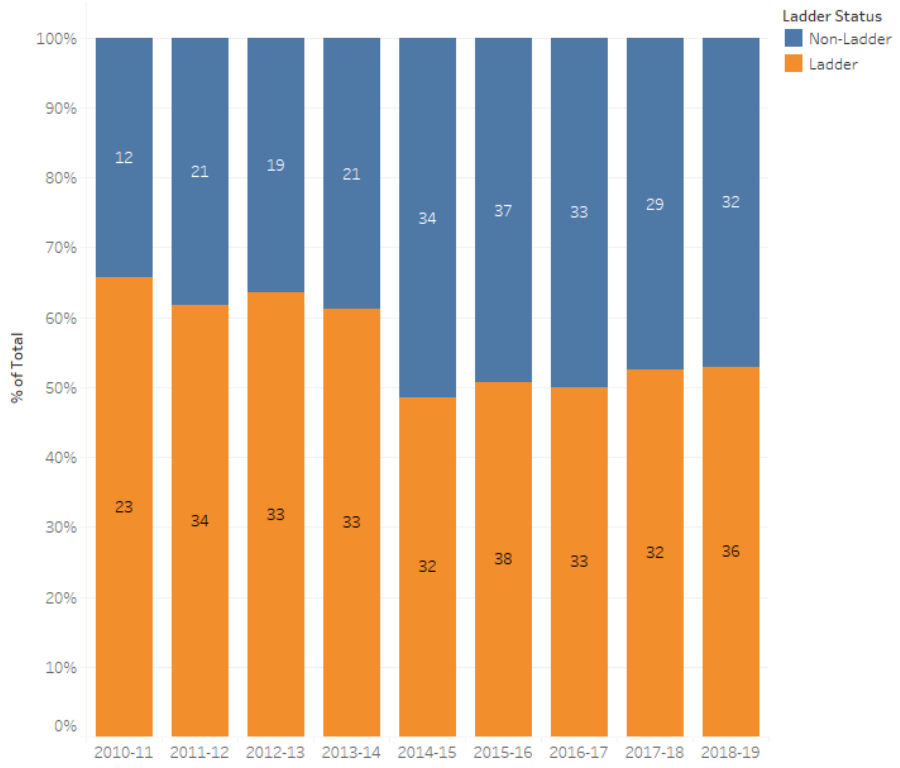
Life Sciences



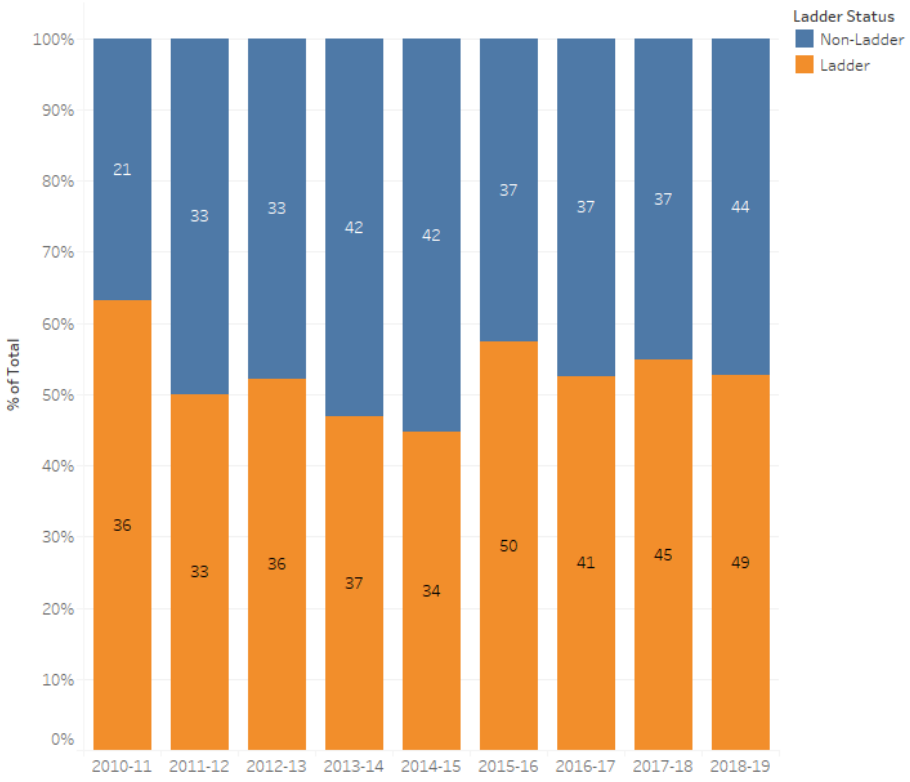
Physical Sciences

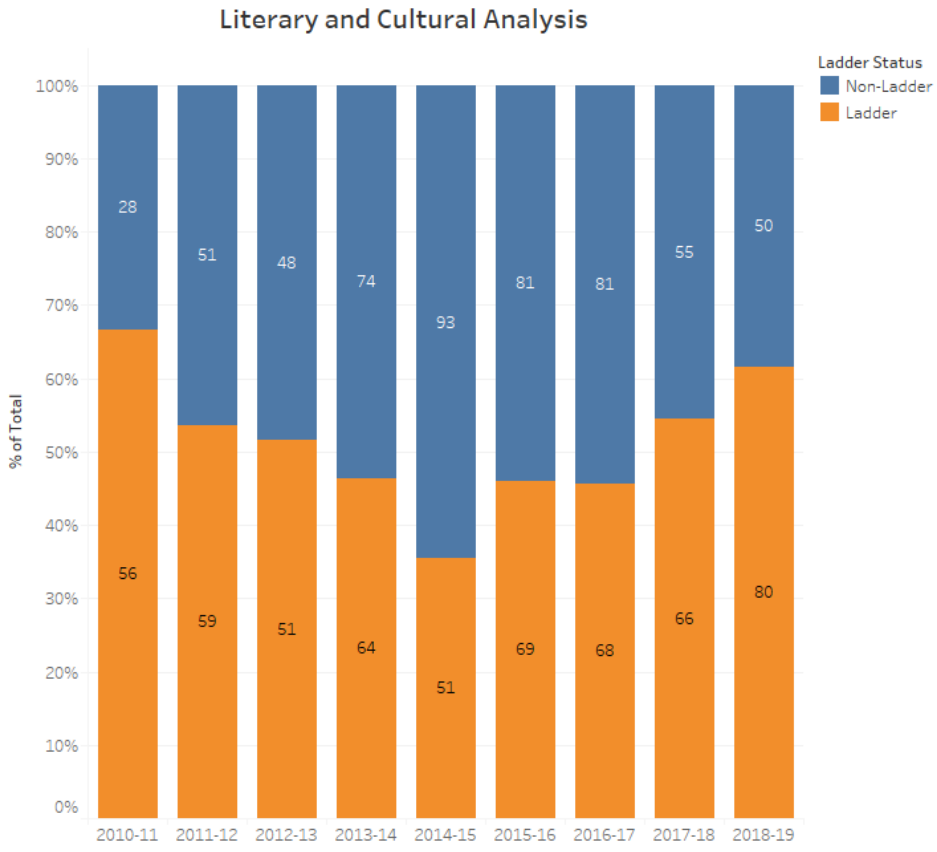


Philosophical and Linguistic Analysis



Visual and Performing Arts Analysis and Practice




Literary and Cultural Analysis
Ladder Status
Non-Ladder
Ladder
% of Total
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
28
51
48
74
93
81
81
55
50
56
59
51
64
51
69
68
66
80
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
2018-19

Appendix I

University of Virginia, Six Guiding Principles for the College Curriculum

ARTS & SCIENCES

GENERAL EDUCATION

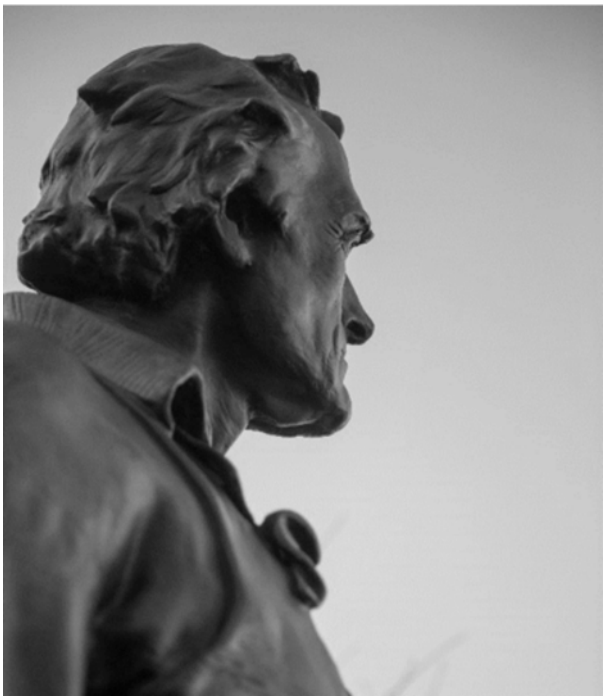
ABOUT

Serving as the cornerstone of the liberal arts experience at UVA, the College of Arts & Sciences' *College Curriculum* prepares our students to lead lives of engaged citizenship by exposing students to questions of value, beauty, history, ethics, and the nature of the physical world. Students in the College of Arts & Sciences complete the College Curriculum to fulfill their general education curricular requirements prior to graduation.

SIX GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CURRICULUM

Courses in the College Curriculum will:

1. Shed new light on enduring and emerging questions –both in scholarship and in the lives of our students.
2. Model and encourage a sense of intellectual wonder, generosity, and curiosity.
3. Orient students to learning as a process of both flux and fixity, and will embrace the ambiguity and humility at the heart of engaging and creating knowledge.
4. Introduce students to how scholars frame inquiry, analyze problems, and create knowledge.
5. Invite students to encounter the liberal arts and sciences as a capacious and constantly expanding intellectual community.
6. Equip our students to articulate provisional analyses that reflect an openness to debate and differing values and a commitment to exploring knowledge and truth.



CITIZEN-LEADERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819, UVA occupies a unique role in the education of our nation's citizen-leaders. Today's students take on that mantle as a member of one of the nation's leading Universities committed to the humanities, basic sciences, the arts, and social sciences..

THE CURRICULUM

A dynamic approach to liberal arts education, each component of the College Curriculum has been meticulously designed to equip you with the questions you must ask, the skills you must acquire, and the approaches you must take in your future lives of engaged citizenship, purposeful vocation, and contributors to the greater good.

WORLD CLASS INSTRUCTION

From the very moment you arrive on Grounds you will be learning from and interacting with acclaimed scholars and leaders across academic fields. Of note are the College Fellows, a rotating body of faculty who devote themselves to the Engagements' first-year experience.

ARTS & SCIENCES

Appendix J

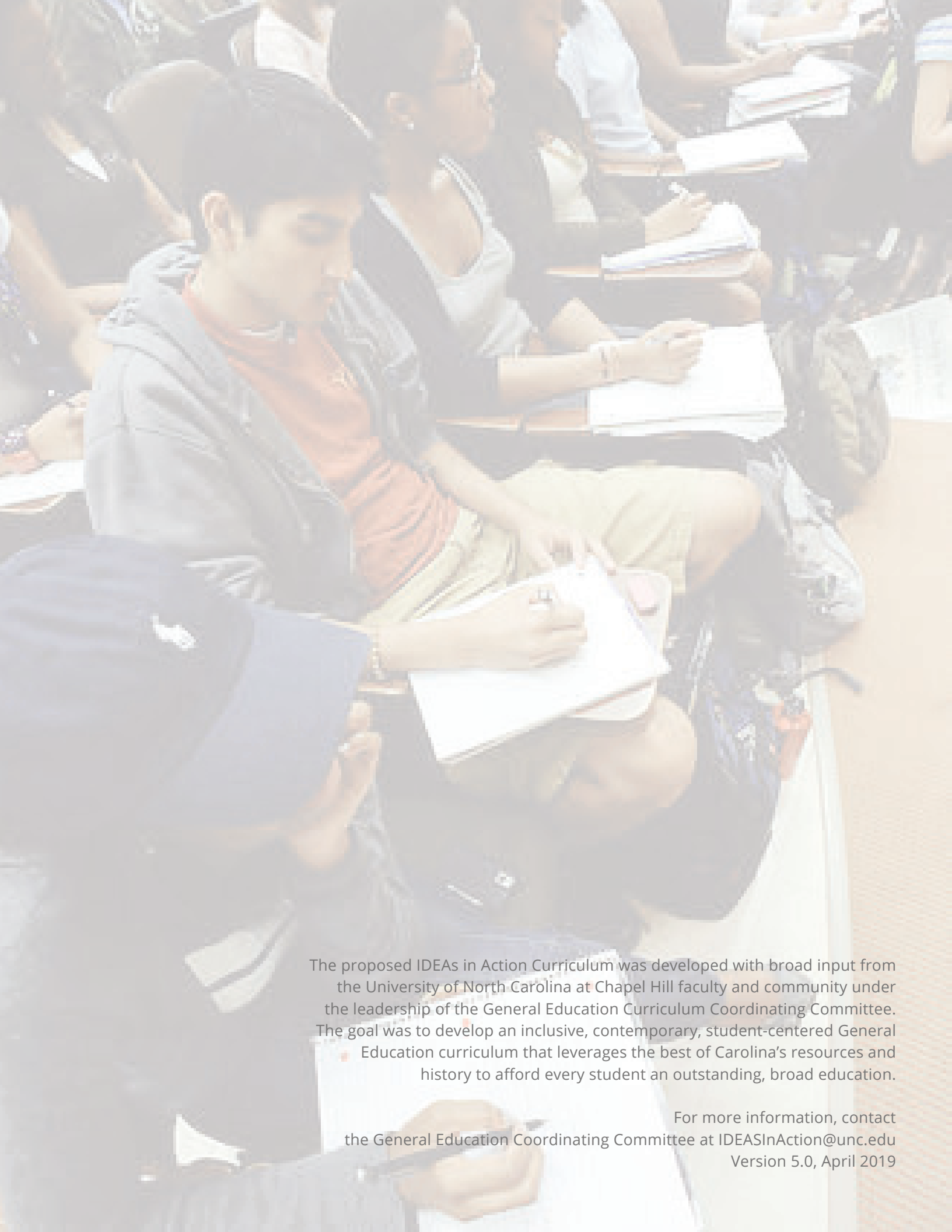
IDEAs in Action Curriculum: General Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

PROPOSAL

IDEAs in Action CURRICULUM

General Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC | COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



The proposed IDEAs in Action Curriculum was developed with broad input from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill faculty and community under the leadership of the General Education Curriculum Coordinating Committee. The goal was to develop an inclusive, contemporary, student-centered General Education curriculum that leverages the best of Carolina's resources and history to afford every student an outstanding, broad education.

For more information, contact
the General Education Coordinating Committee at IDEASInAction@unc.edu
Version 5.0, April 2019

CONTENTS

THE GOALS OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND THE VALUE OF CAPACITIES

The IDEAs in Action Curriculum brings Carolina's faculty and resources to the task of preparing graduates to become lifelong learners, approaching the world with curiosity and open minds. This ambition requires a general education curriculum that instills in its graduates the tendency and ability to apply creativity, care, reflection, and evidence-based inquiry to the problems and issues they encounter as they serve the public as productive employees, entrepreneurs, citizens, and leaders in a rapidly changing world.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate should be able to think critically, define and frame questions, work collaboratively, solve problems, make reasoned judgments based upon facts and evidence, respond creatively to changing and uncertain situations, take risks, and be resilient. A Carolina graduate should also be able to communicate these judgments persuasively and effectively to a variety of audiences, as well as listen carefully and thoughtfully to the concerns and ideas of others.

Educational experiences should promote equity among students. Most students arrive without full knowledge of what the university offers, the questions and ideas under discussion, and the opportunities in the array of disciplines. In the years since UNC-Chapel Hill introduced its previous general education curriculum, the share of low-income students in the incoming class has nearly doubled (from 12% to 21%), and the rate of first-generation college students also increased, amplifying the urgency of supporting the transition to college for all students. In response, we aim to guide students through clear pathways for navigating the research university, better promote persistence, address disparities in academic preparation, and provide opportunities for success.

Additionally, students should carry forward the abilities they develop at Carolina throughout their lifetimes and adapt them to contexts beyond the university. The same broad intellectual goals behind their college education should apply to students' post-college roles as citizens, leaders, family members, and lifelong learners. In each of these domains, graduates can bring to bear such capacities as identifying and understanding problems; submitting these problems to evidence, critique, and dialogue; forming good judgments, even in the context of uncertainty; and acting upon those judgments.

Further, students should apply their education to acting in the world. Their education should prepare them to engage with the world to solve problems and promote the ideals of flexibility of thought, sophistication, humility, communication, and innovation. Students today inhabit an interconnected public sphere that is dramatically different from the one their counterparts faced even a decade ago. In addition to critically

The IDEAs in Action Curriculum brings Carolina's faculty and resources to the task of preparing graduates to become lifelong learners, approaching the world with curiosity and open minds.

responding to a world in which distinctions among arguments, beliefs, emotions, opinions, principles, and knowledge are becoming less clear, students should be prepared to participate fully in—and help to shape—this public sphere.

The key to preparing students to be effective, successful thinkers and citizens is developing flexible *capacities* that are useful in many areas. [1] Beyond particular skills, which are adapted to specific contexts, capacities as we conceptualize them are flexible and adaptable modes of thought and action that can be used in different contexts, including new contexts that will emerge in the future.

The capacities model allows educators to identify traits and approaches they hope to cultivate among students. Further, thinking in terms of capacities prompts educators to articulate outcomes that will situate learning activities in concrete contexts with clear aims. Courses promoting those capacities will help students learn to identify, discover, evaluate, and act, even as they cultivate context-specific outcomes and engage students with a range of subjects.

A second key aspect of capacities is their portability: their potential for transfer to other areas of investigation and action.[2] To maximize portability and demonstrate flexibility, each capacity should be encountered several times in different contexts.[3] A curriculum should help students develop capacities that can be usefully applied in a range of fields or situations. Having developed the capacity for communicating across different ways of knowing in a course focusing on gender, for example, students might transfer that capacity into other domains—say, a public forum on women's health concerns, where communication across different contexts would be crucial.

---

[1] As the AAAS "Future of Higher Education" report details, it is precisely these intellectual styles of thought that the liberal arts can teach and exemplify. The challenge is to fulfill that potential. Several theoretical strains use the concept of "capacities" in this area. In her work on one of these strains, Martha Nussbaum uses the concept of capacities to refer to human abilities cultivated through education and useful in many domains beyond the academy. (Nussbaum, Martha. *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* [updated ed.] Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.)

[2] Guthrie, Kathy L., and Kathleen Callahan. "Liberal arts: Leadership education in the 21st century." New Directions for Higher Education 2016.174 (2016): 21-33.

[3] It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates, 2013. https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf

IDEAS IN ACTION

The IDEAs in Action curriculum is designed so students encounter key capacities several times and at varying levels of depth and complexity throughout their general education, each time in a different intellectual context to ensure breadth. It is flexible, allowing students the opportunity to mold their own educational pathways, while also requiring that they encounter new and challenging ideas. And it includes many opportunities for students to learn using high-impact practices—educational practices that have been shown to contribute to students' overall learning and success and improve persistence.[4]

The curriculum asks students to:

- **Identify** pressing questions, problems, and issues.
- **Discover** new ideas, evidence, and approaches to these matters.
- **Evaluate** these ideas, evidence, and approaches, coming to sound judgments, even under uncertainty.
- **Act** appropriately based on that evaluation and judgment.

To complete the degree, students must also complete:

- Requirements for a major.
- For bachelor of arts degree candidates, supplemental education consisting of a second major, a minor, or three advanced-level courses (nine credits) in a department outside the major.
- At least 120 credits.

The curriculum also identifies a set of focus capacities, key courses, and experiences that students will pursue in their studies.

The curriculum begins with **First Year Foundations**, a set of special courses and experiences designed to help students navigate their transition to the college environment, get ready to take ownership of their education, and make the most of the opportunities at Carolina and beyond. The curriculum proceeds through all four years of the student's education with the help of **Focus Capacity** courses, nine types of courses that convey key capacities for students through liberal arts and sciences content, bringing depth, breadth, and recurring capacities to students' general education. And it incorporates flexible curricular and extracurricular experiences and tools to complement and build upon these courses to foster **Reflection and Integration**.

[4] Kuh, George D. *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008; Kuh, George D., and Ken O'Donnell. *Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013.

The IDEAs Approach

Identify pressing questions, problems, and issues.

Discover new ideas, evidence, and approaches to these matters.

Evaluate these ideas, evidence, and approaches, coming to sound judgements even under uncertainty.

Act appropriately based on that evaluation and judgement.

FIRST YEAR FOUNDATIONS

In their first year, students learn about new areas and develop foundational capacities they will use throughout their college careers and beyond. Preserving flexibility for students to meet other general education, major, and elective goals, the first year requires four types of learning experiences: a first-year seminar (or alternative), a writing intensive course, an interdisciplinary course, called Ideas, Information and Inquiry (III), and a College Thriving course that helps them design and manage their education. These courses also offer initial engagement with the campus e-portfolio—a platform and set of resources for helping students archive, reflect on, and share their work.

First-Year Seminar or First-Year Launch

As students acclimate to a large university, a small class led by a full-time faculty member can link them with others who share similar interests. This helps students establish personal connections: an important part of college learning.[5] First-year students must take a First-Year Seminar (which is strongly encouraged) or, alternatively, a First-Year Launch course. First-Year Seminars (FYS) provide students with this close contact through in-depth study of a specialized topic in a small class (no more than 24 students). First-Year Launch (FYL) courses provide a similar experience through a small (no more than 35 students), faculty-led version of an introductory course.

First-Year Seminar

FYSs are small (maximum 24 students) courses that focus substantially on research and systematic inquiry as practiced by the faculty member(s) and/or disciplines of which they are a part. An early college experience with a deep dive into a disciplinary question, the FYS complements the slate of introductory surveys many students sign up for. FYSs are issue-oriented, covering a wide range of knowledge and/or engaging specific issues or advanced, cutting-edge topics. They are methodologically self-conscious, focus on how scholars pose problems, involve active learning, encourage self-directed inquiry, and enable students to take responsibility for producing knowledge. The courses also build students' communication skills. They are not introductory surveys.

FYS instructors are encouraged to use the e-portfolio system to facilitate students' reflecting and connecting between courses and experiences. FYSs may fulfill a Focus Capacity. FYSs must be open to traditional first-year students; at the discretion of the

[5] Skipper, Tracy L. (ed). *What Makes the First-Year Seminar High Impact?* Research Reports on College Transitions, No. 7. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First Year Experience & Students in Transition. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573737.pdf

instructor, they may also be open to transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. They are not open to students who have already completed their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. FYSs that fulfill the requirements of a Focus Capacity (see below) may count for that Focus Capacity. The FYS must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
2. Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
3. Analyze and communicate issues associated with a specific, advanced topic, covering a wide range of knowledge.
4. Produce knowledge through self-directed inquiry and active learning.

First Year Launch

Students may take a FYL course instead of an FYS. These courses provide an introduction to a discipline or field of study that directly relates to a major offered at UNC-Chapel Hill. Thus, FYL courses must fulfill a requirement in a major (e.g., gateway, core requirement, or elective requirement). These courses also build students' communication skills. FYL courses are ordinarily capped at 24 but may have as many as 35 students. They are taught by full-time faculty members. FYLs that fulfill the requirements of a Focus Capacity may count for that Focus Capacity.

FYLs are only open to traditional first-year students, transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill, or a combination. Students are eligible to take an FYL course in the summer before and the summer after their first-year at Carolina. FYLs must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
2. Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
3. Apply methods for how scholars pose problems, discover solutions, resolve controversies, and evaluate knowledge.
4. Analyze and communicate issues associated with a broad, introductory topic covering a wide range of knowledge.

Writing at the Research University

All students must take English 105, a multiple-genre writing course. English 105 will be administered through the English and Comparative Literature department. Instructors emphasize research-based writing in disciplines across the University to match the breadth of first-year and later academic experiences. Students learn to write, and in the effort, to study, reason, instruct, provoke, persuade, anticipate, and entertain. The effort prepares them for the work ahead at Carolina and beyond. ENGL 105 courses

also engage students with the campus e-portfolio. It must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Employ conventions, genres, and rhetoric practiced in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.
2. Conduct research using a variety of methods, databases, and sources.
3. Discuss and present research-based arguments and information.
4. Identify how best to use research and evidence in discipline-specific compositions.
5. Compose using written, oral, and multimedia modes.
6. Review and revise one's own work and assist others in revising their work.

Ideas, Information, and Inquiry

The Ideas, Information, and Inquiry (III) program is designed to teach the power of disciplinary thinking—and the value of crossing disciplinary boundaries. No student arrives at Carolina with a full understanding of all the academic opportunities available on campus. Few understand how multiple disciplines rigorously define and test problems or create and share knowledge. III courses introduce students to disciplines they may not even be aware of early in their academic careers with the possibility they could decide to major or minor in such areas.

III classes are large (typically 250 students), four-credit, broadly interdisciplinary courses that introduce students to a wide range of academic subject areas and to four key capacities. They are taught by teams of three faculty members whose disciplinary, research, and/or scholarly approaches differ significantly from one another. Ordinarily, this means that groups will include faculty from each of the three divisions of the College and/or from similarly diverse perspectives in the professional schools, but groups may demonstrate sufficient breadth in other ways.

Courses are organized around a broad theme that highlights the different approaches among the team. Instructors explore with students the strengths, weaknesses, distinctions, and similarities among disciplines and approaches. III courses also help students to develop four key capacities that they will extend through further study: foundations of data science, global awareness, principles of evidence, and collaboration. Approximately one credit hour (of four) is devoted specifically to data science and data literacy. Instructor teams without expertise in data science will be supported by College-level resources.

III courses are open to traditional first- and second-year students and to transfer students in their first year at UNC-Chapel Hill. Students are strongly encouraged to take their III during the first year but may defer it to their second year. It must be taken for credit and for a grade. Students may not receive credit for more than one III. 4 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Compare and contrast three distinct ways of addressing a question.
2. Use data and evidence to apply key methods of and concerns associated with data science.
3. Situate ideas and experiences in global contexts.
4. Collaborate with others for mutual benefit.

College Thriving

All students must take College Thriving (EDUC 101), an introduction to the research, resources, and practical skills that facilitate thriving in college and beyond. The course contributes to students' ability to study systematically, learn deeply, and monitor and foster their own well-being. College Thriving empowers all students to participate fully in the opportunities of a research university and find personal and institutional resources to support them in a demanding academic setting. It must be taken for credit and a grade. 2 credits

Learning Outcomes

1. Increase and appreciate the significance of self-awareness.
2. Value a liberal arts education.
3. Set goals, plan, and reflect upon learning using aspects of using learning science: metacognition, self-regulated learning, and motivation.
4. Describe academic strategies, policies, and pathways and their link to resources, such as academic advising and career services.
5. Reflect on the science of thriving: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, healthy relationships, resilience, stress, and other aspects of well-being.
6. Demonstrate mastery of basic mental health, drug and alcohol, and sexual wellness practices.

Global Language

Students are required to complete courses or demonstrate proficiency in the study of a foreign language through level 3. Certain majors may require additional levels of foreign language study. Students are strongly encouraged to begin this requirement in their first or second semester.

By way of foreign language study through level 3, students consider the nature and structure of their native language and reflect upon their own cultural norms while gaining functional linguistic proficiency in the language of study, as well as an appreciation of the cultures and worldviews represented.

Native speakers of a language other than English (e.g., who attended all or most of high school in the native country with a language of instruction other than English) can satisfy the foreign language requirement with Writing at the Research University

(ENGL 105). Experiential speakers (e.g., heritage speakers of Chinese or students who have lived abroad for an extended period, etc.) can satisfy their requirement with that language if the language is taught at UNC and they place beyond level 3 on a departmentally provided assessment.

Learning Outcomes

1. Communicate orally and in writing in a foreign language about a variety of real-life situations with a variety of audiences.
2. Demonstrate comprehension of oral and written texts in a foreign language on a wide range of topics to discuss everyday life, as well as life in a cross-cultural context.
3. Apply perspectives, practices, and ideas associated with the culture(s) of a foreign language.

FOCUS CAPACITIES

During their Carolina careers, students take a set of Focus Capacity (FC) courses that introduce and reinforce a set of focused capacities that help them identify, discover, explore, and act.

FC classes are offered by departments and focus on developing particular capacities through substantive study of course content. The capacities support a breadth of subject matter and encourage faculty from diverse departments to develop courses that share their expertise with students.

The capacities themselves are composed of habits of perception, discrimination, and analysis that take distinct form by reference to serious study of a subject. The courses not only engage specific activities and content but also bring variety, depth, and opportunities for transfer to the knowledge a student acquires.

FCs may be introductory or mid-level courses in a disciplinary progression, or they may be on specific topic areas that are not in such a progression. Any department may offer classes that fulfill any focus capacity as long as they meet the learning outcomes for that capacity.

In general, FC courses should be numbered below 400 and offered regularly (ideally at least once every two years). When appropriate, courses for advanced undergraduates and graduate students (numbered 400-699) may also fulfill a FC. For smaller and/or interdisciplinary departments that may not be able to commit to offering a given FC course every two years, a lower threshold (e.g., every four years) may be used. Approved FC courses that have not been offered in four years will be reviewed by the General Education Oversight Committee, in collaboration with the offering department, to determine whether they should remain with an FC label in the general education curriculum.

FC classes sustain the recurring capacities of inquiry that guide the general education mission. As appropriate to the course's topic, each class should:

- Pose problems and questions that require systematic thinking about evidence, argument and uncertainty.
- Consider its content in the context of human difference between and within societies; the full range of legitimate debate in its field; and/or change over time.
- Require:

Focus Capacities

- Aesthetic and Interpretive Analysis
- Creative Expression, Practice, and Production
- Engagement with the Human Past
- Ethical and Civic Values
- Global Understanding and Engagement
- Natural Scientific Investigation
- Power, Difference, and Inequality
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Ways of Knowing

One Focus Capacity course must include or be associated with a one-credit Empirical Investigation Lab.

- Writing totaling at least 10 pages in length, or the intellectual equivalent.[6]
- Presenting material to the class, smaller groups, or the public through oral presentations, webpages, or other means that enable corroboration of fact and argument.[7]
- Collaborating in pairs or groups to learn, design, solve, create, build, research, or similar.[8]

By incorporating these elements, FC courses ensure that students encounter a broad array of academic ideas, approaches, and information across the liberal arts, as well as develop crucial capacities for future study and life. Courses that do not meet one or more of these recurring capacities must include an explanation as to why such inclusion would be inappropriate for the topic area. The General Education Oversight Committee reviews these requests.

Courses may fulfill a maximum of two focus capacities. A course fulfilling two focus capacities must meet all the requirements for both. Students may count a course fulfilling two focus capacities for only one such requirement. Thus, they need to take nine courses to meet these requirements. An FC course may count toward a major at the discretion of the offering department of the major.

All FC courses must be taken for credit and for a grade. Three credits are required for each, though courses may require additional credit hours. Courses must include substantial attention to the learning outcomes of the capacity or capacities of which they are part; however, as substantive courses in significant areas of academic study, they also accomplish learning outcomes in addition to those of their focus capacities. For example, an introductory physics and astronomy course might meet the criteria for the Natural Scientific Investigation Focus Capacity, but would also include learning outcomes, subject matter, and activities related to physics and astronomy.

---

[6] Examples include a 10-page paper or multiple shorter papers that address research questions or argue a point of view; short in-class writing activities; playwriting; fiction composition; discussion board or blog contributions. Intellectual equivalents might include:
- Performance: perform multiple scenes, or present sense memory exercises.
- Design-oriented activities: several iterations of costume renderings or build set models.
- Compositions in formats other than the written word.

[7] Examples include think-pair-share techniques in-class; individual student or group oral presentations; jigsaw techniques in-class; poster presentations; debates; infographics; website postings for external audiences, etc.

[8] Examples include regular think-pair-shares in class; group exams; peer-editing work; group assignments; capstone projects, partner-based labs, makerspace team projects, etc.

Aesthetic and Interpretive Analysis

Students develop the ability to analyze literature and/or other artistic works, to understand how they relate to the historical circumstances of their creation, and to think critically about the past, present, and future contributions of these works to a shared world.

Questions for Students

1. What is the particular value of aesthetic experience and how does it generate meanings, responses, and acts of reflection?
2. What makes an artistic work different from other forms of expression?
3. How does creative attention to an aesthetic object reveal new ideas, articulate values, and reflect or enact art's functions in the world?

Learning Outcomes

1. Interpret and critique literary and artistic expression.
2. Analyze literary and artistic works in various contexts (social, political, historical, philosophical, etc.) and with regard to style, period, and the circumstances of composition.
3. Explain how aesthetic expression enhances human experience.

Creative Expression, Practice, and Production

Students engage in individual and collaborative creative expression, exploration, or production, such as in performance, visual art, composition, design, or technology. They engage with tools, techniques, methods, design processes, technologies, and materials for creating works that express, innovate, or create solutions to problems.

Questions for Students

1. What processes and practices can I use to produce meaningful expression or effective solutions with lasting impact?
2. How does collaboration and teamwork change or enhance the creative process?
3. How does a design strategy affect or enhance the creation and evaluation of a work of value?

Learning Outcomes

1. Compose, design, build, present, or perform a work that is the result of immersion in a creative process using appropriate media, tools, and techniques.
2. Explain the roles and influences of creativity, technologies, materials, and design processes in the creation of knowledge, expression, and effective solutions.
3. Evaluate their own and others' creative work to demonstrate how critique creates value in creative domains.

Engagement with the Human Past

Students acquire knowledge through evidence about human experience in one or more eras of the human past and learn to evaluate, synthesize, and communicate that evidence, applying it to their lives in the present.

Questions for Students

1. What events, conflicts, and continuities shaped an era of the human past?
2. What distinctive kinds of evidence do we use to interpret and understand the human past?
3. How have people made decisions and acted in light of historical knowledge?
4. How does the material and historical past survive in the present and affect our perception of both the past and the present?
5. What conditions and processes shape our approach to the human past?

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop knowledge of different spatiotemporal scales, patterns, ideas, figures, and events from the past.
2. Evaluate primary source material and/or other historical evidence of past conditions (e.g., behaviors, events, and social, cultural, economic, and/or political structures) and assess divergent or complementary methods, materials, and/or methodologies in interpreting the human past.
3. Assess conflicting historical narratives based on evidence and methodologies.
4. Generate and evaluate arguments based on the analysis of primary and scholarly sources.
5. Apply historical methods and knowledge to make informed judgments about the past and the present.

Ethical and Civic Values

Students develop their capacity to think carefully and critically about how to make and justify private and public decisions.

Questions for Students

1. How can people think fruitfully (individually and together) about how they should live their lives?
2. What is required to judge a standard or value as worthy of support?
3. How should we distinguish between prejudices and reasonable grounds for value judgments?
4. What considerations—stories, reasons, testimony, documents, data, etc.—can justify our values and commitments, whether personal or social?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the contexts in which questions of justification arise.
2. Assess ethical values in terms of reasons offered.
3. Recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value, evaluating ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities.
4. Analyze the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic spheres.

Global Understanding and Engagement

Students study and engage with global processes shaping the world and its peoples, including those beyond the North Atlantic region (United States, Canada, and Western Europe). They develop deep knowledge of historic or contemporary roles and differential effects of human organizations and actions on global systems.

Questions for Students

1. What forces connect and distinguish the experiences of peoples, societies, and human organization around the world?
2. How can I understand and compare differing worldviews?
3. What connections and differences exist between particular worldviews, experiences, societies, or power structures?
4. What ideas, approaches, and international sources allow scholars to compare societies?

Learning Outcomes

1. Classify and analyze diverse historical, social, and political exchanges that shape nations, regions, and cultural traditions of the world.
2. Translate among civic cultures, social values, and moral commitments that characterize peoples and societies, including those beyond the North Atlantic region.
3. Assess ways that political and economic institutions shape contemporary global relations.
4. Explain human and environmental challenges that transcend national borders.

Natural Scientific Investigation

Students learn how to make and interpret scientific descriptions and explanations of the natural world, practice the skills of scientific inquiry, and evaluate scientific evidence within the contexts of both scientific communities and society.

Questions for Students

1. What rules govern the natural world and how are they discovered, tested, and validated?
2. What is distinctive about the approach to understanding employed in the natural sciences?
3. What challenges are encountered in making measurements of the natural world?
4. What are the limits of investigation in the natural sciences?

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to use scientific knowledge, logic, and imagination to construct and justify scientific claims about phenomena, including validation through rigorous empirical testing.
2. Analyze and apply processes of natural scientific inquiry as dictated by the phenomena and questions at hand. These include generating and testing hypotheses or theories; using logic and creativity to design investigations to test these hypotheses; collecting and interpreting data; making inferences that respect measurement error; building and justifying arguments and explanations; communicating and defending conclusions; revising arguments and conclusions based on new evidence and/or feedback from peers; and synthesizing new knowledge into broader scientific understanding.
3. Evaluate science-related claims and information from popular and/or peer-reviewed sources by examining the relationship between the evidence, arguments, and conclusions presented and by assessing consistency with existing knowledge from valid and reliable scientific sources.
4. Identify, assess, and make informed decisions about ethical issues at the intersections of the sciences and society.

Power, Difference, and Inequality

Students engage with the histories, perspectives, politics, intellectual traditions, and/or expressive cultures of populations and communities that have historically been disempowered, and the structural and historical processes by which that disempowerment has endured and changed.

Questions for Students

1. What are the relevant structures, institutions, ways of thinking, and practices that create, maintain, and change social, economic, and political inequalities?
2. What practices have been implemented and institutionalized to address social, economic, and political inequalities?

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize the relationship between inequality and social, economic, and political power.
2. Analyze configurations of power and the forms of inequality and bias they produce.
3. Evaluate dynamics of social, economic, and political inequality in relation to specific historical contexts.
4. Interrogate the systemic processes by which forms of inequality are sustained and how these processes have been and are resisted and transformed.

Quantitative Reasoning

Students learn to comprehend and apply mathematical concepts in authentic contexts, developing tools for reasoning with data, logic, and quantitative methods.

Questions for Students

1. What is the role of mathematics in organizing and interpreting measurements of the world?
2. How can mathematical models and quantitative analysis be used to summarize or synthesize data into knowledge and predictions?
3. What methodology can we apply to validate or reject mathematical models or to express our degree of confidence in them?

Learning Outcomes

1. Summarize, interpret, and present quantitative data in mathematical forms, such as graphs, diagrams, tables, or mathematical text.
2. Develop or compute representations of data using mathematical forms or equations as models and use statistical methods to assess their validity.
3. Make and evaluate important assumptions in the estimation, modeling, and analysis of data, and recognize the limitations of the results.
4. Apply mathematical concepts, data, procedures, and solutions to make judgments and draw conclusions.
5. Synthesize and present quantitative data to others to explain findings or to provide quantitative evidence in support of a position.

This capacity presumes that the enrolled students already have the requisite mathematical skills that may be established through appropriate assessment or by completion of an online or classroom-based course in quantitative literacy and can:

1. Recognize and apply basic calculations (including fractions, percentages, exponents, and radicals), distributive and commutative properties, and basic logic.

2. Use functions and operations, including exponential, logarithmic, and piecewise linear functions.
3. Manipulate equations to express them in different ways and/or find solutions.
4. Qualitatively sketch basic functions (e.g., linear, quadratic, power laws, exponential, logarithmic).
5. Solve word problems that lead to systems of linear (and possibly quadratic) equations in two variables.

Ways of Knowing

Students develop intellectual humility, learning to question assumptions, categories, and norms that structure their worldviews and to understand the sources and effects of biases. They learn, use, and distinguish strengths and weaknesses of one or more approach(es) to knowledge of the unfamiliar, such as: aesthetically, philosophically, linguistically, historically, or culturally remote forms of knowledge and worldmaking, or formal logic, scientific practice, and similar formalized approaches to countering bias and creating knowledge.

Questions for Students

1. What norms and expectations do I take for granted?
2. What categories and concepts frame my assumptions, experiences, and beliefs?
3. What practices of investigation or inquiry best challenge those assumptions and expectations?
4. How can I consider whether my beliefs might be wrong?

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize and use one or more approach(es) to developing and validating knowledge of the unfamiliar world.
2. Evaluate ways that temporal, spatial, scientific, and philosophical categories structure knowledge.
3. Interrogate assumptions that underlie our own perceptions of the world.
4. Employ strategies to mitigate or adjust for preconceptions and biases.
5. Apply critical insights to understand patterns of experience and belief.

Empirical Investigation Lab

One Focus Capacity course must include or be associated with a one-credit Empirical Investigation Lab. In such labs, students participate in measurement, data collection and analysis, and hypothesis testing connected to the course content. An Empirical Investigation Lab is not usually a separate class; ordinarily it is a fourth credit attached to another Focus Capacity class.

Learning Outcomes

1. Take empirical measurements using appropriate apparatus.
2. Generate and test hypotheses.
3. Gather, store, and organize data.
4. Analyze and report on data and hypothesis testing.

REFLECTION AND INTEGRATION

As students move through the curriculum, IDEAS in Action calls for them to put their capacities into practice through concrete experiences. These opportunities help students reflect upon, deepen, and connect knowledge and capacities.

Research and Discovery

Through a course or outside experience, students must immerse themselves in a research project, incorporating reflection and revision to produce and disseminate original scholarship or creative work. Courses (Focus Capacity or not) must address all five learning outcomes below, although the time spent on each outcome may be unequal. A Research and Discovery course should have a substantial focus on the learning outcomes, constituting at least one-third of the final course grade or one-third of the course time. Non-course experiences, such as mentored research, should include reflection on each of the five outcomes.

Students immerse themselves in a research project and experience the reflection and revision involved in producing and disseminating original scholarship or creative works.

Questions for Students

1. How do I establish my point of view, take intellectual risks, and begin producing original scholarship or creative works?
2. How do I narrow my topic, critique current scholarship, and gather evidence in systematic and responsible ways?
3. How do I evaluate my findings and communicate my conclusions?

Learning Outcomes

1. Frame a topic, develop an original research question or creative goal, and establish a point of view, creative approach, or hypothesis.
2. Obtain a procedural understanding of how conclusions can be reached in a field and gather appropriate evidence.
3. Evaluate the quality of the arguments and/or evidence in support of the emerging product.
4. Communicate findings in clear and compelling ways.
5. Critique and identify the limits of the conclusions of the project and generate ideas for future work.

High-impact Experience

All students must have one high-impact experience. These are experiences that are novel to the student, substantial in commitment, and intellectual in some way.

There are six main types of high-impact experiential opportunities:

- Active research involvement
- Community service

- Study abroad
- Internships
- Performance creation or production
- Undergraduate learning assistant

Other types may be approved by the General Education Oversight Committee if they meet the novel, substantial, and intellectual criteria. Some of these may be experienced through a course in which the instructor explicitly attaches an experiential component, such as a:

- Substantial, required field trip or field research experience integrated with the academic content.
- Hands-on, discovery-oriented research experience that is a core element of the course.
- Substantial, required service-learning experience integrated with the academic content.
- Substantial, required creative production experience integrated with the academic content.

Students may also fulfill their high-impact experience requirement through experiences not directly tied to courses if they meet the novel, substantial, and intellectual criteria. Examples include:

- Mentored research resulting in a thesis, presentation, or other authored product.
- An internship paired with academic reflection.
- Community service or volunteer work paired with academic reflection.
- Study abroad that results in a substantially new experience outside the classroom.

Course requirements and non-course opportunities will be approved through the Experiential Education office. The same course or experience may not be counted for both the Research and Discovery and the High-impact Experience requirements.

Students enrich and expand their academic study by engaging in compelling applied experiences that transform their learning.

Questions for Students

1. How do things I've learned in the classroom apply to outside settings?
2. How can experiences and observations raise or answer questions in academic settings?
3. How can I meaningfully reflect to help navigate complexities and ambiguities I encounter?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the connections between academic studies and outside-the-classroom experiences and observations.
2. Apply knowledge in complex or ambiguous situations.
3. Develop questions from experiences and observations to deepen and extend academic inquiry.

Communication Beyond Carolina

Students will practice presentation, discussion, collaboration, and teamwork capacities for communicating at the University and beyond.[9] They will develop strategies for careful listening and effective communication in the public sphere.[10] Students build capacities for producing and listening to oral and digital communication across a range of contexts. They learn to persuasively convey knowledge, ideas, and information to multiple audiences and to listen to knowledge, ideas, and information from others.

This course is ordinarily taken during the junior or senior year. It may be taught as part of a major or minor, as a standalone course on communication, as a global language course (above level 3), or as an elective. At least 70 percent of the content of the course must focus on the capacities and practices of communication and collaboration, understanding and adapting messages to distinct audiences, listening seriously to the messages of others, and taking and offering feedback from peers and audiences. The class must include communication designed for at least three distinct audiences. At least one of these audiences must be a public (i.e., not a purely professional, scientific, or closed group). The College will provide resources to help instructors fulfill these outcomes. Must be taken for credit and for a grade. 3 credits

---

[9] Gil, K., and Williford, L. "Results from the 2013 Undergraduate Alumni Survey"; Association of American Colleges & Universities. "Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work." Washington, DC: AACU, 2018. https://www.aacu.org/research/2018-future-of-work

[10] "Verbal empowerment consists of interpretive (or exigetical) and expressive skills. Civic and political action must begin from a diagnosis of our current situation and move from that diagnosis to a prescription for a response. Such interpretive work... can be done only in and through language." (Allen, Danielle. *Education and Equality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, p. 40). See also Steinberg, K. S., Hatcher, J. A., & Bringle, B. G. (2008). "Civic-Minded Graduate: A North Star." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 18, 19-33; Englund, T. (2000) "Rethinking democracy and education: Towards an education of deliberative citizens", *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32:2, 305-313, DOI: 10.1080/002202700182772; McMillan, J, and Harriger, K. (2002) "College Students and Deliberation: A Benchmark Study", *Communication Education*, 51:3, 237-253, DOI:10.1080/03634520216518.

Students build capacities for producing and listening to oral communication across a range of contexts. With multiple audiences, they learn to listen to and persuasively convey knowledge, ideas, and information.

Questions for Students

1. How can I engage with audiences through oral communication?
2. How do I best convey knowledge, ideas, and information effectively to different audiences in situations?
3. How can I best understand the views and ideas of others, both individually and collectively?
4. What are the best ways of strategizing and delivering oral communication for achieving my intended outcomes?
5. How can media or digital compositions extend my ability to communicate?

Learning Outcomes

1. Ascertain the expectations, opportunities, and barriers to oral communication in distinct situations.
2. Tailor communications to different kinds of settings, including individual, small group, and public communication.
3. Tailor communications to different levels of expertise (inexpert, informed, expert), and to varying levels of alignment (resistant, ambivalent, supportive) and distinct contexts.
4. Make informed situation- and audience-sensitive strategic choices in content and delivery.
5. Improve ability to move audiences, as measured by best practices, audience feedback, and instructor feedback.

Lifetime Fitness

To gain facility and knowledge of life-long physical wellness, students must participate in a Lifetime Fitness (LFIT) class. This class combines instruction in and practice of a sports or physical activity along with instruction in physical well-being (exercise and fitness) to promote lifelong fitness. Students who are members of a varsity athletic team, ROTC, or a similar University organized and sponsored program combining physical activity with instruction in lifetime fitness are exempted from this requirement. Many students fulfill LFIT in the first year, but it may be taken at any point in the student's college career. Pass/Fail, 1 credit

Campus Life Experience

All students will attend at least two on-campus organized activities, such as performances, talks, panels, workshops, etc., for each semester they are enrolled on campus. Students may attend more or fewer events in a given semester as long as they attend the total number required during their career at UNC-Chapel Hill. Events that are required for a course the student is taking are still eligible to count toward the Campus Life Experience (CLE) requirement. To be eligible, events must be sponsored by a UNC-Chapel Hill department, unit or recognized student organization. Events may include students on the program but may not be entirely composed of students.

Events taking place off campus or at other colleges or universities may be approved for a CLE if they are substantially similar to eligible on-campus events.[11]

Leadership or sustained, active involvement in Student Government or a recognized student organization may be counted as one of the two CLE requirements each semester. Students who are unable to fulfill these requirements for personal, family, or other reasons may request a waiver.

Students experience the artistic, intellectual, and political life of the UNC campus and connect these experiences with their academic work.

Questions for Students

1. How do public and campus events enrich and broaden college learning?
2. How do performances and intellectual talks inspire new ways of interpreting and understanding the world?
3. How do political lectures and debates bridge or illuminate important differences?

Learning Outcomes

1. Attend a diverse set of campus performances, lectures, and events.
2. Interpret performances, lectures, and events in light of academic study.
3. Participate in the life of a university campus and its activities outside the classroom.

E-portfolio

Students will have access to and be encouraged to use an electronic portfolio system (e-portfolio). The system will allow students to curate their work and experiences and foster connections between academic and outside experiences. It will also encourage students to reflect on their learning beyond the classroom.[12] The e-portfolio system will be maintained centrally.

E-portfolios will be integrated into the curriculum at multiple levels, with initial engagements beginning in the first semester and ongoing activities in courses that follow both in the major and the College. These activities will enable both archiving and assessment of learning artifacts and activities and showcasing and sharing of the intellectual and professional work of students. E-portfolios will also facilitate the capturing and credentialing of co-curricular work.

---

[11] Attendance will be verified through the e-portfolio, where students are also encouraged to reflect upon these activities and connect them with other academic and co-curricular experiences. Instructors are encouraged to assign or incorporate relevant campus events into class and to use e-portfolios to connect them.

[12] Moos, D.C., and C.A. Stewart. "Technology Uses in Instruction." In *Connecting Self-regulated Learning and Performance with Instruction Across High School Content Areas* (pp. 417-440). Springer, Cham, 2018.; Usher, EL, and DH Schunk. "Social Cognitive Theoretical Perspective of Self-Regulation." In Schunk, D. (Ed.), Greene, J. (Ed.). *Handbook of Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

RULES AND POLICIES

Disciplinary Distribution

All students must take at least one general education course (FYS/FYL, Focus Capacity, High-impact Experience, Research and Discovery, or Communication Beyond Carolina) in each of the three major divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences (humanities and fine arts, mathematics and natural sciences, and social sciences). This requirement fulfills Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Standard 9.3.C.[13]

Credit by Examination

Students may substitute up to five by-examination courses for FC courses. Course equivalency must be reviewed by the GEOC to determine whether the examination assesses capacities similar to those in the relevant Focus Capacity course.

Students may also substitute by-examination credit (BE/PL credits) for Global Language requirements. Additional by-examination credit may be used for credit or placement outside the general education curriculum but may not be used to substitute for general education courses.

Transfer Credits/Transfer Students

In general, students transferring in as sophomores must fulfill the Writing at the Research University course and all FC requirements but not FYS/FYL, III, or College Thriving. However, transfer students are encouraged to take all of these courses. Students transferring in as sophomores or beyond (including Early College students) may transfer FC courses based on equivalencies established by GEOC in consultation with relevant departments. Students transferring in under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) are exempt from the general education requirements except for Global Language.

Governance

A General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) will oversee assessment, examine results, and propose curricular change. Committee members will have revolving terms.

The committee will comprise:

- Five members of the voting faculty elected by the faculty, including :
  - One faculty member in a social sciences department.
  - One faculty member in a fine arts or humanities department.

[13] http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAcreditation.pdf, page 21-22

    - One faculty member in a natural sciences and mathematics department.
    - Two additional members of the voting faculty.
- One member of the voting faculty appointed by dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.
- The chair of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) or her/his designee from EPC membership.
- Two undergraduate students appointed by UNC Student Government.
- The curriculum director of The Office of Undergraduate Education (ex officio).
- The senior associate dean for undergraduate education (ex officio).

The committee will operate under the auspices of the Administrative Boards of the College of Arts and Sciences and will be supported sufficiently to allow ongoing assessment and consideration of innovations in and amendment of the curriculum. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will gather and provide appropriate data as needed to support the committee's work. In the third year following implementation, the Administrative Boards of the College will review the GEOC's composition and charge.

Upon commencement of the IDEAs in Action Curriculum, the five elected members will be chosen in the earliest possible faculty election: two members to two-year terms, two members to three-year terms, and one member to a one-year term. Subsequent members will be elected in the annual faculty election process as terms end. Members may be elected to no more than two consecutive elected terms on the GEOC. New and continuing courses will be reviewed and approved for the curriculum by the GEOC with support from the Office of Undergraduate Curricula.

Periodic Review

The GEOC will oversee periodic review of elements of the general education curriculum, assessing successes and weaknesses and identifying opportunities for improvement. In general, GEOC membership will decide the order and priority for assessment of elements of the curriculum. However, it will take on the following assessments unless the membership determines these are inappropriate or impractical:

- In the third year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
    - Global language
    - Lifetime Fitness
    - College Thriving
- In the fourth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
    - Writing at the Research University
    - III
- In the fifth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
    - Communication Beyond Carolina

- In the sixth year following implementation of the general education curriculum:
    - Full review of the curriculum

Major Articulation

The GEOC will be consulted on any requested changes to majors and will assess the extent to which such changes might threaten or undermine the general education curriculum. In general, majors may not increase the number of courses required beyond the maximum currently required in their division or school without a clear and compelling need to do so. These maximums are (BA degrees):

- Fine arts: 12 courses (36 hours)
- Humanities: 10 courses (30 hours)
- Natural science/math: 16 courses (34 hours)
- Social and behavioral sciences: 16 courses (49 hours)

Assessment and Data Collection

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will assist in the ongoing collection of assessment data about courses that are included in the general education curriculum, as well as on the curriculum in general. In part, these data collection efforts will be used to evaluate whether the curricular goals for student learning are being met.

Course Level and Institutional Data about the Curriculum

Assessments will be included within classes and/or outside classes to examine students' success in learning relative to general education outcomes. These assessment activities will be developed in consultation with faculty so that they may be easily embedded in course activities and/or directly evaluate students' learning in the terms of learning outcomes. Assessment activities will be proactive and may involve mixed methods (qualitative, quantitative, interpretive) to fully understand how students have developed in and used these capacities.

The goal of course-level assessment as part of the IDEAs in Action Curriculum is to measure students' achievement of these specific capacities for general education. Departments, instructors, and curricula are responsible for assessing the quality of the substantive content beyond these capacities. Additionally, questions may be included in student evaluations of Focus Capacity courses, developed in consultation with course instructors, to identify student perceptions and experiences regarding the identified learning outcomes for those courses.

Curriculum Level

To provide a holistic assessment of achievement of the overall curriculum's goals,

cohorts of students will be surveyed and interviewed upon entry to Carolina, at the end of their sophomore year, and at the end of their senior year to assess their experiences and perceptions with the curriculum outlined in this proposal. In addition, examination of student e-portfolios or other submitted student work may be used to assess students' experience and intellectual activities associated with the curriculum. These cohort assessments will focus on the goals of the IDEAs in Action curriculum using Association of American Colleges and Universities Value and other applicable rubrics, in collaboration with Carolina Metrics when appropriate. Students may also be asked to voluntarily participate in standardized assessments of student learning, such as the ETS HEIghten exam, to assess achievement in the capacities.

Alumni

Alumni will be surveyed periodically, focusing on continuing measures of the influence of academic work at Carolina, as well as large-scale goals in economic, citizenship, leadership, and lifelong-learning domains.

Amendment

Faculty with innovative ideas for implementing the goals of any part of the IDEAs in Action curriculum can propose these innovations to the GEOC, which may endorse innovative pilot efforts for possible inclusion. Pilot efforts do not need to be approved by the Educational Policy Committee but may be carried out upon endorsement by the GEOC and support of the dean of the College. Such efforts must include standards and methods for assessment agreed upon before the idea is carried out to determine the success of the innovation.

Amendments to the curriculum (either in response to successful pilots or to assessments) will come from the GEOC to the Educational Policy Committee, which will consider them for support at Faculty Council.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
UNC College of Arts and Sciences

Questions/Comments
General Education Coordinating Committee
IDEAsInAction@unc.edu

Appendix K

Subcategory Integration among Most Popular Courses, 2010-19

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Scientific Inquiry 2010-2019

Course	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	Total	Sub[1]
CHEM 14A	1643	2041	2115	2159	2009	1954	2523	2025	2185	18654	P
STATS 10	1281	2083	1550	1657	1874	1998	2144	2066	2051	16704	L,P
CHEM 14B	1420	1764	1768	1777	1741	1690	1994	1609	1899	15662	P
LIFESCI 2[2]	1792	1985	2021	1972	2140	1988	2149	596		14643	L
LIFESCI 1[2]	1237	1724	1600	1904	2110	2045	2183	653		13456	L
LING 1[3]	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494	L
CHEM 20A	1322	1289	1243	1248	1178	1144	1149	900	1070	10543	P
PHYSCI 5	879	1247	1230	1207	1235	1206	1230	1153	1111	10498	L
PHYSICS 1A	983	1294	1117	1081	1125	1112	1156	1210	1286	10364	P
CHEM 14BL	882	969	927	1257	1123	1140	1271	1275	1412	10256	P

[1] Subarea: L – Life Sciences, P – Physical Sciences
[2] No longer offered as of 2018
[3] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis) credit

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Scientific Inquiry 2010-2019, excluding service courses for B.S. majors

Course	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	Total	Sub[1]
LING 1[2]	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494	L
PHYSCI 5	879	1247	1230	1207	1235	1206	1230	1153	1111	10498	L
GEOG 5	824	1021	910	830	888	693	899	764	727	7556	L,P
ASTR 3	997	789	731	810	795	775	793	796	845	7331	P
LIFESCI 15	431	716	721	715	922	907	922	701	681	6716	L
EPS SCI 15	701	354	849	468	771	823	470	910	703	6049	L,P
ANTHRO 7/1[3]	634	690	642	776	581	472	461	522	544	5322	L
PSYCH 15	189	615	535	568	660	648	509	736	523	4983	L
A&O SCI 1	379	519	473	403	481	472	717	718	559	4721	P
A&O SCI 2	452	397	518	495	518	512	663	405	224	4184	P

[1] Subarea: L – Life Sciences, P – Physical Sciences
[2] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis) credit
[3] Course was renumbered in 2017

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Arts & Humanities 2010-2019

Course	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	Total	Sub[1]
LING 1[2]	1114	1229	1108	1247	1574	1842	1738	1256	1386	12494	PL
FILM TV 106A/6[3]	527	713	691	817	791	814	752	674	590	6369	V
CHICANO 10A	340	352	401	402	399	804	808	881	725	5112	LC,PL, V
PHILOS 7	744	611	253	502	550	451	584	508	583	4786	PL
SCAND 50	296	600	652	627	680	330	215	450	312	4162	LC
CLASSIC 30[4]	546	696	457	328	546	302	420	473	360	4128	LC
ART&ARC 10	523	529	264	735	696	261	452	411	206	4077	V
AN N EA 10W[5]	312	346	464	386	596	452	558	481	444	4039	LC
LING 20	356	351	377	463	525	502	514	488	463	4039	PL
PHILOS 8[6]	356	192	307	412	345	411	404	507	452	3386	PL

[1] Subarea: LC – Literary & Cultural Analysis, PL – Philosophical & Linguistic Analysis, V – Visual & Performance Arts Analysis and Practice
[2] Also grants Scientific Inquiry (Life Sciences) credit
[3] Course was renumbered in 2016
[4] Also grants Society & Culture (Social Analysis) credit
[5] Also grants Society & Culture (Historical Analysis) credit
[6] Also grants Scientific Inquiry (Physical Sciences) credit

Top 10 courses in Foundations of Society & Culture 2010-2019

Course	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	Total	Sub[1]
SOCIOL 1	879	1103	1156	1238	1205	1188	1272	1175	1209	10425	S
POL SCI 20	513	668	652	716	530	565	537	829	741	5751	S
COMM 10	759	651	556	621	657	667	605	602	506	5624	S
POL SCI 10	651	656	665	631	596	535	577	537	759	5607	S
ANTHRO 8/2[2]	463	658	654	602	696	514	572	586	589	5334	H,S
ANTHRO 9/3[2]	486	662	595	568	602	645	623	562	552	5295	S
ANTHRO 33/4[2]	520	675	650	572	596	512	577	478	457	5037	S
CLASSIC 30[3]	546	696	457	328	546	302	420	473	360	4128	S
AN N EA 10W[3]	312	346	464	386	596	452	558	481	444	4039	H
CHICANO 10B	358	394	187	330	170	795	693	502	592	4021	H,S

[1] Subarea: H – Historical Analysis, S – Social Analysis

[2] Course was renumbered in 2017

[3] Also grants Arts and Humanities (Literary & Cultural Analysis) credit

Appendix L

Focus Group Interview Protocols

Interview Protocols

There were three separate protocols for the students, academic counselors, and chairs. Each addressed the same broad categories, save for the chairs, who were also asked about logistics within their departments. High priority questions are bolded throughout.

Student Focus Groups

Thank you for taking time to be here with us today. We are interested in learning more about the General Education program, both in terms of your own experience and what you have heard from others. This can be in the context of your role as ASK Peer Counselors or in conversations with friends.

We have four broad areas we want to address, and we will guide the discussion about each area with some specific questions. To give you a sense of our structure, we will begin by talking about your perceptions of the value of UCLA's GE program. Then, we will discuss your experience and satisfaction with the current model, and we will conclude with any thoughts about what changes you think would be beneficial for the GE program.

I encourage you to engage with one another as we discuss the questions, though I may have to cut in if we go off track or are short on time. Okay, let's begin.

Perceived Value of the Current Model

(The goal for this section is to get a sense of the big picture understanding and relevance of GE)

1. **I want to start by asking you to think about the first time you learned about GEs. Can someone start us off by sharing that experience?**

    (If they struggle to remember, ask about orientation or looking at requirements online once they were admitted to UCLA)

2. **Can you recall if you were you told the purpose of GE at UCLA?**

    - As they are talking, find an opening to expand beyond their experience:

        What do you think students perceive as the purpose of GEs?

3. **Thinking about the GE courses you have taken, did you pick up skills that you were able to transfer to other courses or to your career aspirations?**

4. **Again, thinking about the GE courses you have taken, did any spark an interest in exploring a subject further? Did they engage your curiosity?**

    - Look for areas to prod here, expanding on experiences they have heard from others (e.g., Can you think of a time that students have shared their excitement for a specific GE course? → This will help transition to next section)

Experience within the Current Model

(The goal for this section is to learn how the GE experience fit in with their other academic experiences at UCAL. Also, we want to understand the comparison between stand-alone GE and Cluster, as a GE experience)

That gives us good overview, and now we would like to move on to discuss your experiences in more detail.

1. **First, can you tell me about how students (yourself included) go about choosing courses for GE?** If you would, tell me about the strategy for selecting courses, not necessarily about the logistics of enrollment.

2. **How did the GE courses compare with other courses you have taken?** Again, you can think about both your experiences and the experiences of others.

3. Now, thinking about just the GE courses, did you perceive that there is any coherence among them. That is, is there something that you think ties the courses together in any way?

4. Do you think there are any connections between the GE courses you took and your major courses? Did they supplement or complement each other in any way?

Cluster (ask these for the cluster group)
5. If you took a Cluster course during your first year, how would you compare that experience to your other GE courses?

6. Did you understand how your Cluster course was related to your General Education experience?

Overlap with other requirements
7. Can you tell me about your experience with writing in GE courses?

8. Did you take GE courses that also carried the diversity requirement? Did you feel that received adequate exposure to diverse peoples, cultures, and perspectives?

Transition to next section (and link back to opening questions)
9. We began by talking about your perception about the value or purpose of the GE requirements. Can you tell me if your experiences aligned with your expectations? That is, do you think the courses fulfilled the goals of GE?

(Here, it might help to point back to a specific thing the students said)

Satisfaction with the Current Model
1. Thinking about your experiences within GE, can you tell me about a memorable experience you had?

2. Was there a particular experience that left you dissatisfied or frustrated about GE?

Future Model
1. Thinking about the things you may have liked or disliked, or your expectations for GE, is there anything you would have liked to have seen in your GE experience?

2. Do you have any other suggestions for improvement?

Counselors/SAOs

Thank you for taking time to be here with us today. We are interested in learning more about your students' experiences within the General Education program.

We have four broad areas we want to address, and we will guide the discussion about each area with some specific questions. To give you a sense of our structure, we will begin by talking about your students' perceptions of the value of UCLA's current model for GE. Then, we will discuss their experience and satisfaction with the current model, and we will conclude with any thoughts about what changes you think would be beneficial for the GE program.

I encourage you to engage with one another as we discuss the questions, though I may have to cut in if we go off track or are short on time. Okay, let's begin.

Perceived Value of the Current Model
(We want to make sure we prod for details within each question. Asking for a specific example or a standout conversation may help)

1. Do your students understand the purpose of General Education at UCLA?
2. Do you get a lot of questions about what GE/Foundation areas are for?
3. Do the students report any transferable skills from their GE course(s)? That is did they mention having picked up skills that they were able to transfer to other courses or to their career aspirations?

Experience within the Current Model
1. What are the biggest challenges for your students in finding classes they want?
Do these challenges affect what courses they take?
2. Do you think students understand how the Cluster courses relate to General Education?
3. If they took a Cluster course, how do they compare that experience to their other GE courses?
4. Do the students see any coherence or synergy across their GE courses? That is, is there something that students recognize ties the courses together in any way?
5. Do students notice connections between these courses and their major courses?
6. Do they report any reactions to writing within the GE courses and does it affect how they choose courses?
7. Did they try to take GE courses that also carry a diversity requirement?

Satisfaction with the Current Model
1. What aspects of the GE program do the students enjoy the most? And least?

Future Model
1. Do you have any suggestions about elements you would like to see in the GE program?
2. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about how to improve how the program functions at UCLA?

Department Chairs (Individual Interviews)

Thank you for taking time to be here with us today. We are interested in learning more about your perception of student and faculty experiences within the General Education program.

We have four broad areas we want to address, and we will guide the discussion about each area with some specific questions. To give you a sense of our structure, we will begin by talking about student and faculty perceptions of the value of UCLA's current model for GE. Then, we will discuss faculty experience with teaching GE courses and the department experience more broadly, including the logistics of GE courses. To conclude, we will discuss satisfaction with the current model, and any thoughts about what changes you think would be beneficial for the GE program.

Perceived Value of the Current Model
1. Do students from your major and faculty understand the purpose of GE at UCLA and can you explain what that is?

2. Do you have any evidence (or perhaps try to learn ways) that GE/Cluster classes are valuable to your students (whether taught by your dept or not)?

Teaching Experience in the Current GE Model
1. How do instructors communicate the distinction of GE to their students?

2. Do your faculty perceive teaching a GE class positively/negatively/same as other courses?

3. Do you receive feedback from your faculty about the GE classes they teach; does it figure into course planning or curriculum design?
4. Do faculty get any special/distinctive recognition during promotion/tenure review if they have taught GE classes?

Department Experience (Logistics) in the Current GE Model

1. Are there any incentives for your department to increase/decrease GE teaching?
2. Do you have any process in place for GE classes that differs from normal classes in the major (i.e. are faculty made aware of the GE expectations when given a GE class to teach)?

3. Have you ever had faculty propose GE classes to the dept? If so, is there a process for designing/mounting GE courses?

Satisfaction with the Current Model

1. From your vantage point, what is working with GE?
2. What are your department's current challenges with GE?

3. What do you think the relationship is between GE and your majors or minors? What would you like it to be?

Future Model

1. Would your department/faculty like to have more or less involvement in teaching GE classes, on average?
2. If the GE system were fully independent of your department (e.g. like the Cluster program) would you have any incentives/disincentives to allow faculty to teach GEs?

3. Similarly, would you in theory or practice support your faculty to teach in interdisciplinary programs (e.g. Cluster program) outside of the department? If so, what is the incentive? If not, what is the deterrent?

4. If your department were required to mount some number of GE classes, how would it affect your curriculum and major?
5. How do anticipate the new budget model to impact your GE offerings?

Appendix M

2018 Senior Survey Questions on the Cluster Program

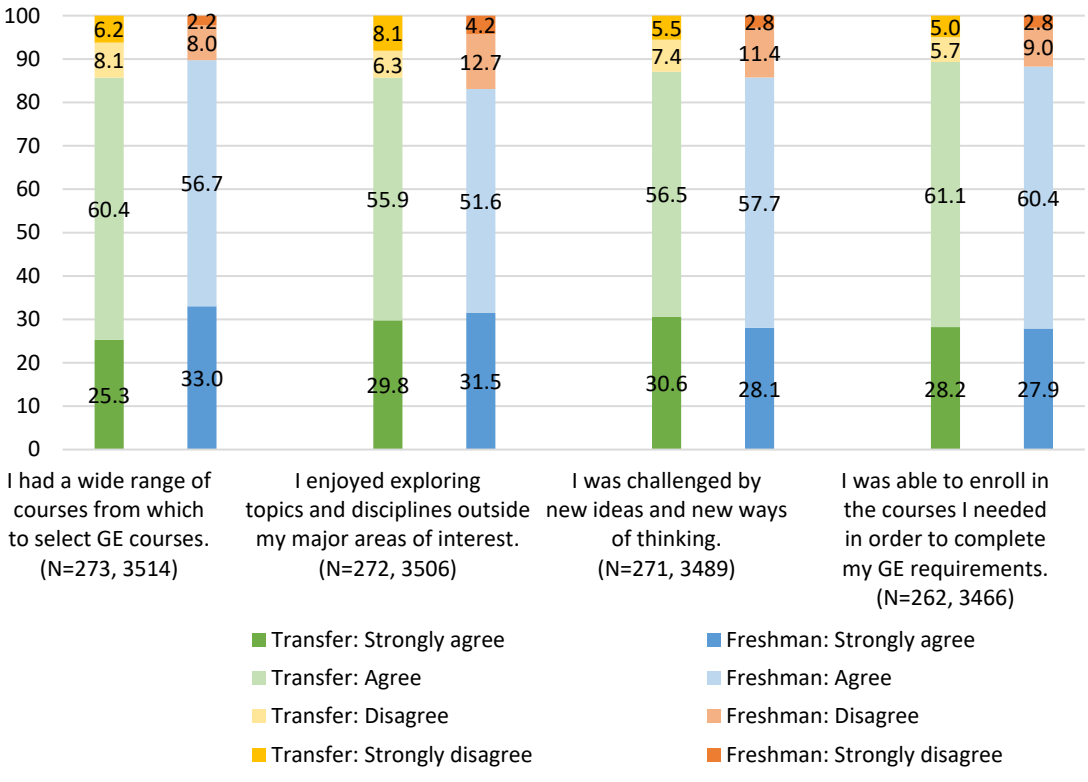
General GE Experiences

Over 6,100 graduating students responded to the 2018 Senior Survey. As part of their survey participation, students had the opportunity to reflect on their GE experiences, generally, as well as experiences in the GE Cluster program. The following section summarizes survey responses regarding general GE experiences, by admissions status (i.e., freshman admit vs. transfer) for the 63.3% of survey respondents who reported completing most of their GE requirements at UCLA.

Table 1. General GE Participation and Major/Minor Selection, by Admission Type (% Yes)

	Transfer		Freshman	
	N	%	N	%
Did you complete most of your General Education (GE) requirements at UCLA? (Filter item for subsequent survey questions)	286	11.8	3600	96.8
I selected my major after taking a GE course in the area.	97	35.7	657	19.0
I elected to take a minor after taking a GE course in the area.	52	19.3	592	17.3

Figure 1. General GE Experience, by Admission Type



GE Cluster Experiences

22.1% of survey respondents reported having enrolled in a GE Cluster. Students who indicated that they enrolled in the GE Cluster program were then asked to reflect on those experiences. The following section summarizes students' (non-disaggregated) responses regarding their Clusters.

Figure 2: GE Cluster Enrollment (N=6144)

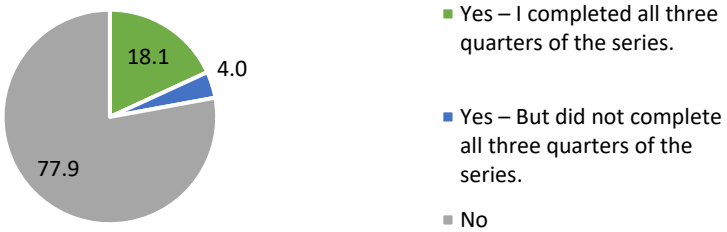
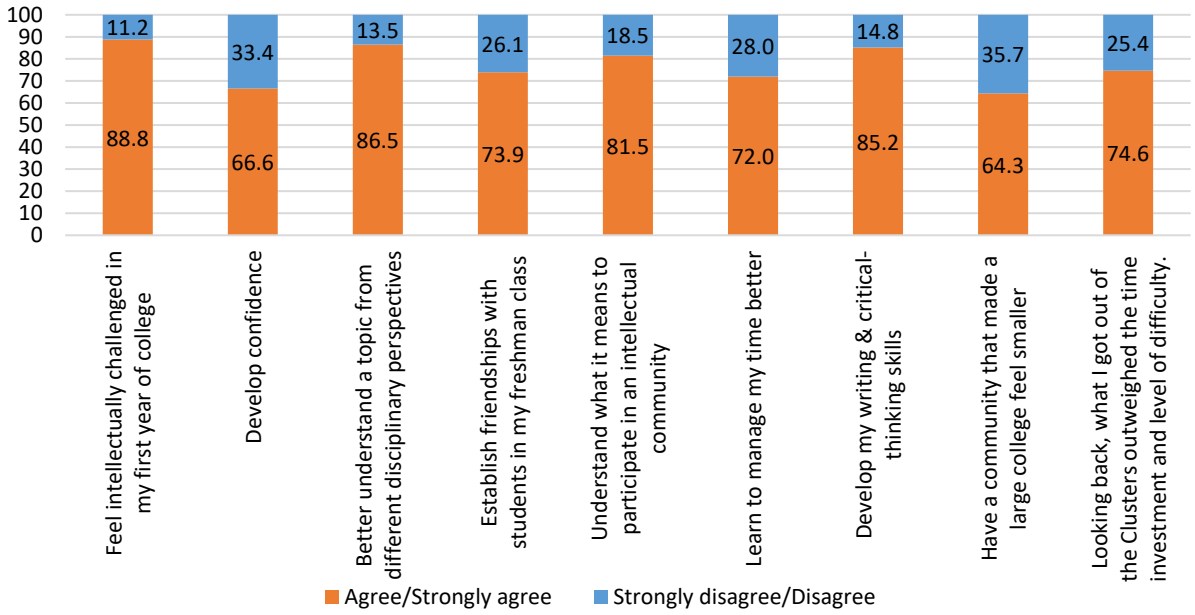


Table 2. GE Cluster Participation (N=1359)

	N	%
GE Cluster M1A-M1B-M1CW. Food: Lens for Environment and Sustainability	78	5.7
GE Cluster 20A-20B-20CW. Interracial Dynamics in American Culture and Society	165	12.1
GE Cluster 21A-21B-21CW. History of Modern Thought	141	10.4
GE Cluster 22A-22B-22CW. Toward World Economy: Perils and Promise of Globalization	5	0.4
GE Cluster 23A-23B-23CW. Inside Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary Exploration of Performance in Society and Culture	7	0.5
GE Cluster M24A-M24B-M24CW. Work, Labor, and Social Justice in U.S.	5	0.4
GE Cluster 25A-25B-25CW. Politics, Society, and Urban Culture in East Asia	10	0.7
GE Cluster 26A-26B-26CW. Poverty and Health in Latin America	84	6.2
GE Cluster 30A-30B-30CW. Never-Ending Stories: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Myth	18	1.3
GE Cluster 40A-40B-40CW. Chinese Classics, Their Legacy in East Asia, and Reimagination in Modern Times	16	1.2
GE Cluster 60A-60B-60CW. America in Sixties: Politics, Society, and Culture, 1954 to 1974	144	10.6
GE Cluster 66A-66B-66CW. Los Angeles: The Cluster	110	8.1
GE Cluster 70A-70DW. Evolution of Cosmos and Life	122	9.0
GE Cluster M71A-M71B-M71CW. Biotechnology and Society	80	5.9
GE Cluster M72A-M72B-M72CW. Sex from Biology to Gendered Society	120	8.8
GE Cluster 73A-73B-73CW. Mind over Matter: History, Science, and Philosophy of Brain	104	7.7
GE Cluster 80A-80B-80CW. Frontiers in Human Aging	63	4.6
Other, please specify	87	6.4

Students responded positively about their experiences in their GE Cluster. Nearly 75% agreed or strongly agreed that looking back, what they got out of the Clusters outweighed the time investment and level of difficulty (see Figure 3). Furthermore, over 85% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the GE Cluster provided intellectual challenge in their first year of college (88.8%), gave them a better understanding of a topic from different disciplinary perspectives (86.5%), and helped them develop their writing and critical thinking skills (85.2%).

Figure 3. Opinions on GE Cluster (N=1304)



Among characteristics of the GE Cluster program, the two most commonly identified as very valuable/ essential were the interdisciplinary approach (73.4%) and the package of GE/Writing II credit (79.8%).

Figure 4. Value of GE Cluster (N=1299)

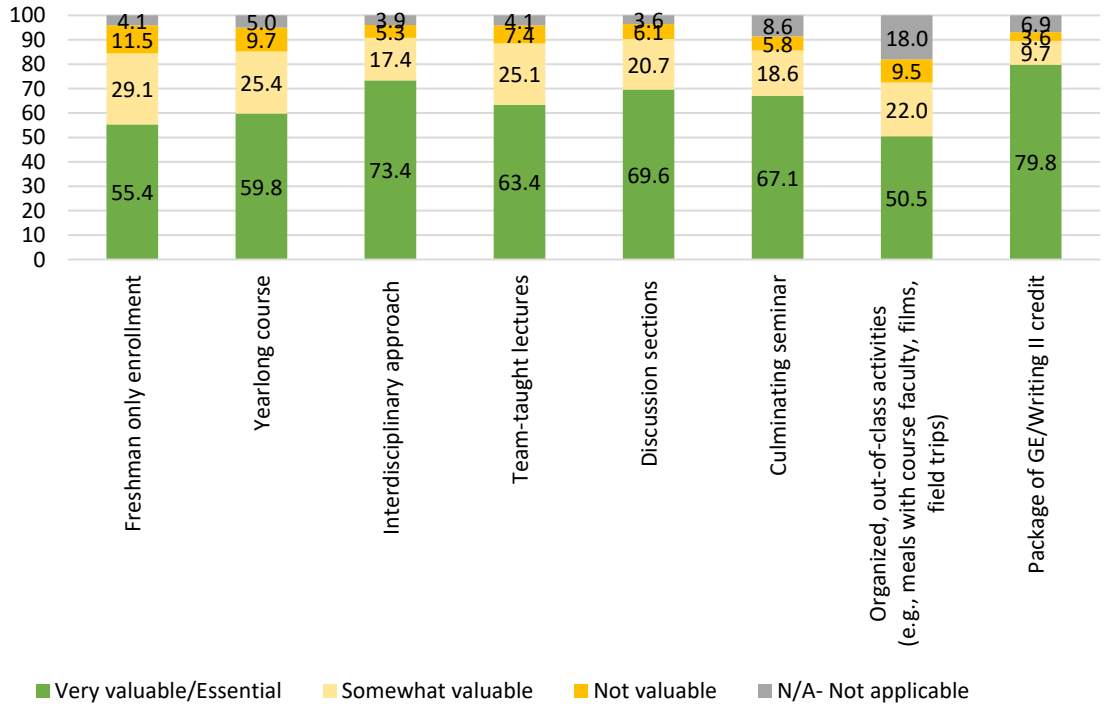


Table 3. Opinions on GE Cluster, by Cluster (if N>10)

	M1A-M1B-M1CW. Food…	20A-20B-20CW. Interracial Dynamics in American Culture & Society	21A-21B-21CW. History of Modern Thought	26A-26B-26CW. Poverty & Health in Latin America	30A-30B-30CW. Never-Ending Stories…	40A-40B-40CW. Chinese Classics…	60A-60B-60CW. America in Sixties…	66A-66B-66CW. Los Angeles…	70A-70DW. Evolution of Cosmos & Life	M71A-M71B-M71CW. Biotech. & Society	M72A-M72B-M72CW. Sex from Biology to Gendered Society	73A-73B-73CW. Mind over Matter…	80A-80B-80CW. Frontiers in Human Aging	All Respondents
Feel intellectually challenged in my first year of college Crosstabulation														
Total	*74*	*160*	*134*	*81*	*17*	*16*	*139*	*107*	*117*	*78*	*114*	*100*	*59*	*1304*
Agree/Strongly Agree	85.1%	87.5%	89.6%	88.9%	88.2%	87.5%	89.9%	84.1%	90.6%	91.0%	95.6%	92.0%	88.1%	88.8%
Develop confidence interacting with faculty														
Total	*74*	*160*	*134*	*80*	*17*	*16*	*139*	*106*	*117*	*78*	*114*	*100*	*59*	*1302*
Agree/Strongly Agree	73.0%	60.0%	61.9%	66.3%	82.4%	81.3%	64.7%	67.0%	75.2%	46.2%	64.9%	71.0%	79.7%	66.6%
Better understand a topic from different disciplinary perspectives														
Total	*74*	*160*	*133*	*80*	*17*	*16*	*140*	*107*	*117*	*78*	*113*	*99*	*59*	*1301*
Agree/Strongly Agree	86.5%	83.1%	82.0%	93.8%	82.4%	93.8%	85.7%	86.0%	87.2%	85.9%	92.0%	90.9%	91.5%	86.5%
Establish friendships with students in my freshman class														
Total	*74*	*160*	*134*	*80*	*17*	*16*	*139*	*106*	*118*	*78*	*113*	*100*	*59*	*1301*
Agree/Strongly Agree	85.1%	71.3%	65.7%	76.3%	58.8%	81.3%	70.5%	80.2%	81.4%	62.8%	68.1%	82.0%	74.6%	73.9%
Understand what it means to participate in an intellectual community														
Total	*74*	*160*	*133*	*80*	*17*	*16*	*136*	*105*	*118*	*78*	*114*	*100*	*59*	*1297*
Agree/Strongly Agree	85.1%	77.5%	81.2%	82.5%	88.2%	87.5%	77.2%	83.8%	86.4%	71.8%	86.0%	82.0%	86.4%	81.5%
Learn to manage my time better														
Total	*74*	*159*	*133*	*80*	*17*	*16*	*139*	*105*	*116*	*77*	*114*	*99*	*59*	*1295*
Agree/Strongly Agree	74.3%	69.8%	69.9%	68.8%	82.4%	81.3%	73.4%	73.3%	74.1%	54.5%	75.4%	73.7%	72.9%	72.0%
Develop my writing & critical-thinking skills														
Total	*74*	*159*	*132*	*79*	*17*	*16*	*138*	*107*	*116*	*77*	*114*	*100*	*59*	*1295*
Agree/Strongly Agree	79.7%	85.5%	88.6%	83.5%	82.4%	81.3%	88.4%	88.8%	83.6%	81.8%	86.8%	84.0%	89.8%	85.2%
Have a community that made a large college feel smaller														
Total	*73*	*160*	*133*	*78*	*17*	*16*	*139*	*104*	*116*	*77*	*113*	*99*	*59*	*1290*
Agree/Strongly Agree	74.0%	60.0%	54.1%	70.5%	58.8%	93.8%	64.0%	66.3%	68.1%	48.1%	62.8%	63.6%	71.2%	64.3%
Freshmen-only enrollment														
Total	*74*	*160*	*133*	*81*	*17*	*14*	*140*	*107*	*118*	*77*	*113*	*100*	*57*	*1299*
Very valuable/Essential	58.1%	55.6%	43.6%	69.1%	58.8%	50.0%	59.3%	61.7%	61.0%	50.6%	53.1%	52.0%	56.1%	55.4%
Yearlong course														
Total	*73*	*159*	*133*	*80*	*17*	*15*	*140*	*107*	*118*	*77*	*112*	*99*	*57*	*1293*
Very valuable/Essential	64.4%	56.0%	57.1%	70.0%	52.9%	53.3%	65.0%	59.8%	66.1%	46.8%	64.3%	61.6%	61.4%	59.8%
Interdisciplinary approach														
Total	*73*	*161*	*133*	*79*	*17*	*15*	*139*	*107*	*118*	*76*	*112*	*99*	*57*	*1293*
Very valuable/Essential	75.3%	75.2%	69.2%	79.7%	76.5%	53.3%	75.5%	67.3%	76.3%	78.9%	85.7%	71.7%	78.9%	73.4%

	M1A-M1B-M1CW. Food…	20A-20B-20CW. Interracial Dynamics in American Culture & Society	21A-21B-21CW. History of Modern Thought	26A-26B-26CW. Poverty & Health in Latin America	30A-30B-30CW. Never-Ending Stories…	40A-40B-40CW. Chinese Classics…	60A-60B-60CW. America in Sixties…	66A-66B-66CW. Los Angeles…	70A-70DW. Evolution of Cosmos & Life	M71A-M71B-M71CW. Biotech. & Society	M72A-M72B-M72CW. Sex from Biology to Gendered Society	73A-73B-73CW. Mind over Matter…	80A-80B-80CW. Frontiers in Human Aging	All Respondents
Team-taught lectures														
Total	*73*	*159*	*133*	*80*	*17*	*15*	*139*	*107*	*117*	*77*	*112*	*99*	*58*	*1293*
Very valuable/Essential	68.5%	57.2%	57.9%	78.8%	70.6%	53.3%	65.5%	57.9%	69.2%	55.8%	75.9%	65.7%	60.3%	63.4%
Discussion sections														
Total	*73*	*161*	*133*	*79*	*17*	*15*	*137*	*106*	*118*	*77*	*110*	*100*	*58*	*1290*
Very valuable/Essential	65.8%	70.2%	72.2%	79.7%	70.6%	60.0%	73.0%	67.9%	68.6%	63.6%	78.2%	73.0%	67.2%	69.6%
Culminating seminar														
Total	*72*	*159*	*130*	*79*	*17*	*15*	*140*	*105*	*115*	*77*	*111*	*99*	*58*	*1281*
Very valuable/Essential	70.8%	68.6%	69.2%	81.0%	64.7%	53.3%	69.3%	62.9%	68.7%	62.3%	73.0%	63.6%	69.0%	67.1%
Organized, out-of-class activities (e.g., meals with course faculty, films, field trips)														
Total	*70*	*160*	*132*	*80*	*17*	*15*	*138*	*107*	*116*	*76*	*111*	*100*	*58*	*1285*
Very valuable/Essential	67.1%	41.9%	43.2%	58.8%	52.9%	53.3%	44.2%	63.6%	69.0%	19.7%	45.9%	54.0%	58.6%	50.5%
Package of GE/Writing II credit														
Total	*73*	*159*	*133*	*79*	*17*	*15*	*138*	*107*	*118*	*77*	*113*	*100*	*58*	*1293*
Very valuable/Essential	80.8%	78.0%	83.5%	83.5%	70.6%	53.3%	86.2%	82.2%	83.1%	83.1%	84.1%	82.0%	77.6%	79.8%
Looking back, what I got out of the Clusters outweighed the time investment and level of difficulty														
Total	*70*	*159*	*132*	*80*	*17*	*14*	*138*	*102*	*118*	*77*	*113*	*100*	*59*	*1277*
Agree/Strongly agree	77.1%	71.7%	72.0%	81.3%	64.7%	78.6%	78.3%	75.5%	87.3%	58.4%	79.6%	66.0%	81.4%	74.6%
How likely would you be to recommend enrolling in a Cluster to entering UCLA students?														
Total	*75*	*160*	*136*	*84*	*18*	*16*	*144*	*108*	*120*	*78*	*117*	*100*	*61*	*1325*
Somewhat/Very likely	70.7%	71.3%	69.1%	82.1%	50.0%	50.0%	76.4%	73.1%	88.3%	56.4%	85.5%	69.0%	78.7%	73.1%

Note: Highlighting based on programs with smallest and largest proportions of response option in given row.

Survey participants were asked to comment on the most rewarding aspect of their cluster experience. Comments from the 680 respondents were coded and are summarized below.

Table 4. Most Rewarding Aspect of Cluster Experience (n=680)

	Frequency	% of Respondents
Topic		
Interesting/ valuable topic	112	16.5
Interdisciplinary/ multiple perspectives	85	12.5
Seminar	71	10.4
Discussions & readings	32	4.7
Learned about diversity and political/ social issues	31	4.6
Explored topics related to career/ major/ minor	25	3.7
Team-taught lectures/ variety of faculty	21	3.1
Year-Long Experience		
Year-long: Built relationships with other students	86	12.6
Year-long: Got to know the teachers/ TAs	77	11.3
Year-long: General	41	6.0
Other		
GE/ Writing II/ honors credits	74	10.9
Developed writing skills	25	3.7
Field trips	22	3.2
Got to know LA	20	2.9
Research experience	20	2.9
Eased transition from high school to college	17	2.5
Being challenged	16	2.4
Critical thinking	14	2.1
Community outreach/ volunteer/ service learning	13	1.9
Small class size	11	1.6
Other miscellaneous	29	4.3
Other none/ did not enjoy cluster	23	3.4

Students were also asked to share recommendations for how their cluster experience could have been improved. Comments from the 361 respondents are summarized below.

Table 5. Recommendations to Improve Cluster Experience (n=361)

	Frequency	% of Respondents
Curriculum		
Too difficult/ "harsh" grading/ decrease workload/ fewer readings	56	15.5
Uninteresting topic/ boring/ repetitive curriculum	18	5.0
Structure: try flipped class; less time on writing/ balance writing across quarters; add guest lecturers; more interactive group discussions; shorter discussions	14	3.9
Improve interdisciplinary aspect	10	2.8
More group projects	5	1.4
Expand diversity in curriculum	4	1.1
Better integrate seminars with cluster topic	4	1.1
Faculty/TAs		
Did not like faculty/ TAs (biased, rude, unapproachable)	25	6.9
More cohesion/ organization/ communication among faculty/ TAs (uneven grading, lack of connections between faculty, shifts in teaching styles)	25	6.9
More mentoring from/ interaction with faculty	10	2.8
More field trips/ out of class experiences/ service learning	15	4.2
Fewer faculty	2	0.6
Administration		
More information/ guidance on choosing clusters (during orientation)	17	4.7
Open up to non-freshman students	11	3.0
More GE options/ flexibility/ take some GEs outside of cluster	7	1.9
More seminar options	7	1.9
More enrollment options/ (not have to commit to full year; switch clusters)	6	1.7
Add cluster options in other majors	3	0.8
Resources		
More clarity on expectations for assignments and learning goals/ outcomes	12	3.3
Improve testing/ tests did not assess student learning	10	2.8
Include study guide for tests/ help with study strategies	9	2.5
More guidance on writing research papers/ writing workshops	4	1.1
Improve logistics for commuters or students who work off campus (transportation for off-campus trips, some classes on main campus)	6	1.7
Other		
Other miscellaneous	26	7.2
Other none, N/A	86	23.8

Students who did not Complete or Enroll in GE Cluster

Students who enrolled in a cluster, but did not complete all 3 terms were asked an additional set of questions (see Table 6). The most common response for why they chose not to re-enroll in their cluster was they did not enjoy the material (49.2%). Qualitative responses to "other" were coded and are also summarized below.

Table 6. "Why did you decide not to re-enroll in the cluster (Check all that apply)" (N=244)

	N	%
Could not fit it into my schedule	61	25.0
Found the Cluster courses to be more difficult than other GEs	67	27.5
Did not want to commit to a year-long program	66	27.0
Did not enjoy the material	120	49.2
Other	37	15.2

Table 6b. "Why did you decide not to re-enroll in the cluster: Other" (n=29 qualitative respondents)

Theme	Frequency	% of Respondents
Transfer student	6	20.7
Credits no longer needed	5	17.2
Other requirements took priority	4	13.8
Disliked the Cluster	3	10.3
Personal reasons	3	10.3
Did not know about GE Cluster	2	6.9
Unable to re-enroll due to scheduling conflicts	2	6.9
Needed to fulfill writing requirement	2	6.9
Other/unspecified	3	10.3

Students who never enrolled in a GE Cluster were asked why they chose not to enroll (Table 7). The most common response was "other" (42.5%) and that they did not want to commit to a year-long program (34.1%). Qualitative responses to "other" were coded and are also summarized below.

Table 7. "Why did you decide not to enroll in a GE Cluster (check all that apply)" (N=4785)

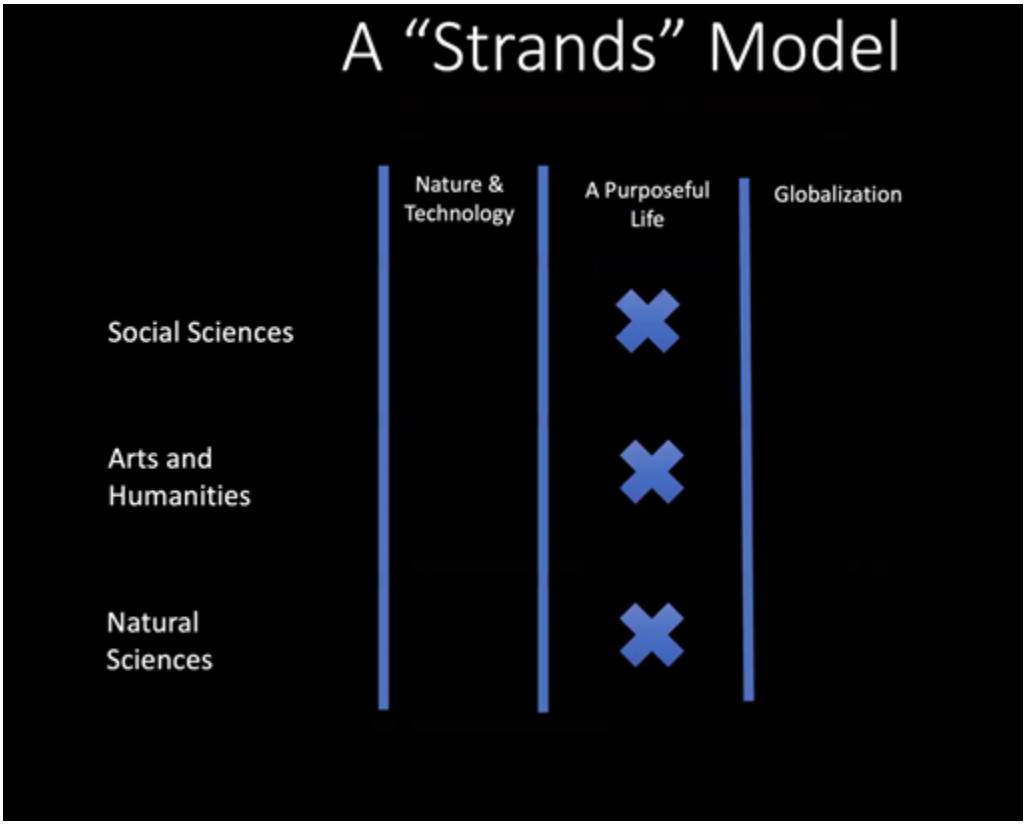
	N	%
Heard the Cluster courses were more difficult than other GEs	539	11.3
Did not want to commit to a year-long program	1633	34.1
Did not find GE Cluster topics that interested me	1387	29.0
Other	2036	42.5

Table 7b. "Why did you decide not to enroll in a GE Cluster: Other" (n=1686 qualitative respondents)

Theme	Frequency	% of Respondents
Transfer student	1118	66.3
Did not know about GE Cluster	167	9.9
Was not beneficial	131	7.8
Unable to enroll due to scheduling conflicts	110	6.5
Not allowed to due to major	51	3.0
Preferred to take a variety of GE courses	33	2.0
Major prerequisites already covered GE courses	25	1.5
Advised to not take	21	1.2
N/A	11	0.7
Fulfilled writing requirement first	9	0.5
Other/unspecified	19	1.1

Appendix N

Strands Model



* Courtesy of Paul Hanstedt

Appendix O

Cluster Program Recommendations for the Current GE Model

Recommendations for Current Cluster Model

1. **Provide incentives for faculty and departments to participate in the Cluster program:** Current compensation to departments is at the same level it was when the program first started 20+ years ago. Not only should the funding to departments be increased to cover inflation, it should be increased to reasonably cover the cost to those departments for replacing faculty. Chairs of academic units are sometimes reluctant to lose a faculty member for more than one quarter, when in fact, for continuity purposes, it would be more beneficial for each faculty to participate in the first two quarters of the Cluster series. It might also be time to revisit the decision to forbid direct compensation for faculty willing to teach in the Clusters as an overload. (This would treat the Clusters like the Fiat Lux program, which has been successful in balancing the needs of the university with the needs of the departments. Even a small bonus in research funds would probably incentivize faculty to make room in their schedule for Cluster teaching.) These recommendations will need to be mandated from the Dean of the respective divisions and reflected in the budget model, where student credit hours will need to be accounted for in a way that does not de-incentivize team teaching.

2. **Pair Cluster credits with majors/minors, including those outside the College**: When Clusters grant pre-major and/or minor credit we see more buy-in from both departments and students (e.g., Biotech Cluster links to the Human Biology and Society (HBS) major; Aging Cluster links to the Gerontology minor). This also has pedagogical advantages in exposing students to fields outside their chosen majors, giving them a broader, integrative experience, which is what we are looking for across the GE curriculum. This could be expanded to assign Cluster course credits to undergraduate majors in Education, Public Policy and Public Health who are not represented well in these courses, but would clearly benefit from Cluster course offerings.

3. **Develop a Cluster-like experience for Transfer students:** Presently, Cluster courses are open to only entering first year students. However, there are many transfer students entering UCLA in their junior year, and thus, are excluded from the Cluster experience. Since Transfer students mainly have their GE credits completed when they arrive at UCLA, a modified Cluster model would need to be developed, which might focus, for instance, on the skills and community building aspects of the Clusters, while possibly granting credit towards majors. These Clusters could partner with the Center for Community Engagement to develop a unique community building learning experience for students outside the classroom.

4. **Coordinate with Residential Life to build on the community building strengths of the Cluster program:** Living Learning Communities and other themed living arrangements connect academics to student life and should be paired with Clusters. Clusters should also work more closely with programs to help with the transition to college for First-Gen students, Under-Represented Minority (URM) and Rural students. Success for these students is dependent on a number of factors such as building self-efficacy, comfort amongst their peers and surroundings, and interaction with faculty outside the classroom, amongst others. Cluster programs provide a unique opportunity to develop the foundation for their success with creation of additional programs outside the classroom. Since the majority of these first-year students live in the dormitories, more programs should be developed for these students and coordinated with Residential Life to better provide them with a sense of community and support.

Appendix P

Writing II and Diversity Overlap with GE Courses, 2018-19

Writing II & Diversity breakdown by Foundation area (18-19 school year)

	Total Courses	Writing II	Diversity
Society & Culture	126	6	45
Arts & Humanities	178	19	33
Scientific Inquiry	72	0	3