January 3, 2018
Dear Colleague,

We're writing to update you on work done by the General Education Review and Inquiry (GERI) Committee. We explained the nature and scope of our work in an email that was distributed by Kate Willink, Faculty Senate President, on October 20. We'll send further updates at least once per month, but certainly feel to contact Doug Hesse, Chair, (dhesse@du.edu) or any other member of the committee.

This email has 4 parts, 3 of them with links to supporting documents:
1. Recent Committee Work and Timeline (with further link)
2. Issue Brief: Parameters of Gen Ed (with further link)
3. Findings from the Survey of Faculty (with further link)
4. Forums with Faculty and Students
We also list committee members and invite contacts.

Recent Committee Work and Timeline

The Committee met on campus December 5 for an all-day retreat to analyze responses to date and to map out our efforts for winter and spring 2018 and beyond. We have divided our work into five broad phases, elaborated in a draft timeline. We have spent this fall in an Identification phase characterized by reading, listening, and data gathering, work that will continue in January 2018 and will be capped with a report in February. Our second phase, Focused Analysis, will occur in February and March and feature another round of campus input and analysis, focused around specific topics and propositions. A Modeling phase will propose specific modifications to the Common Curriculum, with a draft of recommendations by mid-June. A Revision and Refinement phase will occur in September and October 2018, culminating in a final proposal submitted for approval by December. We expect action on the proposal in winter 2019, with full Implementation in fall 2020. Please see a more detailed timeline.

Parameters of General Education (an issue brief)

There's an extensive scholarly literature on general education programs, which have an interesting history in higher education. The committee has read and discussed much of that literature, and we've written a short primer on the Parameters of General Education, to share with the campus at large. It summarizes thinking on the possible functions/purposes of general education. Is it an individual student good? A social/civic good? An institutional good? The primer also summarizes three dominant models (and a fourth, emerging one): the Core model, the Distribution model, the Skills/Competencies model, and the Thematic model. In that context, the issue brief characterizes the DU Common Curriculum, including its relationship to the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.

Survey Findings

As you know, on November 3, 2017, we invited all faculty to complete a survey about aspects of the current Common Curriculum at DU. After the initial invitation and one reminder, 160 of 714 faculty had replied, many of them writing extended comments along with completing multiple choice questions. A preliminary analysis of findings is available on our portfolio site. It includes

tables of results, some interpretations, and some analysis of the open-ended comments that were coded.

Forums with Faculty and Students

GERI hosted a first open listening session on November 13. Approximately 30 faculty discussed three questions: What seems to be working well (or has strong potential) in the current Common Curriculum? Given who we are at DU, what should be distinctive features of a general education program here? What additional perspectives would you like to share? We will host similar forums in weeks two and three of winter quarter 2018. We also conducted focus groups with two ASEM courses, asking them several questions about their knowledge of and experiences in the Common Curriculum, now that most had completed the requirements. Additionally, we'll survey students.

The GERI Portfolio Site, with many documents open to the University Community (including those linked above), is at
http://portfolio.du.edu/GenEdReviewInquiry2017.

As always, we invite your ideas and input.

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Chris Coleman, Professor of Emergent Digital Practices
Barbekka Hurtt, Teaching Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences
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