Office of General Education
End of Year Report
2019-20
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INTRODUCTION

The Offices of General Education, Learning Outcome Assessment, and Curriculum Administration conduct work that touches every single student and faculty member at the University of Utah. Each of our 27,000 students completes General Education and Bachelor Degree Requirement courses that are overseen by the Office of General Education. Each faculty member helps to develop and assess learning outcomes and that work is facilitated by the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment. Students who participate in an integrated pathway through General Education, the BlockU Program, are supported by the Office of General Education. Faculty, staff and administration work with the Office of Curriculum Administration to propose and review new majors, minors, certificates and degree programs.

Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies has challenged the Office of Undergraduate Studies to aim for an Exceptional Educational Experience (E3) in each of our areas. Because all 27,000 undergraduate students participate in General Education, this program has tremendous potential to affect the goals of E3. Courses taught by inspiring teachers, learning that is integrated and engaged, and projects that have a purposeful impact are in obvious alignment with the preliminary findings of E3. We move toward providing exceptional experiences for all students enrolled in general education courses in the way that these courses are reviewed and renewed and in the goals that we have set for the coming year.

While data are still being summarized for Phase I of E3, we have been focused on three conclusions this work is likely to offer: 1) our students want to feel, see and understand the connections in their curricular experiences, 2) our students want to establish an anchor point early in their program and 3) our students want to have an impact while they are pursuing their degree and have a plan for a lifetime of impact. Through the Office of General Education, Office of Learning Outcome Assessment, BlockU Program, Learning Portfolios and Major Maps these conclusions are made possible.
NEW GENERAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

The Office of General Education team, along with input from the General Education Brain Trust and other partners on campus, has launched a new way for students and faculty to think about and interact with General Education. The new General Education experience is designed to encourage students and faculty to view General Education courses beyond a set of requirements by providing a framework that supports understanding how General Education courses connect across disciplines and aid development of a broad range of skills and perspectives. The framework brings intention to student’s decision making in choosing general education courses by making the learning that happens in them transparent and accessible. Students are being introduced to the new General Education experience through the New Student Orientation Canvas module this summer. Our efforts to continue introducing Departments, Directors of Undergraduate Studies and Faculty will continue over the summer as we begin to receive new General Education designation applications and into the Fall 2020 review cycle.

An important element of the new Gen Ed experience is to provide an online resource where students and faculty can easily access the General Education information they need. As such, we overhauled the General Education webpages to make information about the new General Education experience clear and accessible for students and faculty. The new website organizes information and resources related to General Education such as course offerings and Gen Ed and Bachelor Degree requirements to provide a more streamlined digital experience. In addition, the website is aligned with the visual aspects with other related and important University initiatives like the Learning Framework, Major Maps and New Student Orientation which provides students with a uniform message across their educational experience and helps them make important connections in their learning.

Alongside the new General Education experience, we have developed a new system for tracking, reviewing and communicating information about General Education courses and requirements to students and faculty on campus. The new system utilizes the Student Data Warehouse resource to connect several sources of course information including, the current “in house” digital system, Kuali Courses, Kuali Gen Ed Apps, and Kuali Build. Connecting these systems allows us to provide more accurate and transparent general education information in the Catalog and Schedule by reducing the number of errors that result from manually inputting information between systems, publishing the information in one accessible place and tracking changes in real-time. The system also supports more functional and accurate processes within the Office of General Education related to tracking requirements, applications for designations, and course reviews. In addition, the new system supports the new General Education branding by allowing for an application that aligns General Education applications in the framework, helps faculty design courses and coursework that support the goals of General Education and connects learning outcomes.
Four groups of faculty have been steadily guiding toward a General Education program that consistently aligns with E3.

**General Education Brain Trust**

This group of 11 faculty and staff volunteers have been meeting monthly for the last three years. Our task has been to identify a structure for General Education that moves beyond a list of requirements to a set of connected experiences that have a unique impact in a student’s education. Using the University’s Learning Framework, the Brain trust has developed a set of goals and learning outcomes to guide General Education experiences. The Brain Trust then spent this academic year refining that framework, identifying learning outcomes, and developing messaging for students and faculty.

Please note that this framework celebrates GE as the place where connections (E3) among courses and people are celebrated. At the 2018 AAC&U summer institute we made the value commitment that GE would exist in the places where the Learning Framework intersects. Each of those intersections identifies an ability that is unique to GE and that we want students to develop. Each of those abilities consists of connecting learning outcomes with 21st century skills and with core values of the University. For example, the “Ability to Collaborate” exists at the intersection of “community” and “knowledge and skills” and highlights teamwork and global learning as targeted learning outcomes. Courses in this intersection will help students develop an anchor point (E3) and the skills to make connections (E3) among people and groups with whom they work and align.

We will begin distributing material about this new framework for GE at orientation this summer and in faculty meetings this fall. We have developed material for students, a new website and a brochure, and a GE handbook for faculty.

**Directors of Undergraduate Studies**

We continue to hold meetings with the DUGS each semester. The purpose of these meetings is to create a line of communication with these colleagues who are essential to the practice of GE and the experiences that students and faculty have. We use these meetings to provide updates on GE, to explain processes, and to get input on new projects.

Thirty-three colleagues attended our fall meeting. This meeting focused on introducing staff and their functions, reviewing designation application processes, providing initial information about program learning outcome assessment, and answering questions. After the meeting we sent out a survey requesting feedback; respondents told us they appreciated the opportunity to establish this connection and requested that our spring meeting be guided by a less robust agenda so that there was more time for conversation.

Our Spring 2020 meeting was cancelled due to COVID but we are holding several small workshops with Directors of Undergraduate Studies this summer.
General Education Curriculum Committee

Data from OBIA asserts that increasing the number of GE and BA courses attempted in the first year of college can positively affect student success metrics by as much as 20%, after controlling for several other variables known to affect student success. Clearly, these courses and the experiences that students have in them are vital to our mission. The General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and the Undergraduate Council make decisions that affect the degree to which students have access to high quality learning experiences in GE and BA courses. These two bodies oversee the quality of the curriculum and the programs through which students earn their degrees.

Over the last seven years the GECC has strengthened its commitment to making sure that courses that carry General Education or Bachelor Degree Requirement designations are of the highest quality and taught by faculty who are committed to student success. These commitments are activated in the criteria used to review courses and in our discussions of those reviews. These review conversations have helped us instill in faculty the need to make instruction in courses engaging, relevant and integrated. Where we see evidence that faculty are struggling to meet these expectations, we recommend consultation with the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence.

• This fall the GECC reviewed 12 new designation applications. Six of those applications were advanced to the Undergraduate Council for review and vote. One application was returned to the faculty member for revisions.

• This fall the GECC reviewed 25 five-year renewal applications. Seventeen of those applications were re-approved. Eight applications were returned to faculty for revisions.

• This spring the GECC reviewed 13 new designation applications. Eight of those applications were advanced to the Undergraduate Council and two were returned to faculty for revisions.

• This spring the GECC reviewed 11 five-year renewal applications. Nine of those applications were re-approved. Two applications were returned to faculty for revisions.

• We are preparing to roll out a new way for students and faculty to think about General Education. The new approach will encourage students to understand Gen Ed as more than a set of requirements and will provide a framework to facilitate choosing courses by making learning transparent and accessible.

• Gen Ed developed an enhanced large lecture in partnership with the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. This course will be taught in the Fall, focusing on climate change and lost cities, taught by two of the college’s premier faculty.

• We are also developing a new system for tracking, reviewing and communicating information about Gen Ed courses and requirements to students and faculty. The system utilizes the Student Data Warehouse to connect several sources of information and will provide more functional and accurate processes in our office.

• The new system will support the new General Education branding by allowing for an application that aligns all Gen Ed courses in the new framework, helps faculty design courses and course-
work that support the goals of Gen Ed, and connects Learning Outcomes.

- As we built the new system we simultaneously engaged in a rigorous process of reconciling errors between systems. Not only did the process yield the removal of 111 designations it also resulted in a complete and accurate database of General Education courses.

**GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS FOR 2020-2021:**

- Engage in workshops and meetings with faculty and departments about the new GE experience
- Continue to develop and improve website experience by implementing interactive tools, developing a new General Education Catalog page and connecting other University systems such as Schedule Builder to our website.
- Develop and launch a “wild card” designation that aligns with the GE learning goals and offers students a premier interdisciplinary experience.

**GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHING AWARDS**

**EXCELLENCE IN GENERAL EDUCATION: SARAH HOLLENBERG**
Sarah has been teaching at the University of Utah since 2011 and has had a clear and positive impact in her General Education courses. This year she is being recognized with the Excellence in General Education Teaching Award for her work with the course, Introduction to the History of Art and Visual Culture. This course carries an HF designation and is offered each semester, most often taught by Professor Hollenberg. This course serves a diverse and challenging range of students including those who plan to major in the arts and those for whom this experience is their first with the visual arts. It is one of the most popular (measured by enrollment numbers) courses on the HF list. One of her nomination letters describes student reactions to her course: “Most impressive to me, however, are the [student] comments reflecting the thought and care she gives to her lesson plans (“guides you through an adventure into unknown territory”), syllabi and assignments (“designed initial assignments to be training wheels for the larger assignments”), her high regard for student voices (“openness to others’ points of view”), all the while retaining a very high-standard of academic rigor (“strong emphasis on developing reading and writing skills”).
Innovation in General Education: Ann Engar

Professor Ann Engar has taught at the University of Utah for over 30 years. Her teaching has focused on General Education, LEAP and Honors courses. She has been recognized with numerous prestigious teaching awards including the Distinguished Teaching Award and the Distinguished Honors Professor. This year she is being recognized with the Innovation in General Education Teaching Award because of her introduction of the Reacting to the Past pedagogy to her teaching and the teaching of her colleagues in General Education, LEAP and Honors. She has become a local and national expert on this pedagogy, presenting at conferences and publishing papers on the topic. One of the nomination letters included the following quote from one of Ann’s students: “Now that I’m in graduate school, I am more fully appreciative of the ‘first exposures’ to many experiences that I’m encountering at a more advanced level. The solo class presentations and group discussions are more regular and expected, but we also heavily emulate case studies of psychopathology taking multiple theoretical perspectives (role playing client, therapist, family and friends of clients, etc), and I definitely would be much less versed in jumping into it and getting more out of the experience Had I not been in Dr. Engar’s Reacting to the Past course.”

Ensure Long-Term Viability of the University

Undergraduate Council

The Undergraduate Council makes the first level of decisions pertaining to all new or discontinued majors, minors, certificates, emphases, centers/institutes/schools, and changes to names of programs/departments. The Council approved four new certificates, four new majors, two new minors, two new emphasis areas, five program or department name changes and seventeen new courses to carry GE/BA designations.

The Undergraduate Council awards the McMurrin Professorship. The goal of this Professorship is to host an event(s) that places academic focus on a topic of interest to undergraduate students. The McMurrin Professorship was awarded to Dr. Ananya Chetterjea.

Professor Anne Cooke was selected to be University Professor for the 2020 - 2022 period.

Additionally the Council restored two programs (formerly departments) in the Department of Health, Kinesiology, & Recreation (HKR) to department status. Specifically, elevate the programs in Health & Kinesiology (H&K) and Parks, Recreation, & Tourism (PRT) to department status and eliminate the umbrella-level Department of Health, Kinesiology, & Recreation.
The BlockU Program contributes to the growing menu of learning community courses available to students. Like other learning community opportunities available, students in the BlockU program experience the wrap around support of peer mentors, advisors, librarians and student success advocates.

Each BlockU program culminates in a real world project that allows students to build a foundation for integrative and applied learning. This deeply engaged learning experience, structured into their first year of college, communicates our full commitment to the Utah Pledge. This year we recruited more students into the program, retained them at a moderate level, are beginning to be able to provide data related to graduation rates and have begun to develop sustainable community partnerships in our deeply engaged learning experiences.

**BlockU Accomplishments for 2019-20:**

- This year 124 students enrolled in a BlockU Program.
- We developed a new Food, Ecology, and Culture Block U with the Office of Equity and Diversity and Diversity Scholars that will begin enrollments the 2020-2021 academic year.
- All blocks transitioned to fully online courses for the end of spring semester.
- The 2020 Block U Symposium was moved to a virtual format this year due to COVID-19 and the cancelations of in-person gatherings. The symposium included 13 projects which received 15,000 page views and 8,590 new/unique views on the Block U website. During the symposium we had a public vote ballot for People’s Choice and a live streamed award ceremony which received over a 1,000 votes and views.
- We awarded $1,000 scholarships to one student in each block.
- Partnered with New Student Orientation to develop the first ever fully online orientation.
Students from the Work, Wellness and the Great Outdoors 2019 - 2020 BlockU Cohort.

**GameShare**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SOCIETY**

GameShare is a crowdsourced video game rental service that serves as a middleman in connecting gamers interested in loaning video games or renting them from others. Gamers can experience brand new games at a fraction of the price of buying one new. GameShare also understands how valuable its customers’ games are, and it provides a safe platform to generate a return on their games.

**Influence of Verbal Command Length on Dog Comprehension**

**DA VINCI**

In this study, I investigated the influence of one-versus two-syllable commands on the rate of novel trick learning in domesticated dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). The design of the study consisted of 18 dogs (varying in age and breed) split into two groups, in which dogs learned a novel trick based on a one-syllable command and another trick based on a two-syllable command. I hypothesized one-syllable commands to be learned more efficiently (as measured in both the count of failed attempts ‘misses’ and time) than a two-syllable command in all dog ages and breeds. The data supported this hypothesis.

**Characterization of the novel coronavirus as “asian” across news sources**

**DA VINCI**

Due to the recent global pandemic, and its initial emergence in Wuhan, China, we investigated the frequency at which different news media platforms connected keywords such as China or Chinese to the Novel Corona Virus outbreak.

Screenshot of projects from the virtual 2020 BlockU Symposium.
Learning Outcome Assessment

The Office of Learning Outcomes Assessment is comprised of Ann Darling, Mark St. Andre, and Donna Ziegenfuss (.20 FTE). Our big goal for the 2019-20 academic year was to have meetings with all 20 of the departments who were in the 3rd or 5th year of their 7-year review or going into their 7-year review in 2020-21 to talk about their assessment plans and work and to motivate them to get these reports completed by the end of the academic year. We met with 18 of those 20 departments (the last two were not possible after we left campus because of COVID-19), and we followed up with as many as we could in the Spring before we left campus in March.

To examine the impact of our work, we looked at how many programs had 3-, 5-, or 7-year reports due this year and how many completed those reports. There were 27 programs who had reports due and we currently have reports from 17 of those 27. Five of the programs did not get reports done this year, and the other five we know are in progress or they will be completing assessment work related to their professional accreditation that we will be able to get copies of: we just don’t have those reports yet. Considering the impact that COVID-19 has had on our institution, we are happy with these results.

In addition to the 18 meetings we mentioned above, we have also met with an additional 31 departments or programs. We met with these other programs either because they reached out or we did because we had not heard what assessment work was happening and we wanted to check in with them.

Department Meetings

In our departmental meetings we discuss learning outcomes and plans to assess them, and let programs know about the updated University policy requiring them to produce assessment reports at the 3- and 5-year points in their 7-year program review as well as at the program review itself. Programs have varying degrees of knowledge and expertise related to learning outcomes assessment.

If a department just has learning outcomes and no plan, then we help them develop a strategy and plan for assessment. For many of these programs, we are taking Section 5 from their most recent 7-year program review and turning it into an assessment plan with their approval. This academic year we have created 50 draft assessment reports by coordinating with the Graduate School to access 7-year program reviews. For programs that are just getting started, we use these draft plans and reports as a starting point in our assessment discussions.

Programs that are professionally accredited often have a well-developed and implemented assessment strategy. In this case we are often learning from their expertise and inviting them to come and talk to our workshops to help spread best practices. We work with them to access their pre-existing reports to add to our University-wide collection of assessment evidence. This year we have made great strides with the School of Business and the College of Engineering in this regard. We now have 7-year reports from all of the departments and programs in Business and we have permission from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in Engineering to access their 7-year reports to turn them into the reports we need for our web site. We have done the same with two of the Engineering disciplines in the College of Mines and Earth Sciences – Metallurgical Engineering and Mining Engineering.
Learning Outcomes Assessment Web Assets

7-Year Assessment Matrix – We are creating a University-wide collection of assessment evidence on a web page in a matrix format. Each academic program is a row, and academic years are the columns. The name of each department or program is a link to their assessment plan. For each appropriate year in the matrix where the department has a 3-, 5-, or 7-year report that is due, we have placed text indicating that milestone.

When we receive a report from the program, we turn that text into a link to that report. This matrix will enable our office, departments, administrators, and accreditors to easily view the status of assessment across campus. We also believe it will serve as motivation to departments as they will see that others are doing this work. Below is a snapshot of the matrix. We do not have it entirely updated yet with the 7-year reports from the Graduate School, but when we do we will be publishing it and will share the link.

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Learning Outcomes Associator and Reviewer

When we meet with programs, we are also letting them know about the applications we have developed that can help them do the work of assessment more efficiently. These applications are now fully functional. The Learning Outcomes Associator is a tool that we developed with the University’s Teaching and Learning Technologies (TLT) that can be installed in a Canvas course. It displays the program learning outcomes for the course, including the relevant learning outcomes if it is a General Education course. It also displays the assignments and quizzes in the course and allows faculty members to associate learning outcomes with those activities.

These associations are stored in a database and assessment coordinators in the departments can then use the Learning Outcomes Reviewer to design an assessment that accesses the student work that was turned in on the relevant assignments. Coordinators select an outcome, the courses they want to pull assignments from, design or import an existing rubric, assign reviewers, and initiate the assessment. When the reviewers have completed their assessments, the system builds tables to display the results.
We had six departments use the Associator and Reviewer suite of tools this semester: History, Political Science, Biology, Communications, the College of Fine Arts, and Electrical and Computer Engineering. We already have interest from a couple of departments to use it next year: Educational, Culture and Society; Writing and Rhetoric Studies; and, the School of Business for their Business Core program that encompasses all of their undergraduate departments.

We presented these tools to Dr. Sneha Kesar, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Engineering and he asked us to come present to his ABET Coordinating group. This generated quite a bit of interest and led to the installation of the Associator on all 30 of the core Electrical and Computer Engineering courses this year. We hope this test run of the applications will lead to more Engineering departments using the tools next year, possibly college-wide.

**Assessment Workshops and Canvas Course**

This Spring we held our 5th learning outcomes assessment workshop. It was held on Zoom because of the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. We had presentations from the School of Biological Sciences, College of Fine Arts, College of Pharmacy, and the Department of History. There were 23 attendees on the Zoom call.

We also decided to record the Zoom presentations and conversations and place them on a web site so those who were unavailable to make the live workshop could access the information after the fact. Each presentation was placed in a Discussion module so visitors can view the presentation and then ask questions of the presenters (who are subscribed to updates to the page) or make comments. This page is accessible to anyone who has a link to it and self-registers. You can access it here: https://utah.instructure.com/courses/624829

The other thing we decided to do with this Canvas course is to add links to the slide decks from all presentations that we have had over the past 3 years in our 5 workshops. They are organized by discipline on the front page so those who are interested can visit presentations relevant to their work.

**Learning Outcome Assessment Goals for 2020-2021**

- As we did this past year, visit with all programs going through their 3rd or 5th year of their program review cycle, or who are 1 year away from their 7-year program review.
- Follow up with programs whom we visited with this academic year to see if they need more feedback on their assessment plans and are prepared to implement them and complete reports.
- Prepare for the University’s 7-year accreditation visit by increasing the urgency of our communications and discussions with departments. We are requiring that assessment plans be completed by this Fall 2020 and a report completed by May 2021. In this way we will be ready to write our section of the accreditation report by Fall 2021.
- Continue to collaborate with TLT to improve our assessment tools to make it as simple as possible for departments to engage in assessment.
- Design new assessment of General Education’s new learning outcomes framework.
- Present to the meeting of Associate and Assistant Deans that is regularly hosted by Dr. Sarah Projansky to communicate the importance of assessment in preparation for the upcoming accreditation visit.
• Revise the Learning Outcome Assessment website so that it fully integrates the University Learning Framework.

**Major Maps**

The E3 Major Map initiative aims to support students in making thoughtful decisions about their paths into, through and beyond their college education. Major Maps help colleges communicate the value of their offerings by incorporating meaningful career exploration, experiential learning and academic curriculum organized around specific periods in a student’s academic career. Supporting students in this way encourages participation in a diverse range of experiences and helps them make informed, productive decisions about both academic and professional trajectories while promoting timely degree completion. After a successful pilot year, this year two colleges joined the project and we added 23 more major maps, bringing the total number of maps available to students to 51.

Major Maps support students in significant ways and they are also the vehicle for bringing together the Learning Framework and E3. They provide common language and visual elements that translate across campus for faculty, administration and students. For these reasons, designing a digital experience for Major Maps has always been in our plan and the money we received from the Degree Complete Challenge this past year, set us up to begin developing and designing our Major Map website. We launched the first phase digital experience at the end of May and students are being introduced to the tool as part of their path through the New Student Orientation Canvas Module.

The first phase of the website focused on digitizing all the content we have collected from colleges and departments and displaying it in an interface for students that is searchable and accessible for students.

Future phases of the Major Maps experience.
It supports students in finding relevant information about majors, accessing resources, and planning their educational experience. Priority was placed on designing a visually engaging, student centric space by information chunking, and focusing on providing guidance to facilitate student decision-making.

The ultimate goal of the digital experience is to connect the content in the Major Maps with other relevant data sources on campus (such as Degree Audit) and present it to students in a profile connected to their UNID. This will allow students to access disconnected resources in one space and incorporate the data from those resources with majors. Ultimately, it will take the support Major Maps already offer students and make them tangible and widely accessible. For example, a student could select a possible major and easily see how the courses and activities they have already completed incorporate with the major and what they will need to do to in addition to complete the major. The digital Major Maps experience will ultimately result in a unique dashboard page for each student that will support them in designing and completing and Exceptional Educational Experience.

**Major Maps Goals for 2020-21:**

- Continue to modify and improve current version of the website.
- Begin planning and laying out an implementation plan for future phases.
- Identify new colleges for creation of major maps.
- Complete all majors in existing partner colleges.
- Develop infrastructure needs for an ongoing process.

**Curriculum**

This office coordinates with departments and colleges to manage the workflow that allows the creation and management of degrees, majors, minors, certificates and emphases. The office also manages the workflow for special course and program fees. Finally, the office manages the creation and updating of the University Catalogue and State Authorization process.

**Curriculum Accomplishments for 2019-20:**

- Integrated State Authorization into our office and created the new “make available” state authorization website (publishes on July 1, stateauthorization.utah.edu) to help meet federal and NC-SARA reporting requirements in an easy to use format. See images below.
- Supported other curriculum initiatives across campus through the new implementation and use of Kuali Build (purchased July 2019) including new degree proposals, Learning Outcome Assessment, General Education, Major Maps, course fee reviews, informatics, and out-of-state learning placement data collection.
- Supported the USHE Academy One Initiatives to review and publish university degree requirements in a third location.
- 5,000+ proposals for 2019-2020 and 200+ program and emphasis proposals in Kuali CM and degree audit.
• Hired and have fully trained staff and were able to support the major curriculum platforms and processes at the University where on campus or remote.

**Curriculum Goals for 2020-21:**

• Create automated disclosure notifications for federal and NC-SARA requirements (in addition to the “make available” disclosures list above) for all licensure boards and national certifications used at our institution.
• Training materials for the curriculum and degree audit for staff and faculty users across campus.
• Upgrade CollegeSource to latest version to help support university initiatives including Major Maps and increasing graduation rates.
• Improve the advisor experience for entering exceptions into the degree audit.
• Cross-training our staff to better support the university.

![Screenshot from the new state authorization site.](image-url)