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June 19, 2018

Dear DU Colleagues,

On behalf of the General Education Review and Inquiry Committee, I'm writing with a final update on our work for 2017-2018. As usual, you may review all our previous messages, plus reports and minutes, on the [GERI Portfolio website](#) (You may need to login to see the university-level documents.)

This is a lengthy email. Rather than have you click on links, I included two important updates directly here.

- The first update is a Draft Mission, Vision, and Outcomes statement.
- The second update (scroll until you see the obvious heading) explains our revised timeline.

Draft Mission, Vision, and Outcomes for General Education

DU General Education Review and Inquiry Committee

June 15, 2018

These statements result from inquiry processes that stretched from September 2017 to May 2018. We offered several opportunities for campus input and were pleased to have over 200 individual DU faculty and over 500 DU students take part, some of them multiple times. We studied the professional literature on general education, reviewed programs at DU comparison schools, and considered the DU mission, vision, undergraduate learning outcomes, and Impact 2025.

Previously, we shared a draft of the Mission and Vision statements. The revision below reflects input from faculty groups. While we keep open possible changes, the Committee believes the Mission and Vision are largely finished. In contrast, the Outcomes are likely to be further refined, even though this version is our third draft and represents hours of meetings and extended digital conversations.

Mission

The mission of the general education program at DU, emanating from our vision to be a great private university dedicated to the public good, is to foster in each undergraduate the knowledge, skills, and critical abilities that are crucial to informed, responsible, and effective participation in civic, scholarly, and professional lives.

Vision

A successful general education program will be marked by several features:

- **A sense of identity.** Students, faculty, staff and members of the DU community will understand the program as enacting DU's specific values, and aspirations, including as manifested in Impact 2025. The general education program will be one distinctive marker of DU's identity.
- **A sense of purpose.** Students, faculty, staff, and members of the DU community will understand and value how general education contributes to the whole of undergraduates' educations. Rather than simply being, as at some schools, a list of obligations to check off, general education courses at DU will be recognized for providing opportunities for intellectual, social, and personal growth.
- **A sense of coherence.** Students, faculty, staff, and members of the DU community will perceive vital connections among courses in the program; between the program and other courses, particularly in majors; and between academic and other settings. That is, they will experience how information, ideas, approaches, applications, and/or skills travel among different sites, both within and beyond the academy.
- **A sense of intentional design.** Faculty will create and teach courses that are intentionally (although not necessarily exclusively) designed for the general education program's purpose, vision, and outcomes.
- **A commitment to meaningful reflection.** There will be compelling analyses of how the program is working, grounded in the interpretation of artifacts, evidence, and practices and done in ways that faculty find valuable, even engaging. Likewise, students will reflect, in ways meaningful to them, upon their experience of the program as a whole and its role in their academic, civic, and professional development.
- **A commitment to faculty development.** Faculty teaching general education courses will have resources and opportunities for professional development with colleagues across the program, including on concerns of curriculum and pedagogy that originate with them. Resources will be sufficient to implement pedagogical and curricular innovations.

Outcomes

At the completion of general education, DU students should demonstrate:

- The ability to define “the public good” with sophistication, for contexts ranging from local to global, informed by how different areas of study contribute to understanding and realizing the public good.
- The ability to address complex questions by applying and synthesizing knowledge of human cultures and the physical world, using methods of inquiry and analysis practiced across the liberal arts and sciences.
- A critical understanding of human diversity and the importance of social, historical, and cultural identities in addition to one’s own.
- The ability to evaluate evidence and source materials and to employ them responsibly.
- The ability to communicate effectively, ethically, and creatively for a variety of situations and purposes, using written, spoken, visual, material, and/or digital modes.
- The ability to use quantitative methods responsibly in addressing questions and solving problems.
- The ability to work productively with others and to collaborate effectively and ethically with different communities.
- The ability to apply general knowledge and skills in experiential learning settings.
- The ability to reflect meaningfully on relationships among areas across the general education curriculum; between general education and their majors and careers; between personal goods and public goods; and between intellectual and other aspects of living.

Updated Timeline

The timeline we released in December 2017 predicted recommendations by June 15. Over the course of bi-weekly meetings in winter and spring, we realized the campus would be better served if we deliberated further and involved even more faculty expertise through various channels, including the Faculty Senate. In our 5/30/18 meeting, then, we adjusted our timeline by a few months. (Revisions of general education programs nationally, by the way, seem to average about three years, some going more quickly, others foundering altogether. We realize this is little consolation.)

Early June 2018

- Agree on “good enough for circulation” learning outcomes for general education and communicate them to the faculty.

June, July, August 2018

- Work occasionally as a committee, probably via Zoom or email, to plan strategies and processes for fall faculty working sessions, including developing speculative “signature ideas” or “building opportunities.”
- Consult with Senate leadership to plan conversations to start immediately in the fall.

Mid-September to Mid-October 2018

- Lead intensive meetings with campus groups, structured around building out from the Mission, Vision, and Outcomes.

Mid-Oct to Early November 2018

- Synthesize and report ideas generated through the fall meetings.

November 2018

- Encourage responses to the synthesis, through additional discussion opportunities and through written channels

December 2018 through February 2019

- Write recommendations for changes in general education
- Involve administrators and others with resource perspectives and content expertise

March 201

- Release final draft.
- Sponsor hearings and be available for deliberations.

May 2019

- Send final plan to Undergraduate Council for approval

Note: By this schedule, any new program couldn't take effect through the Bulletin until fall 2020, although some aspects might lend themselves to earlier implementation.

Sincerely,

Doug Hesse, on behalf of the Committee:

Chris Coleman, Emergent Digital Practices; Doug Hesse, English and Writing (Chair); Barbekka Hurtt, Biological Sciences; Tonnett Luedtke, Academic Advising; Kateri McRae, Psychology; Nic Ormes, Mathematics; Matt Rutherford, Computer Science; Laura Sponsler, Morgridge College of Education; Billy J. Stratton, English; John Tiedemann, Writing; Cheri Young, Hospitality

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