

# Academic Core Curriculum Committee

## White Paper on General Education

August 1, 2014

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## Introduction

In November 2013, the Longwood University Faculty Senate Executive Committee formed the Academic Core Curriculum Committee (ACCC) to begin the process of examining and reforming the General Education curriculum that has been in place since 2002. The ACCC is comprised of 13 faculty members and chaired by Sharon Emerson-Stonnell, Professor of Mathematics; vice-chair of the committee is Larissa Ferguson, Professor of History.

The impulse for this reform comes from several sources. First, during the 2011-2012 school year, faculty and staff worked together to develop an Academic Strategic Plan (ASP). The ASP recommended the reform of General Education to make it more responsive to the needs of our students and of our society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Second, between 2011 and 2013, Longwood faculty conducted a self-study of the General Education curriculum in preparation for our SACSCOC reaffirmation. While reaffirmation was successful, the self-study revealed potential areas of improvement in our General Education curriculum, including closer coordination with the assessment of the SCHEV Core Competencies. Third, Longwood's Strategic Planning Priorities for 2014-2018, which are still in draft form as of the writing of this report, call on Longwood to be a national model for higher education and call for the renewal of the General Education program. Drawing on our University's unique assets, Longwood should aspire to distinguish itself nationally for its innovative General Education curriculum.

During spring semester 2014, ACCC members conducted research about Longwood's current General Education program, employers' needs, and other models of General Education curriculum. In May 2014, the committee held a day-long meeting to present its findings. This white paper summarizes those findings and shares them with the University community.

October 25, 2013

Dear colleagues,

General Education reform is an opportunity for Longwood to distinguish itself among colleges and universities and provide future students with a broad foundation to support their growth and development as citizen leaders. To this end, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate met on Thursday, October 17, 2013 to discuss the timeline and develop a structure for beginning this process.

Following standard procedures and guidelines, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has decided to create a long-term ad-hoc committee, the Academic Core Curriculum Committee, which will be charged with analyzing our current General Education structure, researching best practices in general education, and developing an innovative proposal to revise our General Education curriculum to reflect the mission of Longwood and serve the best interests of future students. This committee will coordinate with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the current General Education committee, and the Provost in working through the process, and they will also offer multiple opportunities for every faculty member campus wide to give suggestions and feedback at all stages of the process. We will ensure an open and transparent discussion that allows all voices their say in our future.

The Executive Committee also affirms the need for representation from all quarters of the campus as we form the committee. Therefore, we have decided that the Academic Core Curriculum Committee will have 13 members, which will include 9 members from the Cook-Cole College of Arts and Sciences, 2 members from the College of Business and Economics, and 2 members from the College of Education and Human Services. The Executive Committee will appoint the members of the Committee and select the Chairperson, adhering to principles of broad inclusion across colleges while also choosing individuals with the skills, knowledge, vision, and commitment necessary to see this project to its end.

If you wish to be considered for the Academic Core Curriculum Committee, please send a nomination to Susan May ([maysh@longwood.edu](mailto:maysh@longwood.edu)) by November 4, 2013. In this nomination, you should include a statement of your interest and note any special skills or attributes that you would bring to the committee if chosen to serve. You may also nominate others who would be well suited for this committee. Please understand that this committee will require a significant time commitment (including summer work) and will be a multi-year appointment. We appreciate your consideration and encourage you to participate, whether on the committee or through the various opportunities for conversation over the next year.

Sincerely,

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee

David Lehr, Chair

David Magill, Vice-Chair

Ruth Meese

Leah Shilling-Traina

Phillip Cantrell

November 12, 2013

Dear colleagues,

As you know, we have begun the process of general education revision, which is an exciting opportunity for Longwood. We solicited nominations from the faculty, and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate met several times to consider the nominations we received and to choose the members of the Academic Core Curriculum committee.

The Executive Committee sought to ensure broad representation from all quarters of the campus in forming the 13 member committee, which includes 9 members from the Cook-Cole College of Arts and Sciences, 2 members from the College of Business and Economics, and 2 members from the College of Education and Human Services. We received 44 nominations from across all three colleges, and we praise the outstanding pool of candidates who offered to serve Longwood in this important task. This group of nominees made our job of creating this committee quite challenging and demonstrated once again what a dedicated and talented faculty we have.

Following standard procedures and guidelines, the Executive Committee discussed the nominations and then chose the members of the Committee listed below. We voted by written ballot to select the Chairperson and Vice-Chair of the committee. Please join us in thanking these individuals for agreeing to serve. We encourage all faculty to help the members of this committee over the long process of general education reform.

**CCCAS**

Lee Bidwell  
Sarai Blincoe  
Wade Edwards  
Sharon Emerson-Stonnell, Chair  
Lara Ferguson, Vice Chair  
Heather Lettner-Rust  
Pam McDermott

Melissa Rhoten  
David Shoenthal

**CBE**

Cheryl Adkins  
David Lehr

**CEHS**

David Locasio  
Sharon Menegoni

Sincerely,

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
David Lehr, Chair  
David Magill, Vice-Chair  
Ruth Meese  
Leah Shilling-Traina  
Phillip Cantrell

## General Education and Assessment History at Longwood University

1. In the 1990-91 undergraduate catalog, General Education was updated to include 10 Goals requiring 33 credits total. Longwood Seminar (LSEM) was required of all entering freshmen but was not part of General Education.
2. In the 2001-02 undergraduate catalog, General Education was updated to include 15 Goals requiring 41 credits total. LSEM was added to General Education as Goal 1.
3. In the 2004-05 academic year, each academic department had a speaking intensive and writing intensive policy. In the 2004-05 undergraduate catalog, each major was revised to include two speaking intensive courses and two writing intensive courses.
4. In the 2010-2011 undergraduate catalog, the General Education Goals were lowered to 14 with a total of 38 credits total.
5. The six SCHEV core competencies were assessed gradually beginning with Quantitative Literacy in 2007-08 until all six competencies were assessed beginning in 2011-2012.

## Current General Education Program & Degree Requirements

For reference, the **fourteen General Education Goals** are presented in their brief version below. Each goal also has student learning outcomes (SLOs) associated with it. The full version of the goals and their outcomes is available at <http://www.longwood.edu/gened/goals.htm>.

1. To develop critical thinking and analysis skills necessary in college and in life
2. To learn to write and speak clearly and effectively
3. To understand our cultural heritage as revealed in literature
4. To understand our cultural heritage as expressed through the fine and performing arts
5. To understand mathematical thought and apply mathematical logic to problem solving
6. To apply the methods of science to the acquisition of knowledge
7. To explore the foundations and history of western civilization
8. To understand the forces shaping contemporary society
9. To understand the diversity of cultures and societies
10. To communicate and function in a globally interdependent world through foreign language study
11. To understand issues of physical and mental wellness
12. To learn how to make informed ethical choices and decisions
13. To learn how to communicate effectively as an active citizen leader and to participate in the written discourse of civic life
14. To apply knowledge and skills developed through the course of study to real world experiences

Each General Education course also fulfills **nine common General Education Course Criteria**. The criteria are as follows:

1. teach a disciplinary mode of inquiry (for example, literary analysis, statistical analysis, historical interpretation, philosophical reasoning, aesthetic judgment, the scientific method) and provide students with practice in applying their disciplinary mode of inquiry, critical thinking, or problem solving strategies.
2. provide examples of how disciplinary knowledge changes through creative applications of the chosen mode of inquiry.
3. consider questions of ethical values.
4. explore past, current, and future implications (for example, social, political, economic, psychological, technological, or philosophical) of disciplinary knowledge.
5. encourage consideration of course content from diverse perspectives.
6. provide opportunities for students to increase information literacy through contemporary techniques of gathering, manipulating, and analyzing information and data.
7. require at least one substantive written paper, oral report, or course journal and also require students to articulate information or ideas in their own words.

8. foster awareness of the common elements among disciplines and the interconnectedness of disciplines.

9. provide a rationale as to why knowledge of this discipline is important to the development of an educated citizen.

When proposing a new Gen Ed course, faculty have to demonstrate what component of the course fulfills each SLO for the goal and how they will assess each SLO. Faculty also have to submit a matrix that shows where in the course they will also address the nine General Education course criteria. The criteria are not assessed.

Assessment of Gen Ed courses is overseen by the General Education Committee, which is appointed by Faculty Senate. The Director of General Education, who chairs the committee, is appointed by the Provost/VPAA.

### **General Education Requirements tied to Institutional Mission (Goal 1 and Goal 13)**

The Gen Ed program explicitly relates to Longwood's institutional mission in two places. The first is the common freshman experience, a one-credit course called Longwood Seminar (LSEM), that fulfills Goal 1: "The knowledge and skills that lead to success in college, the ability to use critical thinking and analysis in all aspects of student life, and preparation for assuming the role of citizen leader working for the common good (one credit)." Students who transfer to Longwood with 25 credits or more earned on a college campus are exempted from this goal.

The goal outcomes include that students will

- understand the mission of Longwood University and how it applies to the college experience
- understand the application of critical thinking skills to multiple situations
- develop the knowledge and skills that lead to college success.

The second place where the institutional mission is reinforced is in Goal 13: "The ability to synthesize and critically analyze through written discourse and a common educational experience information pertaining to issues of citizen leadership (three credits)." Most students fulfill this goal by taking ENGL 400 (Active Citizenship: An Advanced Writing Seminar), although GNED 400 (Exploring Public Issues through Writing) and GNED 495 (Special Topics: General Education) also fulfill this goal.

The goal outcomes include that students will

- engage in the process of citizen leadership by investigating multiple perspectives on an important public issue
- understand the nature of public discourse/debate as determined by purpose, audience, and context
- choose appropriate formats in writing for a variety of purposes

- analyze the effectiveness of their own texts and processes for specific rhetorical situations
- understand how the knowledge, skills, and values learned in general education are interwoven, interrelated, and how they can contribute to the process of citizen leadership

## **Degree Requirements**

In order to graduate, Longwood students are also required to take two speaking-intensive courses and two writing-intensive courses beyond the courses required for General Education. Although these requirements are currently outside of the General Education program, they are tied to the SCHEV Core Competencies and so should be considered as part of the purview of the Academic Core Curriculum Committee. The Writing Intensive and Speaking Intensive policies are reprinted below from the Undergraduate Catalog, 2013-2014 (pp. 52-53).

### The Writing Intensive Course Policy

All students will earn a grade of “C-” or better in at least two writing-intensive courses beyond courses required for General Education in Goals 1-11 and 13. Writing-intensive courses shall be designated in the Catalog, in the registration schedule, and on the course syllabus. Each major discipline should offer at least one writing-intensive course each year. Class sizes normally should not be larger than 25 to 30 students for writing-intensive courses. Transfer courses do not normally satisfy writing intensive requirements.

To qualify as writing-intensive, a course must meet the following guidelines:

1. Writing-intensive courses should require at least 10 pages of formal writing from each student, typically distributed over three or more papers so students have an opportunity to apply faculty feedback to future written work. (This does not include essay examinations.)
2. Instructors in writing-intensive courses are encouraged to require informal writing (reading journals, brief in-class writings, pre-writing for formal papers) to lead students to explore and articulate course content. Students could use this informal writing to develop ideas for formal papers.
3. Students in writing-intensive courses should be assigned and instructed in specific forms and processes of writing used in professions related to the course discipline.
4. Instructors in writing-intensive courses should give explicit instruction in how to complete the required writing assignments. This explicit instruction must include giving detailed written assignment sheets and a scoring guide showing the explicit criteria, including grading scale, used to score the assignment. If possible, this information should be attached to the course syllabus. Other explicit instruction might include discussing procedures for gathering and organizing information, providing models of appropriate forms, assigning and responding to drafts, and encouraging revision and editing. Instructors must return graded work before the next paper is due, noting areas of strength and weakness on the scoring guide along with the overall grade.



5. Students who have problems with their writing assignments should be encouraged to seek assistance at the Writing Center as early in their writing process as possible.

6. The demonstrated ability to communicate content knowledge effectively through writing must be a factor in the grading for a writing intensive course. Students must earn a grade of "C-" or better in the course in order to apply it toward their writing intensive course requirement. A statement to this effect must be included on the syllabus.

### The Speaking Intensive Course Policy

All students will earn a grade of "C-" or better in at least two speaking-intensive courses beyond courses required for General Education in Goals 1-11 and 13. Speaking-intensive courses shall be designated in the Catalog, in the registration schedule, and on the course syllabus.

To qualify as speaking-intensive, a course must meet the following guidelines:

1. Speaking-intensive courses should require at least one formal speaking occasion for each student.
2. Instructors in speaking-intensive courses are encouraged to require informal speaking opportunities to lead students to explore and articulate course content.
3. Instructors in speaking-intensive courses should give explicit instruction in how to complete the required assignments. This explicit instruction must include giving detailed assignments and a scoring guide showing the explicit criteria, including grading scale, used to score the assignment. If possible, this information should be attached to the course syllabus. Other explicit instruction might include discussing procedures for gathering and organizing information, providing models of appropriate forms, and encouraging rehearsal and revision.

Transfer courses do not normally satisfy speaking intensive requirements.

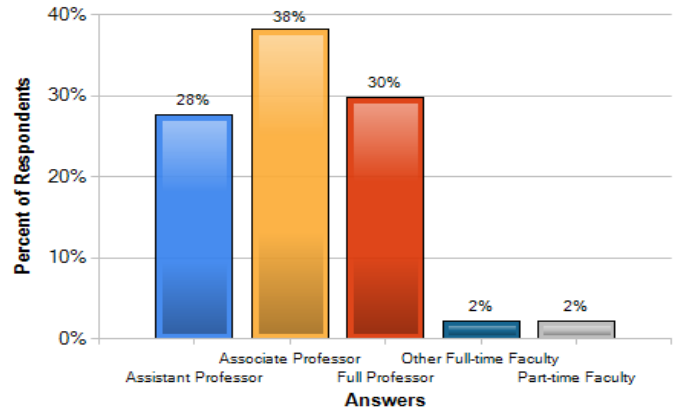
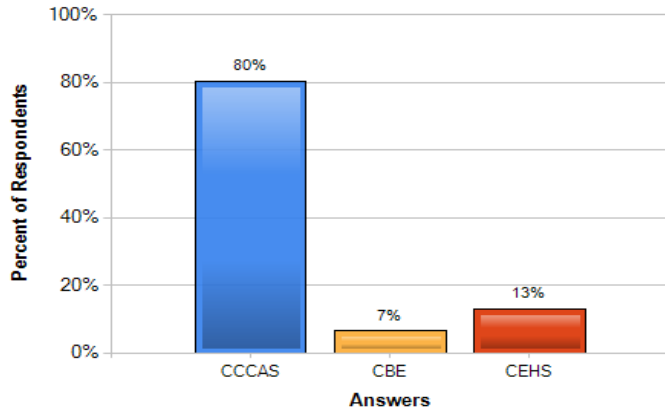
## Trends in General Education Goals Taken at Longwood University

Data was collected from Longwood University Institutional Research about undergraduate students graduating in the academic years 2009 – 2013. The table below represents the percentage of students in each graduating class that completed the general education goal at Longwood University.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
Goal 2	76.35%	67.31%	65.10%	65.14%
Goal 3	93.58%	88.58%	88.33%	87.62%
Goal 4	93.96%	91.74%	87.53%	89.90%
Goal 5	84.91%	79.83%	73.34%	77.76%
Goal 6	81.89%	80.56%	79.86%	80.65%
Goal 7	90.57%	89.79%	83.64%	88.34%
Goal 8	69.69%	62.45%	20.37%	61.18%
Goal 9	96.73%	95.87%	95.08%	93.03%
Goal 10	88.68%	89.79%	87.99%	86.90%
Goal 11	97.23%	96.23%	97.71%	97.72%
Goal 12	95.09%	95.99%	94.74%	95.91%

## Longwood University Faculty Survey

The Longwood University faculty were asked to complete an on-line survey about our current general education program. Forty-seven faculty members responded to the survey. Demographics are represented in the graphs below.



The survey consisted of seven questions about General Education. An overview of the results follow.

- What is the purpose of general education at Longwood University?

Common responses included:

- It should be a foundational experience for all students lending breadth and exposure to a variety of disciplines.
- It should hone critical thinking, writing/speaking ability, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and information literacy.
- It should create well-rounded, citizen leaders with a broad set of skills.
- It should “help students understand the need for multiple perspectives and the relationships and interconnectedness of all subjects when facing real world issues and challenges”.
- It should stimulate students' intellectual curiosity and encourage them to become lifelong learners.

- List the top three strengths of our general education program.

Common responses included:

- Breadth of content areas from which to choose
- Wide variety of courses within a specific goal from which to choose (in most cases)
- Internship/research requirement

- List the top three elements you would like to see in our new general education program that our current program either does not have or needs to improve upon.

Common responses included:

- A more integrated and interdisciplinary program – “It would be nice to have an integrated GenEd curriculum such that all goal courses were woven together to address the same question. Example questions/topics might be "Addressing World Health Issues" or "Art in Society".
  - A more unified approach to assessment; restructuring to align with SCHEV’s Core Competencies
  - Inclusion of more writing and speaking intensive courses
  - Smaller class sizes
  - Removal of the “check box” mentality
  - Address the accessibility of and place more emphasis on study abroad
- If you could change only ONE thing about our general education program, what would it be?

Common responses:

- A change to the foreign language requirement
  - The creation of an integrated/interdisciplinary program
  - More emphasis on writing, critical thinking, problem solving
- Currently general education is comprised of 38 credits. How many credits do you think our new general education curriculum should require?

Most responses indicated that a program comprised of 30-40 credits is appropriate.

## Longwood University Student Survey

One on-campus English 400 section served as a pilot. Because of the length of time needed to complete the survey, it was divided into three different surveys. Each survey was administered among one-third of the remaining on-campus English 400 sections. Committee members attended English 400 courses and administered a 10-minute survey at the beginning of the course during the months of March and April. Only students present during the course were allowed to participate.

- The first survey was qualitative. Students were asked the following questions.

What 5 words/phrases would you use to describe the general education program to an interested high school student?

Positive words	Number of responses	Negative words	Number of responses
diverse/broad/well-rounded/extensive	85	long	15
useful/helpful/valuable/educational/worthwhile	51	boring/monotonous	14
eye-opening/insightful	27	not always relevant to major	13
challenging	15	time-consuming	11
rewarding	15	overkill	8

Of the 96 responses, positive terms were used more often than negative terms.

In your mind, what is the mission of Longwood University?

Of the 100 respondents, 45 students correctly named the mission.

Do you think the Longwood general education program (14 goals) supports the university's mission/values as you described them above? If yes, WHY? If no, WHY NOT?

Yes	Yes and no	no
64% well rounded; leadership skills	22% broad education Redundant; too easy; not related to my interests; poorly taught	13% not about leadership; lack of rigor or diversity; disconnection

These results are only from the 45 students who correctly named the mission.

If you could keep one thing about the Longwood University general education program, what would it be?

Description	Number of responses
listed specific courses	47
variety of choices	29
required	3
Small classes	2
Diversity goal	2

Of those mentioning specific courses, the following courses were mentioned more than once.

course	Foreign language	Writing	Internship	PHED	LSEM
Number of responses	12	7	5	3	2

If you could change one thing about the Longwood University general education program, what would it be?

Description	Number of responses
add more choices	22
change foreign language requirement	20
add/remove specific courses	16
make general education courses relate to major	12
add career focus	11
issues related to teaching of courses	10
require less goals	9
don't change anything	6
too much work	5
remove it or test out of it	3

- The second survey has a quantitative survey. 103 students responded to this survey. The following statements were rated using a 0-3 scale. The statements were taken directly from the current Longwood University general education goals.

The general education courses allowed me to...

Statement	Mean score
get exposed to a variety of subjects	2.5728
develop an ability to get along with and work with people different from oneself	2.4272
apply independent thinking skills	2.3592
develop project management skills, including work habits, self-discipline	2.2621
locate, screen, and organize information	2.2427
appreciate the University's mission and values	2.2233

learn to write clearly and effectively	2.2136
learn how to communicate effectively as an active citizen leader	2.1262
understand the diversity of cultures and societies	2.1068
understand the forces shaping today's society	2.0388
develop critical thinking and analysis skills necessary in life	2.0194
understand issues of physical and mental wellness	2.0097
live as a citizen leader in civic life	1.9709
apply the methods of science to the acquisition of knowledge	1.9709
make informed ethical decisions	1.9515
learn to speak clearly and effectively	1.9417
understand cultural change as related to literature	1.9320
explore the history of western civilization	1.9223
understand and apply mathematical logic in order to solve problems	1.8447
participate in a written discourse of civic life	1.8155
understand cultural change as expressed through the fine and performing arts	1.7184
communicate and function in a globally interdependent world through foreign language study	1.6667

The scale used is: 3 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 1 = disagree; 0 = strongly disagree

Students were then asked to rate statements on a 0-4 scale. The statements were chosen to determine common beliefs about general education.

<b>Positive statements</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
During registration, I had a reasonable number of classes to pick from to meet my general education requirements.	2.8432
I was able to connect information learned in one general education class with information learned in another general education class.	2.4412
I was able to connect information learned in one general education class with information learned in my major-specific courses.	2.2451
I found myself enjoying general education courses.	2.1569

<b>Negative statements</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
General education courses were too big; they have too many students in them.	1.2745
Because of how many courses there are in general education, I found it challenging to graduate in 4 years.	1.5196
As I was choosing my general education courses, I was not interested in the general education areas.	2.3725

The scale used is: 4 = very frequently; 3 = frequently; 2 = occasionally; 1 = rarely; 0 = never

- The third survey was a qualitative survey.

Each group had students stated which general education courses, SCHEV core competencies were met. The six core competencies (Scientific Literacy, Oral Communication, Written Communication,

Ethical Decision-Making, Problem-Solving, Appreciation of Diversity) were divided into three groups of two competencies each. Each group was given to three English 400 sections.

Instructions for students:

Below are two of the core areas that the Longwood General Education Program is designed to help students grow in. In **the first column** of each table, list any general education courses that you *personally took* (if any) that helped you to grow in that particular area. In **the second column** describe a specific experience from that course (project, reading, assignment, etc) that helped you grow in that area. In **the third column**, tell us briefly how you grew from that specific experience.

The most stated goals were goal 8 (46 responses), goal 13 (37 responses), and goal 12 (36 responses). Goals 1 and 14 were never mentioned.

The following activities were mentioned the most throughout the survey: whole class, project/paper/presentation, lab/activity, reading.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Most common activity stated</b>
Scientific Literacy	Lab/activity; whole class
Oral Communication	Formal speaking
Written Communication	Final paper or proposal
Ethical Decision-Making	Whole class
Problem-Solving	Whole class
Appreciation of Diversity	Whole class

Most common outcomes listed by core competencies.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Most common outcomes</b>
Scientific Literacy	Evidence gathering/interpretation/analysis, critical thinking
Oral Communication	Formal/public speaking
Written Communication	General writing improvement
Ethical Decision-Making	changed/created views, perspectives AND appreciation/awareness
Problem-Solving	general process AND specific process
Appreciation of Diversity	awareness/understanding



## Employer Needs

Four national studies were researched.

- ***Are they Really Ready to Work?*** was conducted by the Conference Board, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Society for Human Resource Management in 2006.

*Are You Ready to Work?* (AYRW) contained a survey of employers assessing employers' perceptions of:

- Skill level of new graduates
- What basic skills and applied skills they considered "very important," "important," or "not important"
- How the importance of those skills may change over the next five years
- Emerging content areas considered critical over the next five years

AYRW results showed the following basic knowledge and skills rated as "Very Important" by employers for four-year college graduates.

Rank	Basic Knowledge/Skills	Percent
1	Writing in English	89.7
2	English Language	88.0
3	Reading Comprehension	87.0
4	Mathematics	64.2
5	Science	33.4
6	Foreign Languages	21.0
7	Government/Economics	19.8
8	History/Geography	14.1
9	Humanities/Arts	13.2
Number of respondents varied for each question, ranging from 382 to 409.		

AYRW results showed the following emerging content areas identified as Most Critical.

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Make appropriate choices concerning health and wellness, e.g., nutrition, exercise, stress reduction, work-life effectiveness	76.1
Exercise personal financial responsibility, e.g., balancing a checkbook, budgeting skills, retirement planning	71.5
Use entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options	70.5
Understand economic issues and the role of business in the U.S. and global economy	60.6
Demonstrate understanding of global markets and the economic and cultural effects of globalization	52.9
Participate effectively in community and government as an informed citizen	51.0
Use non-English languages as a tool for understanding other nations, markets, and cultures	49.7
N=431 *Note: For all new graduates (includes high school, two-year college, and four-year college)	

AYRW results showed the following applied skills rated as “Most Important” by employers for four-year college graduates.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Applied Skills</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Oral Communications	95.4
2	Teamwork/Collaboration	94.4
3	Professionalism/Work Ethic	93.8
4	Written Communications	93.1
5	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	92.1
6	Ethics/Social Responsibility	85.6
7	Leadership	81.8
8	Information Technology Application	81.0
9	Creativity/Innovation	81.0
10	Lifelong Learning/Self Direction	78.3
11	Diversity	71.8
Number of respondents varied for each question, ranging from 402 to 409.		

➤ ***It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success***  
 conducted by Hart Associates for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (2013)

*It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success* (ITMM) is a survey of 318 employers who employ at least 25 employees and report that 25% or more of their new hires hold an associate degree or Bachelor’s degree. The survey examined employers’ perceptions of kinds of learning college graduates need for success in today’s economy.

ITMM results show that majorities of employers would like higher education institutions to increase their level of emphasis in these areas:

<b>Area</b>	<b>More %</b>	<b>Less %</b>	<b>Same %</b>
Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills	82	7	11
The ability to analyze and solve complex problems	81	6	13
The ability to effectively communicate in writing	80	8	12
The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources	72	9	19
The ability to innovate and be creative	71	9	20
Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse group settings	67	11	22
The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions	64	9	27
Knowledge about science and technology	56	9	35
The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics	55	10	35
Proficiency in a language other than English	43	18	39
Knowledge about global issues and developments and their implications for the future	40	15	45
Knowledge about the role of the United States in the world	35	18	47
Knowledge about cultural diversity in America and other countries	33	22	45
Civic knowledge, civic participation, and community engagement	30	18	52
Knowledge about democratic institutions and values	27	20	53

- ***The Role of Higher Education in Career Development: Employer Perceptions*** was conducted by Maguire Associates for The Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media’s Marketplace in 2012.

*The Role of Higher Education in Career Development: Employer Perceptions* (RHECD) surveyed employers who hired recent college graduates. Questions examined included:

- What skills should college graduates possess?
- What skills are higher education responsible for developing?

RHECD results showed the top skill areas identified by employers as the following. (Employers asked to identify top five; multiple response)

	<b>Recent College Graduates Need for Success</b>		<b>Colleges and Universities Responsible for Developing</b>	
Knowledge of a content area associated with the job	298	42.5%	315	45.3%
Technical skills associated with the job	319	45.4%	350	50.3%
Written and oral communications skills	553	78.8%	575	82.6%
Leading teams	60	8.5%	83	11.9%
Collaborating with others	369	52.6%	273	39.2%
Working with diverse groups of people	281	40.0%	243	34.9%
Adaptability/managing multiple priorities	455	64.8%	291	41.8%
Analytical/research skills	224	31.9%	409	58.8%
Planning/organizational skills	335	47.7%	355	51.0%
Making decisions/solving problems	416	59.3%	375	53.9%
None of the above	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
Other (Please specify):	36	5.1%	13	1.9%

➤ **National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook, 2014**

NACE results of employers rated the importance of candidate skills/qualities as the following.

Skill/Quality	Weighted average rating*
Ability to work in team structure	4.55
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.50
Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work	4.48
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.48
Ability to obtain and process information	4.37
Ability to analyze quantitative data	4.25
Technical knowledge related to the job	4.01
Proficiency with computer software programs	3.94
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	3.62
Ability to sell or influence others	3.54

\*5-point scale, where 1 = Not at all important; 2 = Not very important; 3 = Somewhat important; 4 = Very important; 5 = Extremely important

## Examples of General Education Structures and Models

ACCC members surveyed general education models at Longwood’s SCHEV peer institutions and other public institutions within Virginia. Most general education programs are best described using the five categories below. Most institutions fall somewhere on the spectrum between a true common core model, in which students take all the same courses, and a distributive model, in which students choose from a menu of courses. Many institutions also incorporate a tiered/progressive approach or thematic approach in curriculum design. The example institutions below reflect the diversity of general education programs in higher education today.

Category	Description
True Core	Common classes
Distributive	Cafeteria style
Two-Pronged	Competencies at lower level /Exploratory at upper level
Tiered or Progressive	Introductory courses/intermediate/advanced
Thematic	alternative groupings of classes

Four examples of General Education curriculum:

### ➤ **Butler University**

Butler University refers to its curriculum as the Common Core, but students have some choice in which classes they take. Butler also has an intensive first-year seminar and degree requirements that include cultural events and a community engagement course.

First Year Seminar:	Self, Community and the World	6 credit hours
	Global and Historical Studies	6 credit hours
<i>Areas of inquiry</i>	1. Analytic Reasoning	3 credit hours
	2. The Natural World	5 credit hours
	3. Perspectives in the Creative Arts	3 credit hours
	4. Physical Well-Being	1 credit hour
	5. The Social World	3 credit hours
	6. Texts and Ideas	3 credit hours
Butler Cultural Requirement		8 events required for graduation
Indianapolis Community Requirement*		1 course
Speaking Across the Curriculum		3 credit hours at the 300- or 400-level

## Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credit hours at the 300- or 400-level

\*From the Butler Core Curriculum brochure, available at <http://www.butler.edu/core/>: “The Indianapolis Community Requirement (ICR) involves students in a wide range of community partnerships where they can integrate classroom knowledge with active experiences in the Indianapolis community. ICR courses can assist students in mastering the skills of their respective disciplines, enhance their understanding of personal and social responsibility, develop intercultural competencies, and foster civic mindedness. As part of their graduation requirements, all students are required to take at least one course in any part of the University that involves active engagement with the Indianapolis community.

“Learning Objectives:

- To have an active learning experience that integrates classroom knowledge with activities in the Indianapolis community.
- To use an experience in Indianapolis to further understanding of the nature of community and the relation to self.
- To assist the University in furthering its commitment expressed in its mission statement of ‘providing intellectual, cultural, and artistic opportunities and leadership to Indianapolis and the surrounding areas.’”

### ➤ **Elon University**

Elon University has elements of the distribution model, core curriculum, and upper-level requirements. It also adopts an intellectual theme and a capstone course.

Intellectual Theme: Diversity & Global Engagement

Core Curriculum Divided into 6 Parts:

- I. First Year Foundations
  - a. COR 110: The Global Experience (distinctive first-year seminar course focused on diversity and global engagement)
  - b. ENGL 110: Writing: Argument and Inquiry
  - c. Math 110: General Statistics
- II. Experiential Learning Requirement (ELR)
  - a. Students may intern, study abroad, conduct independent research, participate in service-learning project, or hold a leadership position
- III. World Languages
- IV. Studies in Arts and Sciences (8 hours in each of 4 categories)
  - a. Expression (literature, philosophy & fine arts--art, music, dance, theatre); at least 1 must be literature. Must choose from at least 2 areas
  - b. Civilization (history, foreign language, religious studies); chosen from at least 2 areas
  - c. Society (economics, geography, political science, psychology, human services, sociology, anthropology); chosen from at least 2 areas

- d. Science (Math, Science, CMSC) (at least 1 must be lab science)
- V. Advanced Studies
  - a. 8 hours of 300-400 level courses outside major in Arts/Sciences
- VI. Interdisciplinary Capstone
  - a. 300-400 Level Elon COR class outside major as Junior/Senior (recent seminar topics include “The Future Now,” “Human Sexuality,” “Media and the Middle East,” “Technology and Society,” “Africa’s People and Environments,” “Wealth and Poverty,” “Permaculture: Food, Culture and Sustainability,” “Coming Home: The impact of Studying Abroad,” “Science in the Media: Exploring Current Science Issues,” “A Liberal Education—What is it good for anyway?”)

➤ **Rollins University**

Rollins University has adopted a thematic approach to their general education curriculum and calls it the Rollins Plan. Students take a first-year seminar course that is part of a Living-Learning Community, fulfill competency courses, and then choose a “neighborhood” in which to focus. Rollins is currently piloting this new curriculum. The two thematic neighborhoods are “Global Challenges: Florida and Beyond” or “Revolution.” Students take courses in that neighborhood in four areas: humanities, the expressive arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. The theme is supposed to tie the courses together over the course of four years.

10 requirements:

- 1 **RCC** course, an interactive seminar class based on a broad range of topics.

During their first fall semester at Rollins, all first-year students are enrolled in an RCC. As part of the course, most students live in a residence hall with their RCC classmates as part of the Living Learning Community program. Throughout the semester, students—joined by the RCC faculty—participate in educational activities and co-curricular experiences that supplement and enhance the course. Upper-class peer mentors assist in the RCC and help first-year students with the transition to academics and life at the College.

- 4 **competencies** courses (One (1) in each area for foreign languages, health and wellness, mathematical thinking, and writing)
- 5 courses within one **neighborhood**

To be eligible for a Bachelor of Arts degree, students must complete five (5) courses from one (1) specific neighborhood (see descriptions below). Neighborhood courses are designated in the course schedule published each semester by the Office of Student Records.

Students may take one neighborhood course from a different neighborhood—except the neighborhood capstone, which must be taken in their neighborhood. Students may double-count one neighborhood course toward their major.



Students may complete neighborhood courses and advance within their neighborhood by achieving a C- or better in neighborhood courses. The rFLA director may approve courses taken at regionally accredited institutions of higher education other than Rollins for neighborhood credit.

Students will select their neighborhood during the fall semester of their first year. In the spring of their first year, they will take their first neighborhood class at the 100-level. Subsequently, students must take:

- three (3) classes at the intermediate level, with at least one (1) class at the 150-level,
- one (1) class at the 200-level, and
- one (1) capstone course in their neighborhood at the 300-level.

All competencies must be completed BEFORE the student enrolls in the capstone.

### ➤ **Western Kentucky University**

Western Kentucky is the only public institution among these four examples and enrolls a little over 21,000 students. Its General Education curriculum was included because it closely follows the American Association of Colleges and University's (AACU) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) learning outcomes. Those learning outcomes include Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World, Intellectual and Practical Skills, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Integrative and Applied Learning. More information on the LEAP learning outcomes is available here: <http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>. WKU also requires its students to demonstrate language proficiency at the "Novice high" level before completing 60 hours of coursework.

WKU's curriculum includes

- Foundation courses (18 credit hours) – Practical and Intellectual Skills
  - College Composition (can test out of this course with ACT or SAT scores)
  - Writing in the Discipline
  - Human Communication (which is their Oral Communication Competency)
  - Quantitative Reasoning (can test out of this course with ACT or SAT scores)
  - Literary Studies
  - World History
- Exploration courses (12 credit hours) – Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical/Natural World
  - Arts and Humanities
  - Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - Natural and Physical Science (2 courses in different disciplines – one has to be with a lab)
- Connections (9 credit hours) – Personal and Social Responsibility
  - Social and Cultural
  - Local to Global
  - Systems
  - 3 courses from different disciplines at 200+ level; should complete 21 or have junior status before enrolling, as content builds on Exploration and Foundation courses

## Parameters of General Education Reform

There are several parameters we have to consider in reforming our General Education curriculum: SCHEV Core Competencies, SACSCOC standards relating to General Education, and Longwood's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

### A. SCHEV Core Competencies

The State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) requires all institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth to ensure their students acquire six core competencies. These competencies were first articulated by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education in 1999 (<http://www.longwood.edu/assessment/17540.htm>). Faculty teams, supported by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (OAIR), are in charge of assessing these competencies using a variety of measures and methods. Currently, the SCHEV Core Competencies are not integrated into the General Education program.

Longwood's identified competencies are:

Quantitative Reasoning Competency (QRC)

Written Communication Competency (WCC)

Scientific Reasoning Competency (SRC)

Critical Thinking Competency (CTC)

Oral Communication Competency (OCC)

Information Literacy Competency (ILC)

### B. SACSCOC Standards relating to General Education

**Core Requirement 2.7.3** states that "the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale" (*SACS-COC Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for 2-Quality Enhancement*, pp. 20-21, <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Resource%20Manual.pdf>). SACS requires that a minimum of 30 semester hours be devoted to the general education component. The standard reads, "These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession."

SACS does allow for interdisciplinary courses to be included in the general education program, but "courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication, and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure

humanities courses. Therefore, for purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the one course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement in CR 2.7.3. (Interpretation adopted by the Executive Council February 2010)”

Moreover, institutions must have a rationale and procedure for including selected courses in its general education program. Institutions must designate general education courses clearly in its publications and also create clear pathways for the students to select general education courses as described in its publications.

**Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1** states that “the institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (General education competencies)” (SACSCOC *Resource Manual*, pp. 65-66). The rationale for the standard explains that “the institution will define specifically which competencies are appropriate to the goals of its general education program and consistent with principles of good practice. The institution is responsible for identifying measures to determine the extent to which students have attained those competencies during their course of study as well as the extent to which students have actually attained those competencies.” This standard does not require that a specific course address each competency, and “there is no requirement regarding when the institution must determine student attainment of competencies.” In addressing the standard, institutions have to define how they determine that the competencies are “college-level.”

### **C. R.E.A.L. Inquiry: Longwood’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)**

According to Longwood’s website, “R.E.A.L. Inquiry uses the development of research skills and the practice of research as a vehicle for improving students' critical thinking, information literacy, and communication skills” (<http://longwood.edu/realinquiry/index.html>). There are three goals:

Goal 1: To improve students’ learning by promoting their discovery of new knowledge through research.

Goal 2: To improve students’ learning by facilitating student-faculty collaboration in research.

Goal 3: To improve students’ learning by advancing an understanding of the importance of disseminating the results of research in academic and civic communities.

In order to implement Goal 1, Action 1.1. calls for the identification or development of courses to be enhanced for research skills development and prepare faculty through development grants and workshops to offer these courses. Strategy 1.1.1. emphasizes “academic inquiry skills development in English 150”; Strategy 1.1.2 calls for “identifying, enhancing, and/or developing s series of twelve disciplinary research-focused courses that focus on discipline-specific research and academic skills development”; and Strategy 1.1.3 will use the “upper-level, QEP-associated disciplinary courses designated as 490, 498, 499, and CHEM/PHYS 496 as a means of enabling top-tier undergraduate scholars to participate in and produce new contributions within their disciplines” (R.E.A.L. Inquiry Report, February 2013, pp. 35-37 <http://longwood.edu/realinquiry/report.htm>).

Strategy 1.1.1 involves General Education Goal 2: ENGL 150. The following is excerpted from the R.E.A.L. Inquiry Report:

“English 150 is a course required as part of the general education program and is the introduction to writing in the academy for many, though not all, incoming undergraduates. The number of students taking English 150 each semester allows Longwood to reach a targeted percentage of its students as they begin their academic career.

“In Year 0 (2013–14), a pilot course will run to improve research and academic inquiry enhancements to English 150 to fit within the R.E.A.L. Inquiry framework. For example, students will be introduced to the research methods, evidentiary standards, and argumentative techniques of five different disciplines (broadly defined): the natural sciences, business and economics, the social sciences (including education and religious studies), history, and literature. In each unit, students will study the academic conventions and methodology of the discipline and read examples of writing in the discipline. At the end of each unit, each student will write and present a brief reflection summing up the methods of research, types of evidence, and argumentative strategies accepted in this discipline. Longwood will compensate the pilot course faculty member with a \$3,500 stipend to enhance and teach his/her English150 sections and the Composition Coordinator \$3,500 yearly to oversee the introduction of the enhancement and the continued growth of QEP enhancements to the freshmen composition curriculum.

“In Year 1 (2014–15), Longwood will provide a stipend to three faculty members to make R.E.A.L. Inquiry-associated research and inquiry enhancements to three English 150 sections. Again, as an incentive to generate faculty participation, we will offer the selected faculty members a \$3,500 stipend to enhance their sections to include the aforementioned methodologies of academic research and inquiry in various disciplines.

“In Years 2–5 (2015–19), in consultation with the Composition Coordinator and based on the results of the pilot and three enhanced sections, selected enhancements will be made to the English 150 course curriculum in order to accommodate QEP expansion at this introductory level.”

Strategy 1.1.3 involves General Education Goal 14, which is the internship or directed study goal. Most majors require an internship or directed study and are therefore “exempt” from this goal. The following is an excerpt from the R.E.A.L. Inquiry report describing the strategy:

“Based on the increased exposure to research/academic inquiry in English 150 and disciplinary research-focused courses, we anticipate a growth in the number of students seeking to participate in an advanced research and/or academic inquiry experience within their discipline or in an interdisciplinary manner. It should be noted that courses designated as 490, 498, 499, and Longwood University CHEM/PHYS 496 satisfy Longwood University’s General Education Goal 14: The application of knowledge and skills developed in the student’s course of study through completion of an internship, guided field experience, or directed research.

“Beginning during Year 0 (2013–14), and continuing throughout the QEP implementation, regular announcements will be made to the faculty regarding the option of participating in R.E.A.L. Inquiry on a one-on-one basis with students via courses designated 490, 498, and/or 499.

“During Years 1–5 (2014–19), faculty members will be invited to submit an application. The offering of the enhanced disciplinary courses designated as 490, 498, and/or 499 by the selected faculty members will begin in Year 2. Expanding on the QEP-associated 490, 498, and/or 499 course offerings will be the primary goal during Years 3–5. (Please refer to Section VII, Timeline.)

“R.E.A.L. Inquiry-associated 490, 498, and/or 499 disciplinary courses will be further developed as directed research/academic inquiry courses. Individual course syllabi will be required and approved by the Director of QEP to ensure that they align with QEP student outcomes. The Director of QEP will work with the selected faculty members to ensure the assessment of these courses is formalized. Faculty will identify the methodologies and outcomes used in the courses to ensure alignment with QEP student outcomes. Tracking the assessment figures and recording student development over a series of years (during the QEP implementation and evaluation) will be coordinated by the director.”

## Tentative Process and Timetable for Reform

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>People</b>
Summer 2014	Write white paper summarizing research of ACCC Creation of faculty workshop for August	Sharon Emerson-Stonnell Larissa Fergeson
Fall 2014	August faculty workshop  Four lunches with faculty	Sharon Emerson-Stonnell Larissa Fergeson
August 2014 – April 2015	Creation of Learning Outcomes and Goals	Academic Core Curriculum Committee
Spring 2015	Four lunches with faculty to discuss structure	Sharon Emerson-Stonnell Larissa Fergeson
March 2015	Presentation of Options in General Faculty meeting	Academic Core Curriculum Committee
Summer 2015	Send team to AACU Institute on General Education and Assessment  Designing program and assessment structure  Faculty Development Institute	Send five member team  Academic Core Curriculum Committee  To be determined
August 2015 – April 2016	Course creation by faculty and reviewed by Academic Core Curriculum Committee  Possible pilots in spring 2016	Faculty members Academic Core Curriculum Committee
Summer 2016	Course development	Faculty members
August 2016- April 2017	Courses piloted in fall 2016 Program and courses adopted in April 2016 by EPC	Faculty members Academic Core Curriculum Committee
2017-2018	General Education implemented	