



TO: General Education Committee

FROM: Tim O'Donnell, Associate Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Success
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RE: General Education Program Revisions

DATE: August 2018

This document provides primary source material and background information which may be considered as part of any review of the current general education curriculum. This includes the University's Mission Statement, the Strategic Vision, the Statement of Community Values, and external constraints, influences and expectations for general education.

University of Mary Washington Mission Statement

The University of Mary Washington is one of Virginia's outstanding **public liberal arts** universities, providing a superior education that inspires and enables our **students to make positive changes in the world.**

The University is a place where faculty, students, and staff share in the **creation and exploration of knowledge** through **freedom of inquiry, personal responsibility, and service.** UMW regards the provision of **high quality instruction** as its **most important function.** The University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs focusing on both disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies. These academic programs afford students opportunities to integrate and apply their knowledge within broad educational experiences, to develop their professional interests, and to practice the habits of mind necessary for life-long learning. Through a professionally engaged faculty, the University supports ongoing research appropriate to the development of student abilities and faculty interests. It **especially encourages the participation of undergraduates in research.** UMW's size, dedicated faculty, and historical **commitment to fine teaching** create an institutional culture where both undergraduate and graduate **students benefit from strong connections with their faculty** and multiple opportunities for **active learning.**

Located in Fredericksburg between our nation's capital and the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the University of Mary Washington is a nexus for **engagement among diverse communities** and is dedicated to **supporting professional advancement and economic development** and to **improving the regional quality of life**.

We fulfill our mission by **immersing students, faculty, and staff in local, regional, national, and international communities**, and by inculcating the **values of honor and integrity**. UMW graduates are models of **adaptive learning, personal achievement, responsible leadership, service to others, and engaged citizenship in a global and diverse society**.

University of Mary Washington Strategic Vision

Goal 1: Promoting the values of service and community and civic engagement

As a public liberal arts and sciences institution, UMW seeks to realize the democratic purpose of our mission. Drawing inspiration from our 1908 founding as a public teacher's college, we will instill the value of service across the university, equipping students to address society's demands, to challenge injustices, and to embrace the world's possibilities. By supporting the full participation of all students in their University experience, we will respond to higher education's imperative to provide an increasingly diverse population with the opportunity to improve their lives, their communities, and the world around them. Our graduates will be prepared to engage in issues of the day with rigor, curiosity, and empathy.

Goal 2: Immersing our students in applied, impactful learning experiences

From their first courses at UMW and throughout their major and degree program, students are engaged by their faculty in student-centered, high impact learning experiences that prepare them for intellectual and professional success, and to live productive and full lives in their communities. Undergraduate and graduate students develop in a learning environment that is collaborative, where they are challenged by innovative and demanding teaching, and where their "classroom" is defined by the problems they seek to understand and solve and extends to the laboratory, the studio, the field, and their residence halls. UMW students become not just consumers of information but they learn to discover, create, and produce knowledge through research, internships, service learning, course work, creative work and living/learning programs that are grounded in civic and community engagement.

Goal 3: Adapting the liberal arts to an age of accelerations and a global digital environment

UMW must prepare our students to live, work, and serve effectively in this Age of Accelerations, and we do so by intentionally fostering the ability in our students to consume

and produce digital knowledge critically, ethically, and responsibly, as well as to creatively adapt to emerging technology while developing the intellectual skills necessary to address the world's biggest problems. The University is already a national leader in the digital liberal arts, in our humane integration of technology into our teaching, our learning, our engagement, and our lives. But more can be done. UMW will ensure that all students, regardless of major, will develop digital fluency during their time at the University, that our faculty and staff will model digitally enabled learning in and out of the classroom that goes well beyond current forms of online learning, that unique programs will provide the framework for other innovations in teaching and learning, and that our focus on the digital world complements our longstanding history of strong, genuine, human connections.

Goal 4: Creating a diverse and inclusive community as an essential requirement for academic excellence and academic success

Diversity and inclusion define UMW's commitment to serve the educational aspirations of all those in our communities. A diverse and inclusive classroom, innovative and culturally relevant pedagogies, and academic programs that are responsive and relevant to global change are fundamental and essential requirements for academic excellence and academic success. Further, as a public university, building and exemplifying a culture of broadly based civic engagement is needed now more than ever amid our nation's current political and cultural divisiveness.

University of Mary Washington Statement of Community Values

As a public, liberal arts university, the University of Mary Washington community is dedicated to providing a diverse, accepting, and supportive environment that holds all of its members to the highest standards of conduct, scholarship, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, and engagement. Through a commitment to these values, we strive to transform our academic community into a place where all will learn, thrive, and grow. As faculty, staff, and students of the UMW community, we are committed to upholding these common values:

- Accountability – we promote practices, behaviors, and attitudes where individuals take responsibility for their actions and decisions.
- Scholarship – we promote intellectual inquiry by engaging ideas and one another in order to gain better understanding and contribute to knowledge.
- Personal and Institutional Integrity – we are honorable in our academic and work endeavors as well as our interactions with others.
- Inclusive Excellence – we strive for all members of the community to have equitable access to opportunities for participation and the resources necessary for success.
- Respect and Civility – we foster an environment in which every individual is treated with dignity at all times by valuing the inherent worth of all identities, abilities, and differences.

- Engagement – we develop engaged members of our community who actively participate in the community through responsible leadership and service.

We ASPIRE to live these values and work to support our collective and individual successes.

Questions:

Given these primary foundational statements, what do you see as the “characteristics of a UMW graduate” that describe the intellectual, personal, and social characteristics developed by a UMW education -- characteristics that fulfill our mission, strategic vision and community values -- including a commitment to the values of service, diversity, inclusion, community engagement, and equity in a pluralistic democracy, and the skills to live and work productively and well in an interconnected and global environment?

What is the curriculum that will ensure UMW graduates will develop those characteristics and skills?

What is the core curriculum, the course of study every UMW undergraduate should have, that fulfills the promise of our mission and strategic vision for all our students in 2018 and in the years to come?

What is the core, shared undergraduate academic experience that defines UMW?

Constraints/Influences on a General Education Program

(1) **SCHEV Core Competencies:** The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia’s (SCHEV) “Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education”¹ requires UMW to assess student achievement in at least six competency areas representing several different types of knowledge and/or skills. Each institution in Virginia is required to assess the following four competencies:

- **Critical Thinking** – The ability to subject one’s own and others’ ideas, arguments, assumptions, and evidence to careful and logical scrutiny in order to make an informed judgment, draw a sound conclusion, or solve a problem.
- **Written Communication** – The ability to develop and communicate ideas effectively in writing as appropriate to a given context, purpose and

¹ <http://www.schev.edu/docs/default-source/institution-section/GuidancePolicy/assessment/policy-on-student-learning-assessment-and-quality-in-undergraduate-education.pdf>

audience. It includes a variety of styles, genres, and media, including computer-mediated communications.

- **Quantitative Reasoning** – The ability to manipulate, analyze, and/or evaluate numbers and numerical data. It may involve calculation and/or analysis and interpretation of quantitative information derived from existing databases or systematic observations, and may be based in a variety of disciplines, not limited to mathematics and the natural and physical sciences.
- **Civic Engagement** – An array of knowledge, abilities, values, attitudes, and behaviors that in combination allow individuals to contribute to the civic life of their communities. It may include, among other things, exploration of one’s role and responsibilities in society; knowledge of and ability to engage with political systems and processes; and/or course-based or extra-curricular efforts to identify and address issues of public or community concern.

Two competencies are selected by the institutions themselves and on February 28, 2018, the University Faculty Council approved the recommendation of the University General Education Committee that **Oral Communication** and **Digital Literacy** are the competencies that UMW will assess.

- (2) **Accreditation:** The Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 2018 Principles of Accreditation² Standard 8.2.b requires UMW to identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results to include *student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.*

Furthermore, Standard 9.3 requires that UMW *require the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:*

- (a) Is based on a coherent rationale.*
- (b) Is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program (30 semester hours or the equivalent in a baccalaureate program)*
- (c) Ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.*

In 2010, the SACSCOC Executive Council adopted the following interpretation of what the breadth of knowledge requirement which states: “Courses in basic

² <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the one course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement.” Further details describing this standard and its interpretation can be found in the 2018 Principles of Accreditation Resource Manual.³

Finally, it will be important to develop a coherent rationale as part of any process of revising the UMW general education curriculum. That rationale, should relate directly to the courses and requirements. For example, if general education is designed to provide a broad base of knowledge, are there compelling reasons to allow more focused upper level courses to satisfy a particular requirement.

(3) **Career Readiness:** One relevant question for the General Education Committee to address is the extent to which the General Education curriculum contributes to the career readiness of UMW graduates. There are many different profiles of graduates which may be considered. For example, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines career readiness as the attainment of and demonstration of the competencies that are required for a college graduate to successfully transition in to the workplace.⁴

- **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- **Oral/Written Communications:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.
- **Digital Technology:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

³ <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018%20POA%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

- **Leadership:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
- **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.
- **Career Management:** Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- **Global/Intercultural Fluency:** Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates, openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

(4) **HB 919/SB631 – Passport Program:** Legislation adopted in the 2018 General Assembly⁵ requires the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to develop by July 1, 2020 a uniform certificate of a 30-credit general studies program and a one-semester 15-credit passport program at each comprehensive community college. As a result, these programs will be expected to synchronize with general education programs at four-year institutions. As of summer 2018, the proposed Passport to be in effect consists of 15 credit hours: communication (3), humanities/fine arts (3), social/behavioral science (3), natural science (4) and mathematics (3). John Morello is UMW's representative to the SCHEV working group which will be meeting throughout the upcoming year.

⁵ <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+sum+SB631>

Proposed Passport: 15-Credit Hour Draft			
Content Area	VCCS Courses	# of Inst Accepting as GE	Inst not Accepting as Specific GE
Communication (3 credits)	ENG 111	12	JMU [^] , W&M [^]
Humanities/Fine Arts (3 credits)	ART 101	14	
	ART 102	14	
	ART 201	13	LU [^]
	ART 202	13	LU [^]
	MUS 121	12	CNU [^] , W&M* [^]
Social/Behavioral Science (3 credits)	ECO 201	14	
	ECO 202	12	JMU [^] , LU [^]
	HIS 101	12	CNU [^] , JMU [^]
	HIS 102	12	CNU [^] , JMU [^]
	HIS 111	14	
	HIS 112	14	
	HIS 121	13	JMU* [^] #
	HIS 122	13	JMU* [^] #
	PLS 135	13	NSU [^]
	PLS 211	13	VT* ⁺
	PSY 200	13	NSU [^]
	SOC 200	12	CNU [^] , JMU [^]
	SOC 211	13	VT* ⁺
Natural Sciences (4 credits)	BIO 101	14	
	CHM 101	14	
	CHM 111	14	
Mathematics (3 credits)	MTH 154	10	CNU, UVA, VSU, W&M
	MTH 155	8	CNU, GMU, NSU, UVA, UVA Wise, VSU
	MTH 161	9	JMU, NSU, UMW, UVA, W&M
	MTH 167	9	JMU, GMU, UMW, UVA, W&M
	MTH 245	14	
	MTH 263	14	

	MTH 266	14	
Total Credit Hours in Passport = 16 credit hours			
* = Credit for 2 course sequence or course			
+ = Course under review			
^ = Course review feedback received			
# = Could accept course if revised			
<p>Note: UVA does not have a math general education requirement that is applicable to all students. In the College of Arts and Sciences, students currently have to complete 12 credits from two different department to satisfy the Natural Sciences and Math area requirements. For Engineering, outside of the of the required math most majors require at least one additional upper-division math courses.</p>			
<p>Note: VMI not included in Passport course listing.</p>			