

Report from the RGE Staff Subcommittee

[Note from Lauren: This subcommittee submitted detailed notes documenting their survey results and their meetings with several focus groups. In keeping with the other subcommittees' reports, and with an eye toward sending out one document from each subcommittee, I've put those notes together into one document. The opening paragraph below is from an email from the subcommittee lead, Elizabeth Johnson, when she sent me those notes. I've used that text to provide some context for those notes.]

The RGE Staff Subcommittee held five focus group sessions and distributed one survey to reach our colleagues in staff positions from the following areas: Advisors' Council (to include professional advisors from each college, student-athlete advisors, CASA advisors, and community partners of advising), Global Education, Experiential Learning Task Force, Civic Engagement, Undergraduate Admissions, New Student and Family Programs (Orientation, Career and Leadership Development, Disability Resource Center, Student Success Programs, Student Support Services, Mocs One Center, Writing & Communication Center, Library, and the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning. Each of those reports are included below.

Focus Group 1: Reimagining General Education Staff Library Focus Group – March 24, 2021

Facilitator: DeAnna Beasley

Co-facilitator: Elizabeth Johnson

Participants: Mary Marr (WCTL), Evan Gross (WCTL), Dunstan McNutt (Library), Rachel Fleming (Library), Chantelle Swaren (Library), Bengt Carlson (EL), Virginia Cairns (Library), Sarah Kantor (Library-Studio), Carolyn Runyon (Library), David Pleins (WCTL), Bo Baker (Library), Lane Wilkinson (Library)

Overarching themes were around transparency and purpose of General Education program, affordability, incorporating interesting topics, connections/engagement across campus, and barriers to a successful program. It is our job to share the value of General Education in a way that is meaningful; but we don't articulate the purpose clearly to students. Going forward with traditional General Education for the sake of protecting "turf" is a disservice to our students who are working multiple jobs to pay for school and feel as if they are taking Gen Ed to only check a box. A General Education program that is tightly tied to discrete categories presents a barrier, as does the belief that programmatic assessment missing that would hold Gen Ed accountable to outcomes.

1. How do staff think and feel about first-year cohorts?
 - Provides an opportunity to build a bridge/connections regardless of subject
 - Special topics of interest would increase success
 - Would help engage students
 - Build rapport with network
 - Affordability is a concern
 - Connections are not organically forming – cohorts will need leaders
 - Missing structure to setup collaborative work
 - Should we be engaging Gen Ed instructors? Creating connections across disciplines?
 - Flip major content to beginning of coursework, to drive Gen Ed choices in a way that is relevant

2. How do they think and feel about the possibility of organizing a new Gen Ed Program around lifelong skills such as written communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, while also respecting SACSCOC requirements?
 - Create a well-rounded individual (well-prepared citizen) around life-long learning.
 - Not just skills, but interests
3. In the past what has worked well for General Education?
4. Moving forward, from your perspective, what do you believe undergraduate students need?
 - Clarity about what we want students/faculty to get out of experience and why Gen Ed is part of the curriculum
 - Ability to take classes that they are interested in (always full or not offered)
 - Flexibility of modality for attending/participating in the course
 - Affordable, interesting options
5. What are the current needs of students- before your interactions with them and after they met with you/your office?
 - How to be a college student, how to work with these types of people, professors, materials
 - Practical courses, tied to success in the workplace
 - Flexibility in teaching/learning modality
6. What resources do staff need to support General Education at UTC?
 - Better understanding of purpose/outcomes/assessment of Gen Ed
 - Support to instate change: "If what we want to do to make a change, will we be able to?"

Questions audience asked and then discussed to stimulate conversation are below.

Discussion was applied to questions asked by facilitator.

1. What is the purpose of general education? Is that purpose clear to students, faculty/staff?
2. What are the practical tools students develop through general education?
3. How do we support first generation students?
4. How do we support faculty/staff as we restructure gen ed? How do we minimize burnout?
5. Programmatic assessment of gen ed? Are we meeting those comprehensive skill set goals and outcomes?

What remote learning tools can be applied post pandemic to support student engagement and learning?

Focus Group 2: Reimagining General Education Staff WCC Focus Group – March 24, 2021

Facilitator: DeAnna Beasley

Co-facilitator: Elizabeth Johnson

Participants: Beth Leahy, Logan Clem, Gwen Mullins Alegre, Danielle Kriener

Feedback from this focus group was around ability to meet expectations of faculty as applied to assignments in General Education classes, what the WCC wants Gen Ed faculty to know, and key writing skills that faculty assume students have. This session was not so much about General Education as a holistic program.

1. What were the main challenges first year students face in writing assignments?
 - a. Understanding the expectations of assignment, basic academic literacy (citation, tone, word choice, structuring arguments, how to do research), “How to be a student”, understanding the expectations of the writing assignment by discipline.
 - b. Technologies
 - c. **What do we mean by written communication? Styles vary across disciplines.** “Feels high stakes”
 - i. Individual faculty have different nuances of a particular style
 - d. Knowing how to start an assignment, especially new or longer assignment – students feel overwhelmed
 - e. Difficulty taking a skill learned in one class and applying it in another
2. What do we wish faculty members know about the writing center and the writing process when planning assignments?
 - a. Students are unclear on why they’re doing the gen ed requirements
 - b. Structuring and scaffolding the assignment to better illustrate the writing process
 - i. Show the writing process and the value of revisions, less focus on grammar (mechanics) and more emphasis on big idea (content analysis)
 - ii. Provide examples of writing assignments
 - c. Writing Center are available as a resource for the entire writing process, not just proofreading
 - i. Some professors discourage students from visiting the writing center because they view it as cheating
3. What are some key writing skills that faculty take for granted that student know?
 - a. Basic academic writing does mean a lot to many students
 - b. Organization of the assignment (“How do I start and how do I proceed with an assignment?”)

Focus Group 3: Reimagining General Education- Staff Group

Summary: Admissions, Orientation and Career & Leadership

Introduction:

Participants collectively shared reflections on current status of Gen Ed and their conversations with students and parents related to the current curriculum. Some participants expressed never being asked about Gen Ed before and gratitude for the opportunity. Orientation has already

begun collaborating with Career & Leadership to draw students into the UTC experience. Everyone was eager for clear and persuasive ways to describe Gen Ed to students and parents and demonstrate connections between Gen Ed learning and long-term success as alumni.

Brainstorming Ideas:

- Proactively sell and celebrate the Gen Ed curriculum as important part of the UTC learning experience.
- Packaging of Gen Ed is very essential
- Equip first generation students and parents to understand the value of liberal arts/gen ed and reduce the perception that it is a barrier or a hardship
- Focus on lifelong skills such as written communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, while also respecting SACSCOC requirements
- Critical thinking skills are so important but also important to include reflective elements and help cultivate discernment
- Collaboration skills is important (different majors working together, negotiation skills)- interprofessional opportunities – Career and Leadership are eager to support such initiatives

Point of Further Consideration:

- How best to include Orientation office in Gen Ed discussions and equip staff to be ambassadors for Gen Ed?
- How to incorporate Career & Leadership office strengths and capacities in the Gen Ed Curriculum and courses.
- Ensure the new curriculum sticks – transitions can be bumpy but important to persist through to ensure successful adoption.
- How has ‘2020’ altered the particular set of lifelong skills necessary for future graduates to succeed after college and how do we best include those in the curriculum?

Focus Group 4: Reimagining General Education Staff Student Success Focus Group – March 25, 2021

Facilitator: Elizabeth Johnson

Co-facilitator: Jeremy Strickler

Participants: Crystal Edenfield (Student Success Programs), Amy Davis (Mocs One Center), Michelle Rigler (Disability Resource Center), Melissa Laseter (Student Support Services)

This group was passionate about being transparent (objectives to be met are clear, what’s offered and what’s not), offering flexible options (use topics courses to offer passion projects which would allow for clarity when faculty changes occur, transfer work, etc.), and moving past what is considered “traditional” General Education. Students need to develop soft skills to be productive citizens, not just master knowledge that they can access online.

1. Understanding of General Education:

- a. Staff:
 - i. Core foundation to build upon in major courses; includes critical thinking
 - ii. Well-rounded approach to college education with various areas of exposure
 - iii. Explore academic areas with a broad range of knowledge
 - b. Student:
 - i. Means to an end; checking a box
 - ii. Lack of understanding to relevancy to end goal
 - iii. A way to make money for UTC
 - c. Parents:
 - i. What students should complete while in high school (dual enrollment, AP, IB)
2. What's working well about current Gen Ed program?
- a. Core-group of faculty that work really well with Gen Ed demographic
 - i. Creativity
 - ii. Engagement
3. Difficulties completing current Gen Ed
- a. Faculty not engaged in teaching Gen Ed
 - b. Some courses at 1000 (freshman) or 2000 (sophomore) level are taught with the same rigor as a 4000 (senior) level
 - c. Deliver what is promised (certified classes that students "hold out" for are not taught or always full)
 - d. Students with specific learning disabilities sometimes can't complete requirements which as barrier to graduation
 - e. Understanding of when to take General Education courses
4. Gen Ed you would be excited to help students navigate
- a. Topic based courses stylized for the professor that wants to teach it
 - b. Discussion/seminar based to allow for developing communication skills
 - c. With more opportunities to interact/community engagement
 - d. Flipped instruction (learning in a less traditional setting)
 - e. Integrated content (subject based statistics was given as an example)
5. What's missing?
- a. Transparency about what is being taught/should be learned
 - b. How to disagree, argue, and/or have differing opinions
 - c. Opportunities to self-reflect
 - d. Remediation, deficiencies
 - e. Clarity between catalogs
 - f. Competency based learning
 - g. Special topics to allow flexibility
 - h. How to be a college student (study skills) is assumed to be mastered
 - i. Acknowledgment that information/knowledge is at the fingertips of students more than ever before
6. Essential experiences/skills all UTC graduates should have or develop
- a. Self-reflection

- b. Creativity/Innovation
- c. Relating to others
- d. Current events
- e. Experiential learning
- f. Diversity based understanding

Focus Group 5: Reimagining General Education- Staff Group- March 29, 2021

Summary: Experiential Learning & Global Education

Facilitator: Shewanee Howard-Baptiste

Co-facilitator: DeAnna Beasley

Introduction:

Participants collectively shared that students do not understand the intention or purpose of General Education at UTC. The current narrative about GE is not conveyed clearly to students. Students believe GE are a series of courses they “must” take in order to graduate. They do not see how GE courses are connected to their major, minor, or use outside of college. Students do not see GE a way to have a broader view and understanding of the world, particularly from various viewpoints.

Brainstorming Ideas:

- **Example:** Comp 101--- dozens of courses listed by topic (science fiction, fashion design, baseball, astrology, football legends) but all courses have the same competencies to be addressed (literature review, research methods, abstract, endnote, etc.)
- Courses for students who may need to close the “academic gap” between high school and college readiness. Course name: *Learning How to Study* (one course below MATH 1010 and below ENGL 1010) for students to enroll in to prepare for Gen Ed.
- GE can be a great way to engage in hard topics/questions: God and science, racism, etc. Students are going to talk about these things somehow but not in more inclusive spaces where homophily will likely take precedence.
- Focus on lifelong skills such as written communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, while also respecting SACSCOC requirements
- Packaging of Gen Ed is very essential
- Critical thinking skills are so important
- Collaboration skills is important (different majors working together, negotiation skills)- interprofessional opportunities
- Students need space to be curious about knowing things- generating new ideas, maintain curiosity and creativity levels higher than those who don’t take Gen Ed courses
- More opportunities to have more social interactions to learn from and approach their professor

Future Points of Pride:

- Opportunities for students to have shared experiences throughout their UTC General Education but need to be mindful of how much experience a professor can provide in one course. For example: all students must attend the International Fair
- General Education courses should be some of the first courses a student takes when they arrive to campus
- Some students like Gen Ed and still remember those courses today- GE courses should be focused and memorable
- Need some interest-based cohorts to have better connections
- Staff support cohort models and frameworks that support the special interests of students: science fiction, outdoor adventures, international travel, sports

Point of Further Consideration:

- For students who earn AP college credit as high school students, how will these earned credit hours align/transfer/support General Education. Is there a limit on how many AP hours a student could earn that would apply to General Education?
- Ensuring that experienced instructors are teaching General Education courses. Adjunct instructors are essential to the campus, the concern is ensuring that all faculty understand the relevance and importance of GE and can articulate that succinctly to students upon entering a GE course.
- May-mester and Winter sessions to help students matriculate towards graduation
- Instead of grade of "F"- would continue with work during the 3 weeks of winter session to increase likelihood of passing the course (credit recovery)- extended chances to pass a GE course.
- Need flexibility to support transfer, international students, and working professionals- Winter session and May-mester: 3 weeks to complete a 3-credit hour GE course
- Find creative ways to keep professors engaged with GE
- Other countries outside of the US do not require Gen Ed- therefore other universities overseas can finish BS in 3 years

Note: OEI was not available to attend

Results from Survey of Advisors on Reimagining General Education – deadline March 24, 2021

Facilitator: Joel Wells

Co-facilitator: Shewanee Howard-Baptiste

Respondents: Theresa Blackman, Emily Blackman, Stacie Grisham, Irene Hillman, Scott Dayton, Sequoia Holmes, Lisa Tarr, Nikki Ownby, Sarah Alsobrooks, Zachary Ridder

Of the 10 survey responses, there were several ideas/themes that were consistent:

- Well-rounded education for the well-rounded student was referenced by most respondents as the purpose of General Education.
- Transferability is a huge concern and discourages exploration and major changes (even if the new major would be a better fit). At times students get stuck between conflicting requirements (deficiencies that need to be met don't align with degree requirements) which necessitates completing additional credit hours above the minimum degree requirements. Other situations are a bit tricky in that credit transferred to UTC (and is equivalent to a UTC course) will apply for General Education but if the course had been completed at UTC, the credit does not for General Education.
- Lack of diversity and inclusion
- Disproportionate number of seats offered in certain courses with many certified courses in same category not being taught at all.
- Consideration for deficiencies and pre-requisites is missing which presents barriers for completion.
- For General Education to not be driven by majors was a consistent theme.
- Special topics courses that allow for instructor passion to shine which engages more students should be included.
- College perspective (meta-major) and not department/subject
- Space to explore other options outside of major is missing.
- Skills/concepts listed that respondents felt should be included:
 - Communication: written (formal and informal), oral (talking with and speaking/presenting to others)
 - Decision making/critical thinking/problem solving
 - Creativity/innovation
 - Integration with the world
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Cultural awareness/social justice (Tolerance/understanding)
 - Team work/collaboration (not just group projects)
 - Human behavior
 - Leadership
 - Professionalism
 - Work ethic
 - Technology

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of our Gen Ed program?

- They are a core set of courses designed to produce well rounded critically thinking citizens
- To give our students well rounded experiences that they may have never been exposed to before (ex. theatre/music/non-western culture), to teach them how to think critically about the experiences and how to effectively communicate about their experiences.

- To help students develop and refine skills that will benefit them as lifelong learners and citizens, such as communication, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.
- To help broaden the education of students to include a more well-rounded inclusive perspective. Additionally, to build critical thinking skills and deepen students' ability to read for context and write both reflectively and academically.
- To provide students with a well-rounded education and provide opportunities for exploration across different programs and departments.
- The purpose of GEN ED at UTC is to provide a broad and "universal" understanding of a variety of subjects beyond the scope of one's major thus giving the student a greater understanding of topics that are relevant to the world.
- To provide students with basic, universal skills that will prepare them to succeed and excel in any chosen major or career.
- To provide a broad base of knowledge, outside the major field of study. To add to the "well-rounded-ness" of the student. To help build essential skills in reading and thinking critically, and writing and expressing ideas effectively.
- The purpose is to provide students with exposure to a wide range of different disciplines, to encourage intellectual curiosity, and to try to provide a baseline of understanding about specific subjects.

2. What has worked well for our current Gen Ed program in the past?

- It provides majors in the hard sciences, engineering, and business exposure to the humanities. This is vital in helping develop some of the soft skills needed for life that may not get the same focus in science and business courses
- Provides a chance for students to explore content outside their major they may be interested in without the issue of delaying graduation or costing extra
- The English/Rhetoric classes do a good job of preparing out students to write. The Fine Arts classes are some of our students' favorites and it exposes them to things they have never seen/experienced before. Some of the new non-lab sciences are engaging for our students.
- I think our gen ed program helps students get experience and knowledge of many disciplines outside of their major concentration, and it often helps students consider new majors if they end up changing from their original interest. It also helps them learn how to write, communicate, and study with new subjects. I think this ultimately helps them succeed in their later years as a student and as a working professional.
- The categories included in the Gen Ed program are great and do a good job, in my opinion, of matching the program's purpose. They provide the opportunity for students to learn about different a myriad of different topics and receive a balanced education. The department heads have also done a good job of accepting credits for transfer students as Gen Ed requirements, although one criticism is that some department heads claim that because we do not have a course with the same title here, they have to refer it to committee.

- Consistency over years
 - For the US Citizen student entering as a freshman, I've not seen many problems other than options for non-western cultures beyond HIST 1110 and options for general science for the non-science oriented student. The limitations on math for those with ACT scores below 19 are difficult but that came from the state of TN when developmental math was removed from university curriculum. Lastly, 1000 level courses that fall into a general education category should only be taught by faculty who will use canvas, provide feedback and not rely completely on an online purchased product for instruction as done in a few classes.
 - International students who are required to take two US history classes are not afforded the same courtesy as TBR students when two US histories are permitted to count as non-western and historical understanding. Thus, international students -- who may have a life that is "non-western" are forced to take two US history classes and then a "non-western" . . . I can't see how this is not a violation of Title 6 somewhere. But, we give the TBR privilege that we don't extend to international students. Those with an engineering degree of 128 hours anyway have then an additional course. So, Gen Ed is not viewed as a positive.
 - Transfer students coming to us from outside of TN are often denied courses that they took as Gen Ed. In fact, in 2019 a student took a "global" politics course that was denied as "non-western cultures" so he took an approved course at UTC and the same text book from his prior school was used. He had submitted the syllabus when putting in the petition so was a bit frustrated.
 - These are just a few examples. I respect and value the need for General Education and a Core group of required courses but think we are missing some elements that make transferring more welcomed.
 - 1) Minimizing or eliminating prereqs to gen ed courses. 2) Allowing transfer courses to float across the H/FA categories. 3) Offering classes that relate to current events, activities or functions.
 - We have a broad variety of courses certified as gen ed. It seems there should be something for everyone in the selections.
 - It does have a wide range of courses that are options, students do have an ability to choose between different courses. It also allows students who aren't good at one subject to recover on others potentially.
3. What are struggles/difficulties students have navigating the current Gen Ed program?
- Math 1730 - students who come in to UTC pursuing certain majors that require MATH 1950 for their math will take this course if they do not place into it right away. Those that change their major face having to take additional math since this is not an approved course even though the content is the same in 1710 and 1720
 - American Literature - while TN community college alleviate this issue, students from outside TN bring in American Lit 1 or/and 2 but it does not count for

general education. When explaining this to students they don't get how the location of the course makes it ineligible for general education

- AP and the sciences - for some students they earn more AP credit at another school, transfer here after taking the next level but are still made to take the step down. For instance, I have a current student that earned a 4 on their CHEM AP. This gave them GEN CHEM 1 and 2 at their former school but not at UTC. They took Organic Chemistry and are currently in Organic 2. They are being told they must retake GEN CHEM 2 for general education. If we could institute an option that if a student earned credit elsewhere but took the next step here that would be waived it would help many folks.
- Finding classes that meet the interest of our students and are not just the same classes taught 12 years ago with the same content. Not enough Non-Western classes. We need to reimagine Math1010 and need a gateway to Math1130.
- Students struggle to understand the value of general education, and they really approach it as something to get out of the way. Students struggle with transferring gen ed in/out of the institution at times. Students really struggle with major-specific gen ed courses because major changes are common. Undecided students (which comprise a significant portion of new students each year) struggle to make selections that apply to a lot of areas instead of being free to explore their interests. They feel a course was "wasted" if it is not required in the new major.
- There are not many interesting options.
- It seems it all happens in the first few semesters. It would be great if they weren't only focused on their academic majors in their last two years and could take gen eds in their later years so they can connect concepts of, say, history with topics of, say, marketing.
- One big struggle, in my opinion, is the course offerings in certain categories. For instance, this spring there were 36 possible sections of classes that could satisfy the Non-Western Culture requirement. Of those 36, 10 were specifically ANTH 1200 sections and 8 were specifically HIST 1110 sections. When over half of your offerings are coming from two sections, there's a problem. There are some sections in which we need more offerings so students do not get shoehorned into taking a specific class. They might also not know about Special Topics courses that are offered so we might need to do a better job of publicizing those options each semester.
- Not enough diversity options
- Options listed are not taught. Why print a GEN ED sheet when so little from each category is actually taken. Again, the non-western area has so few options. Navigation of options is not the challenge for most but finding relevant courses of interest is difficult. Years ago, students really liked a few courses such as the nutrition course about food of the world - then it went to majors only. Or, the ECHD course on family relations where the course was decertified as GEN ED.

- 1) Students are presented with too many options. 2) Many listed options are not offered. 3) Some gen ed options cover multiple categories and move around on the MMD. 4) Some gen ed options are taught toward the major and not toward general education. 5) Transfer credits are treated differently than UTC credits. 6) Some lab science credits are 4/0 and others are 3/1 credit.
 - Frustration in transferring general education courses from another institution to ours. It is common that the student will have satisfied gen ed requirements somewhere else, only to find that their round courses don't fit into our square holes, and they have to take additional courses.
 - International students having to take "non-western culture," when they come from and represent a non-western culture. If we want students to learn about cultures other than their own, we should provide more flexibility here.
 - The current issue is that many general education courses sound, just based on the name, more interesting to students than others. About 80% of my total caseload asks if they can take classical mythology, but it isn't possible due to only one section being offered with 30 seats. At the same time, students express that they don't see the point of all of these courses, and often they use phrases like "it doesn't really matter, I will take whatever is easiest." Reading into those responses a little bit, I can tell that they see general education as an obstacle to be overcome, not something to enjoy or as a pathway to other options. While we try to explain this, students seem to want to focus on courses that help them in the real world, as opposed to theoretical understanding.
4. What would a Gen Ed program look like that you would be excited to help students navigate through?
- One that provided options for students to explore areas of interest:
 - performance, hands on art, and other interactive courses for VPAR
 - fewer options in THVB but ones that are offered more often (ethics courses are always popular but are offered randomly and do not have much capacity)
 - First year course part of general education, we have great content in the course but students drop it since they think its "extra" or "don't need it". Letting them know it helps them graduate may incentivize them
 - courses that are not the same they took in high school. US history, world history, intro to lit are a few examples. They have just covered this content and tend to view them as something to "get out of the way" I would love to be able to present things that are new to them. We have some options already but they are not offered all the time or are small courses. Expanding special topics would be nice
 - I enjoy the current general education program but I do believe that for international students with a US history deficiency, there should be a way to make both US History classes be in their general education program. If not, it extends out their program hours. They should be advised on this throughout the program and it should be on their clearpath/MMD. Also, more students want to

learn practical skills such as urban farming and composting - would be great to integrate these skills that make our community better.

- A true, common gen ed that is not driven by majors. I think we could spend less time focused on the specific courses and more time on the overall goals of gen ed if we weren't balancing the dept-specific requirements. My prior institution had much more common pathways across gen ed, whereas at UTC, English Comp is the only gen ed that we can confidently say is not restricted at the program level. With more students bringing in PLA and dual enrollment, we are losing this leverage.
- Many options, and options that are diverse and interesting.
- I like the overall skeleton of our program. However, for Gen Ed I would consolidate Math and Statistics into a Qualitative Understanding (or something similar) requirement. For some majors, Math is not going to be a part of their daily responsibilities so either a Math or Stats class would suffice for majors like Comm, CJ, SORT, etc. I also think adding more Special Topics to categories like Historical Understanding, Non-Western Cultures, and BSS would provide students with more exciting options that they could look forward to and allow them to spread out their Gen Ed classes over their four years rather than knocking them all out in two or three terms.
- Something that promotes diversity and inclusiveness, maybe flexibility for those programs and students who need it.
- I shared this example several years ago - my niece went to Univ of New Hampshire. Her historical understanding options included a course titled "Mama mia" -- women of Italy and how they impacted culture, history and life today. She loved the class. Following up on this, the class had the option to do a two-week travel to Italy that summer. All general education. Showing how old world history is relevant to today is critical.
- Innovation, communication, etc are not included. THSP 1090, MGT 1000 or ETR 1010 should be options -- courses that help one navigate the world.
- A gen ed program should demonstrate how classical topics shaped our existence, impact the current world/events and influence/create our future.
- I would love to see more flexibility, and more opportunity to explore their interests. I believe that Jessica brought this up in an AC meeting. If a student has a strong interest in theater, for example, why not let that student explore TWO theatre courses for gen ed, instead of forcing specific categories. Allow them to delve a little deeper. I think they would engage better, and could still be exposed to the basic skills of reading, writing, and expression.
- I would like general education to focus on skills that are transferrable and knowledge that is both useful and applicable. I love learning, I would personally be happy to take many of the general education courses, but what I hear from students is that they desire real skills or understanding over learning a theory of something that they are not interested in and will never return to. I would like to drill down on the specific components of skills, critical thinking for example, and I

would like for those groups to be more closely balanced against each other between departments.

5. Given we are redesigning the current Gen Ed program to meet the needs of undergraduate students, what do you believe students need from your perspective?
- Public Speaking or communication course
 - Making the first year experience part of general education
 - More engagement. With COVID-19 interrupting their HS and college lives, they want to see a person in a classroom that cares about them and engages them. They need to be exposed to new ideas and how to think critically about social media and the news.
 - More flexibility in gen ed options across programs, fewer course options so it is not overwhelming, more online gen ed options (beyond COVID), a common experience across all disciplines (like an FYE course that exposes students to what it means to be a college student), and a greater focus from our campus overall on the value of gen ed. Students and families continually question about the value of their degree, and we need to have consistent messaging about how this brings value to them. I'm not confident that unified messaging exists across all areas.
 - Stimulate their intellectual curiosity, give them conflict and paradox and debate. Help them understand why research is important and vital. Introduce them to the mysteries of the world.
 - I would look at adding a Communication or Digital Understanding category to Gen Ed. In today's world, I would wager that more than half (for some, substantially more) of all our students' communication is done electronically. As such, in-person communication is more difficult for them and the line between communicating in-person and electronically often gets blurred. A category that would help them with either, or both, of these forms of communication would be welcomed in my opinion. We could also include foreign languages in this requirement so that students could learn how to communicate with people in other cultures as our world becomes more global.
 - More course options and buy-in from the students. We need to ask them.
 - I think we are not far from having a good program but relevance, easy access, and an understanding that these courses may inspire one to pursue more courses in the topic area are so important.
 - Students need a gen ed program that leverages their skills and interests while preparing them for their chosen major or career. Perhaps some (or all) of gen ed should share a focus from the College perspective (i.e. A&S, CHEPS, RCOB, ENGR, etc.). Why should an art major take biology instead of a "Science for the Humanities"? Or instead of ENGL 1010 and 1020, perhaps create a 4 hour "Rhetoric & Comp for Professional Studies".
 - They need to be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. From what I see, our students are so immersed in social media and TXT SPK that they are suffering from lack of communication skills that they desperately need

to succeed as adults. I think this is a huge function of gen ed. And as mentioned above, being able to explore topics that interest them, not just checking off boxes. And for the love of all that is good, please require public speaking!!

- As above, I would like more practical application of skills. Ideally, also tie it into student interests. If a student is a Nursing major they are more likely to want to take Biomedical Ethics, so having courses that relate materially to stated majors would be helpful.

6. Lifelong skills will be a core component of reimagining Gen Ed, while also respecting SACSCOC requirements. What should be included? Why?

- Public Speaking - folks need to be able to communicate with others
- Communication Skills - emails, voicemails, letter writing etc. these are skills students are increasingly lacking in
- Decision Making/Critical Thinking- students need to be able to know how to evaluate options and make decisions, increasingly we have students that are paralyzed by making decisions or rely on others to tell them what to do
- Creativity - especially with hard sciences the opportunity to create can be limited, this is debilitating for students later on especially when looking at health science careers. More and more programs are looking for well-rounded students. Providing opportunities to create could inspire them to become more well rounded
- More integration with the world the students' live in and preparing them for the job market.
- I think the most critical components are communication, critical thinking, diversity and inclusion, and social justice. Communication and critical thinking are skills used daily in virtually every profession, and the ability to acquire this early helps students from the get go in college. If they can think critically, they can master almost any type of content to a satisfactory level. I think it also our responsibility to introduce students to themes of diversity and inclusion in support of our strategic plan, as we recognize many students have not had exposure to those of different backgrounds and experiences. I also believe we should equip our students to engage meaningfully in conversations about equity, systemic racism, and social justice since this is an important part of being a democratic citizen and worker in a global economy.
- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving.
- Oral/Written Communications.
- Teamwork/Collaboration (NOT more group projects)
- Leadership
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Any class on problem solving, communicating, or critical thinking would be a great inclusion. Those are the skills that they will be using the rest of their lives, so the more exposure they have to them now, the better. Also, a class on "adulting" and things they'll need to know about coming out of college like work benefits, money management, etc. would be a welcome addition.

- Something that promotes experiential learning. Because we need to recruit and retain lifelong learning and students.
- Technology (mentioned above) communication and tolerance/understanding (True TVB)
- 1) Written and oral communication to clearly state idea/issue, articulate possible solutions and act in tandem. 2) Critical thinking for identifying and solving problems. 3) Quantitative analysis for managing and using information to make decisions and solve problems 4) Creativity/curiosity for innovation and creating beauty. 5) Human behavior for working in teams and managing people or conflict. 6) Cultural awareness for diversity, inclusivity and "world peace".
- effective communication- oral and written
- exploring interest in SOMETHING other than the major field
- Soft-skills, talking to people, presenting, creating and utilizing graphical information. Honestly, the working world requires a lot of flexibility. What I would like, in an ideal world, is to give students more chances with the same material rather than a lot of separate components or one massive paper. A lifelong skill I personally attest to is refinement, and if a student gets a terrible grade on a paper that is 25% of their grade, with no chance to change that, how will they learn that value? If you mess up in the working world, you have to fix your mistakes, give students that experience.