

MavEd Framework

UNO's General Education Program

Approved Dec, 2024

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I. Executive Summary

The goal of UNO's new proposed general education curriculum is to develop students with an ability to exercise critical thinking skills and integrate disparate areas of knowledge in contexts of uncertainty. We aim to do so through a coherent, relevant, and integrated curriculum emphasizing core transferable skills and content-specific learning/skills essential for students' personal, civic, and professional futures.

To reach this point of proposing a new general education program, UNO's General Education Committee has reviewed literature, examined models in place across the country, collected input from multiple stakeholders along the way, and crafted a new model. The engagement with campus constituencies has been extensive both with respect to examining the existing model, as well as with regards to the design of the new model, including conversations, surveys, focus groups, and other forms of interaction. Great effort was made throughout this two-year process to address input, questions and concerns in a thoughtful manner.

As a result, several key shortcomings of the current general education program have been identified, including the following:

- The General Education curriculum currently lacks direction and outcomes for key skill areas such as critical thinking, information literacy, data literacy, and integrative learning. These skills have been identified repeatedly as critical for post-graduation success — they are demanded by employers, are transferrable across situations, increase the student's adaptability, and are robust to changes in the environment.
- Although some UNO students report regular exposure to engagement in integrative and reflective learning (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE] results), expanded opportunities are needed to permit our students to be consistently and reliably involved with these meaningful high-impact practices.
- UNO's retention and graduation rates are lower than expected (per a recent study by the Urban Institute and NY Times, UNO's graduation rate is about 12% lower than it 'should' be). Retention challenges are greatest between the first and second years, when students are primarily enrolled in general education courses.

The consensus is that UNO's current approach to general education is not consistently achieving the stated goal, with the result that students often question the value of their General Education courses.

The General Education model proposed herein is designed to address the challenges outlined above. This new model reinforces fundamental skills, integrates knowledge across disciplines, supports individual and social responsibility, and centers classes on transferable abilities such as critical thinking — all while maintaining a strong, rigorous involvement with traditional academic disciplines. Specifically, the new approach/curriculum includes the following changes and innovations:

Enhanced Faculty Support

- Emphasizes greatly expanded opportunities and support for faculty involvement in professional development, curriculum enhancement efforts, and culture/climate-building initiatives. This includes generous financial support from the Weitz Innovation Fund. These funds will reinforce efforts that aim to support development of impactful courses and a vibrant faculty community that will establish UNO as a leader in delivering innovative general education in alignment with UNO's urban metropolitan mission (see pages 9–10).

Course/Curriculum Changes

- Establishes both updated content-specific outcomes, as well as new core transferable skills outcomes (critical thinking & information literacy, integrated learning, intercultural awareness) across all General Education courses (see pages 6-7).
- Includes a new fundamental skill — that of Data Literacy (see page 6).
- Includes a new category of courses related to Individual and Social Responsibility (see page 7).
- Includes reinforcement of fundamental academic skills in all General Education courses (see pages 8, 12).
- Ensures General Education courses align with discipline-based methods, enduring questions, and specific breadth of knowledge outcomes through involvement of content/discipline experts to be appointed by the Faculty Senate (see page 11).
- Reduces and clarifies credit hour requirements to provide greater parity with other University of Nebraska campus requirements, and allow students greater flexibility with respect to elective courses (see pages 6–7).

Governance Updates

- Incorporates governance changes to include:
 - A representative from the Faculty Senate as a non-voting member on the Gen Ed Committee (see page 11).
 - Formal review and input about course approval from Faculty Senate-appointed disciplinary experts (see page 11).
 - Incorporation of a 5-year recertification process for all general education courses where the General Education Committee, in partnership with content area experts, will review assessment data, student artifacts, and other relevant information to determine the suitability of courses for continued inclusion in the general education curriculum (see page 15).

This new and innovative approach to UNO's General Education will help students see general education courses as a coherent curriculum instead of independent and disconnected classes they simply need to complete to graduate. Collectively these changes will help students experience an improved, meaningful, rigorous, and cohesive general education curriculum.

II. Introduction

The purpose of UNO's general education program is to provide a deliberate introduction to the intellectual life of our metropolitan university, empowering individuals to become active, informed, and compassionate students, citizens, and professionals.

UNO's General Education reform will entail both structural changes to curriculum and cultural changes in how faculty approach teaching and learning in these courses. The structural changes are the foundation upon which a more coherent, relevant, and integrated curriculum can grow — a curriculum that must be intentionally nurtured by a vibrant, engaged, and connected general education faculty culture. UNO has a generational opportunity to transform the way that students experience general education and the way we support faculty teaching these courses. The changes outlined in this proposal will enable us to realize the full potential of a more robust general education program.

The promise of general education lies in its potential to launch students on a path of lifelong learning while fostering the skills and dispositions necessary for integrating disparate areas of knowledge in contexts of uncertainty. These are the same broad skills valued in our communities and places of work. [In a survey conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#), employers identified communication skills, critical thinking, problem solving skills, applying skills to real world settings, the ability to analyze and interpret data, and ethical judgement and reasoning as among the most important skills and abilities for workplace success. Throughout the survey results, the related themes of adaptability, problem solving, and critical thinking were identified as important in various ways. Similarly, the ability to work with data or information was identified as important, as were communication and analytical/quantitative skills. Employers also expressed a desire for graduates to have a range of aptitudes and mindsets, indicating that they valued a well-rounded education and wanted graduates who were adaptable or could “think for themselves.”

Although respondents to the AAC&U survey were less likely to use terms such as “liberal education,” many of the outcomes identified in the survey are the product of such an education. This is not an unexpected result, as [more than two-thirds of college graduates find themselves working in jobs unrelated to their undergraduate major](#). Thus, graduates must have a set of foundational skills applicable to all professional roles (e.g., communication skills, analytical skills, ability to work with information or data), and they also must be able to think critically, be adaptable, and have a broad understanding that can be applied in new contexts.

General education must not only equip students with broad transferable skills, but it must do so in ways that are meaningful, engaging, and that have a clear purpose. Student surveys and campus feedback suggest this is not always achieved consistently. According to the most recent NSSE results, slightly more than half of first-year UNO students reported they regularly had the opportunity to engage in integrative and reflective learning practices. Though a solid foundation upon which to build exists at UNO, there remain opportunities to ensure more students are exposed to these high-impact practices in accordance with UNO's Pillar to educate all learners. At the same time, nearly half of first-time freshmen currently do not finish their degree within six years. Unfortunately, the decline in retention is largest between freshman and sophomore years — precisely when students are taking general education courses. These findings and observations present an opportunity for our campus to reimagine general education in ways that are relevant, coherent, and integrated, while capitalizing on existing best practices in general education courses here and elsewhere.

The proposed curriculum addresses these challenges by creating a cohesive curriculum that reinforces core skills, integrates knowledge across disciplines, provides multidisciplinary knowledge to all students, and centers all classes on transferable abilities such as critical thinking and information literacy. It equips students across programs with cognitive skills and perspectives that align with the expectations of engaged citizenship and the needs of employers. This proposed curriculum meets the needs of employers by providing students with in-demand skills regardless of their major — thereby supporting a vibrant economy sought by community and state leaders. It meets the needs of students by emphasizing that all general education classes are part of a broader program with relevance, applicability, and goals beyond the topics of the individual courses. Students see common connections and requirements as they navigate the curriculum, and the practical, transferable skills they learn are made obvious to them at every stage in the curriculum. By showing relevance to students, employers, and other stakeholders, we anticipate this curriculum will support workforce development, address the university's goals of increasing retention rates and degree completion, and serve as a beacon of excitement, demonstrating to students that UNO is *the best* place to complete their General Education requirements.

The proposed general education curriculum includes outcomes that focus on two broad areas: (a) transferable learning outcomes that apply to all courses across the general education curriculum, and (b) content-specific outcomes.

- Transferable outcomes include integrative learning, critical thinking and information literacy, and intercultural awareness. These abilities (a) are demanded by employers, (b) are transferable across disciplines, (c) increase the adaptability of the student, and (d) are robust to changes in the external environment (e.g., A.I.).
- Content-specific outcomes include fundamental skills, breadth (e.g., social sciences, humanities), and a focus on individual and social responsibility (e.g., cultural knowledge and civic knowledge and engagement).
- The fundamental skills classes — (a) writing, (b) non-written communication, (c) quantitative literacy, and (d) data literacy — provide foundational skills that can be applied to nearly any job and are applicable to multiple aspects of adult life.
- Breadth courses are centered on the *methodology* of a given area (e.g., social sciences, humanities) while simultaneously reinforcing skills from at least one fundamental skills area (e.g., writing).
- Courses aligned with individual and social responsibility outcomes provide opportunities for students to explore and develop a deeper understanding of their roles as responsible individuals and engaged members of society, while also simultaneously reinforcing skills from at least one fundamental skills area (e.g., oral communication).

A final key feature of this curriculum is transparency for students. Before enrolling in courses, students will know exactly what skills and abilities each class aims to reinforce and how these will be developed. Integrated assignments will not only reinforce and connect knowledge but should clearly demonstrate how different general education classes are interconnected. Finally, there will be deliberate efforts to highlight and communicate how the abilities students gain through the curriculum align with the demands of the modern workforce and everyday life.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

The goal of UNO's general education curriculum is to develop students with an ability to exercise critical thinking skills and integrate seemingly disparate areas of knowledge in contexts of uncertainty. UNO aims to do this by creating a more relevant, coherent, and integrated general education curriculum that emphasizes the development of intellectual and practical skills, exposure to diverse disciplinary perspectives, cultivation of individual and social responsibility, and incorporation of research-backed high-impact practices that facilitate integrative thinking and learning across disciplines. The following proposed learning outcomes align with the overarching goal of a revised general education curriculum.

A. Transferable Learning Outcomes

These represent the core outcomes of general education and should be embedded in every course.

1. **Integrative learning.** Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge and skills from different disciplines and/or experiences, transfer knowledge to personal, professional, or other real world contexts, and communicate insights through reflective and adaptive thinking.
2. **Critical thinking and information literacy.** Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills and information literacy by effectively locating, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing credible information from a variety of sources to make reasoned judgments and solve complex problems.
3. **Intercultural Awareness.** Students will demonstrate awareness of cultural differences and the ability to analyze the significance of various cultural perspectives, while developing skills needed to navigate complex intercultural contexts.

B. Content-Specific Learning Outcomes

These represent distinctive course requirements and outcomes that students must complete.

Fundamental Skills

4. **Writing (6 credits).** Students will develop and express ideas in writing in various genres and styles that demonstrate consideration of audience and purpose, content, sources and evidence, and syntax and mechanics.
5. **Oral communication (3 credits).** Students will prepare and deliver purposeful presentations designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
6. **Quantitative literacy (3 credits).** Students will use numerical data to solve problems from a wide array of authentic contexts, justify conclusions supported by quantitative evidence, and communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).
7. **Data literacy (3 credits).** Students will learn to evaluate data sources, extract data from multiple sources, clean and transform these data for analysis, and perform basic analysis such as elementary statistics or visualization to uncover valuable insights through data and make data-informed decisions. Students will

follow best practices to build robust data pipelines that can be used to answer questions across various fields including the sciences, business, and fields concerning societal issues¹².

Breadth of Knowledge

8. **Social science (3 credits).** Students will explore human society and social relationships through systematic study and analysis by applying scientific methods and theories to understand various aspects of human behavior, institutions, cultures, and interactions within societal contexts.
9. **Humanities (3 credits).** Students will examine the cultural, historical, and philosophical aspects of human society through critical analysis and interpretation and focus on the exploration of human creativity, values, beliefs, and expressions across different civilizations and time periods.
10. **Natural and physical science (4 credits).** Students will investigate the physical and natural world through systematic observation, experimentation, and analysis, applying scientific methods and principles to demonstrate understanding of natural phenomena, processes, and laws governing the universe. Students must complete a lab as part of this requirement.
11. **Arts (3 credits).** Students will explore creative expression, aesthetics, and artistic practices across various disciplines with a focus on cultivating skills, knowledge, and appreciation for artistic forms, techniques, and traditions.

Individual and Social Responsibility³

12. **Cultural knowledge (3 credits).** Students will demonstrate an understanding of varied cultural perspectives and traditions, and critically analyze how culture creates and transforms individual experiences and social relations. Students will engage in dialogue across differences, fostering an understanding of how approaching diversity with respect and empathy can promote human dignity. Courses should explore how various systems, laws, and practices—both historical and contemporary—can affect individuals and communities in meaningful ways.
13. **Civic knowledge and engagement (3 credits).** Students will demonstrate an understanding of issues related to citizenship, community involvement, and ethical responsibility, by critically analyzing diverse civic, governmental, and social systems and institutions.

¹ This requirement will be fully phased in as more courses are developed to satisfy the requirement. Until Fall 2028, students can satisfy this requirement with an approved data literacy course, or any approved natural or social science general education course.

² Several campus units possess expertise in data literacy. These units encompass, *but are not limited to*, those involved in previous data literacy programs (from at least four colleges) or those who have taught data analytics courses. Furthermore, data literacy learning objectives can be taught using a diverse range of data. For instance, one could envision developing a course that meets these objectives while utilizing data related to personal finance, geography, population demographics (e.g., political, sociological, economic, biomedical), and various other fields.

³ Courses from across the sciences, humanities, and arts are envisioned to satisfy these requirements.

IV. Curricular Requirements

Graduates of the University of Nebraska at Omaha will satisfy the requirements of their majors, their colleges, and the general education program.

1. General education courses are credit-bearing curricular offerings.
2. Any course approved to satisfy a general education learning outcome will satisfy the requirement in all colleges.
3. Courses may be approved to address a maximum of two general education outcomes (8–13).
4. If a course addresses two general education outcomes, the student decides which one of the two outcomes the course will satisfy in the student's program; a single course in a student's program of study may satisfy only one general education outcome.
5. All approved general education courses must satisfy:
 - a) One of the relevant content-specific outcomes (4–13)
 - b) Each of the transferable outcomes (1–3).
6. Courses seeking to fulfill breadth of knowledge outcomes (8–11), or Individual and Social Responsibility Outcomes (12–13) must also reinforce at least one fundamental skill. Courses satisfying Humanities should reinforce writing, courses satisfying Arts should reinforce communication (writing and/or oral communication), Natural & Physical Science should reinforce quantitative or data literacy, and Social Science should reinforce quantitative, data literacy, or writing.
7. General education courses must be offered regularly (Note: courses should be offered at least once every two years, though exceptions can be made if necessary for staffing issues, etc.)
8. In most cases, courses will not have prerequisites beyond the fundamental academic skills requirements.
9. Courses fulfilling general education learning outcomes may not have a GPA requirement for enrollment that is higher than the university minimum requirement for enrollment.
10. Not including the Fundamental Skill requirements, a student may not take more than 2 courses with the same department/discipline prefix in their General Education program. Lecture/lab combinations from a single department that must be taken as co-requisites count as one course for this rule.
11. Students must earn a grade of C- or better in general education courses to be counted toward the degree. If a course is being counted in general education and also is part of a student's major, the major (program, department, school, college) may require a higher standard of performance than C- in order for the course to be counted in the major. This higher standard does not supersede the standard for counting as a general education course. This may mean that a student must retake a course to meet the higher performance standard for the course to be counted in the major.

V. Populating the New Curriculum

A. Timelines for Implementation

The new set of requirements, along with the migration of existing courses (see item B below) to the new requirements, will be included in the 2025–2026 undergraduate catalog. Students entering in Fall 2025 will be under the new curriculum, while existing students will be able to choose the catalog year most advantageous to their academic pursuits.

B. Migration of Existing Curriculum to New Requirements

All existing courses will be automatically transitioned to the new curricular requirements prior to the start of the fall semester 2025. Each course will be permitted to satisfy a maximum of two general education curricular requirements (outcomes 8–13). Each college will be provided with a list of its existing general education courses, sorted according to the recommended new requirements. Colleges will provide feedback to the General Education Committee and identify the final categorization for their courses by January 2025. Units will finalize updates in the undergraduate catalog by March 2025.

C. Approval/Reapproval of General Education Courses

All existing general education courses, and any new courses, must be approved/reapproved by the General Education Committee within three years from implementation of the new curriculum to ensure alignment with the new general education requirements (Section IV) outlined in this document. The process for requesting approval/recertification, and the standards for granting such requests, are outlined in Section VI, Governance and Assessment.

D. Transforming General Education Culture and Improving Faculty Support

The need for reform is both structural and cultural. The structural components include curricular requirements, outcomes, assessment processes, course approval processes, etc. This is essential, but it will ultimately be UNO's faculty and staff who help make the students' general education experience vibrant, coherent, and transformative. Therefore, building new mechanisms to more consistently engage faculty and staff, build partnerships, and equip instructors with tools and resources is essential. Multiple initiatives are planned to support this cultural change. Weitz funding has already been committed to support these initiatives, and additional grant opportunities and other resources are being explored.

1. **Initiative 1 – Course Redesign Seminar.** An 8-week workshop offered each fall, spring, and summer featuring a combination of asynchronous Canvas content and in-person work with weekly checkpoints. The workshop will comprehensively assist faculty with meeting the revised general education structural requirements emphasizing integrative learning, critical thinking, and diverse perspectives
2. **Initiative 2 – General education onboarding.** Faculty not directly involved in the course redesign workshop will also need support to align their teaching practices with the expectations of new curricular requirements. The aim of this initiative is to provide comprehensive guidance to prepare faculty to deliver high quality, engaging, and effective instruction in their general education courses. Additionally, participants will learn about general education assessment expectations and their responsibilities in the process. Participants will meet in small groups for an hour, four times over a semester.

3. **Initiative 3 – Professional Learning Community.** A general education Professional Learning Community will be established to form a supportive foundation and sustainable mechanism for faculty and staff to engage in collaborative conversations about general education curriculum and pedagogy. It will also provide a vehicle to recognize outstanding teaching, staff support, and innovation within the general education program.
4. **Initiative 4 – Pathway Program.** The aim of this initiative is to explore and invest in general education innovation, including a “pathway” program designed to highlight the liberal arts and to create clear pathways that more robustly train students to apply a broad set of skills. These pathway options will help students 1) better market their skillsets to employers, and 2) adapt to an ever-changing economic and social landscape. Faculty will have the option to incorporate community engaged teaching to strengthen this applied learning. The general education curriculum already recognizes the importance of a well-rounded education for training our future workforce; however, it can be more effectively leveraged to create clearer pathways that merge STEM and professional programs with a more robust liberal arts background.

VI. Governance and Assessment

A. General Education Committee

1. **Membership.** The General Education Committee is composed of two representatives (one primary and one alternate) from each of UNO's six academic colleges. Representatives will be selected in accordance with the governing procedures, traditions, or special rules of their home colleges. Additional faculty or staff from such areas as academic affairs, advising, the library, and the registrar's office may be part of the committee and participate in deliberations but will not have a vote. A new standing non-voting representative from the Faculty Senate will also be added to the General Education Committee.
2. **Charge.** The university General Education Committee is responsible for (a) establishing the definition, criteria, and learning outcomes for each university general education area; (b) reviewing syllabi and approving courses used to satisfy university general education requirements; and (c) facilitating ongoing review, assessment, and modification of the university general education curriculum.
3. **Committee responsibilities.** To effectively carry out the committee's charge and ensure course alignment with the requirements and expectations of the general education curriculum, committee representatives will: (a) solicit feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g., content area subcommittees, college curriculum committees, department chairs of general education content areas) regarding the appropriateness of courses proposed for the general education curriculum and their alignment with requirements, outcomes, and expectations; (b) develop forms, processes, and guidelines that facilitate, track, and record feedback from campus stakeholders; and (c) provide updates to colleges about general education courses, initiatives, or assessment.

B. Content Area Subcommittees

1. **Membership.** Content area subcommittees will be established for each of the general education outcomes (8–13) and be composed of faculty who represent the relevant area (Humanities, Social Science, Arts, Natural Science). Representatives will be identified through consultation between the Faculty Senate and the General Education Committee.
2. **Charge.** Content area subcommittees will be responsible for reviewing courses proposed for the relevant general education content area to ensure that courses (a) are aligned with the enduring questions of the content area; (b) are aligned with the core methods of the content area; and (c) sufficiently meet the relevant general education outcomes, including transferable outcomes (1-3). AAC&U resources can be leveraged to support evaluation of transferable skills.
3. **Subcommittee responsibilities.** To effectively carry out their charge, the subcommittees will: (a) meet at least monthly to ensure prompt recommendations and feedback of submitted courses to the General Education Committee; (b) make course approval recommendations and provide feedback to the General Education Committee; (c) provide updates to Gen Ed Committee periodically.

C. Requests for General Education Course Certification/Approval

1. **Request initiation.** Requests for certification/approval must be initiated by the department/unit that offers the course using the Course Inventory Management (CIM) system. Courses should align with general education outcomes and should be designed with consideration given to the general student who

may take no additional courses from a particular discipline. Courses will be logged and disseminated to the relevant content area subcommittee for consideration prior to consideration by the General Education Committee.

2. **Course proposal and approval form.** A new general education course proposal and approval/certification request form must accompany all requests for certification (see example included in appendix). Proposals will include:

- a) **Course Identifiers.** Course prefix, number, name, description
- b) **Enduring Question.** Faculty should identify an enduring question, or questions, as part of the course description and explain how the question(s) will be addressed throughout the course. Examples might include, but are not limited to (1) how death and dying are regarded in societies around the world, (2) how do we balance personal freedom with the common good, (3) how does globalization influence social life and cultural identities, etc.

- c) **Content Area and Justification.** Proposals must identify which content-specific general education outcome the course will satisfy (e.g. social science, cultural knowledge), identifying how the course aligns with the fundamental concepts and methods of the area.

- d) **Fundamental Skill Reinforcement area.** Proposals must identify how the course will reinforce the specified fundamental skill and explain the nature and scope of this reinforcement. This should include information about the nature of assignments and how the skill will be reinforced, what percentage of the course is devoted to reinforcement of the skill, and/or the percentage of course grade that results from evaluation of the skill. At minimum, courses must be able to demonstrate how they will deliberately and intentionally integrate the fundamental skill in ways that promote continuous feedback, practice, and application.

Note On Enduring Questions:

These should be thought provoking questions that drive inquiry within a specific area of knowledge. These are often timeless, open-ended, and challenging questions that encourage students to think critically, explore multiple perspectives, and engage in deep analysis.

- (1) **Written Communication.** Students will focus on writing skills through an iterative process that includes drafting, receiving feedback, and revising their work. This process will constitute a significant portion of their overall effort and grade in the course, emphasizing the importance of continuous development and refinement in written communication.
- (2) **Oral Communication.** Courses must include a minimum of two structured speaking assignments such as oral presentations, debates, or group projects with speaking components in which the speaking components represent significant effort and point total. Students must be given feedback and instruction related to the presentation of material. Mechanisms to ensure students reflect on their engagement with the fundamental skill must be included in the course.
- (3) **Quantitative Literacy.** Courses must include at least three graded assignments representing a meaningful portion of the course grade that apply math concepts, interpreting data, or solving quantitative problems. Mechanisms to ensure students reflect on their engagement with the fundamental skill must be included in the course.
- (4) **Data Literacy.** Courses must include a variety of assignments that individually or collectively represent significant effort and point total that emphasize data management (collecting, organizing, managing data), data visualization, and data interpretation. Students should use one

or more data management visualization tools (e.g. Tableau, Excel, Google data studio, geographic information systems).

- e) **Transferable Outcomes.** Emphasis on transferable outcomes should constitute a meaningful portion of the course as reflected by grades and/or percentage of class time/assignments.
 - (1) **Integrative Learning.** Proposals must indicate what broad approaches and activities will be included in the course to provide students with opportunities to integrate knowledge and reflect on their learning.
 - (2) **Critical thinking & information literacy.** Proposals must indicate how the course will ensure students meaningfully and consistently demonstrate critical thinking and information literacy skills.
 - (3) **Intercultural awareness.** Proposals must demonstrate how the course will align with the intercultural awareness learning outcome.
- f) **Assessment.** Course proposals must indicate how student learning will be assessed, including the types of assignment(s) that will be used for assessment, at what point(s) during the course student learning will be assessed, and how the assignment(s) will be weighted in terms of both time and grade.

Note On Transferable Outcomes and Signature Assignments:

*There are many ways to address and assess transferable outcomes. One powerful and impactful way, as explained by the AAC&U, is to make use of **signature assignments**. A signature assignment is a substantial project that illustrates something essential about course content while providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate transferrable outcomes (1–3). A signature assignment also requires significant and intentional reflective elements to help students identify and articulate relationships between the course content, broader ideas, and their sense of community.*

D. General Education Assessment and Evaluation

1. Overview

- a) **Continuous assessment.** Courses satisfying general education outcomes must provide evidence of continuous assessment. Continuous is defined for this purpose as assessment of students during every semester in which the course is offered. Failure to provide evidence of continuous assessment may result in the course being removed from the general education curriculum. Units must also be prepared upon request by the General Education Committee to provide samples of student work that demonstrate alignment with the discipline-aligned outcomes.
- b) **Transferable Outcomes.** All courses must assess transferable student learning outcomes (1–3) using a common rubric derived from AAC&U VALUE rubrics. This rubric will be embedded in Canvas and available for download into individual courses. Faculty should consider using a signature assignment to assess student learning of these outcomes. A signature assignment is a substantial project that illustrates something essential about course content while providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate transferrable outcomes (1–3). A signature assignment also requires significant and intentional reflective elements to help students identify and articulate relationships between the course content, broader ideas, and their sense of community and self.

- c) **Other Student Learning Outcomes.** Content-specific student learning outcomes (4–13) can be assessed in a manner determined by academic units. The relevant assessment information must be submitted when courses are recertified/reapproved in accordance with section 'F' below.
- d) **Data Analysis and Feedback.** Continuous program improvement involves regular and systematic data collection and analysis. In alignment with course recertification cycles (see below), the General Education Committee, in partnership with content area experts, will review assessment data, student artifacts, and other relevant information to determine the suitability of courses for continued inclusion in the general education curriculum. Courses that fulfill a general education outcome must be prepared to provide examples of assessment measures/tools and student artifacts that are used to evaluate student competence in the relevant general education outcome area.

2. Responsibilities

a) Instructors of general education courses:

- (1) Ensure the course reflects the content, skills, and approach outlined in the general education course proposal.
- (2) Assess students' ability to demonstrate relevant general education student learning outcomes using AAC&U rubric embedded in the Canvas LMS.

b) Departments hosting general education courses:

- (1) Review and aggregate assessments across course sections and semesters.
- (2) Draft a summary assessment that addresses: (a) general trends in the kinds of assignments used to assess student achievement of general education outcomes, (b) general trends in achieving outcomes of integrative learning, and (c) potential modifications that might improve student learning.
- (3) Are prepared to provide samples of student work if requested to aid in overall assessment of the general education curriculum.

c) General Education Committee:

- (1) Collect and review assessment summaries provided by the units.
- (2) Develop and communicate a standard assessment cycle for the general education curriculum.
- (3) Develop forms, processes, and guidelines that facilitate general education program assessment.
- (4) Prepare an annual report on the general education program.
- (5) Report regularly to the University's Academic Assessment Committee.

d) Content Area Experts:

- (1) Collect and review assessment summaries provided by the units.
- (2) Identify best practices and areas of needed improvement.
- (3) Recommend courses for continued inclusion as part of the general education curriculum.

E. Two-Year Program Evaluation

- 1. Two years after implementation of the general education proposal, the General Education Committee will evaluate initial campus satisfaction and effectiveness. Potential approaches could include surveys of campus stakeholders, focus groups, feedback from content area subcommittees, and input from campus leaders. Additionally, metrics such as GPA trends, enrollment trends, course completion rates, and retention data may be analyzed.

F. Recertification/Reapproval of General Education Courses

1. **Submission of course for recertification/reapproval.** Following initial approval, all general education courses will need to be recertified/reapproved after a period of five years. If electing to continue with a course in the general education curriculum, the hosting unit will be asked to identify:
 - a) What assessment data have revealed about how the course helps students achieve the designated learning outcome(s).
 - b) How those data have been used to modify the course.
 - c) Any changes in the course since certification was obtained.
 - d) Response to any indirect assessment measures related to the student experience such as student surveys, advisor feedback, etc.
2. **Review.** The General Education Committee, content area experts, and other campus stakeholders will review assessment data, student and faculty feedback, and input from campus stakeholders to determine whether to recertify a course.

Appendix A. General Education Course Proposal/Approval Request Form

This form must be submitted to the General Education Committee in addition to advancing the required information in the Course Information Management (CIM) System.

A. Course Information

1. **Course Prefix and Number:**
 2. **Course Name:**
 3. **Course Description:**
 4. **College Curriculum Committee Endorsement/Recommendation:**
-

B. Area of Inquiry, Enduring Questions, and Justification

1. **Identify General Education Content Area** (e.g., Social Science, Humanities, Cultural Knowledge):
 2. **Identify enduring questions of the course**
 3. **Justification:**
 - Explain how the course aligns with the fundamental concepts, methods, and enduring questions of the identified content area.
 - Provide examples of course content that supports this alignment.
-

C. Reinforcement Area

1. **Fundamental Skill Reinforced** (e.g., Writing, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Data Literacy):
2. **Nature and Scope of Reinforcement:**
 - Explain the nature and scope of fundamental skill reinforcement throughout the course.
 - Detail the percentage/weight of the course dedicated to the instruction and reinforcement of this skill.

D. Integrative Learning

1. Approaches and Activities:

- Describe the approaches and activities that will provide students with opportunities to integrate knowledge from other courses, disciplines, and experiences while reflecting on their learning.
 - Detail the percentage/weight of the course dedicated to the instruction and reinforcement of this skill.
-

E. Critical Thinking & Information Literacy

1. Approaches and Activities:

- Describe how the course will ensure students meaningfully and consistently demonstrate critical thinking and information literacy.
 - Provide examples of assignments, projects, or activities designed to develop these skills.
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F. Intercultural Awareness

1. Approaches and Activities:

- Proposals must demonstrate how the course will align with the intercultural awareness learning outcome
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G. Assessment

1. Explain How Core General Education Student Learning Outcomes Will Be Assessed:

- All courses must assess transferable student learning outcomes (1–3) using a common rubric derived from Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics. This rubric will be embedded in Canvas and available for download into individual courses. Faculty should consider using a signature assignment to assess student learning of these outcomes. Describe the assignments that will be used for assessing all general education outcomes and explain at what points in the course such assignments will be administered.

Appendix B. Example General Education Course Proposal/Approval Request

Following is a completed general education course proposal/approval request, using a social science course as an example.

A. Course Information

1. **Course Prefix and Number:** Econ 2200
2. **Course Name:** From Netflix to Your Next Job: Decoding Economic Decisions for a more Prosperous Life and Career
3. **Course Description:** This course isn't just about dusty old theories — it's about unlocking the scientific approach to studying decisions (otherwise known as economics)!
4. **College Curriculum Committee Endorsement/Recommendation:**

B. Content Area, Enduring Question(s), and Justification

1. **Identify General Education Area of Inquiry:** Social Science
2. **Justification:** All social science courses are animated by the broad question of *How do social sciences use the scientific method to study human behavior?* We believe that all graduates at UNO should have some level of scientific literacy. The way we achieve this is through the natural and social science requirements. Fundamentally, this means this course will be *centered* around how social scientists approach the scientific method. Social scientists are different than natural scientists in that, generally, they are less likely to run lab experiments where you can isolate a single variable. Instead, they often use data generated by institutions, survey data, and statistical techniques to control for outside factors. Once a student graduates, whether they are reading economic results in the newspaper, a political poll, or they are asked by their boss to conduct a customer survey, it will be *this class* that they are leaning on. More broadly, this course will be *centered* around teaching the methods of the discipline. Keep in mind that for most students this is the only social science course they will ever take (a similar statement can be made for a class in any category). Thus, methods of the discipline are more important than memorizing specific facts. Moreover, the target audience is *all students*, not just students in the major.

C. Fundamental Skill Reinforcement Area

1. **Intellectual and Practical Skill(s) Reinforced:** Quantitative Literacy, Data Literacy
2. **Nature and Scope of Reinforcement:**
 - Quantitative Literacy: This course will reinforce students' algebra skills through assignments that require them to analyze markets, choices, and other economic decisions. Students will apply at least four economic models (production possibility frontier, supply and demand, comparative advantage, etc.) where they must solve equations, determine areas between curves, and connect

graphs to equations. Approximately 90% of course lessons will deliberately reinforce quantitative literacy.

- **Data Literacy:** Students will reinforce their data skills by examining labor markets, firm market power, and other topics through the creation of Power BI dashboards. This will entail several key steps: preparing and cleaning data, loading it into Power BI, and creating a data model with appropriate relationships and calculated measures. Students will build and customize visualizations, add interactive elements like slicers and drill-throughs, and format the dashboard for a professional look. They will also publish the report to the Power BI service, create a dashboard, and share it with users. Approximately 40% of course lessons will deliberately reinforce the data literacy curricular requirement.
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D. Integrative Learning

1. **Approaches and Activities:** An integrated project with a community partner will require that students apply basic economic principles to evaluate the impact of an Omaha workforce development initiative. Students will identify basic economic metrics to be assessed, identify and collect relevant data, analyze the information, and report findings to the community partner. As part of the assignment, students will be required to write a reflection on their experience, discussing the application of economic principles, their perceived impact of their work to the community partner, and how they view the experience as being connected to their future personal or professional aspirations. The assignment will be worth 25% of the final grade.
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E. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy

1. **Approaches and Activities:** There are multiple ways students will exercise critical thinking skills through the assignments. The service learning project, for example, requires students to distinguish relevant from irrelevant data, determine the reliability and validity of data sources, analyze and synthesize information to identify patterns and trends, and then draw conclusions and present recommendations based on their analysis. Other assignments will require students to apply economic models to identify insights in different scenarios, identify cause and effect relationships, assess reliability of data, and assess the implications of government policy on economic trends.
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F. Intercultural Awareness

1. **Approaches and Activities:** Students will learn how the choices they make can have an unintended impact on others. Students will be required to complete an individual project involving wage discrimination where they must search for data on wages by industry, gender, and race from 2000 to today. They must generate plots graphing the gender wage gap for at least three industries, determining if there are different trends by industry and hypothesizing reasons for the observed trends. This assignment will constitute 15% of the final grade.
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G. Assessment

1. **Explain How Core General Education Student Learning Outcomes Will Be Assessed:**
 - Courses may use a common general education rubric for integrative and applied learning, or other methods appropriate for the discipline. Explain which approach will be used for this course.
 - Describe assignments that will be used for assessment purposes and explain at what points in the course assignments used for assessing general education outcomes will be administered.