“Recommendations that would help with policy language and rollout logistics”

Jeremy Vetter, 2/28/2024

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General support and appreciation for seeking wide faculty input on this area, and carefully considering the impact across the University.

There is some support in the comments for a two-course model. One group expressed support for a breadth/depth model with two courses. Another group “seemed to favor a two-course model in which one course is included under ‘foundations’ that has the goal of meeting all or very close to all 7 American Institutions outcomes and then a second course (attribute via EP or BC?) that is more focused on civic knowledge, engagement, debate, etc.” or that is “more open ended and flexible to cover 1 or more of the areas in greater depth.” This is similar to the breadth/depth model, but with the crucial difference that the comprehensive (breadth) course would be an additional foundations-type course rather than part of existing EP/BC courses.

There was also some support for this being an attribute, rather than including a foundations course. If a comprehensive or breadth course is included in the BC/EP courses, rather than foundations, the concern was mentioned that it might need to be a BC course. Achieving all seven outcomes could make it inherently interdisciplinary. There is a concern that there be options for participation from different disciplines, not just the core fields (presumably History, Political Science, Economics, Law). This could “encourage the possibility for in-depth study and genuine conversations” in a particular area of interest for the student. It was also noted by another group that an attribute allowing for in-depth exploration of one or more areas could enable “more inclusion by professors already implementing some kind of CE in their courses.”

A variety of other ideas: One suggestion was that two courses could be in different disciplines. Someone else expressed concern about an “unfunded mandate” and requiring departments in these areas to take on an excessive burden. An idea mentioned in another group was to partition to the topics/outcomes into A and B lists so that each course can address some but not necessarily all of them. Someone else suggested this could be perhaps woven into existing courses, such as UNIV 101, Foundations Math and Writing, or Exploring Perspectives. This is worth considering, although it these are already very packed courses already in terms of their learning goals (esp. UNIV 101 which is only one unit) so it may prove difficult, although certainly the EP category is one place where attribute courses might be developed.

Some key rollout and policy language issues and themes that come up in the feedback:

1. How to fit into the existing GE curriculum: multiple concerns were raised about whether there will be space for 2 additional courses in the curriculum, even if these are attributes for the 7 BC/EP courses. It was asked by some participants: what else would be displaced from the curriculum to make room for this, or what courses would need to be “taken away” elsewhere for it to be implemented. Also, “is there space for 2 courses for civic knowledge learning outcomes”? Another group member expressed “hesitation on [requiring] 2 classes for civic knowledge.” This would seem to suggest a one-course (or even no course?) model could be preferable for some. There is also a wider concern expressed by some that it is already challenging for some students to meet graduation requirements, so it is important to avoid adding anything. At least one person/group mentioned that they hope this requirement isn’t added at all, even as an attribute.

2. There is concern in some colleges that we can’t add to GE requirements for total units, especially in Engineering, because of the existing credit expectations for degree programs. AP credit could help with this problem, but may not be possible for all students. On the other hand, some majors may already address these outcomes within the major.

3. Assessment of 7 different outcomes in a single course is a cause for some concern. (As the OGE has noted, it may be that the specific outcomes assessed could rotate from year to year, or as the UWGEC Chair has suggested, it might be that the signature assignment for a course covering all the areas could address some of the outcomes, while other outcomes could be addressed elsewhere in the course rather than on a signature assignment, perhaps through a threshold level of having students engage in an activity or graded work.) At least one comment mentioned that covering all seven outcomes could be a lot of coverage for a single class and might run the risk of making it “dry and unappealing” to students if it comes across too much as a “checklist model of teaching,” and thereby working against the purpose of the existing GE curriculum.

4. Some discussion centered around how many courses already address these outcomes across the University. One group discussed multiple courses in SGPP and History that probably do, or are very close, and other future options might exist elsewhere. It was pointed out that rollout will be heavily affected by how many new courses will be needed to meet student demand and how quickly they can be rolled out. A suggestion was expressed that we go to departments to find out what they already have or might be interested in offering in the future. Timing of the rollout was also mentioned as a concern. Make sure we have time to get them ready for Fall 2026 attributes in graduation requirement, which may be far enough off to make this possible.

Some other important and specific issues to be addressed in rollout:

* Transfer / Articulation
* AP credit (and other credit by exam)
* Microcampuses
* International Students
* Balance with global/world
* Alignment of UAGC with this ABOR requirement
* Civic Engagement practicum and possibility of a “microbadge” or other notation
* Civic Learning across the curriculum beyond GE attributes or foundations?
* Advising – reports are already very long – how can this be added without excessive complexity?