

Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PLAN FOR GENERAL EDUCATION



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Transforming General Education

at the University of Maryland »

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
PLAN FOR GENERAL EDUCATION**

DECEMBER 2010

APPROVED BY THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST
AND THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

In the spring of 2008, following more than a year of intense discussion by the entire campus community, the University of Maryland adopted a bold and ambitious new strategic plan, entitled *Transforming Maryland: Higher Expectations*. This plan is guiding our course to the front ranks of world-class research universities. Central to this plan is an enhancement of the quality and rigor of the undergraduate programs and especially their common foundation—the university’s long-standing program of general education. Representing as much as one-third of a student’s curriculum, general education is a critical shared experience for all of our undergraduates; it should thus clearly reflect the mission, vision, and values of the university.

To craft this vision, the Office of the Provost and the University Senate jointly created the Task Force on General Education, comprised of faculty and students from disciplines across the campus and chaired by Distinguished University Professor Ira Berlin. The task force was charged with developing a plan that will provide an intellectual context for academic, personal, civic, and professional life, challenging students to explore how various disciplines contribute to knowledge and to an understanding of the human condition and society.

Input from the campus community echoed my own sentiments that these principles should permeate the curriculum, embedded in courses in traditional disciplines as well as those that cut across disciplinary boundaries. General education should be a distinguishing feature of a University of Maryland education. It should be not only intellectually rigorous and demanding but also nimble enough to take advantage of the unique opportunities afforded by our location in the Washington-Baltimore corridor.

The task force’s new plan, which is detailed in this document, accomplishes this and more. Its proposal, which represents the culmination of an intensive yearlong effort,

was overwhelmingly approved by the University Senate and enthusiastically embraced by the president in April 2010. I am also delighted to endorse *Transforming General Education*. It adds components in Oral Communication, Diversity, Cultural Competence, and Experiential Learning, and it expands participation in Distributive Studies to all colleges on campus through an innovative new category called Scholarship in Practice. A suite of imaginative signature courses, the “I-Series” will offer students the opportunity to view complex problems from defined disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. They challenge students to explore how research-active faculty members use their experience and knowledge to examine timely societal issues.

I am confident that *Transforming General Education* will rise to the challenge of engaging and educating our increasingly talented student body. It will empower our graduates with critical thinking and reasoning skills, preparing them to be responsible citizens in the global community.

Nariman Farvardin

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

At the University of Maryland, general education is us. While each student has—or will eventually have—a major and each member of the faculty has his or her disciplinary specialty, all students and most faculty members participate in general education. It unites us as an intellectual and creative community and defines a University of Maryland education.

General education speaks to the faculty's first principles, the student's best abilities, and the university's highest ideals and aspirations. It is for just these reasons that general education is a point of permanence in an institution committed to change. While students and faculty members come and courses are added and dropped, the general education curriculum remains—until it too changes.

CORE, Maryland's previous general education program, served the university with great success for more than 30 years until the university's new strategic plan mandated its reevaluation. Members of the task force charged with revising CORE undertook our assignment with caution, humility, and anticipation. We studied CORE and determined what has worked in the past. We compared CORE's offerings to other similar programs. We identified areas where changes in American society demanded new thinking. After a full year of consultation and debate across the campus, the new plan—dubbed *Transforming General Education* (TGE)—received the overwhelming support of the University Senate and the approval of the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost.

As noted below, *Transforming General Education* is both conservative and innovative. It maintains and strengthens CORE's commitment to a liberal education even as it places Maryland's general education within an entirely new structure. While the demands of Fundamental Studies, Distributive Studies, and Diversity are restated and reinforced, new categories of learning—Scholarship in Practice, Understanding Plural Societies, and Cultural Competence—along with a host

of new courses, are established. Those who peruse this report will find much that is familiar but also much that is new.

Because it is foundational, *Transforming General Education* offers both challenges and opportunities. The first challenge, implementation, is going forward as members of the faculty are designing new courses with defined learning outcomes under the leadership of the dean for undergraduate studies. It is difficult and complex work, and I and the other members of the task force stand in awe of the energy and ingenuity that the various faculty committees are bringing to this intellectual task.

No doubt *Transforming General Education* will precipitate other curricular changes, for no curricular structure can remain in place when its foundation shifts. Changing one piece always changes the whole. In the years to come departments and colleges may find opportunities to restructure the requirements for majors and make new electives available to all students. Encouraged by the incentives put in place by TGE, members of the faculty will find resources to adopt new pedagogical methods and technologies. In short, TGE does not only mark a change in general education, but also speeds the process of renewal throughout the university. Preserving the best of the old and creating the new have always been central to the spirit of the University of Maryland. I am confident that that process—retaining the best of the past while making room for the new—will continue.

Ira Berlin

Distinguished University Professor and
Chair of the Task Force on General Education



I. Introduction »

Transforming Maryland, the university's strategic plan adopted in 2008, called for a new vision of general education to ground, inspire, and challenge faculty and students at the University of Maryland. The following year, the chair of the University Senate and the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost created and charged the Task Force on General Education. One year later, on April 8, 2010, the task force's proposal for a new general education program entitled *Transforming General Education at the University of Maryland* was debated, modified, and approved by the University Senate.

Transforming General Education (TGE) is innovative yet conservative, exacting yet flexible, practical yet visionary, and dynamic rather than static. TGE requires intellectual mastery and agility from students and ingenuity and commitment from faculty. Above all, it speaks to the changing character of the University of Maryland and points to the future, drawing on the university's historic strengths and reflecting its long-term aspirations.

Transforming General Education provides a general education experience of unprecedented variety in a university that is constantly expanding and enriching knowledge and understanding through new works of art, cutting-edge scholarship, and innovative research. Through this new program, students will discover that education at the University of Maryland is no longer only a campus-centered experience, but one that reaches across the globe. TGE asks students to engage with that larger universe by acquiring new skills and understandings. It prepares them for a new "multiverse" of learning and for a demanding and constantly changing world beyond graduation. TGE provides necessary skills and basic knowledge; it complements and expands the university's course offerings and connects students more fully to the intellectual community of the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area, the nation, and the world beyond.

Goals of General Education at the University of Maryland

General education at the University of Maryland has many parts because the University of Maryland has many missions. The new program of general education has the following goals for all students:

- Develop the skills necessary to succeed in academic careers and in professional lives by establishing habits and understanding of clear writing, effective speaking and presentation, and critical and analytic reasoning.
- Strengthen knowledge in major areas of study.
- Broaden knowledge of civilizations past and present.
- Establish the ability to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad understanding of the world in which they live and work.
- Define the ethical imperatives necessary to create a just society in their own communities and in the larger world.

Reaching the Goals of General Education

To achieve these goals, *Transforming General Education* provides students with exposure to different disciplines, improves the students' fundamental academic skills, and strengthens their commitment to using knowledge and abilities to better themselves and others. TGE prepares the students of the University of Maryland to participate fully in a world that is perpetually changing.

As an essential element in the University of Maryland curriculum, *Transforming General Education* provides students with breadth of knowledge and disciplinary diversity, allowing them to explore unfamiliar fields and to develop new intellectual and professional passions. TGE engages students in traditional

disciplines, established interdisciplinary programs, and emergent transdisciplinary fields. The new program exposes students to the arts, the humanities, and the social and natural sciences, as well as to multiple combinations of these approaches to knowledge. TGE sparks new connections and insights within and outside each student's specialty and opens students' minds to diverse areas of study. This new program cracks the door into the world beyond the university and provides students with an opportunity to address basic questions of human existence and to grapple with great traditions, even as the ancient dilemmas appear in new guise.

Fostering intellectual dexterity is another essential component of *Transforming General Education*. Intellectual dexterity grows not only from mastering a broad range of subjects, but also from understanding the many ways knowledge is produced. Students need to experience the adroit shifting of perspectives, the wielding of a variety of analytic tools, and the ability to discern connections because these are scholarly resources for meeting the challenge of change. In a variety of rigorous and varied intellectual experiences, students learn to evaluate a broad range of knowledge, to recognize what they do not know, to ask penetrating and fruitful questions, to locate existing answers, and to design research protocols that might generate new ways of thinking. Through these processes, students can become aware of how existing assumptions, theories, technologies, and modes of interpretation guide and expand—but also limit—knowledge. TGE develops in each student the discipline to postpone conclusions, to seek out and listen carefully to alternative or even opposing arguments, and to examine problems from different perspectives as they formulate their own positions.

Of necessity, *Transforming General Education* is destabilizing, challenging students' preconceived models of the world. Through disciplinary studies, students appreciate that their set of assumptions, values, and commitments constitutes only one set among many possibilities. They begin to recognize as belief what they once took to be fact, as transient what they once took to be permanent, and as contingent what they once took as certain. The self-questioning that is stimulated by broad learning can liberate students to make choices for their lives, and also to commit themselves to values that emerge from conscious assessment of the world as it is.

Aside from specific disciplinary studies, *Transforming General Education* works to ensure that students have basic skills in written and oral communication and also in mathematical analysis. These fundamental skills and understandings are critical to each student's success across the curriculum and in professional life. The ability to write and speak clearly and

forcefully and the competence to understand and employ analytic reasoning are necessary for all University of Maryland graduates. Student success requires both sets of skills; critical thinking begins with mastery of both words and numbers.

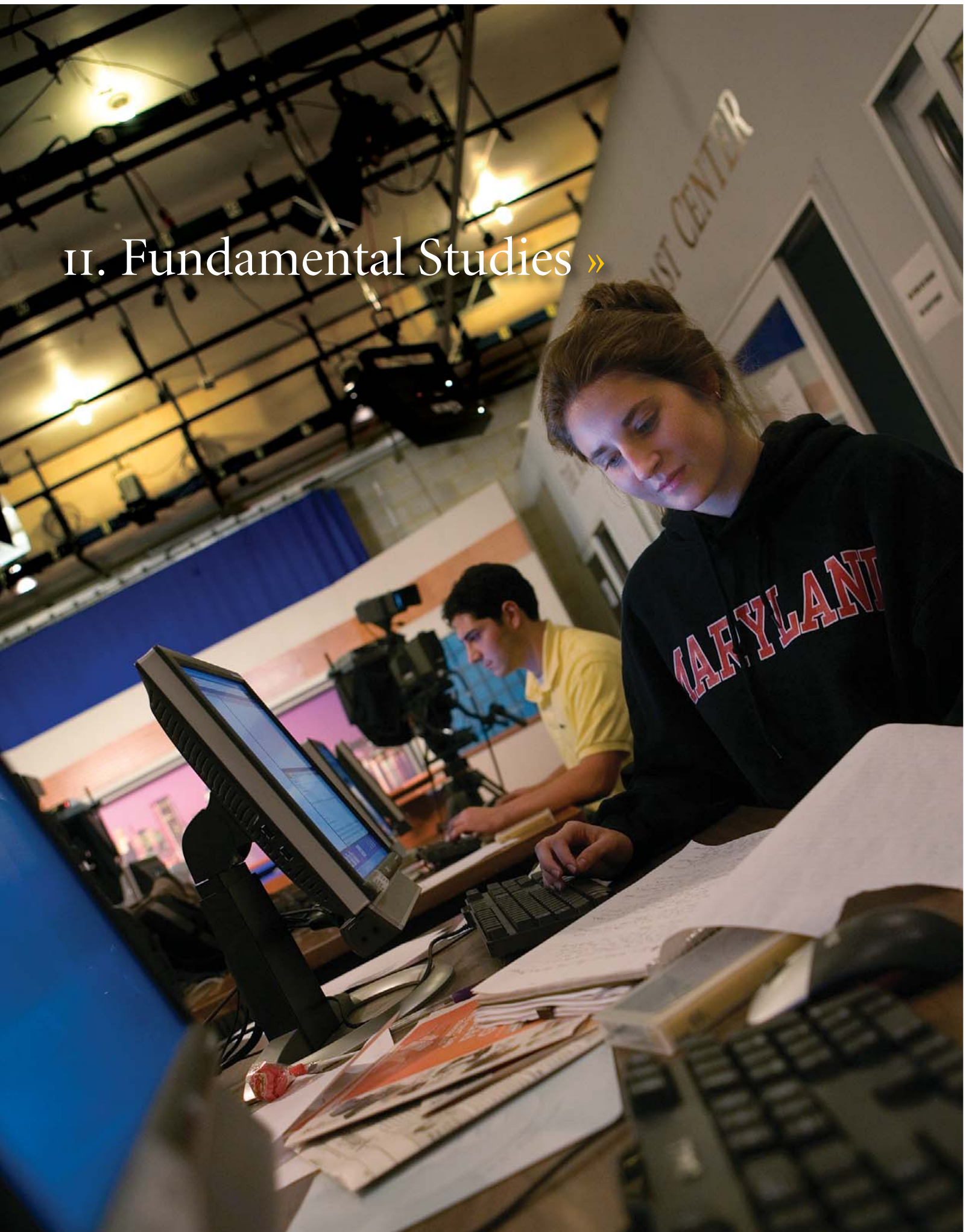
Transforming General Education promotes self-understanding and the understanding of others. The new program endows students with the resources required to thrive, not just as individuals, but also as members of families, communities, and the larger world, reminding them that they are the inheritors of vast storehouses of knowledge. Courses in TGE sharpen students' awareness of consequences—intended and unintended—of previous generations' decisions and therefore alert them to the significance of their own choices. By placing at students' disposal some of the best ideas and deepest insights that human civilizations have yet produced, TGE invites them to become knowledgeable, ethical citizens of the world.

The Right Environment for *Transforming General Education*

The University of Maryland—with its global reach, diverse student body, outstanding faculty, and proximity to Washington, Annapolis, and Baltimore—is uniquely situated to fulfill the imperatives of a broad-based general education. Students at Maryland draw on the university's connections to the capitals of both the United States and the state of Maryland and to the offices of numerous national and international associations and resources such as the National Institutes of Health, the Smithsonian Institution, Dumbarton Oaks, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives. The university offers students opportunities to make history themselves through real-life experiences, collaborative learning, and intellectual engagement with institutions representing the vast expanse of human accomplishments. With unparalleled local resources, the University of Maryland allows students to take on the challenges of global leadership. The rich metropolitan environment challenges students to develop national and global perspectives to accompany even their earliest courses at the university.

The following sections of this report outline the components of *Transforming General Education*, which are broadly categorized as Fundamental Studies and Distributive Studies. In the summer of 2010, members of the faculty under the leadership of the dean for undergraduate studies developed goals for each part of the new plan for general education. These learning outcomes, listed in Appendices A–L of this report, help define the intent of each requirement in terms of student learning.

II. Fundamental Studies »



A primary function of general education at all universities is to ensure that students can write clearly, speak effectively, reason quantitatively, and think analytically. *Transforming General Education* requires students to achieve proficiency in four areas: Writing, Oral Communication, Mathematics, and Analytic Reasoning.

A. THE WRITING REQUIREMENT

Transforming General Education recognizes the importance of writing in every dimension of a university student's education. Writing facilitates learning, reinforces cognitive skills, and engages student commitment to subject matter. Academic writing provides a vehicle for intellectual independence and creativity and helps in the assessment of student progress. Written texts are perhaps the most visible products of an undergraduate education. Writing skills are equally critical to the next phase of a student's life—whether in the workplace or in advanced studies. Employers often solicit evidence of an applicant's writing skills, while success and promotion in a career often depend on writing ability as well as on other communication skills. Graduate and professional schools also require evidence of writing proficiency. TGE emphasizes the crucial importance of writing in an undergraduate education.

The Old Writing Requirement

Under CORE, the university's previous program of general education, students were required to fulfill a two-course writing requirement, taking both "Academic Writing," optimally within their first year at the university, and "Professional Writing" in their junior or senior year (after earning 60 credits). Some type of first-year writing course to prepare students for college-level work has existed at Maryland almost since the university's founding. The second kind of basic writing course, Professional Writing, was created early in the 1980s with two purposes: to strengthen students' writing skills and to prepare them for writing in the workplace.

Academic Writing has existed in recent years in a standard version and in several specialized variants for students who need specialized instruction, including those whose second language is English; those enrolled in the Honors College or College Park Scholars; and students in the CIVICUS or Markets and Society learning communities.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Academic Writing are listed in Appendix A of this report.

Professional Writing has been the focus of several courses designed to help distinct groups of students to develop skills tailored to their major disciplinary studies. Professional Writing courses include specializations for legal, technical, business, science, and health writing, among others. In the last four years, the Professional Writing Program developed courses such as "Writing in the Arts" and "Writing for Non-Profits" for students with distinct interests.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Professional Writing courses are listed in Appendix B of this report.

Transforming General Education retains the requirement that students take both Academic and Professional writing courses. Professional schools and accreditation agencies in some fields promote a two-stage basic writing program by requiring students to have taken six credits of writing.

The Professional Writing Program under *Transforming General Education* offers a larger variety of specialized courses. These courses generate high student-instructor interaction and positive student engagement; such courses also are likely sites for some of the interaction with external agencies called for in the strategic plan. Course offerings may be increased by substituting them for the current generic version of Professional Writing.

Transforming General Education also promotes enhanced offerings in the Academic Writing Program. Such enhancements are especially appropriate in light of the proposed changes to the exemption structures that also are part of TGE. First-year writing courses at the 200 level, such as the newly created "Writing in a Wireless World," may be open to students who, under the old CORE structure, would have been exempt from taking a first-year Academic Writing course. These variations on existing courses will have the attention and guidance of a university-wide Writing Board.

The Old Exemption Structure

A longtime faculty member at the University of Maryland has been credited with saying that there is "no one at the University of Maryland who cannot write better" and that "the only way to learn how to write is to write." These truisms are borne of long experience. Yet, under the CORE rules, incoming freshmen were exempted from the Academic Writing requirement with an SAT verbal score of 670 or with strong scores on the Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition test or the International Baccalaureate (IB) extended essay. In recent years, about 12–15 percent of each year's entering class was exempted from the Academic Writing requirement by SAT scores alone. Under CORE, students have also been exempted from a second writing course, the Professional Writing requirement, if they earned an "A" in

Academic Writing. As a result, many students graduating from the university have taken only one writing course.

The New Exemption Structure

Transforming General Education eliminates the exemption from Academic Writing that is based on the SAT score. Exemptions on the basis of the AP Language and Composition test or the IB extended essay, however, remain, as do exemptions from both Academic and Professional Writing courses that are based on transfer credit.

Transforming General Education also eliminates the exemption from Professional Writing on the basis of an “A” in Academic Writing. This change derives from the fact that the two courses have different goals. While both aim to improve students’ writing skills, the lower-level requirement prepares students for academic writing, while the upper-level requirement reinforces students’ writing skills and begins to prepare them for writing after graduation. Research suggests that students’ writing skills decline over four years of college unless those skills are explicitly and continually reinforced.

TGE’s writing requirements are strategically placed to provide such reinforcement. The most serious negative consequence of the old “A” exemption structure has been to send a signal that writing is a fixed ability, mastered at one time, rather than a skill that requires development and reinforcement over many years. Rather, writing ability is challenged with each new genre and situation, and the new exemption structure reinforces the need for continual writing practice and learning.

Outreach and Reinforcement for Improved Writing

In the current configuration, writing programs have no direct or continuing contact with faculty members across campus who are assigning and responding to students’ writing. However, the creation in *Transforming General Education* of a campuswide Writing Board provides a forum in which writing program directors can learn of faculty expectations, particularly with respect to the quantity and quality of student writing. At the same time, the writing program directors may explain program goals and adjust courses and services to meet the evolving needs of faculty. The creation of a Writing Board offers an

WRITING CENTER SERVICES

Under *Transforming General Education*, the university’s Writing Center will be expanded beyond the present mission of assisting students with their writing assignments. While the center originated as an adjunct to the Academic and Professional writing courses, it has been enlarged to serve students in any course. TGE provides another opportunity for growth.

The Writing Center allows students to register online for appointments or to drop in for a session. The center also is an invaluable resource to all instructors, who can recommend that individual students go there for help. Instructors are notified when their students attend the center and are informed of the material covered. In the past, students have reported a high degree of satisfaction with the assistance they received at the center. Services are especially valuable to the large number of “second-language writers” on campus. It is important to note that second-language writers are not necessarily international students. They are instead an uncounted group of students, often permanent U.S. residents or citizens, for whom English is not the primary language spoken at home. A recent survey of students in Academic Writing suggests that approximately 20 percent of students are second-language writers. Among these students, writing challenges vary from the minor to the significant, making uniform approaches ineffective and leading many of these students to seek help at the Writing Center.



Transforming General Education expands the Writing Center’s mission and capacity in a number of ways. Under TGE, the Writing Center will offer a new type of service in the form of “course tutors.” The center currently tutors individual students who seek its services. Under TGE, instructors may request tutors to be assigned to their courses, who will provide assistance at all stages of planning, drafting, and revising writing assignments. This service is especially targeted at courses that fulfill the TGE Distributive Studies requirements. The expectation is that students will improve their writing skills while they master the course content. In most cases, former students in the course will be selected and trained to serve as writing tutors. Tutors who are new to the course will be required to attend lectures. Required or recommended tutoring sessions can be incorporated in the course syllabi.

opportunity to enhance collaboration between the university's writing programs and faculty across the campus. It is hoped that this new collaboration will lead to innovations for increasing the amount and quality of writing that students produce during their course of study at the University of Maryland.

Writing courses that fulfill the Fundamental Studies requirement offer students intense, targeted, and even individualized instruction. But new technologies have expanded the kinds of writing required in the classroom and the workplace as well as the modes of message distribution. Under *Transforming General Education* the required writing courses ensure that students compose in an online environment. These new settings often require "multimodal" documents that combine visual, audio, and video components.

Beyond the dedicated two-course sequence of writing, students need other sources of sustained guidance and practice that will maintain and improve their writing skills. To that end, *Transforming General Education* calls for courses fulfilling Distributive Studies—especially I-Series courses (described in the following section)—to be targeted as sites of experimentation with various forms of writing instruction. In the new general education environment, it will be especially important for students to experiment with forms of writing that exercise the methods of argumentation and verification as they are used in different disciplines. Exposure to discipline-specific writing is of value to all graduates, enhancing preparation for careers and other tasks in daily life. Some genres of writing are best introduced by instructors from specific fields and disciplines, but generic skills of organization, coherence, sentence form, and editing may be reinforced throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

Transforming General Education charges instructors to respond to all written assignments, noting that simply assigning writing to students is insufficient for improvement. Rather, guidance and feedback from faculty are needed in every case. New methods to ensure effective writing instruction will evolve for use in all settings and could include the following:

I-Series courses may sometimes feature concurrent enrollment in designated sections of Academic Writing or in newly developed writing courses at the 200 level that could fulfill the first-year writing requirement.

Special sections of Professional Writing may be cross-listed with departmental numbers and taught by instructors in those departments who interact with the Professional Writing Program.

Graduate tutors or advanced undergraduate writing tutors who are majors in a discipline and who have been trained at the Writing Center may be attached to large lecture sections of

some Distributive Studies courses. These student assistants will provide special tutorials in the writing skills required in each specific course and could coach their fellow students at various stages of assignments.

The Writing Board could provide a natural site for planning new methods for reinforcing students' writing skills throughout their years at Maryland.

B. THE ORAL COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENT

Transforming General Education stipulates that, in addition to good writing skills, students at the University of Maryland develop skills for effective oral presentation and communication. Also essential are skillful listening and interaction that support success in personal relationships, educational undertakings, professional advancement, and civic engagement. Even the brightest applicants struggle to find a job if they perform poorly in an interview; the most industrious employees may not advance if they cannot explain their work; and the most concerned citizens may fail to make their case—in parent-teacher associations, faculty Senate, or the U.S. Congress—if they cannot explain themselves. Successful human relationships, from the most formal to the most personal, depend in large measure on skilled listening and effective speaking. Experience and research both demonstrate that oral communication can be enhanced by systematic instruction.

Recognizing the centrality of oral communication for success in life, many colleges and departments at the University of Maryland have instituted an oral communication requirement. *Transforming General Education* mandates that all students are required to take at least one course in oral communication. The requirement could be satisfied in a number of ways, both with existing courses and a series of new courses that TGE will initiate.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Oral Communication courses are listed in Appendix C of this report.

Oral Communication in Undergraduate Education

Like writing and computation, the ability to communicate effectively through speech is not acquired all at once and forever. Presentation abilities can always be improved and must be practiced to remain sharp. As such, oral communication is a skill woven consistently through the general education curriculum, so that graduates may increase their skills as oral communicators throughout their course of study at Maryland. To ensure that students get sufficient experiences in



self-presentation, *Transforming General Education* also includes oral communication as an enrichment factor that reflects positively on courses seeking to satisfy the Distributive Studies requirements. For advanced students, TGE urges colleges and departments to continue offering every opportunity for majors to present their research orally and to participate in group and panel discussions.

Implementation of Oral Communication

Transforming General Education mandates the creation of a committee chaired by the dean for undergraduate studies and including members from colleges and departments across campus. The committee is responsible for overall administration of the Oral Communication Fundamental Studies requirement. These duties include evaluating and approving a sufficient number of existing and new courses to meet the needs of students as well as ongoing course oversight. This oversight includes learning outcomes assessments, student evaluations, and classroom observations.

C. THE MATHEMATICS REQUIREMENT

Like prose and speech, mathematics is a language used to communicate, solve problems, and create works of art and technology. The goal of the Mathematics requirement at the University of Maryland is to convey the power of mathematics, demonstrated by the variety of problems that can be modeled and solved by quantitative means. Ability in mathematics is a critical measure of how well University of Maryland students are prepared to meet the challenges they will face in their lives beyond school.

Reading and comprehending mathematics is a multifaceted task because the reader is challenged to acquire fluency and proficiency in the interpretation of numbers and symbols, in addition to words. Courses that fulfilled the Mathematics Fundamental Studies requirement under the old CORE general education program covered topics including data analysis, systems of equations and inequalities, functions, the mathematics of finance, probability, and statistics. Existing course requirements include applications of these topics to problem-solving and decision-making in economics, management, and the natural and social sciences.

Under the old Mathematics Fundamental Studies requirement, students were required to pass one in a suite of courses at the level of pre-calculus—courses that include “Elementary Mathematical Models,” “Introduction to Probability,” college algebra or pre-calculus, or statistics and probability. Undergraduates were required to attempt the Fundamental Studies Mathematics requirement within their first 30 credits and to complete the requirement by 60 credits. Students could be exempt from this requirement through strong scores on placement exams such as AP calculus, IB Higher Mathematics, the Cambridge International Pure Mathematics exam, or the College Level Examination Program, as well as through a mathematics SAT score above 600.

Transforming General Education maintains the current three-credit, one-course requirement, but removes the SAT exemption, with the rationale that the SAT is a predictor of how well a student will do in college but is not a test of competency in a course of study or a body of knowledge. Thus, the SAT score is not relevant as a course substitute at an institution of higher learning. In contrast, exemptions based on scores on AP and similar exams are based on advanced courses with published syllabi and thus are suitable substitutes that provide exemption from the Mathematics requirement under TGE.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Mathematics courses are listed in Appendix D of this report.

D. THE ANALYTIC REASONING REQUIREMENT

Fundamental Studies addresses the communication skills of undergraduate students through the writing and speech requirements and also their quantitative skills through the Mathematics requirement. *Transforming General Education* also speaks to undergraduates' reasoning skills and their ability to think clearly when assessing issues, analyzing information, and developing arguments. Such skills are essential because they provide students with a framework for solving both concrete and theoretical problems. Courses that teach such skills are typically labeled "critical thinking" or "analytic reasoning." The latter term has been adopted as the name for a new requirement in TGE. The American Association of Colleges and Universities provides a rationale for adding such a requirement to Fundamental Studies in its recent survey of what employers expect of college graduates. Survey results indicated that 81 percent of employers surveyed valued critical thinking and analytic reasoning and that 75 percent valued complex problem-solving abilities (see "Raising the Bar: Employers' Views on College Learning in the Wake of the Economic Downturn," January 2010).

Although the survey results offer confirmation of the utility of an Analytic Reasoning requirement, the rationale for such a requirement in a major research university stands on its own merit. Students face a world filled with data in the guise of information. Given trends over the past several decades, the amount of information they will be asked to master is only likely to increase, and when information is filtered through newspapers, public debates, and various official reports, problems of analysis become increasingly complicated. To participate actively in society, students must be able to reason incisively and systematically. They must become competent problem solvers with a full understanding of how meaningful data are appropriately generated, valid inferences drawn and tested, and convincing arguments constructed.

The Analytic Reasoning requirement also is consistent with the two-stage writing requirement proposed by *Transforming General Education*, which maintains that two courses are the bare minimum a student needs to develop and to apply writing skills, regardless of major. Some students prove mastery of the first stage (basic academic writing) via AP credit and thus can skip to the second stage; then all students are required to take Professional Writing. The current Mathematics requirement is similar to the first writing stage. Students must demonstrate basic comprehension and mathematical understanding. The new Analytic Reasoning requirement adds a second stage, but broadens it to include not only mathematical but also other forms of reasoning. Mathematics is one way to reason analytically, but there are other systematic ways to develop critical assessment skills. By adding Analytic Reasoning to the current Mathematics requirement, the Fundamental Studies

requirement will include a first phase, ensuring that students have basic mathematic skills, and a second stage that enables students either to apply those skills to empirical analysis or to develop further sophisticated reasoning abilities. Some majors already include courses in mathematics, statistics, scientific research methods, or logic, so they currently meet this requirement.

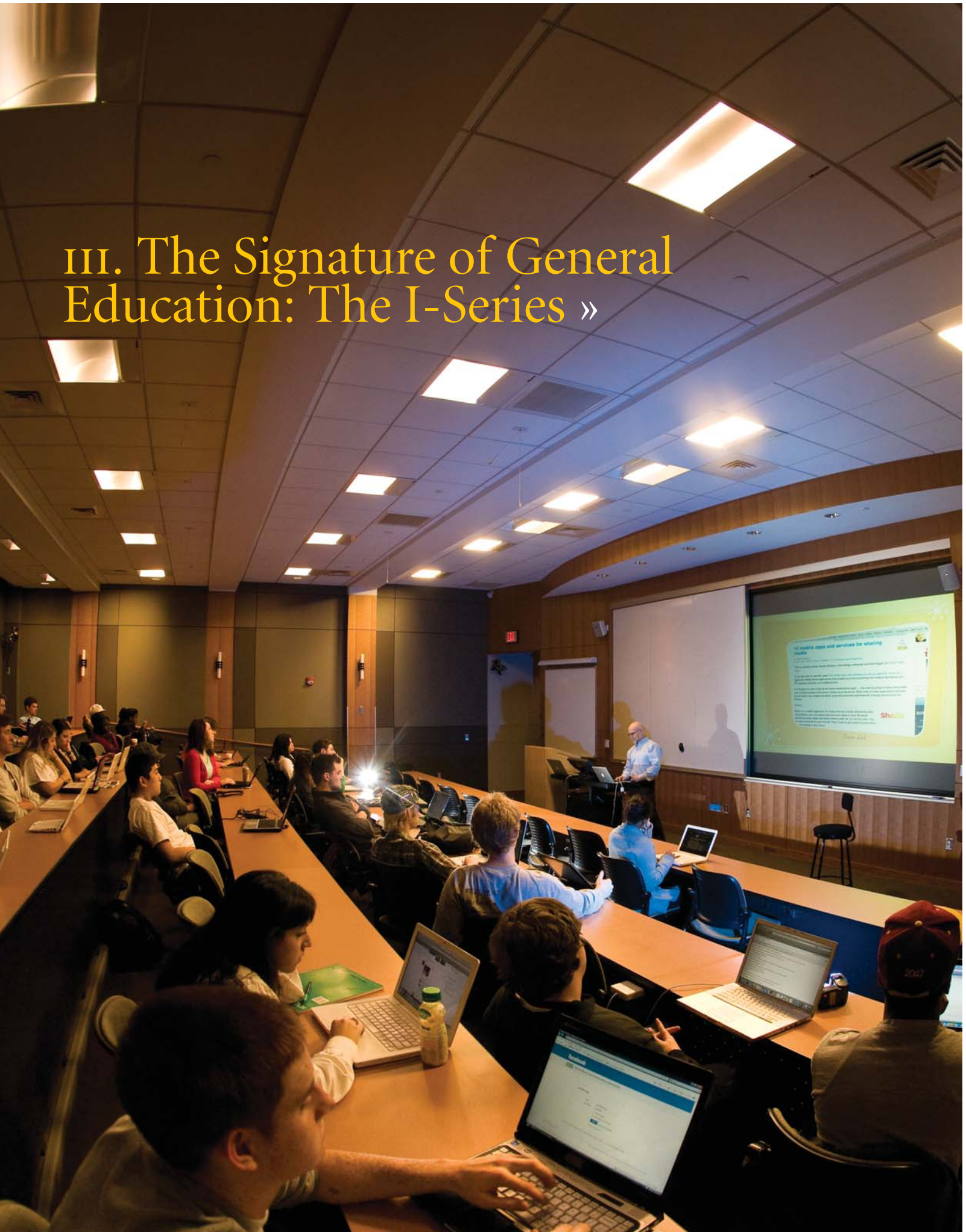
For these reasons, *Transforming General Education* establishes the addition of a one-course requirement in Analytic Reasoning. Most of the courses in the CORE category of Math and Formal Reasoning satisfy this requirement. Students in the natural sciences and engineering typically take additional courses in mathematics, most of which naturally fulfill this goal. Essentially all majors in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Robert H. Smith School of Business are required to take a course in statistics and research methods. In the College of Arts and Humanities, students often take "Introduction to Logic" or pursue further study in mathematics or statistics. Thus, this requirement already is being met by the majority of Maryland students, and TGE posits that all Maryland graduates will profit from the rigor added by such attention to their analytic reasoning skills.

Abilities in analytic reasoning may be cultivated in higher-level mathematics courses, but there are other ways to develop these skills. A course in statistics fulfills this reasoning requirement. Students as voters (and prospective policymakers) are constantly presented with statistics and manipulated data. In order to function as responsible citizens, successful entrepreneurs, and capable leaders, they must understand policy alternatives that are often supported with competing sets of statistics and diverse discursive arguments. As necessary critical equipment, a university graduate should understand how populations are defined and reliably sampled, how definitions are operationalized, and how estimates are generated at different levels of confidence. Similarly, courses that teach students the steps of the scientific method will provide a template for how scientists collect, organize, and evaluate data in an objective manner. Students learn that power and authority are not privileged in the pursuit of knowledge and one needs to be constantly on guard against personal prejudices and faulty procedures.

Courses that examine reasoning discursively (in natural language), as opposed to formally, teach students how to isolate an addressable problem and identify issues in contention, whether they concern facts, definitions, causes, values, policies, or jurisdiction. These courses should also make students aware of pitfalls in reasoning as they apply to different disciplines.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Analytic Reasoning courses are listed in Appendix E of this report.

III. The Signature of General Education: The I-Series »



Goals of the Signature

The university's strategic plan, *Transforming Maryland*, urged the creation of a unique signature—or brand—for the general education program at the University of Maryland. The I-Series courses answer this challenge. These courses speak to important **issues** that spark the **imagination**, demand **intellect**, **inspiration**, and **innovation** and conclude where feasible with real-world **implementation**. The I-Series inverts the traditional pedagogical pyramid. Rather than starting with a survey of existing knowledge, the I-Series courses offer Maryland students an opportunity to view large problems from defined disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives (for example, African American studies or cognitive studies) or from the perspective of particular fields of study (for example, education and engineering). I-Series courses have two purposes: first to investigate a significant issue in depth and second to understand

how particular disciplines and fields of study address problems. How does a biologist, engineer, poet, or sociologist think? I-Series courses address these and other big questions.

The I-Series serves a number of purposes within the general education program curriculum. In its very name, the I-Series reflects its purpose as the signature of the university's general education program. It begins the process of defining what is unique about education at the University of Maryland and thus embodies and communicates the aims of the entire program. Allowing entering students to wrestle with big questions, the I-Series provides a mechanism for all Maryland students to glimpse the utility, elegance, and beauty of different disciplines and to appreciate how such areas of investigation might become the subject of extended study, as a concentration, a major, or even a lifelong commitment.



Description of the I-Series

I-Series courses are not surveys of particular fields of knowledge. These courses do not focus primarily on coverage, for example, of basic facts of plant biology, or early modern history between the 15th and 17th centuries, or the course of romantic poetry. Instead, I-Series courses provide students with the basic concepts, approaches, and vocabulary of particular disciplines and fields of study as well as an understanding of how experts in those disciplines and fields employ terms, concepts, and approaches. Indeed, while I-Series courses ask questions—When did life begin? What is the solution to the energy crisis? How can poverty be abolished?—they do not necessarily attempt to answer them. Rather, they aim to examine the ways in which diverse intellectual traditions and disciplinary protocols address such questions. I-Series courses raise the level of generality and infuse students with the excitement of learning by putting “the good stuff” up front, offering courses that address the gritty work of the mind on a matter of significance.

I-Series courses are built around contemporary problems such as economic climacterics, disease pandemics, or state terrorism. But they also can be based on enduring questions about such matters as the nature of political authority and power, the sources of human creativity, diversity, and sustainability, or the meaning of freedom and equality. In pursuing these subjects, I-Series courses can be linked to experiential learning or to research projects, internships, study abroad programs, or service learning. They may also (and likely will) incorporate transferable skills including writing, oral communication, and use of library and other research technologies.

The I-Series was against compartmentalization of knowledge. It encourages cross-campus collaboration and interdisciplinary exploration. In time, it might be possible to link I-Series courses on the biology of human diversity, the politics of human diversity, and the history of human diversity. Other I-Series courses might speak to the science of sustainability and the politics of sustainability; the literature of the Great Depression and the economics of the Great Depression; or the geology of the landscape and the art of landscape. Students could take one or more of these courses. It also may be possible to link each pair of courses with a third, perhaps a seminar on an allied subject, or with Academic Writing or an appropriate Mathematics course. Statistics, for example, could discuss concepts used to meet the challenge of calculating a census, estimating the scope of the slave trade, or determining the possibility of life on another planet. A course in oral communication could explore the rhetorical strategies for defending—or challenging—the case for global warming. In short, the I-Series might provide a mechanism for interdisciplinary teaching across the campus.

The I-Series encourages students to bring their own interests, knowledge, and real-life experiences to the classroom and to see themselves as active agents of their own education, hence the “I.”

The I-Series courses serve another important purpose. While allowing students to engage matters of enduring significance—the origins of religion, the rise (and fall) of empires, and the struggles for freedom of speech—their flexibility provides a means for faculty and students to address so-called “hot topics” such as sustainability, terrorism, or wellness. While the university has enormous resources to speak to such matters, these often are lodged in specialized, upper-division courses with substantial prerequisites. Hot topics, however, lend themselves to more general exploration, often across disciplinary lines. The I-Series provides a venue where courses or clusters of courses might address such concerns, even as they are regularized and incorporated into the larger university curriculum.

Implementation of the Signature Courses

The implementation of the I-Series began through a series of pilot courses taught during the 2009–10 academic year. The university initiated a pilot offering of I-Series courses for the Spring 2010 semester by sending out a request for proposals, or RFP, inviting faculty to propose new courses. This RFP served as a model for the creation of the I-Series and the basis for the Learning Outcomes identified in Appendix L.

Transforming General Education incorporates I-Series courses into Distributive Studies under the appropriate categories (see “Distributive Studies” in the next section). TGE requires that all University of Maryland students be required to take at least two I-Series courses, which would represent roughly one-fourth of Distributive Studies requirements. Meeting that goal will require the campus to mount approximately 80 I-Series courses per semester. This number might be enlarged over time, but TGE establishes that a minimum of two I-Series courses per student would make the I-Series an intellectual signature for the new general education program.

For reasons of institutional stability, colleges and departments will take ownership of various I-Series courses. But it is important that I-Series courses be continually renewed, with at least 10 to 15 percent removed each academic year and replaced with new entries. This practice of replenishing the I-Series will keep the corps of courses relevant and fresh and also will allow for participation across the campus. The supervision of this process, along with allied matters of quality control, falls to the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies.



IV. Distributive Studies »

Just as Distributive Studies was central to the old CORE curriculum, it is the central component in the new vision in *Transforming General Education*. Distributive Studies ensures that all students acquire an exposure to a variety of disciplines even as they concentrate on a chosen field of study. The goal is a wide-angle view of the fields of learning, both established and emerging, that are pursued at a major university; however, this sampling must be more than cursory. Distributive Studies courses also offer students insights into the methods of the different disciplines, the kinds of questions disciplines ask, and their standards for judging the answers. Courses should lead students to new perspectives and also challenge students to apply their new understandings.

The New Distributive Studies Requirement and CORE
Transforming General Education builds upon CORE's Distributive Studies protocols, but changes the number and nature of the courses required. These changes expand the old CORE program, specifically by adding the I-Series, modifying the Diversity requirement (explained in the next section), and including opportunities for experiential learning. At the same time, TGE provides simplification of Distributive Studies categories by eliminating most subcategories. The goal of the new structure is to enlarge student choice and simplify administration by making the Distributive Studies requirement transparent, knowable, and effective.

Overall, the new Distributive Studies requirement meets the enduring goals of a higher education while putting to best use the advantages that a large, diverse university is uniquely positioned to offer.

Description of the New Distributive Studies Requirement

The new Distributive Studies requirement, first, preserves the established areas of learning in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences that were essential features of CORE. *Transforming General Education* is designed so that students continue to take courses in these areas of study to fulfill Distributive Studies across the curriculum. A fourth area appears in TGE, Scholarship in Practice, to encourage students to sample courses that put traditional learning into practice. Courses in this area might produce a defined outcome such as a performance, a product, a policy, or an artistic work. Such courses can come from any departmental unit or college in the university. Schools and colleges including Agriculture; Architecture, Planning, and Preservation; Business; Education; Engineering, and other applied disciplines will find this area to be a new niche in general education that is well-suited for their offerings.

Courses in the Distributive Studies areas—like those in Fundamental Studies and Diversity—may help to fulfill the requirements for a student's major, minor, or certificate program. Some courses may also fulfill the requirements for special citations or notations in living and learning programs. For example, an I-Series course on new media could count (1) as one of two I-Series courses, (2) as one of two courses required for the Scholarship in Practice area of Distributive Studies, and also (3) as an elective needed for the journalism major. This flexibility in how courses may be used will streamline the new general education program. *Transforming General Education* offers students many opportunities to choose courses that satisfy several goals at once.

The following sections define each area in the four new Distributive Studies requirements for all University of Maryland students.

A. NATURAL SCIENCES

This area introduces students to the concepts and methods of the disciplines that study the natural world. It includes courses in the traditional physical and life sciences, environmental science, animal and avian science, and plant science, among others. It also includes a requirement for a substantial, rigorous laboratory experience.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for courses in the Natural Sciences are listed in Appendix F of this report.

B. HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Courses in this area introduce students to history and to the social science disciplines and their combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. It includes courses in criminology, economics, history, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for courses in History and the Social Sciences are listed in Appendix G of this report.

C. HUMANITIES

Students fulfilling this requirement take courses in the foundational humanities disciplines that study the history and the genres of human creativity. It includes courses in literatures in any language, art and art history, classics, and music and music history, as well as in the disciplines of linguistics and philosophy, among others.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for courses in the Humanities are listed in Appendix H of this report.

D. SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE

In its most general conception, Scholarship in Practice speaks to the process whereby abstract knowledge is transferred into some tangible form. Through courses in this area, students learn by applying a body of knowledge to create professional products or works of art. Areas such as architecture, business, education, and journalism offer courses in this area that lead to products such as architectural designs, new technologies, innovative publications, new computer software, business plans, advertising campaigns, and educational curricula. In addition, courses in creative and artistic performance lead students to

produce such works as writing portfolios, plays, operas, dance productions, art exhibits, and creative media. The Scholarship in Practice area also includes courses that combine competency in speaking, writing, and translation in a foreign language. Courses in Scholarship in Practice offer students a chance to innovate by exploring the material basis of ideologies and exposing the ideology upon which material reality rests.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for courses in Scholarship in Practice are listed in Appendix I of this report.

This new fourth area reinforces and enhances learning in the humanities, natural sciences, and history and social sciences with courses that put these areas of learning into practice. In the fine and applied arts, students learn to tackle the challenges associated with realization of an artistic vision, be it a stage production, symphony, or skyscraper. If students apply maxims of communication, the result may be the production of compelling curricula, enactments, news stories, or short fiction. In the realms of technological innovation and entrepreneurship, students may approach problems confidently and identify sustainable solutions. Students in Scholarship in Practice courses may confront some of the real-world challenges faced by scholars and artists, wrestling with complex problems that face the nation and world—problems such as economic development, global poverty and hunger, and responsible management of our natural resources.

Courses in Scholarship in Practice offer students opportunities to exercise intellectual skills that complement learning in the liberal arts and sciences. These courses require students to shape and define a desired outcome and to select and combine knowledge from relevant areas of learning to achieve that outcome. Such courses encourage “reverse engineering” that is often involved in successful models and best practices, as well as in examination of failed attempts. These courses teach the stages required for the pursuit of a tangible goal through planning, modeling, drafting, testing, revising, perfecting, and assessing. They emphasize the critical need to adjust and adapt a project to the contingencies of time and place and to the particular population involved.

Scholarship in Practice courses develop and exercise the skills of collaboration and teamwork required to bring about large-scale outcomes. They challenge students to meet the need to convince and recruit others to invest in or accept a new idea or vision. At the same time, courses in Scholarship in Practice foster an awareness of potential impacts of new or altered practices or products, of possible consequences for those immediately affected, and of distant and future repercussions. Courses in application and production also teach an appreciation for craftsmanship and an ethic of responsible productivity. Overall, these courses can give students an



appreciation for how successful outcomes can be defined and assessed, how feasibility tempers and corrects optimistic intentions, and how achievement through applications of knowledge always requires discipline and hard work.

In addition to fostering students' intellectual development, the new Scholarship in Practice category also supports the overall purpose of Distributive Studies by expanding students' exposure to academic endeavors across the large, diverse institution that is the University of Maryland. In particular, this category corrects a current imbalance: While students from applied disciplines such as business and engineering are required under the current requirements to take courses in the humanities and social sciences, students in the humanities and social sciences are rarely exposed to the intellectual synthesizing of the applied disciplines. This new fourth area is added in the spirit of the best definitions of a complete education, to foster a more broadly prepared, aware, and academically well-grounded University of Maryland graduate.

Enrichment Factors

Courses that fulfill Distributive Studies requirements in *Transforming General Education* will be evaluated in terms of certain enrichment factors that are considered particularly valuable for today's students. Courses sought for inclusion in each of the four Distributive Studies categories also will reinforce Fundamental Studies competencies expected of a Maryland student, using math, writing, analytic reasoning, and oral communication. Ideal Distributive Studies courses also will be enriched by addressing a number of broad topical themes such as globalization, sustainability, the environment, diversity, civic engagement, ethics, and social justice. These elements are societal concerns today, and such concerns are likely to change over time. When such change occurs, new courses on new concerns will need to be developed for Distributive Studies to keep the curriculum fresh and relevant. Enrichment factors will be taken into account as courses are considered for each category within Distributive Studies.

Summary of Distributive Studies

In brief, the new Distributive Studies program (1) adds a fourth area, Scholarship in Practice, (2) reduces the number of courses required in each area from three to two, (3) eliminates subcategories in each of the areas, (4) requires that two of the courses fulfilling Distributive Studies be I-Series courses, and (5) incorporates enrichment factors that help to equip students for engagement in an ever-changing world.

The Distributive Studies curriculum creates requirements that are simpler to understand and easier to implement than the old CORE requirements. It offers greater transparency to students, advisers, faculty, and administrators, making the major divisions of learning visible to students and offering fewer impediments to fulfilling those categories. Such simplification eases burdens on students and their advisers in planning course selection efficiently and in planning for timely graduation. Because the new requirements includes fewer categories, many more course choices will exist in each category. This greater freedom in course selection is likely to expedite the student's time to degree.

The removal of subcategories has administrative value as well, giving faculty more flexibility in designing courses and also clarifying the task of administrators who are providing adequate numbers of seats and courses. The new Distributive Studies program retains the CORE goal of assisting students who have yet to decide upon a major, offering great variety among the disciplines. This variety may stimulate the intellectually adventurous to develop a concentration, a minor, or even a second major.

From the departmental perspective, the reduction in overall credit hours required to fulfill Distributive Studies also returns more "curricular space," allowing more control in setting major requirements. At the same time, it reduces any one department's burden for providing seats for general education and thus frees resources to serve students in the major. From the university's perspective, the new Distributive Studies requirements spread the responsibility for staffing general education courses across the campus, reducing the disproportionate burden now carried by some colleges and departments. *Transforming General Education* incorporates all the colleges and schools, as well as all the disciplines and areas of practice they represent, in a way that is more representative of the university as a whole. In this way, broader participation in general education can create a sense of a common enterprise in which all participate.

In sum, the new Distributive Studies requires the following:

- Students must complete two courses in each area for a total of eight courses in Distributive Studies. One of the courses in the Natural Sciences must include a laboratory experience.
- Two of the eight courses must be I-Series courses. AP credit may not be used to satisfy the I-Series requirement.
- AP credit for Distributive Studies is limited to six of the eight courses. At least two of the courses (the I-Series courses) must be taken at the University of Maryland, College Park.
- Course work within one's major is permitted to satisfy the major and general education requirements.
- Distributive Studies courses do not necessarily have to be at the 100 or 200 levels, but ideally they should have no prerequisites outside Distributive Studies to satisfy general education requirements.
- A Diversity requirement may be fulfilled by a course that is approved for both a Diversity category and for a Distributive Studies category (see below).
- Distributive Studies courses that include an internship or research or service-learning project may be used to meet any Distributive Studies requirement.



v. Diversity »



Goals of the Diversity Requirement

“Diversity is in our DNA,” declared former University of Maryland President C. D. Mote, Jr. in reaffirming the university’s commitment to developing and maintaining a student body that mirrors the composition of American society. *Transforming Maryland*, the strategic plan of the university, also underscores the relevance of that goal not only for the university’s student body, but also for its faculty, its curriculum, and many of its most respected research programs. With this strong commitment, the university consciously has separated itself from a portion of its past and aspires to inclusion at all levels. For most of its history, the University of Maryland formally barred African American and female students and discouraged other minorities from enrolling. It denied people of color and women a place on the faculty and created a curriculum that failed to recognize the experiences of women and minorities. The university, once a site of exclusion, later became a force on the frontlines of the struggle against “separate but equal” educations for college students of different backgrounds. In

working to transform itself from a segregated academy into one of the world’s most diverse institutions of higher education, the university has embraced the mission of inclusion and dedication to be a university for and of all the people.

Because the University of Maryland constantly strives to be a truly diverse, multicultural institution, it continues to reassess and improve its curriculum to address the realities of a world in which diversity is now the rule and difference is normative.

Charting new territory in higher education always is difficult. Recent events on campus, in the neighboring community, and in the nation at large indicate that the need for a meaningful diversity requirement has never been more important. The 20th century’s most heinous crimes against humanity were founded in twisted perceptions of human difference. As the United States again becomes an immigrant society, difference has become a constitutive part of American life. Changes in American society parallel global changes, as men and women throughout the world rush to escape rising tides of genocidal



violence or simply to improve their lives and those of their loved ones. Everywhere the number of pluralistic societies has grown and with them the tensions that multiculturalism often engenders. University of Maryland students can expect to live and work with people who are different from themselves in multiple ways. *Transforming General Education* prepares students for that reality.

The Diversity Requirement in CORE

In mandating that students examine their own “ideas and values in the light of an unfamiliar intellectual or social context,” the CORE Diversity requirement spoke precisely to the needs of Maryland students. However, over the years, the original purposes of CORE’s Diversity requirement became blurred, in part because of CORE’s success in creating a multicultural curriculum. The very number and variety of such courses provide evidence of the enlargement and enrichment that transformed the curriculum. But such close examinations were often made at the expense of the complex and confounding realities upon which different cultures meet. Lost also was the Janus-faced nature of various chauvinisms (national, economic, racial, sexual, and so on), which produce both in-group solidarity and pride, on the one hand, and, on the other, ostracize outsiders as “the other,” often placing them beyond the pale of humanity. Indeed, rather than engage with the universe of different “ideas and values” as prescribed by CORE, students often focused on those that were most familiar to them. While the Diversity requirement sometimes assisted students in exploring their identities, it often reified that identity rather than challenged it.

The New Diversity Requirement

While applauding the richness of the existing Diversity offerings and reaffirming their permanent place in the curriculum, *Transforming General Education* reformulates the Diversity requirement to emphasize the promises and problems of pluralism and the challenges that must be addressed to achieve just, equitable, and productive societies. Courses in this new Diversity requirement explore the gritty struggles through which plural societies are established and maintained. Rather than affirm or celebrate difference, courses in the new requirement investigate the complexities of human difference and commonality. In so doing, the new Diversity requirement creates new intellectual demands on students and expands the place of courses about diversity in the new general education curriculum.

In 2004, Professor Bonnie Thornton Dill joined with Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assistant to the President Robert Waters to co-chair a committee that

recommended an expansion and revamping of the Diversity requirement. The Diversity requirement in *Transforming General Education* draws on the Thornton Dill-Waters report and the experience of CORE, as well as on various surveys of Maryland undergraduates. The result is the creation of a new curricular configuration to satisfy the Diversity requirement with two required courses for a total of up to six credits. The two categories of courses are Understanding Plural Societies and Cultural Competence. The former is a traditional classroom-based experience, while the latter incorporates study abroad or practicum-oriented projects. Students may elect two courses in Understanding Plural Societies or they can choose one and complement it with a Cultural Competence course to meet the Diversity requirement. These new course categories are described in the following sections.

A. UNDERSTANDING PLURAL SOCIETIES

Perhaps the University of Maryland’s most important responsibility is to prepare its students to live in a globally competitive society by teaching both the theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the new Diversity requirement. These courses speak to both the *foundations*—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the *operation* or *function* of plural societies. Courses about both the foundations and the human operation of difference are part of Distributive Studies.

Learning outcome goals and guidelines for courses in Understanding Plural Societies are listed in Appendix J of this report.

B. CULTURAL COMPETENCE

While courses about plural societies provide students a broad theoretical and substantive basis for appreciating the role of difference in plural societies, they may not offer students a chance to apply that knowledge directly in a hands-on fashion. University of Maryland students should also understand the practical ways plural societies operate. Therefore, *Transforming General Education* establishes a Cultural Competence component for the Diversity requirement. Training in cultural competence has become commonplace in major institutions

such as corporations, hospitals, and government agencies. The new Cultural Competence category serves students as a practicum for the Understanding Plural Societies courses, just as a laboratory section serves as a practicum for a science course or a rehearsal serves as a practicum for a music, dance, or theater class. Cultural Competence courses provide training in practical ways of dealing with human difference and navigating the complexity of plural societies. Whatever profession students envision beyond the University of Maryland—artist, doctor, educator, engineer, politician, stockbroker—the ability to interact on a day-to-day basis with broad cultural knowledge and cultural awareness will prove invaluable.

Defining Cultural Competence

Transforming General Education borrows from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) this definition of cultural competence: “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable men and women to create a successful multicultural society. As they develop competency, individuals gain the ability to establish effective interpersonal and working relationships that supersede cultural differences.” HHS states that a culturally competent individual should be able to do the following:

- Understand the concept of culture and how cultural beliefs influence individual and societal decision-making.
- Value diversity and similarities among all peoples.
- Be knowledgeable of relevant data sources required to understand differences and similarity among different groups.
- Recognize personal and societal tendencies toward bias and stereotyping and appreciate how these tendencies can influence individual and societal decision-making.
- Understand and effectively respond to cultural differences.
- Engage in cultural self-assessment.
- Understand how individuals, organizations, and communities accommodate cultural differences.
- Understand the relationship between social justice and diversity.
- Understand the role of continuous cultural competency development.

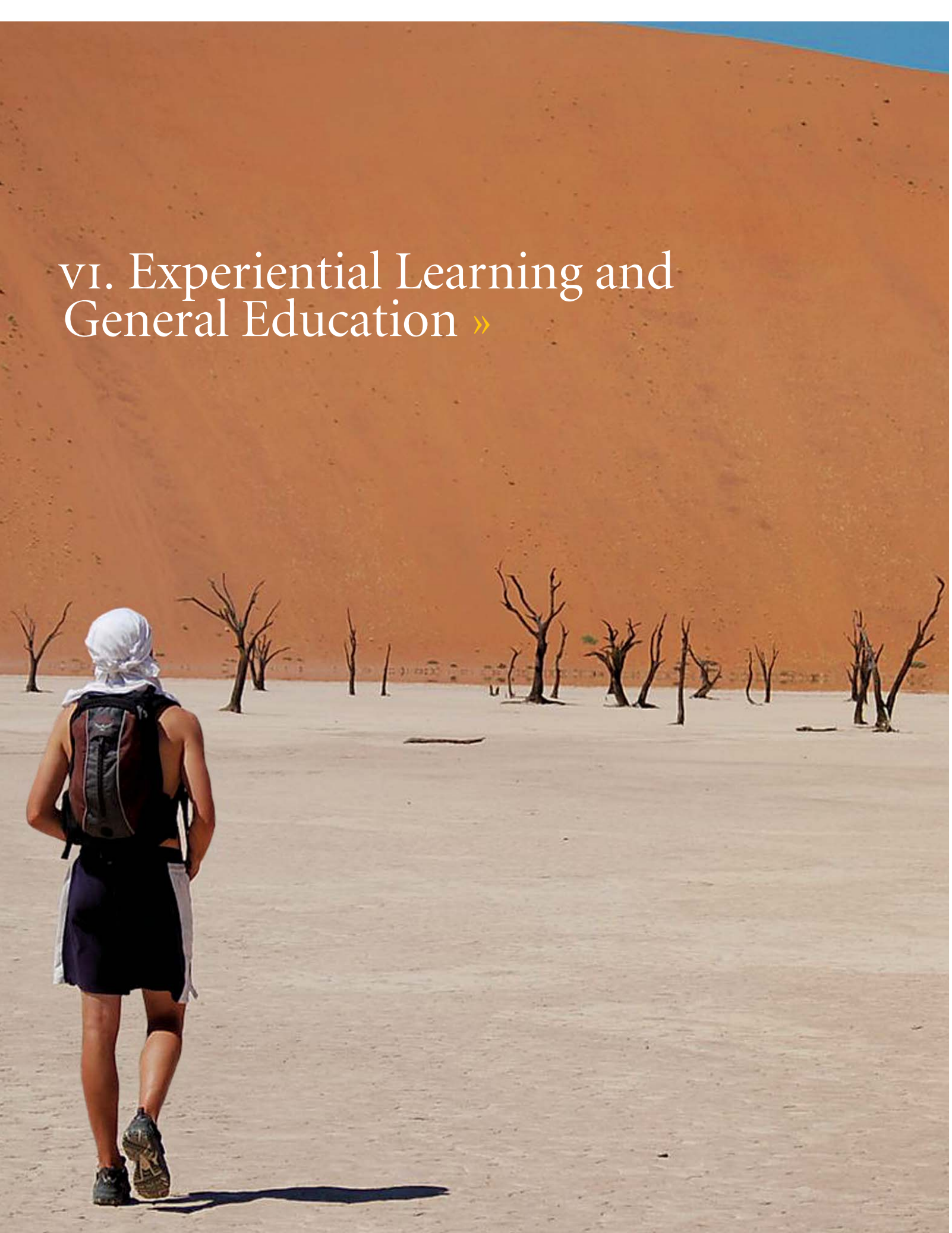
Learning outcome goals and guidelines for Cultural Competence courses are listed in Appendix K of this report.

Implementing Cultural Competence

In establishing a Cultural Competence requirement, the University of Maryland again places itself on the cutting edge of the pedagogy of diversity by providing opportunities for broad-based intercultural interaction. While hospitals, corporations, and governmental agencies have considerable experience teaching cultural competency, universities do not. In implementing this new category, *Transforming General Education* draws upon the existing resources of the University of Maryland, as well as on courses initiated by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. As a result, there may not be enough courses in Cultural Competence to meet initial student demand. Hence, TGE allows students to satisfy the two-course Diversity requirement by taking two Understanding Plural Society courses. TGE recommends three ways in which students can fulfill the Cultural Competence requirement: a specially designed course on Cultural Competence tailored to meet the needs of their fields of study; a study abroad experience that includes a global competency component; or an intergroup cultural dialogue course on campus.

The University of Maryland has made substantial progress over the past half-century in constructing a faculty and a student body that reflect the composition of the state and, indeed, American society. Its commitment to pluralism is unshakable. But the work of “diversity” is never done. The university must constantly reassess, re-imagine, and recommit itself to the maintenance of a diverse academy and the creation of a diverse society. The CORE Diversity requirement did its part; TGE takes the next step. As the university enters a new decade, its students will confront the challenges of a world in flux. A Diversity requirement that alerts them to new realities and provides the intellectual skills to address such realities is more necessary than ever.

vi. Experiential Learning and General Education »



By policy and practice, the University of Maryland is committed to the idea that education does not stop at the boundaries of the campus. Opportunities for students to gain formal credit toward graduation outside of the classroom have long been an integral part of the university's curriculum. Indeed, the university's location in an area rich with governmental, non-profit, and private institutions has been recognized as a prime asset. Appreciating this, then-President Mote in 2005 issued his President's Promise, guaranteeing every University of Maryland student the opportunity for sustained, substantial enrichment opportunities outside the classroom to enhance their on-campus experience. *Transforming General Education* expands the President's Promise, specifically incorporating "academically rich and personally rewarding" experiences into the general education curriculum.

Experiential learning takes a number of forms at the University of Maryland, including specially designed research courses, internships, studying abroad, and service-learning. *Transforming General Education* permits one course of this type to be included, with approval, in any one of the Distributive Studies areas. For example, a government course that includes a six-hour-per-week internship as a legislative research assistant could be approved for inclusion in the History and Social Sciences area. In addition to its experiential learning component, this course must also meet learning outcomes and other requirements stated for this area of Distributive Studies. The course must also provide students with challenging assignments that allow them to expand on and explore all aspects of their active learning in the legislature. Relevant readings, discussions, research papers, and journal entries or reflections allow students to benefit fully from experiential learning.

Research Experiences

Most upper-division courses incorporate independent research, as it is generally accepted that students gain knowledge and skills through research experiences and that hands-on activities in the lab or the library teach how knowledge is created. But some students go beyond such course-specific projects. Allowing students to substitute well-defined, pre-approved research projects for traditional classroom offerings broadens opportunities for those who wish to pursue a topic in depth beyond the usual boundaries of their studies.

Internships

Internships offer students practical experience in their fields of interest. Some colleges and schools (Education, Journalism, and Public Health, for example) recognize the utility and importance of internships and require them for their majors. Other colleges, schools, and departments encourage but do

not require their majors to undertake an internship. As with research experiences, internships involve complex learning and also are a recognized strength of the university and of government agencies, businesses, and community organizations in the Annapolis-Baltimore-Washington corridor, which regularly offer opportunities to Maryland students.

Study Abroad

Studying in a foreign country offers students in an increasingly globalized society firsthand knowledge of another culture in ways that classroom study often cannot match. The federal government recently recognized study abroad as an investment in worldwide social and political welfare when the House of Representatives passed the Paul Simon Foundation Study Abroad Act. This legislation calls for a fourfold increase in study abroad enrollment among American college students over the next 10 years, toward a goal of at least 1 million students studying abroad each year and with an emphasis on nontraditional locations and on a more diverse student body traveling abroad.

Community Service-Learning

Among the purposes of state universities that benefited from the Morrill Act of 1862 were the promotion of citizenship and the extension of university expertise to their communities. From its beginnings, the University of Maryland embraced that charge and has dedicated itself to serve. More than 150 years later, civic engagement and community service are a proud tradition, fueled by the university's proximity to the nation's and the state's capitals and its connections to many local jurisdictions. The university has developed numerous credit-bearing community service-learning programs to support civic involvement. Service-learning programs link the university and the community and encourage students to become more engaged and grounded citizens. As with internships, service-learning courses combine experience with the traditional academic activities of reading, discussion, and synthesis through writing and presentations.

Implementing Experiential Learning

In addition to pre-approved general education courses that contain experiential opportunities, some students construct independent research or internship experiences. When structured to satisfy Distributive Studies requirements, such activities can take the place of a traditional course in Natural Sciences, Humanities, History and Social Science, or Scholarship in Practice. Many colleges and departments already have mechanisms in place to grant credit for on- and off-campus research, because such research experiences are likely to be within a student's major discipline. Often a student and

a research mentor will formulate a “learning contract” at the beginning of the research experience to specify that the student will produce a significant piece of work and some form of culminating reflection on his or her experience

Currently, Maryland’s Education Abroad Office offers some 80 programs that send nearly 2,000 (about 7 percent of all Maryland undergraduates) to study in foreign countries, and plans are under way to expand these offerings. Finally, an informal survey reveals the presence of numerous community service experiences within the existing curriculum, especially during winter term. Expanding and formalizing these courses can provide a template for enlarging service-learning opportunities for students.

While *Transforming General Education* recognizes the advantages in incorporating experiential learning into the general education program, it does not mandate student participation. TGE, however, does urge the incorporation of a credit-bearing

experiential learning course into the general education curriculum. Students can participate in the following ways:

- Students may apply a credit-bearing, out-of-classroom experience to one course in the appropriate category in Distributive Studies (Natural Sciences, Humanities, History and Social Sciences, and Scholarship in Practice), provided the course is approved by the faculty committee that oversees Distributive Studies courses.
- Students may apply to receive credit for either paid or unpaid research and internship experiences as the basis of a course for general education.
- Faculty may develop courses that incorporate experiential learning within the Distributive Studies portion of general education.





VII. Implementation of the General Education Plan »

Responsibility for the implementation of *Transforming General Education* rests with the associate provost and dean for undergraduate studies. It is a complex process involving curricular changes; new course development; engagement of faculty, students, and staff; and changes to support infrastructure. As recommended by the general education task force, an implementation committee, jointly appointed by the provost and the University Senate and largely consisting of associate deans from colleges across campus, has responsibility for the establishment of procedures and for the creation of the institutions and committees that will maintain long-term oversight of the program and its component parts.

Among the matters that the implementation committee addresses are the chronology of implementation of elements within the program, the establishment of boards of expert faculty to review the courses that will populate those elements, the criteria to be used for course review, and the review and establishment of calls for proposals for the new elements such as Oral Communication, Cultural Competence, and the I-Series. Faculty boards are chosen from among experienced teachers of courses in general education who are nominated by their collegiate deans in concurrence with the Senate. The boards review, assess elements and requirements, and measure the success of the program.

Long-term oversight of *Transforming General Education* also rests with the associate provost and dean for undergraduate studies. In this capacity, the dean reports to the provost and to the chair of the University Senate. The dean also reports on a regular basis to the Senate's General Education Committee, providing an evaluation of long-term trends in the program, learning outcome assessments, and program balance among colleges and departments. Development of a timeline for this periodic review is part of the charge to the General Education Implementation Committee.



Summary »

In sum, the general education program established by *Transforming General Education* accomplishes the following:

- Maintaining those features of the existing CORE program that have for 20 years guided Maryland students along the path of academic excellence.
- Expanding and enhancing general education with a variety of intellectual and pedagogical innovations.
- Strengthening and expanding Fundamental Studies—those matters that all students must master—by eliminating exemptions and creating two new requirements, one in Oral Communication and the other in Analytic Reasoning.
- Simplifying and enlarging Distributive Studies by simultaneously expanding the areas of knowledge and reducing the number of required courses, thus widening student choice, making courses more accessible, and giving greater transparency to the entire program.
- Creating a signature program—the I-Series courses that distinguish the University of Maryland’s general education program and challenge faculty and students to think anew.
- Encouraging students to move their learning outside of the classroom by incorporating options for experiential learning into the general education curriculum.
- Rethinking and redefining the Diversity requirement, giving it a sharper intellectual focus, a larger place in the curriculum, and an expanded practical range.
- Allowing all colleges and departments to participate fully in general education, unifying the campus with a shared responsibility.

The most important consequence of these proposed changes is a better education of the kind that a university, as a community of scholars, can provide. Universities are unique and privileged institutions in many ways. They have, first of all, a responsibility to the past—to examine it, interpret it, preserve it, and carry it into the future. The traditions, the texts, the accumulated learning of centuries have to be present in living minds as the objects of engaged scholarship. The arts and their performance skills, the specialized crafts, and professional practices are passed on from teacher to pupil. At the same time, universities add to this inheritance with active investigation in all disciplines, creating new knowledge, new technologies, new practices, and new systems and products as a result of their research. This double responsibility to the past and the future means that universities must, to some extent, be apart from the world, resistant to fads, enthusiasms, and skewed agendas. But, at the same time, universities are also a part of the world and responsible for delivering the benefits of their collective wisdom, whether in the form of time-tested truths or cutting-edge discoveries that address contemporary concerns. A public university, in particular, has to be responsive to the community that licenses and supports it and to the constituencies it ultimately serves. *Transforming General Education* helps the University of Maryland balance these goals and shape graduates who are grounded in traditional learning, knowledgeable in their chosen fields, aware of the inheritance they carry, and prepared to take their place in the world.

The Task Force on General Education »

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Appendices »

APPENDIX A: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES—ACADEMIC WRITING

The Fundamental Studies Introduction to Writing requirement prepares students with a foundational understanding of academic writing and the skills for success in further studies at Maryland and beyond.

On completion of an Academic Writing course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of writing as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate sources, and as a process that involves composing, editing, and revising.
- Demonstrate critical reading and analytical skills, including understanding an argument's major assertions and assumptions and how to evaluate its supporting evidence.
- Demonstrate facility with the fundamentals of persuasion as these are adapted to a variety of special situations and audiences in academic writing.
- Demonstrate research skills, integrate their own ideas with those of others, and apply the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Use Standard Written English and edit and revise their own writing for appropriateness. Students should take responsibility for such features as format, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between writing and thinking and use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in an academic setting.

APPENDIX B: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES—PROFESSIONAL WRITING

The Fundamental Studies Professional Writing requirement strengthens writing skills and prepares students for the range of writing expected of them after graduation.

On completion of a Professional Writing course, students will be able to:

- Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
- Understand the stages required to produce competent, professional writing through planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Identify and implement the appropriate research methods for each writing task.
- Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate to each genre.
- Write for the intended readers of a text and design or adapt texts to audiences who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.
- Demonstrate competence in Standard Written English, including grammar, sentence, and paragraph structure; coherence; and document design (including the use of the visual); and be able to use this knowledge to revise texts.
- Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

APPENDIX C: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES—ORAL COMMUNICATION

Human relationships, from the most formal to the most personal, rest in large measure on skilled listening and effective speaking. Skillful listening and speaking support success in personal relationships, educational undertakings, professional advancement, and civic engagement.

On completion of an Oral Communication course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of oral communication in academic, social, and professional endeavors.
- Demonstrate effectiveness in using verbal and nonverbal language appropriate to the goal and the context of the communication.
- Demonstrate an ability to listen carefully.
- Demonstrate an enhanced awareness of one's own communication style and choices.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate interpersonally and interculturally with others in conversation, interview, and group discussion contexts.
- Demonstrate skill in asking and in responding to questions.
- Demonstrate competency in planning, preparing, and presenting effective oral presentations.
- Use effective presentation techniques including presentation graphics.
- Demonstrate awareness of communication ethics in a global society.

APPENDIX D: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES—MATHEMATICS

The Fundamental Studies Mathematics requirement prepares students with the mathematical understandings and skills for success in whatever majors they choose, as well as in everyday life.

On completion of a Mathematics course, students will be able to:

- Interpret mathematical models given verbally or by formulas, graphs, tables, or schematics, and draw inferences from them.
- Represent mathematical concepts verbally, and, where appropriate, symbolically, visually, and numerically.
- Use arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, technological, or statistical methods to solve problems.
- Use mathematical reasoning with appropriate technology to solve problems, test conjectures, judge the validity of arguments, formulate valid arguments, check answers to determine reasonableness, and communicate the reasoning and the results.
- Recognize and use connections within mathematics and between mathematics and other disciplines.

APPENDIX E: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES—ANALYTIC REASONING

Courses in Analytic Reasoning foster a student's ability to use mathematical or formal methods or structured protocols and patterns of reasoning to examine problems or issues by evaluating evidence, examining proofs, analyzing relationships between variables, developing arguments, and drawing conclusions appropriately. Courses in this category also advance and build upon the skills that students develop in Fundamental Mathematics. For most courses here, a course taken for the Fundamental Mathematics requirement is a prerequisite.

On completion of an Analytic Reasoning course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate proficient application of the skills required by the Mathematics Fundamental Studies requirement, including the ability to communicate using formal or mathematical tools.
- Distinguish between premises and conclusions or between data and inferences from data.
- Understand the differences among appropriate and inappropriate methods for drawing conclusions.
- Apply appropriate methods to evaluate inferences and to reason about complex information.
- Systematically evaluate evidence for accuracy, limitations, and relevance and identify alternative interpretations of evidence.
- Use formal, analytical, or computational techniques to address real-world problems.

APPENDIX F: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES—NATURAL SCIENCES

Courses in the Natural Sciences introduce students to the concepts and methods of the disciplines studying the natural world. They include courses in traditional physical and life sciences, environmental science, animal and avian science, and plant science, among others. It also includes a substantial, rigorous laboratory experience.

On completion of a Natural Sciences course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of scientific principles and the ways scientists in a particular discipline conduct research.
- Apply quantitative, mathematical analyses to science problems.
- Solve complex problems requiring the application of several scientific concepts.
- Look at complex questions and identify the science and how it impacts and is impacted by political, social, economic, or ethical dimensions.
- Critically evaluate scientific arguments and understand the limits of scientific knowledge.
- Communicate scientific ideas effectively.

In addition to the Learning Outcomes above, on completion of a Natural Sciences course with a laboratory experience, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate proficiency in experimental science by: making observations, understanding the fundamental elements of experiment design, generating and analyzing data using appropriate quantitative tools, using abstract reasoning to interpret data and relevant formulae, and testing hypotheses with scientific rigor.

APPENDIX G: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES—HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Courses in this area introduce students to history and to the social science disciplines and their combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. It includes courses in criminology, economics, history, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences.

On completion of a History and Social Sciences course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideas in a specific topical area in history or the social sciences.
- Demonstrate understanding of the methods that produce knowledge in a specific field in history or the social sciences.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating causal arguments in history or in the social sciences and in analyzing major assertions, background assumptions, and explanatory evidence.
- Explain how culture, social structure, diversity, or other key elements of historical context have an impact on individual perception, action, and values.
- Articulate how historical change shapes ideas and social and political structures.
- Explain how history or social science can be used to analyze contemporary issues and to develop policies for social change.
- Use information technologies to conduct research and to communicate effectively about social science and history.

APPENDIX H: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES—HUMANITIES

Courses in the foundational humanities disciplines study history and the genres of human creativity. It includes courses in literatures in any language, art, art history, classics, history, music, and music history as well as linguistics and philosophy.

On completion of a Humanities course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental terminology and concepts in a specific topical area in the humanities.
- Demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in a specific field in the humanities.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works in the humanities.
- Describe how language use is related to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.
- Conduct research on a topic in the humanities using a variety of sources and technologies.
- Demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

APPENDIX I: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES—SCHOLARSHIP IN PRACTICE

Courses in Scholarship in Practice teach students how to assess and apply a body of knowledge to a creative, scholarly, or practical purpose. The resulting application should reflect an understanding of how underlying core disciplines can be brought to bear on the subject. It should go beyond the traditional survey and interpretation that culminate in, for example, a final research paper or activity often used in courses that are designed to be introductions to a specific topic or area of study.

While Scholarship in Practice courses will be evaluated for appropriateness through the learning outcomes listed here, essentially every college on this campus has relevance to this area of Distributive Studies. Examples include (but are not limited to) the following: courses in business that focus on the design of productive systems and enterprises, drawing upon knowledge from economics, psychology, mathematics, and other disciplines; courses in engineering that require students to design environments, technologies, and systems by applying knowledge from the natural sciences and mathematics; courses in education, journalism, and architecture that provide students with an opportunity to engage in well-defined professional practices; courses in studio art, music performance, dance, etc., that introduce students to creative skills and performance arts; applied proficiency in a foreign language; extensive research experiences; and internships.

On completion of a Scholarship in Practice course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship.
- Articulate the processes required to bring about a successful outcome from planning, modeling, and preparing, to critiquing, revising, and perfecting.
- Demonstrate an ability to critique existing applications of scholarship, in order to learn from past successes and failures.
- Demonstrate an ability to collaborate in order to bring about a successful outcome.
- Recognize how an application of scholarship impacts or is impacted by political, social, cultural, economic, or ethical dimensions.
- Produce an original analysis, project, creative work, performance, or other scholarly work that reflects a body of knowledge relevant to the course.
- Effectively communicate the application of scholarship through ancillary material (written, oral, visual, and/or all modes combined).

APPENDIX J: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR UNDERSTANDING PLURAL SOCIETIES

Life in a globally competitive society of the 21st century requires an ability to comprehend both theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the university's Diversity requirement. Courses in this category speak to both the foundations—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the operation or function of plural societies.

On completion of an Understanding Plural Societies course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the basis of human diversity: biological, cultural, historical, social, economic, or ideological.
- Demonstrate understanding of fundamental concepts and methods that produce knowledge about plural societies.
- Explicate the processes that create or fail to create just, productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies.
- Analyze forms and traditions of thought or expression in relation to cultural, historical, political, and social contexts, as, for example, dance, foodways, literature, music, and philosophical and religious traditions.
- Articulate how particular policies create or inhibit the formation and functioning of plural societies.
- Use a comparative, intersectional, or relational framework to examine the experiences, cultures, or histories of two or more social groups or constituencies within a single society or across societies, and within a single historical timeframe or across historical time.
- Use information technologies to access research and communicate effectively about plural societies.

APPENDIX K: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is the ability to demonstrate skills necessary to work with diverse individuals and teams. More specifically, cultural competence covers the following: awareness of one's own culture; knowledge of different cultural practices; and cross-cultural skills. Cultural competency contributes to an individual's ability to understand diversity, communicate effectively, and approach issues with a global world view.

On completion of a Cultural Competence course, students will be able to:

- Describe the concept of culture.
- Explain how cultural beliefs influence behaviors and practices at the individual, organizational, or societal levels.
- Analyze their own cultural beliefs with respect to attitudes or behaviors.
- Compare and contrast differences among two or more cultures.
- Effectively use skills to negotiate cross-cultural situations or conflicts.

APPENDIX L: LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE I-SERIES COURSES

As the centerpiece of the university's new general education program, I-Series courses will become the intellectual and pedagogical marker for which the University of Maryland is known: broad, analytical thinking about significant issues. In branding the university's general education curriculum, the signature courses begin the process of defining what is unique about education at the University of Maryland. Through these courses, students will be challenged from their first moments on campus to master the intellectual tools needed to wrestle with matters of great weight and consequence, the so-called "big questions." A signature course could take students inside a new field of study, where they may glimpse the utility, elegance, and beauty of disciplines that were previously unknown, unwanted, disparaged, or despised. Students may be able to see how such areas of investigation could become a subject for extended study, a major, or even a lifetime commitment. By addressing both contemporary problems and the enduring issues of human existence, the signature courses will speak to the university's historic role both as a timeless repository of human knowledge and as a source of solutions to burning issues of the day. At their best, the signature courses might do both. The I-Series offers extraordinary opportunities for increasing the level of intellectual discourse on campus and for providing occasions where new pedagogical methods may be introduced. The possibilities are large and exciting.

On completion of an I-Series course, students will be able to:

- Identify the major questions and issues of the course topic.
- Describe the sources the experts on the topic would use to explore these issues and questions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic terms, concepts, and approaches that experts employ in dealing with these issues.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in the course.
- Communicate major ideas and issues raised by the course through effective written and/or oral presentations.
- Articulate how this course has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the university and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest.

