

Core Curriculum Appraisal Task Force
Summer-Fall 2023 Report
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Submitted by Fletcher Linder

Members: Quentin Alexander, Bethany Blackstone, John Burgess, Allison Fagan, Dana Haraway, Fletcher Linder (chair), Christine May (Faculty Senate), Meg Mulrooney, Carole Nash, Kane Nashimoto.

Charge: Goal 1, Objective 4 of the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan identifies renewal of the General Education Program (GEP) as a high priority. With the GEP Academic Program Review (APR) report and response in hand, the Provost Leadership Team affirms its commitment to renewal and to providing “all undergraduates with a high-quality liberal education program.”

To these ends, the Provost has appointed the Core Curriculum Appraisal Task Force to lead the division through a process of consultation, discernment and innovation. Curriculum is primarily vested with the faculty and developed through shared governance processes. This task force will facilitate broad collaboration and has the following responsibilities:

1. Use the 2021-22 APR to develop recommendations for facilitating discussion among faculty and other stakeholders for revising and renewing JMU’s core curriculum to better incorporate contemporary expectations for the liberal arts and sciences.
2. Identify and work with an external consultant to facilitate campus engagement and help us assess the university’s curricular needs.
3. Advise academic leaders on expanded communication and messaging about the General Education program’s role in JMU’s unique blend of liberal arts, research and professional education.
4. Analyze staffing levels needed to meet SCHEV base adequacy guidelines, with the possibility of strategic growth in full-time instructional positions to support the instructional needs of our core curriculum.

Meetings Held

May 22	Bi-weekly meeting
June 8	Bi-weekly meeting
June 22	Bi-weekly meeting
July 6	Bi-weekly meeting, rescheduled for July 19 or 20
July 19	Bi-weekly meeting (attendees picked July 19 or 20)

July 20	Bi-weekly meeting (attendees picked July 19 or 20)
Aug 17	Bi-weekly meeting
Aug 28	Bi-weekly meeting
Sept 11	Bi-weekly meeting
Sept 25	Bi-weekly meeting
Sept 27	General Education Conversations, with Dr. Meg Mulrooney
Oct 9	Bi-weekly meeting
Oct 23	Bi-weekly meeting
Oct 24	General Education Conversations, with Dr. Stephen Biscotte
Nov 1	Chair discussed CCATF work with student government leadership in deans' meeting
Nov 13	Bi-weekly meeting
Nov 27	Bi-weekly meeting
Nov 30	General Education Conversations, with Dr. Natasha Jankowski
Dec 11	Bi-weekly meeting

Scope of Work, Progress, Plans going Forward

Connect with faculty

In Fall 2023, the task force sponsored three General Education Conversations for faculty to learn more about JMU's current General Education Program, the national landscape of General Education, and setting and assessing student learning outcomes. Conversations were 90 minutes, including Q&A, and were presented via webinar in order to maximize attendance. Recordings are posted on the CCATF [website](#).

General Education Conversations presenters were:

Dr. Meg Mulrooney. Dr. Mulrooney serves as JMU's Senior Associate Vice Provost and Professor of History. Dr. Mulrooney is past president of the [Association for General and Liberal Studies](#), and is the administrative director of JMU's General Education Program. Dr. Mulrooney discussed the origin and evolution of JMU's current General Education program, its faculty governance structure, and key challenges and opportunities highlighted by its most recent Academic Program Review.

Dr. Stephen Biscotte. Dr. Biscotte serves as Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Instructor of Educational Psychology at Virginia Tech and as the president of the [Association for General and Liberal Studies](#). Dr. Biscotte shared information about the advantages and challenges of different general education models, emerging issues in general education in the U.S. and lessons learned from general education reform endeavors.

Dr. Natasha Jankowski. Dr. Jankowski is a higher education and assessment expert. Dr. Jankowski serves as Senior Fellow at Strada Education Foundation and is a lecturer at New England College and Endicott College. Previously, Dr. Jankowski served as the

Executive Director of the [National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment](#) (NILOA), and as graduate program coordinator and research associate professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Jankowski discussed the value of outcomes-based General Education programs, how General Education programs can positively affect post-collegiate outcomes, and advice to campuses undertaking General Education reform.

High-level results from the first faculty survey on General Education reform were presented at Dr. Mulrooney's General Education Conversations' talk. The task force is continuing to work on informative summaries of the survey to post on the CCATF website.

Spring 2024 plans include 8 General Education Conversations with faculty. These discussions will inform, and will be followed by, conversations with students.

Continue to develop formal connections with the General Education Council

Task force members continued to meet with the GEC during the fall semester. Connections with GEC will be ongoing.

Maintain formal connections with Faculty Senate

The task force representative from Faculty Senate continued to meet with Faculty Senate over the Fall 2023 semester. Connections with Faculty Senate will be ongoing.

Continue to build and maintain the CCATF webpage

The website will continue to be built as a repository of information relevant to General Education reform, and will serve as a standing communication portal for faculty input and questions. Updates to the webpage will be ongoing.

Build networks with external experts on GenEd reform

The TF continued to make new contacts with, and strengthen existing relationships with, external experts on GenEd reform. The TF will continue to build these professional networks as the TF's work unfolds.

As part of this network-building work, the task force submitted in Fall 2023 a proposal to the Institute on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment ([iGEPA](#)) to help enhance our campus' General Education reform work. If chosen and we participate, the Institute may help JMU in the following areas related to planning and optimizing participatory processes.

- detailing processes to have productive GenEd conversations with faculty, administrators, students, and other constituents;
- detailing processes to collect formal input from faculty, administrators, students, and other constituents regarding ideas for a renewed GenEd program;
- detailing processes to move from suggested ideas to constructing multiple concrete proposals for a renewed GenEd;
- detailing processes to gather input/responses on multiple concrete proposals; detailing processes to summarize input on multiple concrete proposals.

END OF REPORT