

GENERAL EDUCATION PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION

The University General Education Committee has developed two proposals each with two variants presented herein and offered as starting points for discussions about how to structure the next General Education curriculum. The goals the Committee has defined for a revised General Education curriculum are the following:

1. to address the needs of our current students during their time at UMW and prepare them for success upon graduation
2. to reflect the knowledge and skills we define as essential for a UMW graduate while upholding the mission statement, strategic vision, and statement of community values of the institution
3. to make UMW's requirements more streamlined, which will allow our students flexibility in their overall coursework

The two proposals presented meet those goals, and each is in compliance with the minimum specifications for a general education program as stated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the regional accrediting agency with jurisdiction over Mary Washington and its programs. Each proposal also will enable UMW to meet its obligations for the required reporting of student core competency measurements to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). In addition, the proposed curricula are in line with the General Education Passport and General Education Certificate programs being developed by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Discussion of the proposals will take place in a series of open forums scheduled during the month of February, beginning with the general faculty meeting on February 6th, at 4 p.m. Additional forum dates, times, and locations will be posted on the University General Education Committee website (<https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-general-education-committee/>). Members of the Committee will attend all forums – to listen, to provide additional information, to engage in discussion, and to begin the process of developing a final proposal based on the input generated through these meetings. The final proposal will be presented at the University Faculty Council meeting on March 27, 2019. Pending approval, the Committee will develop learning objectives and assessment plans for the new curriculum over the summer. After approval of these learning objectives and assessment plans by the University Faculty Council, courses will be submitted for approval for General Education designation in the fall. The anticipated starting date for the new core curriculum is Fall 2020.

In developing the proposals, the Committee wanted to emphasize the skills and knowledge that would be gained from each required course to clarify for the students the benefits that would be acquired through the completion of the General Education curriculum. In the proposals, requirements were placed into three overarching categories: Foundations, Methods of Investigation, and Connections. Courses in the Foundations category will establish skills for later success at UMW and after graduation and ideally should be taken early in the academic career. Methods of Investigation courses will explore how different disciplines approach critical thinking, research, and problem solving. Connections courses will build on prior requirements to help students make links between classroom knowledge, the world, and their life beyond UMW.

The first curriculum presented is our current general education program, included for contrast. The two new proposals follow, with brief explanations of new designations given after the proposals. Each model has two different options, with the differences shaded in blue.

In all of the curriculum models presented below, credit hour counts were determined assuming 1 course equals 3 credit hours (4 credits for courses with labs), with the recognition that this may not always be the case. Credit counts for the second language requirement were determined assuming the student started with 101. Requirements listed with variable credit were not included in the final credit hour count, as some courses that would meet these designations are for zero credits. Any course listed as an Intensive course is an across-the-curriculum course, which could also satisfy another requirement. For the two new proposed curricula, courses required in the major will not count toward the final credit hour count for the general education curriculum.

Current General Education Curriculum
First Year Seminar, 1 course, 3 cr
Quantitative Reasoning, 2 courses, 6 cr
Natural Science, 2 courses in sequence, 1 with lab, 7 cr
Global Inquiry, 1 course, 3 cr
Second Language, intermediate competency through 202, 3 cr (12 cr if starting from 101)
Arts, Literature, and Performance – Process, 1 course, 3 cr
Arts, Literature, and Performance – Appreciation, 1 course, 3 cr
Human Experience and Society, 2 courses from different disciplines, one of which has to be from a social science discipline, 6 cr
Experiential Learning, 1 course, variable credit
Speaking Intensive, 2 courses, 6 cr
Writing Intensive, 4 courses, 12 cr
61 credit hours

PROPOSAL 1

Proposal 1, Option A
Foundations
First Year Seminar, 1 course, 3 + 1 cr
Writing Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Speaking Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Quantitative Reasoning, 1 course, 3 cr
Second Language, through 102, 3 cr (6 cr if starting with 101)
Methods of Investigation
Social Science, 1 course, 3 cr
Arts and Humanities, 1 course, 3 cr
Creative Process, 1 course, 3 cr
Natural Science, 1 course with lab, 4 cr
Connections
Digital Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Beyond the Classroom, 2 courses, variable credit
Diversity and Global Perspectives, 1 course, 3 cr
1 Writing Intensive course in major
1 Speaking Intensive course in major
38 credit hours

Proposal 1, Option B
Foundations
First Year Seminar, 1 course, 3 + 1 cr
Writing Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Speaking Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Quantitative Reasoning, 1 course, 3 cr
Methods of Investigation
Social Science, 1 course, 3 cr
Arts and Humanities, 1 course, 3 cr
Creative Process, 1 course, 3 cr
Natural Science, 1 course with lab, 4 cr
Connections
Digital Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Beyond the Classroom, 2 courses, variable credit
Global Perspectives, 2 courses (can be 2 language courses, 2 global courses, or 1 language and 1 global course), 6 cr
Diversity and Inclusion, 1 course, 3 cr
1 Writing Intensive course in major
1 Speaking Intensive course in major
38 credit hours

PROPOSAL 2

Proposal 2, Option A
Foundations
First Year Seminar, 1 course, 3 + 1 cr
Writing Intensive, 2 courses, 6 cr
Speaking Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Quantitative Reasoning, 1 course, 3 cr
Second Language, through 102, 3 cr (6 cr if starting with 101)
Methods of Investigation
Social Science, 1 course, 3 cr
Arts and Humanities, 1 course, 3 cr
Creative Process, 1 course, 3 cr
Natural Science, 1 course with lab, 4 cr
Connections
Digital Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Beyond the Classroom, 2 courses, variable credit
Career Readiness, 1 course, variable credit
Additional course in Quantitative Reasoning or Natural Science, 3 cr
Diversity and Global Perspectives, 1 course, 3 cr
2 Writing Intensive courses in major
1 Speaking Intensive course in major
44 credit hours

Proposal 2, Option B
Foundations
First Year Seminar, 1 course, 3 + 1 cr
Writing Intensive, 2 courses, 6 cr
Speaking Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Quantitative Reasoning, 1 course, 3 cr
Methods of Investigation
Social Science, 1 course, 3 cr
Arts and Humanities, 1 course, 3 cr
Creative Process, 1 course, 3 cr
Natural Science, 1 course with lab, 4 cr
Connections
Digital Intensive, 1 course, 3 cr
Beyond the Classroom, 2 courses, variable credit
Career Readiness, 1 course, variable credit
Additional course in Quantitative Reasoning or Natural Science, 3 cr
Global Perspectives, 2 courses (can be 2 language courses, 2 global courses, or 1 language and 1 global course), 6 cr
Diversity and Inclusion, 1 course, 3 cr
2 Writing Intensive courses in major
1 Speaking Intensive course in major
44 credit hours

BRIEF EXPLANATIONS OF NEW DESIGNATIONS

First Year Seminar – The 3 + 1 credit designation is to show that our Committee supports the discussions currently being undertaken by the First Year Seminar Committee to make the First Year Seminar a 4 credit course, where the fourth credit incorporates the current online modules and would allow for the inclusion of foundational digital fluency skills in the course.

Social Science – This course would be in one of the disciplines defined by the faculty in 2011 as a social science including Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology.

Arts and Humanities – This course is a re-shaping of the Human Experience and Arts, Literature, and Performance – Appreciation requirements. This course would focus on gaining an understanding of the human experience through art, literature, and the humanities through an engagement in the aesthetic, ethical, and moral issues in today's society.

Creative Process – This course is a re-shaping and broadening of the Arts, Literature, and Performance – Process requirement with an emphasis on the process of creation and critical assessment of created works, opening to the inclusion of creative processes outside of traditional ALP courses.

Digital Intensive – As defined by the Digital Fluency Working Group, digital fluency is the ability to consume and produce digital knowledge critically, ethically, and responsibly, as well as to creatively adapt to emerging technology. In Digital Intensive courses, students will build on information literacy and digital fluency foundations developed in the First Year Seminar to work toward advanced digital fluency. This will serve as an across-the-curriculum requirement, where these principles and skills will be presented in appropriate ways that may be unique to each learning context or discipline.

Beyond the Classroom – These courses take students beyond the typical classroom and seek to provide the high-impact learning experiences that are so crucial to our students' success after UMW. This designation will align with our current experiential learning and community engagement designations.

Career Readiness – This course would prepare students for life after UMW, whether through a major course, a career development IDIS course, or a program through the Center for Career and Professional Development.

(Diversity and) Global Perspectives – These courses would cultivate the skills and knowledge which enable graduates to make effective decisions as citizens of a rapidly changing, richly diverse, and increasingly interconnected world. The focus of this requirement is understanding and working with the interconnections that differently affect people living in different places, not merely an appreciation of difference.

Diversity and Inclusion – In this course, students will gain self-awareness of how they are situated relative to those around them based on social identities and foundational knowledge of the interactive dynamics of social identities, power and inequity. Students will explore how social identities influence the human condition and experience, either in the United States or in comparative perspective.

With either of the proposed curricula, there is a choice between Option A and Option B.

Option A: Courses in a second language through the 102 level would be placed in the Foundations category, recognizing the cognitive skills that learning a second language can impart. Current methods for determining course placement would be employed. Under the Connections category, there would be a course focused on diversity and global connections, with an emphasis on current challenges in these areas.

Option B: Under Connections would be 2 courses in Global Perspectives, with the options for fulfillment listed in the models above. This recognizes the global connections that can be gained from learning a second language while allowing students to elect to fulfill this requirement without language courses through the global perspective courses. Also under the Connections category would be a course focused on Diversity and Inclusion, with an emphasis on current challenges in these areas (some of which are not necessarily global in nature).

The Committee also recommends requiring Writing Intensive and Speaking Intensive courses in the major program, to reinforce that students should be able to communicate effectively in their chosen discipline. A survey of the major programs indicates that most programs would easily be able to accommodate these recommended course requirements.

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