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REPORT OF THE PSU GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

December 2025

COMMITTEE

In November 2024, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Shelly Chabon, tasked Jill Emery, Collections Development & Management Librarian, Professor & Presiding Officer of Faculty Senate, Brenda Glascott, Interim Dean and Director of the University Honors College, Erin Shortlidge, Interim Vice Provost for Student Success, and Lindsey Wilkinson, Interim Executive Director, University Studies to pull together a task force to address concerns that it now was time for a review of the organization and provision of general education.

The initial task force steering committee was comprised of the following members:

- Mikky Bell, Assistant to Student Success
- Jill Emery, Collection Development & Management Librarian, Professor and Presiding Officer of Faculty Senate
- Brenda Glascott, Interim Dean and Director of the Honors College
- Gina Greco, Professor of French, Department of World Languages and Literatures
- Erin Shortlidge, Interim Vice Provost for Student Success
- Lindsey Wilkinson, Interim Executive Director, University Studies

The **current task force steering committee** is comprised of the following members:

- Jill Emery, Collection Development & Management Librarian, Professor and Past Presiding Officer of Faculty Senate
- Brenda Glascott, Dean of the Honors College
- Gina Greco, Professor of French, Department of World Languages and Literatures
- Cristina Herrera, Interim Vice Provost for Student Success; Professor and Chair, Chicana and Latina Studies Department
- Tia Freeloove Kirk, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Projects, Office of Academic Affairs, Project Management
- Lindsey Wilkinson, Interim Executive Director, University Studies

Current Portland State University Student Needs Subcommittee:

- Sarah Dougher, University Studies, Chair of the Subcommittee
- Ben Anderson-Nathe, Child, Youth, and Family Studies
- Christopher Carey, Criminology & Criminal Justice
- Esperanza (Espie) De La Vega, School of Education
- Greg Flores, Career Center

- Becky Ingersoll, Advising
- Betty Izumi, School of Public Health
- Nick Matlick, Registrar
- Rebecca Summer, Honors

Finances and Institutional Data Subcommittee

- Brianna Avery, Honors, Co-Chair of Subcommittee
- Rowanna Carpenter, University Studies, Co-Chair of Subcommittee
- Mitch Cruzan, Biology
- Peter Dusicka, Civil Engineering & Environment
- J.R. "Jones" Estes, University Studies
- Andreen Morris, Office of Academic Affairs
- Jacob Suher, School of Business

Key Competencies & Literacies Subcommittee

- Alissa Hartig, Applied Linguistics, Chair of Subcommittee
- Amy E. Borden, Honors
- Kate Comer, English
- Sarah Wolf Newlands, University Studies
- Elizabeth Pickard, Library
- Grant Scribner, Office of Academic Innovation
- J. Forrest Williams, Economics
- Shoshana Zeisman-Pereyo, Student Academic Support Services

National Models of General Education and High Impact Practices Subcommittee

- Joel Bettridge, English/University Studies, Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Theresa McCormick, Chemistry, Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Miriam Abelson, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies
- Seanna Kerrigan, University Studies
- Benjamin Mendelsohn, Film Studies
- Cassio de Oliveira, World Languages & Literatures
- Marc Rodriguez, History and Chicanx and Latinx Studies
- Harry York, Honors

INTRODUCTION

This document is submitted on behalf of the General Education Task Force Steering Committee to the Portland State University Faculty Senate. It presents a proposed new structure for PSU's general education curriculum. The proposal reflects a year of intensive work by the core Steering Group, the four Subcommittees, and the many faculty and student-success professionals who participated in the Winter and Fall General Education Symposia or contributed through interviews and consultations.

In developing this proposal, we consulted both internal and external resources. Internally, we worked with the Task Force as a whole, implementing the work they had conducted over the course of a year. We consulted extensively with the University Registrar's Office, Undergraduate Advising Office, and a curriculum coordinator in OAA to ensure fidelity to statewide general education and transfer guidelines. Externally, we examined general education models at peer institutions with similar student demographics but stronger retention and graduation rates. We reviewed the Oregon Core Transfer Map; the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) and Associate of Science Oregon Transfer (ASOT) degree requirements; and general education revisions adopted by Oregon universities aligning with community college pathways. We also drew on national research and best practices in General Education and High-Impact Practices (HIPs), including work from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the Association of General and Liberal Studies (AGLS), the Center for First-Generation Student Success, the Boyer 2030 Report, Oregon Department of Education, and other experts. Two Task Force subcommittee chairs attended the AGLS 2025 Constitute in October to learn about national trends in general education curriculum and reform. In November 2025, the Task Force met with a representative from Oregon State University who was involved in that campus's recent general education reform. Finally, we incorporated findings and recommendations from the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) Diagnostic & Playbook review.

Across this process, we engaged in extensive discussions about the needs of PSU students—both first-year and transfer students—, the barriers they encounter, and how a redesigned general education program could create more equitable pathways to majors, to graduation, to careers, to civic engagement, and to personal fulfillment.

This proposal includes both a new general education model and an accompanying implementation map. We recognize that implementation will take time: courses will need to be revised or newly designed to meet the proposed learning outcomes, and these courses must then move through curricular review. To support this work, the implementation map outlines opportunities for faculty development and recommends that we streamline aspects of the curricular approval process and suggests a place in the timeline where this streamlining could occur, especially for course redesigns rather than entirely new offerings. The proposal also outlines a plan for program administration and assessment.

RATIONALE

PSU's current University Studies (UNST) program—approved by the Faculty Senate in 1993 and implemented in 1994—was an ambitious, nationally recognized innovation. Its emphasis on community-building first-year experiences helped establish practices that are now commonplace across U.S. campuses. In the decades since, however, our general education requirements have expanded in a piecemeal fashion to address emerging gaps in areas such as science, writing, and ethnic studies. As a result, student experiences in First Year Inquiry (FRINQ) and Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) have become inconsistent. Each course is expected to address all four UNST learning goals, with FRINQ instructors, for example, asked to teach writing, social

science, arts and letters, and science literacy—an unusually demanding scope. The most recent UNST external review found that faculty struggle to balance these expectations with the intensive needs of first-year students, and that the large number of sections contributes to uneven rigor and coherence across SINQ and Cluster courses. Recent reviews of the PSU writing curriculum likewise indicate that the amount and quality of writing instruction in lower-division UNST courses vary “enormously” depending on the background and priorities of non-specialist instructors. Numeracy, or quantitative literacy—unarguably an important learning outcome for the 21st century student—is a component of the UNST Communication learning goal, but the program recognizes it has struggled to address it consistently.

As indicated by the Finance & Data Task Force subcommittee [presentation](#), while each new graduation requirement created outside of UNST (e.g. science for the B.A. and Writing requirements for all) responded to a legitimate need, the cumulative result is a system that is increasingly difficult for students to navigate and disproportionately challenging for transfer students. The requirement sets each follow different rules, are housed on different websites, and treat transfer students differently. This obscure system produces inequities: students without timely advising or insider knowledge about “double-dipping” strategies can take on a significantly heavier credit load than their peers. What began as an integrated and coherent model has become fragmented, confusing, and misaligned with the needs of today’s learners.

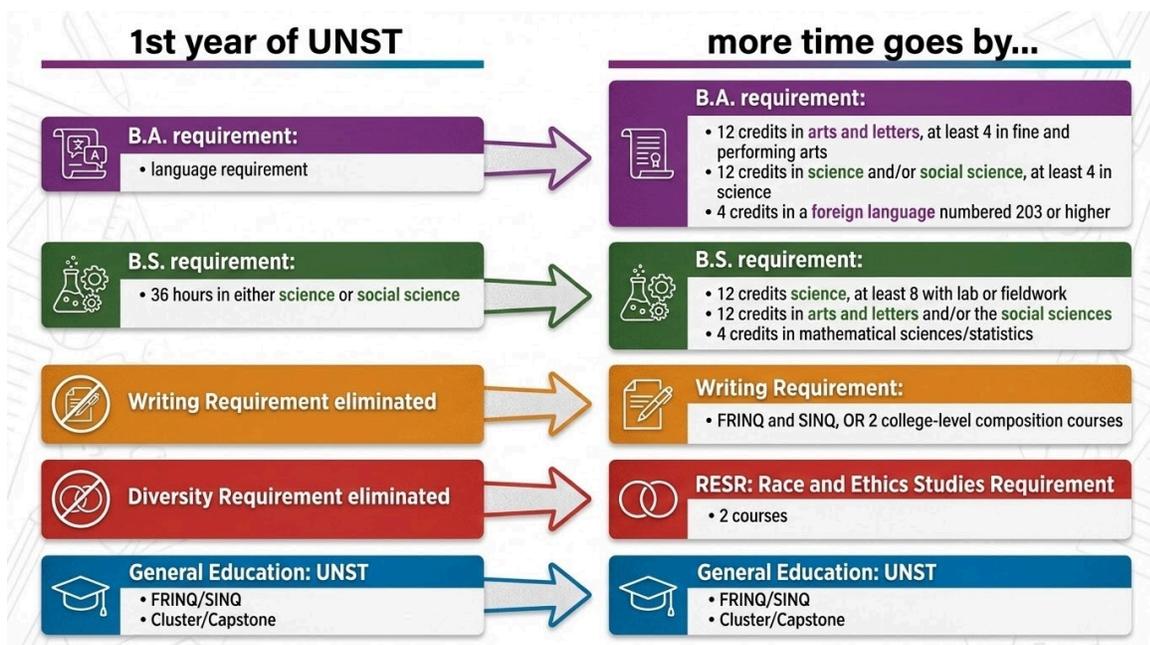


Image Description: This image compares the undergraduate requirements during the first year of University Studies to the requirements as time passed and additional requirements were added.

To fulfill PSU's mission of access, equity, and student success, we now need more than incremental adjustments. We need a comprehensive reconsideration of how we deliver the competencies essential for success in the 21st century. Our student body has changed dramatically since 1994,¹ as have their expectations for learning environments, the pace of their academic pathways, and the financial pressures they face. Students increasingly demand clarity and relevance in their required coursework, and research shows that they persist at higher rates when they understand the value of the curriculum and can connect it to a sense of purpose early in their academic careers.²

The moment calls not merely for updates, but for a renewed, intentional, student-centered general education model—one that preserves the strengths of our legacy while removing barriers to student progress and institutional equity; one that centers transfer students, who are a majority of our population; one that ensures all students develop the competencies needed for success in their lives and careers; and one that achieves these goals through a more streamlined, navigable system that supports every learner, including (and especially) first-generation and transfer students.

Key Reasons PSU Needs a Redesigned General Education Model

- **The current system has become fragmented and difficult to navigate.**
Requirements have accumulated over three decades in response to emerging needs, but without a comprehensive redesign. The result is a complicated set of overlapping expectations that many students—especially those new to PSU—struggle to understand and plan for. See the [work](#) of the Finance & Data Subcommittee.
- **Transfer students are disproportionately impacted.**
Because requirements do not align cleanly with many transfer pathways, transfer students often encounter unexpected coursework, delayed progress, and difficulty applying prior credits. This runs counter to PSU's commitment to access and degree completion.
- **General education needs to align more clearly with recent state transfer laws.**
State legislation (e.g., [HB 2998](#) and [SB 233](#)) aims to streamline student mobility across Oregon institutions. The proposed model aligns directly with the **CTM** (Oregon Core Transfer Map) and the Oregon Community College **AAOT** (Associate of Arts Oregon

¹ PSU is now designated as an AANAPISI (Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution) and an emerging HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution).

² G.N. Pfund, T.J. Bono, and P.L. Hill, "A Higher Goal During Higher Education: The Power of Purpose in Life During University," *Translational Issues in Psychological Science* 6, no. 2 (2020): 97–106, <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2020-31789-002>; Ashley Mowreader, "Promoting Purpose to Reduce Stop-Outs," *Inside Higher Ed*, June 4, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/college-experience/2025/06/04/students-sense-purpose-tied-college-retention>. The NISS (The National Institute for Student Success) Diagnostic and NISS [NISS Playbook](#) prepared for Portland State also determined that to improve persistence, PSU should use meta-major cohorts to connect first-year students to a sense of academic purpose.

Transfer) and **ASOT** (Associate of Science Oregon Transfer) degrees.³

- **The current structure inadvertently creates equity gaps.**
Students who are not aware of or advised into “double-dipping” opportunities often take on significantly more credits than peers with stronger internal or external advising support, increasing time to degree and financial burden. See slide 8 of the Finance & Data [presentation](#) for examples.
- **Students expect—and research supports—a clear rationale for required coursework.**
Evidence shows that students persist at higher rates when they understand the purpose of their general education requirements and can see how these competencies support their personal, academic, and career goals.⁴
- **Our students would be better served by a designated writing composition class in their first year.**
Designated writing courses correlate with improved retention and graduation outcomes.⁵ They also meet employer expectations: 89% of employers want writing to receive “more emphasis”.⁶ This was also the revision supported most strongly by PSU faculty and staff who attended the Fall Symposium on General Education.
- **Incremental adjustments are no longer sufficient.**
While UNST has been updated over time, it has not undergone a full, mission-driven reassessment in more than 30 years. Some significant substantive recommendations from prior reviews have not been addressed. A holistic redesign is required to restore coherence and ensure a new model fully supports its intended learning goals.

PAST REVIEWS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

UNST Reviews

[2016 UNST External Program Review](#)

The 2016 UNST external program review highlighted strengths, challenges/opportunities, and recommendations for the future of UNST. We acknowledge that some of the challenges identified in 2016 have been and/or are currently being addressed by UNST, including the

³ Oregon House Bill 2998, 2017, <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2017R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2998>; Oregon Senate Bill 233, 2021, <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB0233>

⁴ Pfund, et al.; Mowreader.

⁵ Garrett, Nathan, et al. “How Student Performance in First-Year Composition Predicts Retention and Overall Student Success.” Retention, Persistence, and Writing Programs, edited by Todd Christopher Ruecker et al., Utah State University Press, 2017, pp. 93–113; McHenry, Linda. “First Year Composition and Fall-to-Fall Retention.” Assessment Update, vol. 26, no. 2, 2014, pp. 11–12.

⁶ Association of American Colleges and Universities. The LEAP Vision for Learning: Outcomes, Practices, Impact, and Employers’ Views. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2011.

concern regarding retention of first year students and consistency in FRINQ and SINQ curriculum. Any revised GE model should build upon these efforts.

Strengths of the UNST program were strongly centered around its dedicated staff and organizational commitment:

- **Exceptional Staff and Program Support/Commitment:** Staff and faculty demonstrate remarkable, thoughtful, articulate, and impressive levels of support for and commitment to the program and to the students.
- **Prioritization of Student Learning and Well-being:** The coordinators of all UNST components (FRINQ, SINQ, Cluster, Capstone, and Mentoring Program) prioritize the well-being of their program and the interdisciplinary learning of students.
- **Signature Program Status:** The passion of the director and staff reflects the program's status as a signature program that helps define Portland State University's role, mission, and engagement with the local community.

The **challenges** identified were primarily interconnected across retention, resources, and coherence, and included the following:

- **Retention and Transfer Student Integration:** A significant percentage of freshmen do not return after the first year, and transfer students are poorly integrated into the model, often not understanding the purpose or structure of the UNST curriculum.
- **Consistency and Rigor in Courses:** Due to the large number of sections, there is an issue with the consistency and rigor of SINQ and Cluster courses, making adequate faculty outreach and curriculum review difficult.
- **Funding and Resource Constraints:** The program operates under tight budget constraints, which is exacerbated by the significant rise in reliance on adjunct faculty (up to 46.1% of UNST-funded faculty, with a particularly high rate at the Capstone level) without sufficient professional development support.
- **Conflict for Shared Line Faculty:** Faculty with shared appointments between UNST and departments experience a pull between departmental tenure expectations (emphasizing disciplinary research) and the demands of interdisciplinary UNST teaching.
- **Impact of Budgeting Systems:** The implementation of performance-based budgeting has created non-uniform and often unclear arrangements that place UNST's needs in competition with departmental needs for scarce resources.
- **Curriculum Coherence and Student Confusion:** The sheer complexity and scale of UNST, especially the wide-ranging Junior Cluster courses, leads to a perception of lack of coherence and confusion among students about the curriculum's importance.
- **Inconsistent Mentoring Program:** While nationally recognized, the mentoring program suffers from inconsistent and unsystematic training for mentors and a lack of structure, leading to varied and sometimes redundant student experiences.

The external reviewers identified the following recommendations:

- **Develop a Unified Strategic Plan:** The university should commit to a concerted effort involving various stakeholders to develop a clear set of goals and objectives for UNST to achieve over the next 4-5 years.
- **Encourage Dialogue and Collaboration:** Support opportunities for greater dialogue between UNST staff/faculty and faculty in academic disciplines and colleges.
- **Adopt a Comprehensive Planning Approach:** The university must take a comprehensive approach to planning for UNST by linking four key areas:
 1. Assessment of student learning related to liberal education goals.
 2. Retention, completion, graduation, and time-to-degree rates.
 3. The distinctiveness of PSU's mission and goals.
 4. Increased internal and external funding necessary to sustain the program.
- **Address Demographic and Curricular Delivery Challenges:** Planning efforts should specifically address:
 - How the high percentage of transfer students (70%) impacts the coherence and accessibility of the UNST curriculum.
 - How to ensure UNST leaves its mark on all PSU graduates, given that a majority of students only experience the Junior Cluster and Capstone courses.
- **Improve Advisor Understanding:** Ensure that faculty and staff advisors in the schools work closely with UNST staff to develop a clear understanding and explanation of the program for students.
- **Align Resources Strategically:** Align financial resources to aspects of the program that demonstrate the greatest long-term impact on student achievement and success.
- **Engage the Wider University:** UNST should focus on strategies to engage the rest of the university in helping students understand the program's importance and coherence, especially for SINQ and Cluster courses.
- **Make UNST an Asset for Transfer Students:** Develop new scheduling, curricular, and credit models so that transfer students view UNST as an asset, not an impediment, to their path to graduation.
- **Sustain External Engagement:** Maintain ongoing engagement with other colleges, universities, and regional community colleges to learn how to best position UNST in the rapidly evolving national higher education environment.

[2015 Freshman Year Experience Comprehensive Review](#) (UNST Council)

The Freshman Year Experience Review identified what is currently working and provided recommendations for improving the first year experience. The reviewers identified the following as “**What is Working**”:

- Alignment with high-impact practices identified by AAC&U and Carnegie LEAP in both UNST and HON utilizing small-cohort, first-year seminars focused on "big questions" within an interdisciplinary theme of inquiry.
- High levels of student satisfaction with year-long FRINQ course
- FRINQ faculty report that teaching FRINQ is rewarding and meaningful
- Robust assessment practice in UNST regularly collects and assesses student portfolio work that is used for continuous program improvement

- Systematic student data collection in FRINQ including a Prior Learning Survey in the first three weeks of fall term and an End-of-Year Survey in the last week of spring term.

The **key challenges** reported by faculty and administrators regarding the FRINQ program are:

- **Time and Energy Balance:** Faculty struggle to balance their time and energy with the heavy demands of teaching freshmen, specifically finding adequate time to provide timely feedback to improve student learning.
- **Lack of Recognition and Reward:** Faculty feel there is a lack of respect and adequate recognition for contributing to the freshman curriculum outside of their departments, particularly as FRINQ participation is often inadequately rewarded in promotion and tenure reviews. Shared-line faculty are especially concerned about this lack of understanding among departmental colleagues.
- **Inconsistent Workload and Staffing:** There is significant variation in how FRINQ staffing is determined, managed, and rewarded, including:
 - Irregularity in departmental staffing choices (e.g., some faculty are the only ones teaching FRINQ while others rotate).
 - Inconsistent teaching loads while teaching FRINQ (ranging from a two-course release to no reduction in overall load).
 - A high percentage of department chairs find the year-long staffing commitment challenging.
- **Isolation in Collaboration and Service:** Faculty report feeling isolated from both their departmental colleagues and other FRINQ faculty (due to physical dispersal). Additionally, collaborative activities and service within FRINQ are not formally supported or rewarded as highly as grants and publications, especially for shared-line faculty.
- **Poor Communication of Policies:** There are systemic issues with communication, as a majority of faculty disagree that UNST communicates well with their department on general education issues relevant to professional development and evaluation. This leads to inaccurate information regarding policies (e.g., faculty being unaware of the "FRINQ sabbatical" option).
- **Variability in MOUs:** The shared-line staffing model resulted in departments negotiating varied Memos of Understanding (MOUs), leading to irregularity in faculty connection (some tied to UNST, others to the department/college) and staffing determination.

HON External Review

The last external review of Portland State University's University Honors College (UHC) was conducted in May 2018 by two experienced honors administrators affiliated with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Several of the recommendations have been acted on in the seven years since the review.

The external reviewers note that the UHC's "urban honors" theme makes it the only urban-focused honors curriculum in the United States. Benefits of the Honors College include a small, liberal arts atmosphere, personalized support, priority registration, and preparation for

graduate school. Reviewers commended the Honors director for her strong outreach, enthusiasm, and visibility, noting she is the first stable director following a period of multiple transitions.

The curriculum is ambitious and rigorous, representing about 25% of a student's total coursework, which is well within NCHC best practices. It includes an honors thesis, which is a requirement for graduation. Experiential learning is a hallmark, with effective investment in research skills and internships.

The report details several recommendations to support UHC's growth and better align it with NCHC's "Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College."

Governance, Reporting, and Staffing

The current governance structure, including the existence of the faculty senate constitutional committee, the Honors Council, is deemed "unusual." The report recommends updating the Honors Council's charge and doubling student representation. They also suggest creating student and faculty advisory boards to supplement the Council and provide the director with a fuller picture of the college. A key recommendation is to name the current Director as Dean of the college and have her report directly to the Provost, better reflecting her responsibilities and improving UHC advocacy.

Significant investment in staffing infrastructure was identified as an immediate need. Recommended additions include:

- Full-time thesis and internship coordinators.
- A full-time support staff person and a full-time national fellowships coordinator.
- Increased, formalized faculty lines, moving away from "borrowed" faculty.

Reviewers wrote that the UHC must identify pathways and courses to serve the large number of transfer students who may not enter as first-year students, to ensure they complete the full sequence and derive similar value. They also advise that the honors curriculum should be clarified as a different experience altogether, not just an enhanced version of University Studies. Reviewers also suggested diversifying reading lists and developing more courses for STEM students. Furthermore, they recommend expanding experiential learning options to include service learning and study abroad.

To combat miscommunication, reviewers recommend that all degree maps should be updated with honors requirements included. The honors advisor needs an active presence on all campus-wide advising redesign teams.

Reviewers note that Honors faculty and staff lamented the lack of a robust honors community, largely due to commuter culture and uncertain funding for activities. Recommendations include securing funding, using NCHC Portz Grants for innovative activities, and applying community-building strategies for commuter students. To enhance visibility, they recommend

UHC share focused stories on its website/social media and regularly collect and share data highlighting its impact.

The external review concludes that while the UHC does much with little, significant financial and staffing support is required for it to meet its potential and successfully compete with other Oregon honors programs.

Writing External Review

In June 2014, a consultant service visit was conducted by two external faculty in Composition/Rhetoric associated with the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). The 2014 Consultant-Evaluator Report, submitted on behalf of the CWPA, assesses the state of writing instruction at Portland State University (PSU) and argues for a comprehensive, university-wide renewal of commitment to writing.

Core Findings and Institutional Failure

The central finding is that writing instruction has become overly decentralized, leading to systemic dissatisfaction among faculty. A survey revealed that a "startling 94.3%" of faculty respondents were moderately or not at all satisfied with their students' writing abilities. This problem is largely attributed to the unfulfilled promise of the University Studies (UNST) program, which was meant to cover writing instruction after a university-wide writing requirement was eliminated.

The report concludes that PSU's existing placement system for writing courses is inadequate, the Writing Intensive Courses (WIC) program has diminished due to defunding, and the instruction in the required WR course sequence is inconsistent.

University-wide Responsibilities

The report outlines eight recommendations for the university at large to assume a campus-wide commitment to improving writing quality:

1. **Mission Statement:** The university must reincorporate an explicit commitment to effective writing into its mission statement.
2. **UNST Accountability:** If University Studies continues to fund and house writing instruction, it must be held responsible for faculty practices and defined student learning outcomes.
3. **Writing Assessment:** PSU must make a budgetary investment in formative assessment for all student groups—incoming freshmen, transfer students, and students in capstones—to accurately gauge readiness and ability.
4. **Leadership Team:** The newly formed University Writing Committee and the Academic Leadership Team should structure regular interaction to provide leadership for improvement.
5. **Writing Inventory:** PSU should develop a Writing Inventory (a descriptive, non-evaluative tool) to determine the current expectations, practices, and outcomes across all departments.

6. Writing Center Expansion: The Writing Center needs more space, more staffing, and better communication to serve as a vital resource for *all* students and faculty (including grant writers), not just those needing remediation.
7. WAC Program: PSU needs to create a new, well-funded Writing-across-the-Curriculum (WAC) program with a dedicated Director who reports to the Provost's office. This is the optimal way to address the needs of the large transfer student population.
8. Placement Accuracy: Procedures for placement into required writing courses must be improved, as the current web-based system is inadequate for accurately determining student readiness.

English Department Responsibilities

The report also details four specific actions for the English Department:

9. Hiring: Hire more tenure-track faculty with scholarly expertise in Rhetoric and Composition to strengthen the curriculum and support campus-wide initiatives.
10. Administrative Support: Appoint additional administrative support (such as an Assistant or Associate Director) for the overburdened Director of Rhetoric and Composition.
11. Course Coherence: Develop shared learning outcomes and assessment methods across sections of the core WR courses (WR 121, 222, 323) to create a more consistent and effective sequence.
12. Digital Curriculum: Develop more online or hybrid writing courses that incorporate media and digital components to modernize instruction and increase accessibility for an urban, commuter student body.

The report concludes that these investments are necessary for PSU to solidify its national reputation as an innovative university and ensure its students are fully prepared to succeed as citizens, workers, and scholars.

The CWPA report echoes findings published in a 2013 article by Duncan Carter, Christie Toth, and Hildy Miller on the history of the PSU writing requirement that draws on quantitative and qualitative assessment data collected since the early 2000s. This article, "When the Writing Requirements Went Away: An Institutional Case Study of Twenty Years of Decentralization/Abolition," examines the long-term consequences of eliminating the traditional First-Year Composition (FYC) requirement at Portland State University in favor of a decentralized model. PSU replaced its two-term writing sequence in 1994 with University Studies, a four-year, interdisciplinary general education curriculum. This reform was initially met with "guarded optimism," as it promised 45 credit hours of integrated, "writing intensive" courses, effectively trading six isolated credits for a campus-wide Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) approach.

Despite the ambitious goals, the authors claim that the experiment quickly faltered and devolved into an example of "de facto abolition" of writing instruction. The key contributing factor was the failure to reallocate sufficient funds from the abolished FYC courses into the administrative and instructional infrastructure required for a successful WAC program. The money saved was not invested in ongoing faculty development, mentor training, consistent assessment, or an expanded Writing Center, leading to a breakdown of the initial promises.

Through quantitative and qualitative assessment data, including student surveys, interviews, and the scoring of upper-division student writing samples, the authors identify three primary issues that arise from the decentralization:

1. **Instructional Inconsistency:** The amount and quality of writing instruction in lower-division UNST courses (FRINQ and SINQ) varies "enormously" based on the non-specialist instructor's background and priorities. Many students feel they were not receiving useful writing instruction, with only about 51.5% of respondents reporting that FRINQ prepared them "very well."
2. **Low Volume:** Students are asked to produce a "disappointingly low" amount of writing throughout the curriculum.
3. **Mediocre Outcomes:** The writing samples from junior and senior students demonstrate "mediocre writing performance" at the upper-division level. On a six-point holistic scale, the average score for student writing is 3.67, falling between the rubric descriptions of "simplistic" and "serviceable." The large standard deviations in scores indicate that upper-division faculty were teaching students with a "broad range of writing abilities" and inconsistent preparation.

The article finds that the non-specialist faculty often revert to the limited, ineffective, and outmoded "current-traditional approach" to teaching writing, and the Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) in English find themselves increasingly viewed as "outsiders" whose expertise was questioned by those now responsible for writing instruction. Furthermore, faculty often treat the Writing Center as an "outsourcing model," depending on it to handle instructional and remedial tasks.

The authors conclude that their decentralized writing program, lacking the necessary sustained financial and administrative support, failed to "bring students onto 'the same page.'" They advise other institutions considering similar reforms to ensure frank discussions about the true costs and to secure a permanent, adequately funded administrative structure led by composition specialists, or risk their experiment becoming abolition by default.

THE CURRENT COMMITTEE AND ITS WORK

The Office of Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate worked together to form a task force to engage the community in discussion around the current and future of general education at Portland State. By General Education we are broadly referring to the common curriculum that students complete to earn their degrees including courses in University Studies, Honors, and other core curriculum that spans academic units.

Charge

The task force steering committee initially had a charge of defining general education for the campus community and holding a Winter Symposium entitled: "Exploring the Role of General Education @ PSU: Past, Present and Future" to bring the community together regarding how

general education was experienced by various stakeholders. After this event, the task force steering committee established four subcommittees: Current PSU Student Needs, Finances and Institutional Data, Key Competencies and Literacies of General Education, and National Models of General Education and High Impact Practices.

A clarified charge, produced in May 2025, posted on the [General Education website](#), can be summarized as follows:

Beginning in Winter 2025, the General Education Task Force will examine national trends, conduct a comprehensive self-study, and research models that could better support PSU students. The team will share its findings with the campus community, Faculty Senate, and administration at a Fall 2025 Symposium, where several potential general education models—analyzed for their pedagogical value, student success impact, budget implications, and alignment with PSU’s student needs—will be presented for community feedback. Using insights gathered at the symposium, the Task Force Steering Committee will develop PSU-specific models and release them for further feedback during November 2025 town halls. Incorporating this input, the Steering Committee will prepare a final set of recommendations for general education reform and submit its report to the Faculty Senate in February 2026.

Subcommittee Charges and Work Description:

The GE steering committee began meeting in Winter 2025 and met at least weekly from summer 2025-December 2025. The Gen Ed Subcommittee members worked Winter 2025 through Spring 2025 and then met (~30 members) in person, September 10-12 from 9am-4pm, for an intense 3-day workshop to assess the research conducted during the Spring term, brainstorm evidence-based recommendations, and develop a slide presentation for an October symposium. All subcommittees met with each other during the same 3 day period to allow for optimum crossover and collaboration.

Deliverables:

Each subcommittee was tasked with producing a report in the form of a fifteen minute presentation that explained their process, summarized the research they conducted, and made recommendations for the campus-wide October Symposium. Each committee synthesized their findings into a set of slides for the October Symposium. Here are the charges the subcommittees were responsible for:

- **Student needs:**
Prepare a 15-minute [presentation](#) for the Fall Gen Ed Symposium that (1) summarizes the curricular, pedagogical and support structures needed to support our students for success in degree completion, career, lifetime learning, and engaged citizenship; (2) summarize what is working in our current GE model to address those needs; and (3) make some recommendations of changes to consider to improve our support of students current and future needs.

- **Finances and data:**
Prepare a 15-minute [presentation](#) for the Fall Gen Ed Symposium that (1) summarizes recommendations that have been made for improvement to Gen Ed and responses to those suggestions, and (2) summarize resource challenges and makes recommendations to address those challenges.
- **Key competencies:**
Prepare a 15-minute [presentation](#) for the Fall Gen Ed Symposium that (1) summarizes the findings regarding the current landscape of key competencies and literacies and showing how PSU's current learning goals and outcomes fit into that picture; (2) makes recommendations for revisions of PSU Gen Ed learning goals to set students up for success in their studies, careers, and civic lives.
- **National models:**
Prepare a 15-minute [presentation](#) for the Fall Gen Ed Symposium that (1) summarizes the findings regarding the national models, "best practices," and how PSU's current delivery model fits into that landscape; (2) makes several "simple and elegant" recommendations of models for restructuring Gen Ed at PSU that take into account student academic and career success, student retention, "best practice," and fiscal reality.

Committee Activities

In February 2025, the task force steering committee held the first of two symposia. This event was entitled [Exploring the Role of General Education @ PSU: Past, Present, and Future](#). The intention of this event was to bring the campus community together regarding our past history of general education and determine aspirations of where we would like to see general education in the future. The [key summary points](#) of this event were presented at the March 2025 faculty senate meeting and also posted to the [General Education Task Force webpage](#).

In late Spring 2025, the subcommittee members came together for the first time after meeting biweekly throughout all of Spring term. At this meeting, they shared highlights of their research and information gathering with one another to help coordinate work going forward by members who were able to continue work over the Summer. In early September 2025, members of the subcommittees came together for a three day sprint to collaborate, further refine information and data, and to hear from key stakeholders on campus regarding the NISS report, from the Race & Ethnic Studies Requirement Committee, the Registrar's Office, and the Transfer Center.

[An update](#) was provided to the faculty senate at the October 2025 meeting; this update included information about the work of the steering committee and subcommittees and advertised the forthcoming Fall Symposium on General Education. The task force offered this second symposium in mid-October to present to the campus community the work of the subcommittees: [finance and data](#), [student needs](#), [key competencies](#), and [national models](#). After this event, feedback was sought on the presentations via a web form and through sessions held within schools and colleges. Furthermore, the task force steering committee sought feedback from key

areas on campus such as the Director of Composition, Kate Comer, the Student Academic Support Services, the Library, and the Registrar's Office.

At the November meeting of the faculty senate an [Ad-Hoc Committee on Comprehensive General Education Plan](#) was approved by faculty senators to help coordinate the faculty senate response to our final report. The [Key summary points from Fall Symposium feedback](#) were distributed at the December faculty senate meeting through the agenda.

THE FINAL MODEL

Mission and Goals for the Reformed General Education Model

Our vision is a coherent, inclusive, and future-focused general education model that advances equity, accelerates student success, and prepares graduates to lead purposeful lives, contribute to their communities, and meet the evolving needs of our region and world. The committee's work was guided by a commitment to clarity, equity, and coherence. PSU's reformed General Education program empowers all students to succeed by providing a streamlined, student-centered curriculum focused on fundamental skills, disciplinary exploration, and applied learning. Aligned with PSU's mission of access, equity, and regional impact, the program prioritizes the needs of transfer students, offers clear and navigable pathways, and eliminates structural barriers that create inequities. The curriculum cultivates strong writing and quantitative literacy, information literacy, intercultural understanding, and ethical reasoning while connecting students early to academic majors and career opportunities. Through engaged, research-based, and culturally sustaining learning experiences, PSU's General Education program prepares students to thrive as informed problem-solvers and contributors to the social, cultural, and economic vitality of Portland and the Pacific Northwest.

By simplifying requirements, aligning pathways with Oregon transfer policy, and strengthening early connections to majors and careers, the model reduces barriers and promotes timely degree completion. Through high-impact teaching, real-world relevance, and an emphasis on belonging and purpose, PSU's General Education program equips students with the skills, confidence, and curiosity needed to succeed in the classroom, the workplace, and their communities.

Program-Level Goals for the General Education Curriculum

1. Build a Coherent Learning Journey
2. Prepare Students for Informed Civic Responsibility
3. Support Student Success and Belonging
4. Connect Learning to Career and Community

5. Advance Equity, Inclusion, and Social Responsibility

6. Honor Disciplinary Depth While Encouraging Integration

Architecture of the Reformed General Education Model

Overview

General education is a cornerstone of higher education in the United States, emphasizing the importance of breadth of knowledge to complement the depth sought in the students' major course of study – general education is also an important site where students discover majors that fit their interests and goals. The breadth of knowledge built into general education prepares students to flexibly meet unforeseen challenges and opportunities, to participate in civic and global engagement, and to pursue lifelong learning beyond siloes of knowledge. General education also grounds all students in fundamental skills and literacies that are foundational to success in any major. At its best, general education helps students make connections between different ways of knowing and broadens perspectives beyond students' major course of study while preparing students to be supple and critical thinkers. The proposed architecture for a reformed general education model at PSU has these goals at its heart.

The new structure is organized into three parts with descriptive titles: Part I: Student Success and World Readiness, Part II: Core Literacies, and Part III: Ways of Knowing. Additionally, the credit allocation within Ways of Knowing is organized into themed competencies. These descriptive phrases communicate to students the reasons for these themed competencies and the embedded outcomes intended in the general education model. In naming these competencies, we hope to highlight the value of each area for students, enabling them to articulate how the general education curriculum fits into their overall academic program as well as how it translates into transferable skills that they can bring to their career and lifelong learning trajectory.

The student learning outcomes for the overall proposed structure are listed below. This section of the white paper then continues with tables presenting the new model visually followed by in-depth descriptions of learning outcomes embedded in the new general education curriculum. The proposed model envisions general education courses being taught by faculty housed in disciplinary departments with a central administrator who oversees and coordinates the undergraduate education programmatic structure.

Student Learning Outcomes for Proposed General Education Model

Upon completion of the General Education curriculum, students will be able to:

1. **Engage in Inquiry Across Ways of Knowing:** Apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary modes of inquiry—including humanities, social sciences, sciences, quantitative reasoning, and creative

practice—to ask meaningful questions, evaluate evidence, and construct well-reasoned interpretations of complex issues.

2. Evaluate, Use, and Create Knowledge Responsibly: Locate, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from diverse sources; distinguish credible evidence from misinformation; and communicate knowledge clearly and effectively across multiple modalities and audiences.

3. Communicate Effectively and Professionally: Communicate ideas, arguments, data, and narratives effectively in written, oral, visual, and digital forms, adapting to disciplinary conventions, rhetorical situations, professional contexts, and public audiences.

4. Understand Difference, Power, and Context: Analyze how historical, cultural, social, political, economic, and global contexts—including systems of power, oppression, and inequity—shape human experiences, knowledge production, and opportunities for action.

5. Integrate Learning for Purposeful Action: Integrate academic learning, personal values, and practical skills to reflect on goals, navigate educational and career pathways, and apply knowledge to real-world problems in ways that serve communities and the public good.

Table 1: Proposed General Education Curriculum Structure

Proposed General Education Curriculum	
Part I – Student Success and World Readiness	
First Year Seminar (FYS) or Transfer Bridge Course	4 credits / 2 credits
Culminating Experience ¹	4 credits min.
Bridge to Career ¹	2 credits min.
Part II – Core Literacies	
Writing and Rhetoric (WR 121)	4 credits
Information Literacy Lab (co-req for FYS)	1 credit
Quantitative Literacy and Analysis	3-4 credits
Writing in the Disciplines (upper level) ¹	4 credits
Part III – Ways of Knowing	
Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts (HCA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Humanities and Arts 	6-8 credits; two courses
Exploring Society and Human Behavior (SHB): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Science 	6-8 credits; two courses
Investigating Scientific Inquiry and Analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Natural Science 	6-8 credits; two courses
Understanding Difference, Power, and Oppression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race and Ethnic Studies 	3-4 credits; one course
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A course with global focus can be taken from either HCA or SHB; double-counting allowed 	<i>0-4 credits</i>

¹ Courses may be taught in major or meta major.

Table 2: Understanding Credit Distribution

Lower Division Total Credits: 33-41	
First Year Seminar	4 credits
Writing and Rhetoric (WR 121z)	4 credits
Information Literacy Lab	1 credit
Quantitative Literacy and Analysis	3-4 credits
Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities & Arts 	6-8 credits, two courses
Exploring Society and Human Behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Sciences 	6-8 credits, two courses
Investigating Scientific Inquiry and Analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Science 	6-8 credits, two courses
Understanding Difference, Power, and Oppression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race and Ethnic Studies 	3-4 credits, one course
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A course with global focus can be taken from either HCA or SHB; double-counting allowed 	0-4 credits
Upper Division 12 credits (10 credits may be fulfilled in major or meta major)	
Transfer Bridge Course	2 credits
Culminating Experience – <i>may be housed in major or meta major</i>	4 credits min.
Bridge to Career – <i>may be housed in major or meta major</i>	2 credits min.
Writing in the Disciplines (upper level) – <i>housed in major or meta major</i>	4 credits

Coursework in the major department CAN fulfill these lower division requirements. Also, while they are listed as lower division here to show how a first-time college student would move through the curriculum, we expect that some of the courses used to satisfy these requirements will be at the 300 level to accommodate the needs of transfer students who have an excess of lower division coursework, but did not do an associates degree or relevant Oregon transfer program, and do not have coursework that satisfies the different requirements. We want to anticipate the needs of students, create flexible pathways for students to demonstrate that they have met the baccalaureate learning outcomes, and avoid the use of petitions, a system that often disadvantages first-generation college students.

Programs will be given a fast-track opportunity to propose changes to their majors so that courses can double count in the major and general education. We note that some majors currently have 6-credit Capstones for their students that incorporate experiential learning and career readiness. Those 6-credit courses can be used, for example, to address the 2-credit Bridge to Career and 4-credit Culminating Experience requirements.

Baccalaureate Degree Requirement⁷

These requirements will no longer appear as a separate catalog category or webpage. Instead, they are integrated into the **General Education Requirements** lists and webpage and the **Honors College** requirements and webpage, using the following language:

Baccalaureate Degree Requirement. Students will satisfy their degree requirement as follows:

- **Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** Complete 3 quarters or 2 semesters of science courses (*minimum 10 quarter credits, 6 semester credits*) that include a lab or fieldwork component.
- **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.):** Demonstrate one year of college-level language proficiency by completing a minimum of 3 credits in a 103-level or higher course **or** by obtaining a language waiver.
- **Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.):** Complete the program of study as prescribed by the major department (*available for Art Practice, Creative Writing, and Graphic Design*).
- **Bachelor of Music (B.M.):** Complete the prescribed curriculum in music and applied music as outlined by the Music Department.
- **Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.):** Meet the general University requirements for a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree.
- **Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.):** Must hold an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and complete the program as prescribed by the major department (*available in Management & Leadership only*).

Transfer Students and Oregon Core Transfer Map

Per Oregon law,⁸ students who transfer a completed CTM will satisfy all *lower division* categories except for the Understanding Difference, Power, and Oppression category (Ethnic Studies). Students who transfer an AAOT or ASOT will satisfy all *lower division* categories of the **Core Literacies** and **Ways of Knowing** and will only be required to complete the remaining upper division requirements. Students transferring from out of state or without a completed CTM or AAOT/ASOT will have their transcripts articulated on a course-by-course basis, as is practice.

⁷ A discussion of the rationale for the changes to the B.A. and B.S. degree requirements can be found in Appendix A.

⁸ Oregon Transfer Compass: Core Transfer Map Cultural Literacy Requirement, <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/transfer/Documents/Transfer-Resources/Core-Transfer-Maps-On-e-pager.pdf>

Table 3: Proposed Curriculum and Transfer Credit Mapping

PSU General Education		Core Transfer Map Category (CTM)	Oregon Transfer Module (OTM)	MTM (AST/AAT) AAOT, ASOT Category
Core Literacies				
Writing and Rhetoric (WR 121)	4 credits	Writing	Writing	Writing
Information Literacy Lab	1 credit	1	1	1
Writing in the Disciplines (upper level)	4 credits	2	2	2
Quantitative Literacy and Analysis	3-4 credits	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Ways of Knowing				
Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts (HCA)	6-8 credits	Arts and Letters	Arts and Letters	Arts and Letters
Exploring Society and Human Behavior (SHB)	6-8 credits	Social Science	Social Science	Social Science
Investigating Scientific Inquiry and Analysis	6-8 credits	Natural Sciences	Science/Math/Computer Science	Science/Math/Computer Science
Understanding Difference, Power, and Oppression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race and Ethnic Studies 	min 3 credits			3
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A course with global focus can be taken from either HCA or SHB; double-counting allowed 	0-4 credits			3
Student Success and World Readiness				
Transfer Bridge course	2 credits			
Bridge to Career	2 credits	2	2	2
Culminating Experience	4 credits	2	2	2

1 This requirement will be satisfied by the Transfer Bridge course.

2 Courses may be taught in major or meta major.

3 Completion of a AAOT or ASOT satisfies all lower-division general education requirements, and guarantees junior standing.

Part of implementing the PSU Core will involve the following:

- Communicating with community college partners early and often to discuss articulation alignment issues with new Core.
- Working with PSU advisors, articulations, and transfer admissions to make sure that updated articulation information is accessible for prospective students.
- Establishing a centralized exceptions request form for students and advisors. This form exists but is currently undergoing necessary updates to reduce the number of cases that fall through the cracks.
- Resolving problems generously in favor of the students. While focus was placed on aligning the new Core to Oregon transfer programs, there are many students transferring from out-of-state institutions that will still need considerable support.

Question: *Are the learning outcomes listed below set in stone?*

No, after the GE reform is approved by the Faculty Senate and OAA creates a GE administrative and governance structure with faculty-led curriculum committees, faculty will have the opportunity to suggest revisions to the student learning outcomes for each requirement.

Question: *What is happening to the international RESR requirement?*

Courses that currently fulfill the international RESR requirement will now be housed in the *Understanding the World* category. Based on extensive feedback about the complexity of the current Race and Ethnic Studies requirement—which requires one U.S.-focused course, one international-focused course, and at least one of the two courses must be from the School of Gender, Race, and Nations—we are separating the U.S. and global components. U.S.-focused courses will remain within the Ethnic Studies requirement, while internationally focused courses will be able to move into the *Understanding the World* category.

Question: *Is “double-dipping” allowed in the proposed Gen Ed model?*

Students will be able to “double-dip,” or even “triple-dip,” across their major, General Education requirements, and B.A./B.S. requirements. However, individual courses will **not** generally count in more than one Gen Ed category. The only exception will be *Understanding the World* courses, which will each double count as EITHER *Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts (HCA)* OR *Exploring Society and Human Behavior (SHB)*. So there will be limited “double-dipping” *within* Gen Ed itself. One of the documented challenges of the current Gen Ed system is that faculty are often expected to address too many skills and content areas within a single course. To avoid this, competency courses in the new model will focus on one defined set of Gen Ed learning objectives, alongside any relevant disciplinary learning objectives. No one course will be placed in two different Ways of Knowing categories, with the exception of the *Understanding the World* courses.

Description of the General Education Requirement Categories with suggested Learning Outcomes

The new model is described below with draft student learning outcomes.

Part I: Student Success and Career Readiness

These courses integrate best practices from University Studies and the Honors College to build meaningful classes that also increase students' sense of belonging, support students in integrating and applying the knowledge they have gained, and prepare students to translate this knowledge for careers.

First Year Seminar or Transfer Bridge Course 4 Credits

First Year Seminar (4 credits)

Co-requisite with Information Literacy Lab

The First Year Seminar provides students the skills and resources necessary for a successful transition to college and beyond, within their meta-major, focusing on access to campus resources that support learning, academic success, and sense of belonging; development of professional communication and critical thinking skills; opportunities for major and career exploration; and reflection on educational goals and purpose.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explore foundational ways of thinking within a meta-major by engaging with its central questions, core themes, and common analytical or creative tools, and begin to compare how different disciplines approach inquiry and evidence.
2. Develop specific skills related to success as a student at Portland State such as time management, attention, task prioritization, study strategies, note-taking, test preparation, and self-advocacy.
3. Identify academic and other student resources at PSU that support student learning and success, inside and outside of the classroom.
4. Reflect on educational and career goals and create a plan for utilizing academic and other student resources to meet these goals.
5. Demonstrate professional communication skills in written and oral interactions with faculty and staff (e.g., writing effective emails, empowered to advocate for themselves effectively).

Question: *How will a one term FYS, rather than a 15-credit, 3-term cohorted FYS, impact student belonging and student success needs currently being addressed in FRINQ? Is there another way to cohort students?*

Per the NISS Playbook Diagnostic & Playbook created for PSU, we recommend cohorting first-year students through meta-major based Early Learning Communities (ELCs), each with pre-determined block schedules in which students take overlapping courses together with opportunities for both curricular and co-curricular cohort building activities.

For example, the university could create 3-4 scheduling models within each meta-major such that each ELC would represent a unique meta-major and scheduling block (e.g., ELC 1 represents Business meta-majors with block schedule A; ELC 2 represents Business meta-majors with block schedule B). The student chooses the ELC that best works for them prior to admission and is provided a first-year block schedule to use as they register for courses.

Meta-major based ELCs provide opportunities for students to identify and confirm their 'right-fit' major and career goals and to make explicit connections between general education courses, major curriculum and degree completion, and sense of purpose and career goals. Meta-majors group majors with common foundational courses (e.g., STEM or Business) and allow students to explore different options within a field while staying on a degree-bearing track. Meta-majors help reduce wasted credits because the initial courses are shared across multiple majors within the cluster, allowing students to switch to a related program without losing significant time or accumulating excess credits. Meta-majors align with labor market needs so that academic advising is tailored to the career paths within a specific meta-major, and career exploration can be built into early-year programming. By grouping students with similar interests, meta-majors can foster peer connections and a stronger sense of belonging. This is supported by research showing students in learning communities grouped by academic interest have higher levels of engagement.

ELCs are designed to support student success by 1) helping students establish supportive relationships with peers and faculty, 2) helping students navigate campus and accessing community resources; and 3) ensuring that core courses will count toward any major they ultimately declare within that broad area, minimizing "wasted credits."

Best practice suggests keeping ELCs relatively small (25-30 students), recognizing that some courses in ELCs are large (with students from several ELCs in one course) while others consist only of students in that ELC (e.g., their FYS).

Question: *Why not have meta-major based FRINQs rather than entirely redesign the FYS?*

The majority of weaknesses identified with FRINQ are due to the fact that the 3-course sequence tries to address too many learning outcomes in the same course, and ends up giving students different academic experiences and uneven preparation in writing, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, etc. We cannot add additional competency and skill-based courses to the 15-credit FRINQ requirement; that would be an excessive credit burden for students. We have already been adding additional requirements outside of UNST (distribution in the BA/BS, Writing, RESR) and the result is confusing and difficult to navigate. We have decided that we can maintain the main strength of FRINQ—creating a sense of belonging through a cohort experience—through the use of ELCs, and address the weaknesses—faculty trying to address too many disparate LOs in one course and students not understanding the purpose of the course—by breaking up the requirements into distinct courses on core skills and ways of knowing.

Question: *How will peer mentors be incorporated into the first year experience (FYE)?*

Despite the acknowledged benefits of peer mentors, several concerns and limitations regarding peer mentor programs have been raised, including in the Fall GE Symposium feedback. These often relate to the quality of training, consistency of support, and the appropriate scope of a peer mentor's role (and financial cost). While our current proposal does not integrate peer leadership, we strongly encourage the administration to consider how peer leadership can effectively be integrated into the general education experience at PSU given the documented positive impact of peer leadership on student success outcomes. Below we identify various peer leadership models to be considered:

Table 4: Peer Mentor Options

Mentoring Models	Administrative Office	Examples
Embedded model in first year experience	General Education, Student Success, Student Academic Support Services	Peer mentors at Portland State Peer mentors incorporated into Learning Communities at Wayne State
Opt-in model: student success for mentees and leadership development/career readiness for mentors	Student Success, Student Academic Support Services, Student Activities & Leadership Programs, Career Services	Peer Leader program at Cal State LA Peer Success Coaching at UIC
Embedded model in high-DWF courses across campus	Student Success, Student Academic Support Services	PLUS at Cal State LA Supplemental Instruction at UMKC Learning Assistant Program at UC Boulder
Automatic assignment to every first-year or transfer student model	General Education, Student Success, Student Academic Support Services	Peer Coaches at UW Bothell Commuter Learning Communities at UIC
Career development model with mentors earning certificate and/or academic credit	Career Services, Student Success, Student Academic Support Services, Student Activities & Leadership Programs, Office of Academic Innovation, New General Education Department	Emerging Leaders at Georgia State Peer Mentoring at UMass Boston

Transfer Bridge Course (2 credits)

This course will orient new transfer students to PSU resources, will assist these students in articulating their educational goals and trajectory, and will provide students with upper-level information literacy skills.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify academic and other student resources at PSU that support student learning and success.
2. Reflect on their educational goals and create a plan for utilizing academic and other student resources to meet these goals.
3. Employ professional communication skills in written and oral interactions with faculty and staff (e.g., writing effective emails, empowered to advocate for themselves effectively).
4. Assess the quality, currency, accuracy, purpose, and bias of information sources (both scholarly and popular) for a specific research need.

Culminating Experience 4 Credits min.

The Culminating Experience emphasizes our university's motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City." It will require students to apply skills from their academic discipline to address a problem, issue, or question relevant to a local or global community. Students will translate the value of their degree and the skills they have developed through reflection on the project.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify a problem, issue, or question relevant to a local or global community and develop a project to address the problem, issue, or question.
2. Communicate the process, findings, and impact of their project effectively and professionally to an external audience and/or the broader public using a modality (written, oral, visual, or digital) appropriate for that context.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply discipline-specific and meta-major career-readiness competencies to real-world tasks and professional environments.
4. Reflect on the undergraduate journey—integrating major learning outcomes—to create a coherent narrative of their growth, demonstrating how the project exemplifies PSU's motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City."

Question: *Why does the Culminating Experience no longer emphasize community-engaged learning (CEL) and working with community partners?*

The AAC&U defines the High-Impact Practice of "Capstone Courses and Projects" as follows: "Whether they're called 'senior capstones' or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a

performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.”

Experiential learning is a learning process in which learners engage in deliberately designed, real-world or simulated experiences, then reflect on those experiences to conceptualize and internalize knowledge, skills, and values — transforming experience into meaningful learning and the capacity for application in real contexts.

While feedback collected at the Fall GE Symposium indicated that the commitment to community engagement is high, there is significant demand for the culminating experience to be more directly relevant to a student's disciplinary path. A majority of comments favored housing the experience within the major, meta-major, or departments. This would allow disciplinary expertise to make the culminating experience more meaningful, facilitate career development, and avoid forcing students to take a “random capstone with no relevance to their major or career path.” Comments suggested the culminating experience should be offered as a menu of options to increase flexibility and avoid duplication of effort.

Question: *How will we maintain the Community Partnerships fostered and developed through the UNST Capstones?*

We anticipate that many programs will develop culminating experiences tailored to their majors, and smaller programs may collaborate within meta-major groups to do so. In many cases, these new courses will be able to adopt, sustain, or expand upon the community partnerships already established through UNST. We also recognize that some departments may not have the capacity to create their own culminating experiences due to staffing or resource limitations. For those situations, we propose retaining a set of the most successful UNST Capstones so that students in those programs can continue to engage in meaningful community-based work and longstanding partnerships are preserved. Schools/Colleges and departments should consult the list of existing capstones to determine which might be appropriate for major or meta-major based Culminating Experiences.

Bridge to Career 2 Credits min.

Bridge to Career requires students to finalize and articulate a post-graduation professional plan, explicitly connecting the skills, insights, and networking gained from their undergraduate experience to a specific career or graduate school pathway.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Employ research methods to identify career opportunities, particularly within the hidden job market, and utilize professional networks, informational interviews, and industry-specific resources to gain insights and potential access to these roles.
2. Analyze personal mission, values, and sense of purpose and accurately assess how these core elements align with the culture, goals, and responsibilities of specific careers

or organizations, enabling students to make informed and meaningful professional choices.

3. Formulate and articulate a comprehensive post-graduation professional plan (including specific career path, graduate school, or professional training) and justify their chosen pathway by explicitly connecting it to the knowledge, skills, and networking experiences gained throughout their undergraduate career.
4. Develop polished, targeted professional application materials (including resumes, cover letters, and professional online profiles) that effectively communicate their relevant skills and experience and are strategically customized for specific roles or academic programs.

Part II: Core Literacies

These courses provide foundational skills and prepare students to communicate effectively, think critically, and interpret data.

Writing and Rhetoric 4 Credits

WR 121Z engages students in the study and practice of critical thinking, reading, and writing. The course focuses on analyzing and composing across varied rhetorical situations and in multiple genres. Students will apply key rhetorical concepts flexibly and collaboratively throughout their writing and inquiry processes.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts.
2. Engage texts critically, ethically, and strategically to support writing goals.
3. Develop flexible composing, revising, and editing strategies for a variety of purposes, audiences, writing situations, and genres.
4. Reflect on knowledge and skills developed in this course and their potential applications in other writing contexts.

Information Literacy Lab 1 Credit

Co-requisite with First-Year Seminar

The Information Literacy Lab provides students with base information literacy skills and related core concepts. These skills enhance and deepen critical thinking, information evaluation, and production of knowledge.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Create keywords and topic development for constructing strategic resource exploration techniques across a variety of databases/platforms.
2. Evaluate information to determine validity, accuracy, bias, iteration, recognition of artificial intelligence derived content versus human generated content, and determination of disciplinary fit.
3. Apply and construct disciplinary specific citation styles.

4. Comprehend authority through context and discipline specific paradigms.

Quantitative Literacy and Analysis 3-4 Credits

Courses in the Quantitative Literacy category focus on reasoning with numbers rather than simply memorizing mathematical procedures. Students practice using data, interpreting information, and making informed decisions in authentic professional contexts and everyday life situations. These courses build practical skills, clear communication, and the ability to use and apply quantitative information responsibly.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Interpret quantitative information presented in multiple forms—such as graphs, tables, equations, diagrams, and statistical summaries—and accurately understand trends and claims in real-world sources.
2. Translate real-life situations (like creating a budget or figuring out a loan) into appropriate mathematical forms such as equations, tables, or graphs, to support effective analysis and informed decision-making.
3. Select and apply appropriate quantitative methods or tools—such as algebraic reasoning, percentages, basic statistics, spreadsheets, or calculators—to solve problems.
4. Analyze issues in personal, civic, or disciplinary contexts using quantitative reasoning strategies, including proportional reasoning and foundational statistical concepts.
5. Evaluate numerical claims by examining assumptions, understanding the limits of models, checking the reasonableness of results, and identifying problems like sampling bias or confusing correlation with causation.
6. Communicate quantitative findings clearly and accurately, translating mathematical results into meaningful explanations for audiences with varying levels of expertise.

Writing in the Disciplines 4 Credits

Courses that fulfill the upper-level Writing in the Discipline (WID) requirement foster rhetorical knowledge about writing conventions within a discipline or discourse community. Students compose texts that respond to the expectations of appropriate audiences, using suitable discourse conventions to shape those texts.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand writing conventions and genre expectations within a discipline or discourse community.
2. Compose and revise texts demonstrating knowledge about disciplinary/discourse community writing conventions and genres.
3. Articulate the choices made in composing and explain how they reflect knowledge about disciplinary conventions.
4. Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing.

5. Use composing processes as a means to discover and reconsider ideas.

Part III: Ways of Knowing

Courses in this category provide students with a broad foundation of knowledge and emphasize critical thinking and problem solving within and across disciplinary frameworks. This broad foundation fosters interdisciplinary approaches to inquiry, and introduces students to how different disciplines construct knowledge and pursue research.

Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts 6-8 Credits; 2 courses

Courses in the Interpreting History, Culture, and Arts category will foster critical thinking, empathy, cultural awareness, and an understanding of historical context through the analysis of arts, literature, history, and philosophy. Students will study artistic, intellectual, or humanistic practices and expressions to develop an appreciation for diverse traditions and the human experience.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Interpret cultural expression—including literature, art, performance, historical narratives, and/or philosophical traditions—using humanities methods (e.g., textual analysis, visual analysis, historiography),.
2. Explain cultural and historical contexts shaping works and traditions.
3. Compose well-reasoned, evidence-based interpretations—written, oral, or creative—that effectively communicate insights about global cultural, historical, and/or artistic works.
4. Reflect on how knowledge of histories, cultures, literatures, and the arts informs ethical reasoning, cultural humility, and responsible engagement in an interconnected world.

Exploring Society and Human Behavior 6-8 Credits

Social Sciences (6-8 credits; two courses)

Courses in the Exploring Society and Human Behavior category address the complexities of human behavior and social patterns and enable students to apply core social science concepts and research methods to analyze and compare how diverse individuals and groups are shaped by (and shape) institutions and systems at the national and/or global levels, preparing them to evaluate ethical issues and contribute to informed solutions for contemporary challenges.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply Core Social Science Concepts and Methods. Identify, describe, and apply basic concepts, theories, and research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) used in the social sciences to explain and analyze human behavior and social patterns across local, national, and/or global contexts. This includes interpreting evidence-based information and drawing appropriate conclusions.
2. Analyze Social and Human Variation, Systems, and Institutions. Students will be able to analyze and compare how individual and group experiences are shaped by social characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, gender, cultural background) and the structures of major institutions and systems (e.g., government, economy, family,

education) at the national and/or global levels, demonstrating an understanding of social and human variation, cross-cultural differences and/or global interconnectedness.

3. Evaluate Ethical Issues, Policy, and National and/or Global Challenges. Evaluate major contemporary national and/or global challenges (e.g., poverty, conflict, climate change) from a social science perspective, identify related ethical issues and policy considerations, and articulate how social science knowledge can inform individual decisions, public discussions, and the development of informed, sustainable solutions.

Investigating Scientific Inquiry and Analysis 8 Credits

Scientific Inquiry and Analysis (8 credits)

Courses in the Scientific Inquiry and Analysis category introduce students to the core methods of scientific investigation and the processes through which scientific knowledge is generated, tested, and refined. Through these courses, students strengthen their science literacy and develop the ability to apply scientific reasoning to everyday decisions and public issues involving science and technology.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain scientific concepts and processes
 - Describe foundational scientific principles relevant to the field of study.
 - Explain how scientific knowledge is developed, evaluated, and revised over time.
 - Show an understanding of the scientific method and its use in investigating hypotheses.
2. Analyze and interpret data
 - Interpret data using graphical, symbolic, numerical, and descriptive methods.
 - Use multiple forms of representation to model and understand real-world phenomena.
3. Evaluate evidence
 - Distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information (misinformation).
 - Use evidence appropriately to justify conclusions, including recognizing the difference between association and causation.
4. Integrate knowledge
 - Synthesize information from diverse sources and apply scientific principles to practical, real-world situations.
5. Engage in ethical scientific reasoning
 - Identify the ethical dimensions of scientific inquiry and societal decision-making, and evaluate how values and responsibilities shape scientific practices.
6. Practice informed citizenship
 - Use scientific knowledge to engage thoughtfully with scientific issues, understand the societal impacts of science and technology, and make evidence-based decisions in everyday life.

Understanding Difference, Power, and Oppression 3-4 Credits **Race and Ethnic Studies (3-4 credits)**

Courses in the Race and Ethnic Studies category will introduce students to the intellectual foundations and origins of the Ethnic Studies discipline, including the activist traditions from

which it derives. Students will learn how the principles of Ethnic Studies remain present-day issues advocated for by scholars, activists, and community members in the continued movement for equity, justice, and liberation.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Define concepts such as racism, white supremacy, imperialism, and settler colonialism.
2. Identify various contemporary forms of racial oppression and discrimination and their origins.
3. Analyze theories, knowledge, artistic expressions, histories, and cultures produced by Native American, African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and/or Chicanx and Latinx communities.
4. Analyze the lived-experiences and struggles for agency, decolonization, and sovereignty by Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Chicanx and Latinx, and Indigenous peoples.

Question: *By moving the RESR requirement into the Gen Ed competencies, does that mean that students in the Honors Program no longer have a RESR requirement?*

The Honors College students will be required to fulfill the Race and Ethnic Studies requirement.

Understanding the World

0-4 Credits

The Understanding the World requirement invites students to explore global contexts and perspectives. Today's graduates—no matter their major—are entering a world that is socially, economically, technologically, and environmentally interconnected. They need the requisite skills to understand and navigate that interconnected world. The Understanding the World category can be satisfied through courses taken as part of the Interpreting History, Culture, and the Arts (HCA) or Exploring Society and Human Behavior (SHB) categories. Double counting is expected and encouraged to fulfill this requirement.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the ability to analyze human experiences, cultural productions, and/or sociopolitical systems within their global historical and social contexts.
2. Assess the roles and impacts of human communities, institutions, and/or interactions within global systems.
3. Interpret cultural meaning-making practices as expressions of, or challenges to, power relations and social inequities.
4. Apply multiple cultural, ethical, and disciplinary perspectives to construct rigorous interpretations of global phenomena.

Baccalaureate Degree Requirements

These requirements will no longer appear as a separate catalog category or webpage. Instead, they are integrated into the **General Education Requirements** lists and webpage and the **Honors College** requirements and webpage, using the following language:

Baccalaureate Degree Requirement. Students will satisfy their degree requirement as follows:

- **Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** Complete 3 quarters or 2 semesters of science courses (*minimum 10 quarter credits, 6 semester credits*) that include a lab or fieldwork component.
- **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.):** Demonstrate one year of college-level language proficiency by completing a minimum of 3 credits in a 103-level or higher course **or** by obtaining a language waiver.
- **Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.):** Complete the program of study as prescribed by the major department (*available for Art Practice, Creative Writing, and Graphic Design*).
- **Bachelor of Music (B.M.):** Complete the prescribed curriculum in music and applied music as outlined by the Music Department.
- **Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.):** Meet the general University requirements for a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree.
- **Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.):** Must hold an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and complete the program as prescribed by the major department (*available in Management & Leadership only*).

The proposed changes to the baccalaureate degrees are as follows:

- The B.F.A., B.M., and B.A.S. remain unchanged.
- A distinction between B.A. and B.S. degrees is retained.
- Description of baccalaureate degree requirements added within the General Education framework for clarity and transparency.
- Distribution requirements removed from B.A./B.S. to reduce confusion and redundancy within the newly proposed General Education Program.
- Expectations for the B.A. and B.S. are balanced:
 - **B.A.** language requirement reduced from two years to **one year**
 - **B.S.** lab/fieldwork science requirement increased from two terms to **one year**

Question: *What is the basis for the proposed changes to the B.A. and B.S. requirements?*

No single data source drove the recommendation; instead, all input was evaluated holistically. Both the **Finance and Data Subcommittee** and the **National Models Subcommittee** identified the B.A./B.S. requirement as a significant decision point. Key concerns included distribution requirements within the B.A./B.S. structure; the challenge of a two-year language requirement for transfer students; inconsistent expectations across majors. **Fall Symposium Feedback** showed support for **retaining a university-wide BA/BS distinction**, with significant support for adjustments: **61%** ranked **maintaining the current requirement** as their 1st or 2nd choice, while **61%** ranked **retaining BA/BS distinctions but modifying requirements** (one year of language for BA, one year of lab science for BS) as their 1st or 2nd choice. Qualitative responses favored strengthening the BS requirement; simplifying the BA language requirement; reducing transfer barriers; preserving meaningful distinctions between the two degrees.

LOGISTICS

Transition Plan

Students already matriculated at PSU have the option to switch to the new GE model. The implementation committee will create a transition plan, working closely with the Registrar's Office. The implementation committee should develop a completion plan that continues to offer UNST courses for 6 years or map a transition that does not require students to complete UNST requirements and does not unduly burden students by having them take more credits and costing more money.

Table 5: Potential Transition Crosswalk

Level of UNST coursework	Satisfies this in the new model
1 term FRINQ	FYE + ILL
2 terms FRINQ	FYE, ILL, WR 121 (+1 credit of LD elective)
3 terms FRINQ	FYE, ILL, WR 121, one 3-credit HCA course, and one 3-credit SHB course
3 terms FRINQ + 1 SINQ	Same as 3 FRINQs + 1 additional 4-credit Ways of Knowing course (all SINQs will be mapped to either HCA, SHB, SIA, DPO, or UTW)
3 terms FRINQ + 2 SINQs	Same as 3 FRINQs + 2 additional 4-credit Ways of Knowing courses (all SINQs will be mapped to either HCA, SHB, SIA, DPO, or UTW); Global requirement waived. Must take 4 credits from an unsatisfied category of HCA, SHB, or SIA, and RESR.
3 terms FRINQ, 2 SINQs + 1 cluster course	Satisfies all requirements except RESR (4 credits), Bridge to Career (2 credits), WID (4 credits), Culminating Experience (4 credits). ¹
3 terms FRINQ, 2 SINQs + 2 cluster courses	Satisfies all requirements except Bridge to Career (2 credits), WID (4 credits), Culminating Experience (4 credits). ¹
3 terms FRINQ, 2 SINQs + 3 cluster courses	Satisfies all requirements except Bridge to Career (2 credits), Culminating Experience (4 credits). ¹

¹ Students seeking a B.S. still have to take Quantitative Literacy and Analysis.

Implementation

Academic years 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 will be critical periods for the implementation of a new model by fall 2028. During these two years, the campus will need to engage in curricular revision work and establish the governance and administration of the GE model. We recommend the creation of an implementation committee that will provide oversight of this process. We recommend the creation of an implementation committee that will provide oversight of this process. Existing resources on campus will also need to be allocated to this effort. For example, this process will require OAI's budget priorities be focused on supporting the general education effort and faculty and academic departments as they prepare to become the "sites" of general education. We recommend OAI's budget be used to compensate or buy-out faculty with university teaching experience and pedagogical expertise to design and facilitate institutes, working groups, and communities of practice for other faculty.

Faculty will play a central role in implementing the new GE model. During AY 26-27, faculty committees, with relevant disciplines represented, will revise and refine student learning outcomes for the GE categories. Also during AY 26-27, faculty and departments should be redesigning and developing curricula for the new GE courses and related changes to curricula in the majors; OAI would need to be structured to support these efforts. In Fall 2027, academic departments will submit redesigned or developed courses for the GE categories. This period will create significant work for departmental and college-level curriculum committees as well as the University Curriculum Committee. Departments, colleges, and faculty senate will need to institute new processes to expedite curricular changes during the implementation phase.

Implementation Timeline

Table 6: Implementation Timeline and Responsible Parties

RESPONSIBLE The "doer(s)"	Action	Start Date	End Date
Gen Ed Taskforce Steering Committee	Send Gen Ed Reform Proposal Draft to Provost, President, FS Presiding Officer, GE Task Force Subcommittee members	Dec, 2025	Dec, 2025
Gen Ed Taskforce Steering Committee	Revise and Finalize Gen Ed Reform Proposal and send to Faculty Senate Steering Committee	Jan, 2026	Jan, 2025
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Education Policy Committee, Budget Committee, Academic Requirements Committee	Review Gen Ed Reform Proposal and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee	Jan, 2026	Mar, 2026
Faculty Senate Steering	Triage review from all committees and move completed proposal to Faculty Senate	Apr, 2026	Apr, 2026
Faculty Senate	Faculty Senate deliberates and votes on Gen Ed Reform Proposal	May, 2026	Jun, 2026

Office of the Registrar	RO prepares line-by-line revisions to all MTMs to send to HECC/TC for review and approval	Jun, 2026	Jul, 2026
Office of the Registrar	Notify the HECC Transfer Council (TC)	Jul, 2026	Sep, 2026
HECC Transfer Council	HECC sends proposal to Technical Changes Faculty Subcommittee	Aug, 2026	Sep, 2026
HECC Technical Changes Faculty Subcommittee	Technical Changes Faculty Subcommittee sends recommendation to Transfer Council	Sep, 2026	Nov, 2026
HECC Transfer Council	Transfer Council votes to approve changes as submitted or sends changes to Major Transfer Map (MTM) subcommittee	Sep, 2026	Nov, 2026
OAA	Establish policy and process standards for the administration, governance, and assessment of the new general education curriculum, including streamlining the curricular approval process	Oct, 2026	Jun, 2027
OAA	Faculty suggest revisions to learning outcomes for all Gen Ed categories	Oct, 2026	Jun, 2027
OAA/OAI	OAI supports faculty and departments as they redesign and develop new GE courses	Nov, 2026	Jun, 2027
Academic Departments	Academic Departments submit, redesign or develop courses to meet established competencies/themes	Aug, 2027	Nov, 2027
Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee/ Gen Ed Committee	Review and approval of course additions and revisions for new curriculum	Oct, 2027	Jan, 2028
OAA, Marketing and Communications	Develop phased training, communication, and marketing rollout of the new general education curriculum to relevant stakeholders	Jan, 2028	Sep, 2028
Registrar's Office, Undergraduate Advising, Transfer Center, University Communications, Faculty Senate	Develop and carry out transition plan from old curriculum to new curriculum - work with students to ensure minimal impact for those completing the old curriculum and those completing the new curriculum	Jan, 2028	Sep, 2028
Office of the Registrar	Update internal systems (Banner, DARS, Degree Maps, Cognos, Canvas, etc.) to reflect all course changes/additions	Jan, 2028	Sep, 2028
Advising	Communicate with transfer partners to evaluate and update transfer maps and inform community college advising communities about the changes	Jan, 2028	Sep, 2028
PSU	Fully implement the new general education curriculum	Sep, 2028	Sep, 2028

Assessment

Current NWCCU standards require that the university establish learning outcomes and/or core competencies, which are assessed through an effective system of assessment within a general education curriculum. This NWCCU standard necessitates the creation of distinct, faculty-developed student learning outcomes, which are consistent with its mission and aligned with broader institutional goals.

A new GE model will require an assessment coordinator to oversee GE assessment across the university. This will include overseeing faculty committees responsible for evaluating course proposals and conducting assessment for each GE component to ensure learning outcomes are incorporated and met. We encourage a thoughtful and intentional design and integration of assessment into the GE redesign so that GE assessment does not become optional, and begin data collection and analysis in order to demonstrate attainment of new GE goals for the next reaccreditation self-evaluation report and site visit.

To achieve these assessment goals, we will need increased assessment support from OAA and OAI to regularly assess the new Gen Ed Learning Outcomes. For example, OSU has an [Office of Assessment](#) in Academic Affairs with three dedicated staff members and a specific [assessment process](#) for General Education course-level Learning Outcomes assessment. [Cal State LA](#) has a director of assessment and assessment coordinator in each school/college.

Governance

The Finance & Data Task Force subcommittee highlighted the need for one faculty-led Curriculum Committee with subcommittees for different curricular components that is overseen by a centralized Gen Ed administrative office housed in OAA. Currently, we have multiple constitutional committees that oversee undergraduate curriculum, including the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), University Studies Council, Honors Council, and the Race and Ethnic Studies Requirement (RESR) Committee. We recommend one undergraduate curriculum that oversees all aspects of the undergraduate curriculum with separate subcommittees for each component of the undergraduate curriculum (e.g., First Year Seminar/Transfer Bridge; Culminating Experiences; Core Literacies; Ways of Knowing).

Administrative Structure

The [Finance & Data subcommittee](#), based on research of comparator minority serving urban institutions, highlights the need for centralized coordination of General Education within an Office of Academic Affairs, with a central administrator (options range from Director with little support structure to a Dean of Undergraduate Education). For example, [San Jose State University](#) has an Office for Undergraduate Education within OAA, which is led by the Dean of Undergraduate Education. [Cal State LA](#) has an Undergraduate Studies Office with an Associate Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and an Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. A centralized and coordinated model of administration ensures that enrollment management, assessment, accreditation preparation, and review of GE is occurring throughout the university in a clear and consistent manner.

Writing Support

Serious consideration needs to be given to oversight of the writing curriculum and faculty development for writing instruction. We recommend an investment in faculty trained to teach composition, including the current NTTFs in UNST who have experience teaching writing intensive, interdisciplinary courses at the freshman and sophomore levels. This training should be designed and facilitated by faculty with expertise in Composition/Rhetoric. We also recommend the hiring of a WID coordinator who would offer regular training and faculty development for faculty teaching writing in the disciplines. This position, which should report to the provost's office but be held by a faculty tenured in English, would additionally manage the writing in the disciplines curriculum and ensure that existing courses meet upper-level learning outcomes and approve new courses for this GE category. We need more investment in composition faculty – we can not rely on GTAs to teach composition – and in ongoing faculty development, curriculum building, placement, assessment, an expanded writing center, and/or a WID program to support writing in the disciplines.

Faculty Support/Development

Faculty support for GE course redesign and development will be essential for implementation of a new GE model. OAI must prioritize faculty development support that focuses on teaching and learning and investment must support faculty development opportunities to redesign and develop new GE courses such as course development workshops and faculty expert-led curricular development training. For example, OAI will need to work with academic departments to develop faculty pedagogical workshops on best practices in teaching first year general education classes to a student population that is majority first-generation, low-income, and BIPOC. It would be worthwhile to examine one of our comparator schools, [Cal State LA](#), whose

nationally recognized Center for Effective Teaching and Learning offers programming on reading and writing in the disciplines and a career engaged department program to embed career readiness into the curriculum, among other topics.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. BA/BS Requirements Rationale

Appendix B. FYE and Transfer Landing Fall Symposium Data Summary

Appendix C. Culminating Experience Fall Symposium Data Summary

Appendix D. Winter Gen Ed Symposium Slides (to be added as PDF)

Appendix E. Fall Gen Ed Symposium Slides (to be added as PDFs)

Appendix A. BA/BS Requirements Rationale

Current Context

The current BA/BS requirement consists of:

Bachelor of Arts (BA)

- Two-year language requirement and distribution requirements:
 - Two years of college-level language proficiency (*minimum 3 credits at the 203 level or above, or a language waiver*).
 - Minimum of 10 credits in Arts & Letters, including at least 3 credits in Fine & Performing Arts.
 - Minimum of 10 credits in Sciences and/or Social Sciences, including at least 3 credits in Science or Mathematics *excluding Math 100 or below*.

Bachelor of Science (BS)

- One-year science requirement and distribution requirements:
 - Minimum of 10 credits in science courses, including at least 6 credits with a lab or fieldwork component. Courses may, but are not required to, come from the same department.
 - Minimum of 3 credits in college-level mathematics or statistics *excluding remedial math (100-level or below)*.
 - Minimum of 10 credits in Arts & Letters and/or Social Sciences.

This requirement is currently presented as a stand-alone component, separate from both the **University Requirements** and the **University Studies Requirements**.

Proposed Change

The revised requirement consists of:

- **B.A.:** One year of college-level language proficiency (*minimum 3 credits at the 103 level or above, or a language waiver¹*).
- **B.S.:** Complete 3 quarters or 2 semesters of science courses (minimum 10 quarter credits, 6 semester credits) that include a lab or fieldwork component.

These requirements will no longer appear as a separate catalog category or webpage. Instead, they will be integrated into the **General Education Requirements** section, under the following language:

Degree Requirement. Students will satisfy their degree requirement as follows:

- **Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** Complete 3 quarters or 2 semesters of science courses (minimum 10 quarter credits, 6 semester credits) that include a lab or fieldwork component.

- **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.):** Demonstrate one year of college-level language proficiency by completing a minimum of 3 credits in a 103-level or higher course **or** by obtaining a language waiver.
 - **Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.):** Complete the program of study as prescribed by the major department (*available for Art Practice, Creative Writing, and Graphic Design*).
 - **Bachelor of Music (B.M.):** Complete the prescribed curriculum in music and applied music as outlined by the Music Department.
 - **Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.):** Must hold an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and complete the program as prescribed by the major department (*available in Management & Leadership only*).
-

Rationale for Change

Data Overview

This proposal reflects recommendations from:

- The **General Education Task Force Subcommittees**
- **Quantitative and qualitative feedback** following the Fall Symposium
- **Feedback from academic colleges** submitted by deans (*to be added*)

No single data source drove the recommendation; instead, all input was evaluated holistically.

Both the **Finance and Data Subcommittee** and the **National Models Subcommittee** identified the BA/BS requirement as a significant decision point. The Finance and Data Subcommittee recommended presenting all requirements as a unified general education program to create consistent student experiences and reduce barriers. Currently, the separation between University Studies, Honors, BA/BS requirements, RESR, the Writing Requirement, and major requirements creates complexity and obstacles for students.

Key concerns included:

- Distribution requirements within the BA/BS structure
- The two-year language requirement for transfer students
- Inconsistent expectations across majors

The National Models Subcommittee also noted that some peer institutions do **not** have **university-wide** requirements for the BA and BS degrees: there are campuses with college-wide BA/BS requirements, departmental BA/BS requirements, and campuses with no BA/BS requirements. We feel that housing BA/BS requirements in colleges or departments would be confusing to students and would not contribute to student success. Instead, by indicating the BA/BS requirements as part of general education, students will have more clarity on the overall requirements needed to graduate.

Fall Symposium Feedback showed support for **retaining a university-wide BA/BS distinction**, with adjustments:

- **61%** ranked **maintaining the current requirement** as their 1st or 2nd choice.
- **61%** ranked **retaining BA/BS distinctions but modifying requirements** (one year of language for BA, one year of lab science for BS) as their 1st or 2nd choice.
- **40%** of respondents ranked elimination of BA/BS requirements as either their 1st or 2nd choice (top) 2, while **41%** respondents ranked elimination as either their 4th or 5th choice (bottom 2).
- **28.5%** supported allowing colleges to set their own BA/BS requirements.

Qualitative responses favored:

- Strengthening the BS requirement
- Simplifying the BA language requirement
- Reducing transfer barriers
- Preserving meaningful degree distinctions

Alternative Proposal Considered

The **Key Competencies and Literacies Subcommittee** suggested **eliminating the BA/BS distinction and requiring all bachelor's students, regardless of their degree type**, to take:

- **13 credits of Natural Science**
- **8 credits of Language**

This option generated thoughtful discussion but **no clear consensus emerged**.

Regarding requiring 13 credits of natural science for all bachelor's students, as part of general education:

- 23% of respondents supported a general requirement of 13 credits of natural science, with an additional 8 % supporting it for BS students only.
- 18% supporting the idea but thought the total credits should be fewer.
- 21% expressed uncertainty.
- 30% were clearly against the proposed requirement.

Regarding requiring 8 credits of language science for all bachelor's students, as part of general education:

- 48% supported the proposal, with an additional 7% supporting it for BA students only.
- 12% were uncertain.
- 33% were clearly against it.

Decision

Based on the data:

- We **retain** the distinction between BA and BS degrees.
- We **integrate** BA/BS requirements within the **General Education framework** for clarity and transparency.
- We **remove distribution requirements** from BA/BS to reduce confusion (and redundancy within the newly proposed General Education Program).
- We **balance expectations**:
 - **B.A.** language requirement reduced from two years to **one year**
 - **B.S.** lab/fieldwork science requirement increased from two terms to **one year**

This revision maintains academic distinction while promoting student progress and equity.

Appendix B. FYE and Transfer Landing Fall Symposium Data Summary

Quantitative responses to the following question about the first-year experience:

How would you rank the following options for a first-year experience?

First choice:

Three terms of first-year seminar in major or meta-major: 22/77, 29%

Two terms of seminar in major or meta-major with student success component, additional writing requirement: 24/77, 31%

One term seminar...: 18/77, 23%

Other: 13/77, 17%

Second choice:

Three terms of first-year seminar in major or meta-major: 16/61, 26%

Two terms of seminar in major or meta-major with student success component, additional writing requirement: 29/61, 48%

One term seminar...: 12/61, 20%

Other: 4/61, 7%

Summary of the following open-ended question about the first-year experience:

What other ideas do you have for the first-year experience (e.g., how many credits it is, who will administer it, how it will address competencies and student needs), and what is the rationale for these first-year experience ideas?

Theme 1: Interdisciplinary and Exploratory Learning (Keywords: interdisciplinary, majors, faculty, options, learn)

Many respondents emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary courses and opportunities for students to explore different majors and academic fields. The rationale is to help students discover their interests and understand the breadth of academic possibilities at PSU.

- "I like interdisciplinary courses for first year with visits from faculty in different majors to learn about options."
- "Students need to be disabused of the idea that taking a course outside their major—even a course that they "don't like"—is somehow a waste of their time. This is a kind of closed-mindedness and incuriosity that a good GenEd program pushes back against. I understand the mindset "I am in a hurry and I only have so many money—only major classes for me!"—but a GenEd needs to help students understand the interconnectedness of knowledge. Also, as a career skill, at some point it may help to know how to talk to someone who has interests and expertise different from your own."

Theme 2: Foundational Skills and Academic Success (Keywords: writing, skills, inquiry, academic, success)

A significant theme revolves around strengthening foundational academic skills, particularly writing, and ensuring students are equipped for college success. This includes maintaining or

enhancing existing programs like Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) and integrating student support components.

- "Keep UNST FRINQ as is. We need to articulate each FRINQ as a pathway to various majors."
- "Freshman Inquiry works great"
- "small enough class size that students can make connections and feel a sense of community/belonging. Content should either connect them to a major or provide academic skills for college success (writing and data literacy). Rationale: foundational skills for success at PSU and in life/career"

Theme 3: Community, Belonging, and Orientation (Keywords: community, belonging, peer, support, orienting)

Respondents highlighted the need for first-year experiences that foster a sense of community, belonging, and effective orientation to the university environment. This includes peer group support systems and place-based engagement.

- "a new RESR counting 2 credit mega class with peer group support systems welcoming and orienting students to psu, that focus a place based engagement of who we are where we come from and where we are going."
- "small classes that build community"

Theme 4: Structure and Credit Considerations (Keywords: credits, seminar, term, major, requirement)

There are discussions about the structure of the first-year experience, including the number of credits, the duration of seminars (e.g., one, two, or three terms), and how these experiences connect to majors or meta-majors.

- "I don't see a need for a multi-term Freshman Seminar."
- "I would like to see a 1-credit seminar that helps students explore majors and careers, and learn about campus resources. It should be taught by staff and faculty from across campus, and be required for all first-year students."
- "1-2 credit course, taught by faculty, that introduces students to the academic expectations of college, helps them develop study skills, and connects them to campus resources. This should be a required course for all first-year students."

Summary of the following open-ended question about a cohorted first-year experience::

A cohort experience (i.e., keeping students in the same meta-major together across courses) in the first-year is one model option. From your perspective, what are pros and cons of a first year cohort experience in a general education model?

Theme 1: Sense of Belonging and Community

Many respondents highlight the primary benefit of a cohort experience as fostering a strong sense of belonging and community among first-year students. This is seen as crucial for student retention and overall success.

- "pro: sense of belonging; con: logistics"
- "We don't have that many first-year students. We could use a greater sense of community; it's a cost/benefit question."
- "This would promote belonging as it would provide early connection to peers in their major."

Theme 2: Logistical Challenges and Inflexibility

A significant concern raised is the logistical complexity of implementing and managing cohort experiences, particularly in a diverse student body with varying entry points and academic paths. This includes issues with scheduling, students joining off-sequence, and the potential for students to feel "locked in" if group dynamics are problematic.

- "pro: sense of belonging; con: logistics"
- "Unwieldy the longer you stretch it out. We aren't Honors"
- "Pro - cohorts help students build community Con - if you miss a term it is hard to get back on track and many of our students miss terms."

Theme 3: Major Exploration vs. Early Specialization

Some responses touch upon the tension between encouraging early major exploration and the potential for a cohort model to lead to premature specialization. While some see benefits in students orienting themselves within majors quickly, others worry it might limit students' ability to explore diverse interests.

- "I think that's generally great, except for students who are exploring (which is one of the great parts of universities). Someone might come in as a pre-med science major, only to realize they love poetry (life story of Aimee Nezhukumatathil), or something like that. Might we limit our students' potential by making them choose very soon?"
- "as you indicated, separation from differences is not always good. It could be that in the first term, students do not need to declare a major or meta major. In term 2, they declare and are then separated into a cohort."

Theme 4: Academic Support and Success

The cohort model is also seen as a way to provide academic support and help students navigate the institution. Some respondents equate it to existing successful programs like Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ).

- "Freshman inquiry provides a cohort experience"
- "So many students come out of FRINQ having made the friends that they keep all their time at PSU."

Theme 5: Cost-Benefit and Resource Allocation

A few responses bring up the practical considerations of cost and resource allocation, questioning whether the benefits of a cohort experience outweigh the potential expenses and demands on faculty and staff.

- "We don't have that many first-year students. We could use a greater sense of community; it's a cost/benefit question."
- "I prefer to put money on faculty positions in the disciplines at a time of severe cuts."

In summary, while a first-year cohort experience is widely recognized for its potential to build community and support student success, concerns exist regarding its logistical feasibility, potential to limit exploration for undeclared students, and the overall cost-benefit.

Summary of the following open-ended question about incorporating peer mentors into the first-year experience:

Our current general education model incorporates peer mentors into the first-year general education curriculum. From your perspective, what are the pros and cons of this? Should we consider incorporating peer mentors into a new general education model? Why or why not? If so, how?

Theme 1: Benefits of Peer Mentors (Support, Community, Transition)

Many respondents highlight the significant positive impact of peer mentors on first-year students. These benefits primarily revolve around providing support, fostering a sense of community, and aiding in the transition to college life.

- "Pros: builds community, provides support for first-year students, helps with transition to college, provides leadership opportunities for peer mentors."
- "Pros: Peer mentors can be a great resource for students, especially first-generation students, to help them navigate the university and feel a sense of belonging."
- "Pros: Peer mentors can help students feel more connected to the university, provide a relatable resource for navigating college life, and offer valuable insights from a student perspective. They can also help with basic academic questions and connect students to resources."

Theme 2: Challenges and Limitations of Peer Mentors (Training, Consistency, Scope)

Despite the acknowledged benefits, several concerns and limitations regarding peer mentor programs are raised. These often relate to the quality of training, consistency of support, and the appropriate scope of a peer mentor's role.

- "Cons: inconsistent quality of mentors, lack of clear role definition, potential for mentors to be overwhelmed, not all students connect with their mentors."
- "Cons: It can be difficult to ensure consistent quality and training across all peer mentors. Sometimes the role can be unclear, and mentors might not feel adequately

supported or compensated for their work. There's also a risk of students relying too heavily on mentors instead of developing their own problem-solving skills."

- "Cons: can be hit or miss depending on the mentor. Some mentors are great, others are not. Training is key."

Theme 3: Incorporating Peer Mentors into a New Model (Structured Integration, Training, Compensation)

There's a general consensus that peer mentors should be considered for a new general education model, but with a strong emphasis on structured integration, comprehensive training, and fair compensation.

- "Yes, we should consider incorporating peer mentors. It's a valuable resource. How: better training, clearer expectations, and perhaps a more formalized role within the curriculum."
- "Yes, but with better training and clearer expectations for both mentors and mentees. Perhaps a dedicated course for mentors, and a required check-in system for mentees."
- "Yes, but they need to be better trained and compensated. It's a lot of work for a small stipend."

Theme 4: Specific Suggestions for Implementation

Respondents offer concrete ideas for how to implement peer mentor programs effectively in a new model. These include:

- **Credit-bearing courses for mentors:** "Offer a 1-2 credit course for peer mentors to provide them with pedagogical training and a deeper understanding of the curriculum."
- **Integration with specific courses:** "Integrate them into specific first-year courses, perhaps as part of a discussion section or lab, where they can facilitate small group work."
- **Clear role definition:** "Define their role more clearly: are they academic support, social support, or both? This will help with training and expectations."
- **Compensation:** "Ensure they are fairly compensated for their time and effort."
- **Faculty collaboration:** "Stronger collaboration between faculty and peer mentors to ensure alignment with course goals."

In conclusion, the data strongly suggests that peer mentors are a valuable asset to the first-year experience, primarily for their role in building community and supporting student transition. However, successful integration into a new general education model would require addressing existing challenges related to training, consistency, and role definition, with a focus on structured integration, comprehensive training, and fair compensation.

Summary of quantitative responses to the following question about a transfer landing course:

A transfer student landing course is important to consider in a model given the large % of our students who are transfer students

First choice:

Landing course for all transfer students: 50/77, 65%

Landing course for those who transfer with less than junior standing: 13

No transfer landing: 4

Other: 10

Second choice:

Landing course for all transfer students: 15

Landing course for those who transfer with less than junior standing: 39

No transfer landing: 1

Other: 5

Summary of open-ended responses to the following question about transfer landing:

What other ideas do you have about a transfer landing course (e.g., how many credits it is, who will administer it, how it will address competencies and student needs)?

The responses regarding a transfer landing course offer a variety of ideas, with some common themes emerging. Here's a summary of the key suggestions:

- Credit Structure:
 - Several responses suggest a 2-credit course.
 - One response proposes a 1-credit course.
 - Another idea is a 4-credit course within UNST that also fulfills a diversity requirement.
- Administration and Focus:
 - A course connected to majors or meta-majors is suggested to help students build relationships and connect with a cohort.
 - One idea is for the course to be administered by the career center or student services.
 - The course should focus on competencies like critical thinking, information literacy, and communication, along with practical needs such as navigating campus resources, understanding degree requirements, and building connections.
 - There's a suggestion for the course to be similar to PSU 101, potentially taken at the sophomore or junior level, with a focus on career readiness and development.
 - One response mentions the OSU model for such a class, suggesting it could be major-specific, structured, and vetted like a first-year class.
- Alternative Approaches:
 - One respondent questions the necessity of a course, suggesting that a revamped orientation and advising model focusing on navigating degree programs might be more effective.

- Another idea is for the course to be free to students and offered during the summer.
- Other Specific Ideas:
 - A 'transfer landing course' is mentioned as a condensed version of the first-year experience.
 - The concept of creating meta-major landing spots for transfers is highlighted to quickly connect students with their majors and related resources.

Summary of responses to the following open-ended question about a writing requirement:

What other ideas do you have about the integration of writing requirement courses into a new general education model (e.g., who will teach the courses, who will oversee the courses, how will the courses be integrated with competencies)?

Integration of writing requirement courses into a new general education model offer a variety of perspectives and suggestions. Here's a summary of the key ideas:

- Faculty and Training:
 - One suggestion is that any faculty in the Humanities, and potentially others, could be trained to teach these courses.
 - There's a call for better training for faculty who teach writing-intensive courses, particularly for those outside of English departments.
 - Another idea is to have faculty from various disciplines teach writing within their subject areas, with oversight from a writing program or a dedicated writing center.
- Course Structure and Integration:
 - Several responses emphasize the importance of integrating writing with competencies, suggesting that writing should be taught within the context of other subjects rather than as a standalone skill.
 - One idea is to have writing requirements embedded within major courses, with a focus on discipline-specific writing.
 - There's a suggestion for a lower-level writing course to focus on foundational skills, followed by upper-level writing-intensive courses across disciplines.
 - Some responses advocate for a "writing across the curriculum" approach, where writing is reinforced in multiple courses throughout a student's academic career.
- Oversight and Administration:
 - A common theme is the need for clear oversight and coordination of writing requirements, possibly through a writing committee, a writing program, or a dedicated writing center.
 - One response suggests that writing courses could be overseen by a central committee with representatives from different departments.
- Challenges and Considerations:
 - One respondent notes the current transitional moment, especially with AI, making it difficult to fully answer how writing requirements should be integrated.
 - There's a concern that students are still lacking basic writing skills by their third year, indicating a need for better foundational writing instruction.

- One response simply states that writing integration is "not important."
- Another emphasizes the need to "start earlier earlier earlier" with writing instruction.
- Other Ideas:
 - A suggestion for a writing portfolio to demonstrate progress and competency.
 - The idea of offering writing support services, such as tutoring and workshops, to supplement coursework.
 - One response mentions the importance of small class sizes to facilitate effective writing instruction.

Appendix C. Culminating Experience Fall Symposium Data Summary

**Summary of quantitative response to the following question about the senior experience:
How would you rank the following culminating experience options?**

- a. Community-based interdisciplinary project
- b. Project focused in major course
- c. Senior seminar for reflections on learning
- d. Career readiness course outside of major/college
- e. Senior thesis
- f. Other

First choice:

community-based interdisciplinary project, N=30/73 41%

Project focused in major course, N=26/73 36%

Senior seminar for reflections on learning 6/73 8%

Other 6/73 8%

Second choice:

Project focused in major course, N=16/66 24%

Community-based interdisciplinary project, N=14/66 21%

Senior seminar 12/66 18%

Senior thesis 12/66 18%

Summary of open-ended response to the following question about the senior culminating experience:

What other ideas do you have for a culminating experience (e.g., how many credits it is, who will administer it, how it will address competencies and student needs)?

The provided comments reveal a complex debate about the future of the culminating experience at Portland State University (PSU), but they converge on three central themes that define what the experience should look like.

The data suggests a successful culminating experience must be a high-impact requirement that reconciles the historical strengths of PSU's General Education (GE) program with the practical career and disciplinary needs of its students.

1. Mandatory Applied Experience & Community Engagement

This is the strongest and most consistently supported theme, viewed by many as the element that **defines a PSU student** and enacts the motto, "**Let Knowledge Serve the City.**"

- **Applied and Real-World Focus:** The experience **must be applied** and **connect students with the community** through a project, service-learning, or internship. Pure

reflection or traditional research (like a thesis) is seen as less impactful unless **coupled with experiential learning and community problem-solving**.

- **Skill Development:** This applied work is valued for explicitly developing **generalizable skill sets** required by the workforce: collaboration, communication, project design, leadership, critical thinking, and working across diverse skillsets.
- **Visibility and Impact:** The existing Capstone model has produced "incredible examples of civic engagement," **benefited the community**, and resulted in **job and employment opportunities** for students. Many faculty argue that "**losing community-based learning... would be a shame.**"

2. Integration with Majors and Flexibility in Format

While the commitment to community engagement is high, there is significant demand for the culminating experience to be more directly relevant to a student's disciplinary path.

- **Major-Specific Integration:** A majority of comments favor housing the experience **within the major, meta-major, or departments**. This allows **disciplinary expertise** to make the Culminating Experience more meaningful, facilitates career development, and avoids forcing students to take a "random capstone with no relevance to their major or career path."
- **Variety of Options:** The culminating experience should be offered as a **menu of options** to increase flexibility and avoid duplication of effort. Options could include:
 - Major-specific course (e.g., **senior seminar, two-term course**).
 - **Internship** with deep reflective seminar.
 - **Community-based project in the major** (combining the best of both models).
 - **Thesis** (often cited as a viable option, particularly if collaboratively designed with an advisor).
- **Consistency in Requirements:** Regardless of where it is housed, there must be **consistency around the options** to ensure it's not "unfair" that some students can double-dip with a major requirement while others must do two separate culminating projects.
- **Credit Structure:** Suggestions for credit hours vary, but the course should **not be 6 credits**, with most favoring **4 credits** or a range of **4 to 8 credits**.

3. Focus on Career Readiness and Professional Reflection

The culminating experience is viewed as the final step in a student's journey, making it a critical bridge to post-graduation life.

- **Career Readiness Priority:** The course **must focus on career readiness**, a component many suggest is best taught within the context of the major. This includes **connecting students to job opportunities** and requiring assignments like an "**aspirational resume.**"

- **Coherent Narrative and Reflection:** The experience should be a **culminating reflection** where students are asked to **make a coherent narrative** out of their undergraduate study and reflect on their learning and growth.
- **Defining the PSU Identity:** The experience should serve to **"unite the students graduating in some way"** and **"define what it means to be a PSU student"** by encapsulating the university's service motto.

Appendix D. Winter Gen Ed Symposium Slides (to be added as PDF)

Appendix E. Fall Gen Ed Symposium Slides (to be added as PDFs)