General Education Reform Proposal
November 2022

2030 Problem Statement

UWM's core curriculum has developed to include a complex, confusing maze of University, College, and Program requirements that can be difficult to navigate, impede student progress, and discourage academic collaboration.

Core Principles

- **Design GER in an intentional and coordinated way that focuses on student needs such that the value of GER can be clearly articulated to them.**

- **Focus and structure GER around UW System learning outcomes (LO)**

- **GER should not be a barrier to changing majors, moving between Schools/Colleges, or transferring to UWM.**

- **GER should be consistent across the campuses of UWM.**

Core Principles

- **Recognize and utilize previous investments in personnel.**

- **Address financial impact of GER reform through central budgeting.**

- **Manage GER course array via staff or a dedicated GER unit in Academic Affairs that coordinates with faculty governance and instructional units.**

Key Problems

- **Proliferation of courses; courses not linked to learning outcomes. Difficulties with assessment.**

- Campus APCC does not have clear guidance on how to determine which courses should be included/excluded and lacks the authority to remove courses from the array.

- **Lack of Support for Governance and Instructional Staff.** The APCC does not have the resources to properly vet general education requests and to assess existing courses. Further, instructional staff often need support in developing, assessing, and revising general education offerings.

Recommendation 1

Provide a simplified distribution of 18 credits, six "areas of inquiry":

- Natural World
- Society and Culture
- Creativity and Aesthetic Innovation
- Global Perspectives and Responsibilities
- Cultural Diversity
- Health and Well-Being

Recommendation 2

Provide clarity on what constitutes a course in General Education

- Course content aligns with the Area of Inquiry and meets the learning outcomes of the relevant Area of Inquiry.
- Assessment mechanisms built into Canvas or another central depository.
- Course size aligned with pedagogical goals (e.g., large, information-based; small, communication-intensive).
- Fits within the overall array of the Area of Inquiry.

Recommendation 3

Provide Support for Faculty and Governance

- Recommend criteria, planning, and policies for the General Education Program;
- Advise colleges, and shared governance units on the consistency of General Education offerings across the university, and on the development of courses and programs related to the General Education Program;
- Provide resources and programming (perhaps in coordination with CETL) on the improvement of delivery modes, technologies, and pedagogies for General Education;
- Coordinate a continuous improvement process for General Education that builds on assessment and other feedback to revise courses, General Education requirements and their place within the UWM undergraduate experience.

In addition….

- CCAT also recommends considering the addition of a 1-unit University Experience course for new freshman and transfer students.

Questions & Discussion