

General Education and Assessment Institute Team Charge

Members of the 2015-2016 LA&S Council have been selected to participate in the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment. The members of this General Education and Assessment Institute Team are: Jane Fiske, Jenn Berg, Chris Cratsley, Elizabeth Gordon, David Svolba, and Kisha Tracy. This group has met and consulted with the LA&S Council throughout the spring of 2016 in order to consider possible ways of revising the LA&S curriculum in response to the Program Review and University Strategic Plan. In addition to recommendations provided by the recent LA&S Program Review, the LA&S council has relied on input from relevant constituencies at events such as Development Day, and from working groups across campus to craft a charge for the team's summer work.

The General Education and Assessment Institute Team's principal task is to develop a curriculum proposal for our LA&S program revision, outlining a flexible model that reflects university-wide recommendations and possibly options that have not yet been considered. This proposal will be open to further review and revision.

The University Strategic Plan calls for curricular innovation to increase interdisciplinary learning, civic learning, twenty-first century intellectual skills, and high-impact practices such as learning communities, student-faculty research, supplemental instruction, writing intensive courses, and capstone experiences across the curriculum. Thus, the group's proposal will consider each of the following:

1. Introductory, intermediate, and advanced LA&S coursework that allows students to develop and be assessed longitudinally according to our learning outcomes.
2. A Liberal Arts and Sciences course approval, review and redesign process that ensures the associated learning outcomes will be taught and assessed for all students and provides an active role for the LA&S council in overseeing these courses.
3. How to insure "A balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences" (from NEASC Standard 4.17) and a role for the associated LA&S departments in offering these courses.
4. A curricular design that can be effectively explained and understood, both in terms of the learning goals and the course selection process through clear terminology (when possible adapted from existing terminology) as well as simple and meaningful choices for students.
5. Incentives or requirements for students to engage in focused coursework in a foreign language.
6. Incentives or requirements for students to engage in introductory and advanced coursework in a single discipline outside their major to encourage minors.

7. High Impact Practices and the necessary institutional support to target improvement in one or more of the LA&S learning outcomes including:
 1. Learning communities, team-taught courses, and/or other models to foster integrative, interdisciplinary learning.
 2. A credit-bearing “First-Year Experience” that, alongside knowledge-based instruction might include the acquisition of cognitive, meta-cognitive, wellness and character-related skills.
 3. Civic learning opportunities that foster civic knowledge and civic engagement.

As noted above, the General Education and Assessment Institute Team will examine the potential to incorporate our existing learning outcomes as well as new learning outcomes into introductory, intermediate and advanced LA&S coursework. In defining the foundational intellectual skills necessary for student success at the introductory level as well as those related to more advanced LA&S courses, the team will build on our existing LA&S program by examining the role and assessment of the current learning outcomes:

- Aesthetic Appreciation
- Citizenship (including Global Learning and Intercultural Knowledge)
- Communication (Oral and Written)
- Ethical Reasoning
- Problem Solving (through Quantitative Literacy/Quantitative Reasoning and through Inquiry and Data Analysis/Scientific Reasoning)

The group will also consider the role and assessment of learning outcomes, beyond those highlighted above that have been outlined in the Academic Plan, identified as important skills and aptitudes in the Strategic Plan, and/or endorsed by ongoing faculty discussions within the LA&S Council and through our Development Day outreach. These include learning outcomes that represent foundational intellectual skills for College success during the first year and beyond such as:

- Metacognition
- Wellness (Physical and Mental)
- Critical and Creative Thinking (including Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking)
- Information Literacy
- Reading

The team will also explore how existing learning outcomes can be integrated with new learning outcomes in more advanced LA&S coursework including:

- Interdisciplinary and Integrative Learning
- Civic Learning and Engagement

Graphic overviews of the proposed elements of the LA&S Curriculum (Figure 1) and full range of Learning Outcomes (Figure 2) that have been shared with the campus community and will be considered by the General Education and Assessment Institute Team when developing the proposal are provided on the following page:

Figure 1.

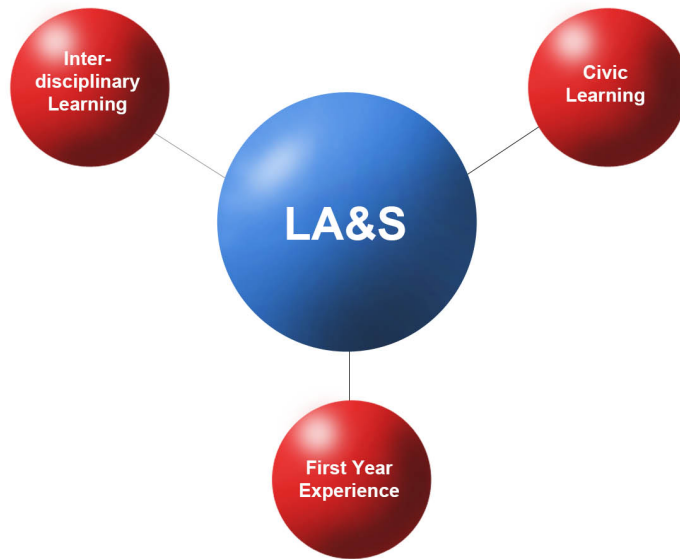


Figure 2.



The group's proposal will be submitted to the President, VPAA, Deans, and the LAS Council prior to September 1st and discussed at the fall faculty development day.