

Infusing EIU's Learning Goals into General Education

Eastern Illinois University Council on Academic Affairs

Spring 2015



Recommendations Developing

EIU is currently in Year Two of a five-year plan for revising the University Undergraduate Learning Goals (UULGs) and infusing them into general education and major courses. The purpose is to examine curriculum, assessment and instructional practices so as to better prepare EIU's students with essential learning outcomes valued by employers and graduate schools and to intentionally prepare our students with skills to be informed, engaged, ethical citizens.

This year the CAA General Education (GEC) and Learning Goal Committees (LGCs) consisted of 28 GEC members and 36 LGC members who studied 1) the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) General Education Core Curriculum requirements; 2) AACU's LEAP Curricular Design Principles (LEAP = Liberal Education for America's Promise) and General Education Maps and Markers (GEMs); 3) the Degree Qualifications Profile-2 (DQP-2) and Common Core; 4) AAC&U's 2007 report, *College Learning for the New Global Century* recommendations for developing excellence; 5) data collected at EIU throughout the Learning Goal study about current practices at EIU; and 6) the Learning Goals report as well as resources shared by LGCs and GEC members from evidence-based literature and practices at other similar universities.

The GEC members also studied the composition and review processes of standing General Education Committees at other Illinois public universities. A proposal for a standing General Education at EIU is described in the box to the right. Page 2 describes the model that is being proposed based on the above information. This model would function to more intentionally target the learning goals within the existing general education structure. Page 2 also discusses resources for faculty.

Timeline

- Faculty Forum: March 5, 2:00 – 3:30, Arcola-Tuscola Room (Faculty who cannot attend can watch the video and provide feedback at: <http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals>)
- Learning Goals in General Education Workshop: April 7, 11:30 – 1:00 Blair 1103
- Discussion of proposals at Academic Councils in April
- CAA votes on proposals end of April/beginning of May

Standing General Education Committee

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A General Education Committee, as a standing subcommittee of CAA, is being proposed. The committee's function would include reviewing new general education courses, partnering with CASL for assessment of General Education, and reviewing/recertifying general education courses on an on-going five-year cycle.

Voting members of the proposed General Education Committee with 3-year terms include:

College Representatives

- 1 A&H
- 1 COS
- 1 LCBAS
- 1 CEPS

CAA Representatives

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Learning Goal Representatives

- 1 Critical Thinking
- 1 Write/Read
- 1 Speak/Listen
- 1 Quantitative
- 1 Citizenship

The Model

The model for infusing the learning goals into general education is consistent with EIU's current general education structure and IAI expectations. Instead of asking all courses to describe how they will target all learning goals, the proposed model asks courses to intentionally target specific learning goals. All courses would target critical thinking. See more details in the box below.

Faculty Support & Resources

Recognizing that infusing the newly adopted revised learning goals into general education will be challenging, faculty resources and support will be crucial to the success of this initiative. The learning goal committees, which were formed in November 2011 and have driven much of the research and discussion of this initiative have turned their attention to developing resources for faculty on instructing and assessing the learning goals, such

as:

- Ongoing informational and professional development workshops and consultation
- A General Education Faculty Guidebook
- Sample course proposals with Learning Goals infused
- Sample instructional and assessment materials
- Ongoing development of Learning Goal website

Learning Goals in General Education: What Might Change?

CURRENT

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

- 1 math course, 2 writing courses, 1 speaking course, 3 courses from the social & behavioral sciences from at least two different disciplines, 3 courses from the arts & humanities 1 of which is an art and 1 is a humanities, 2 natural science courses of which 1 is a physical science and 1 is a biological science, and a general education senior seminar/study abroad capstone

LEARNING GOALS ADDRESSED

- All general education course proposals stated how the course would address the 4 general education learning goals: critical thinking, communicate effectively through writing and speaking, and function as responsible citizens.
- All general education courses were supposed to be writing centered, writing intensive, or writing active. Writing Intensive focused on multiple writing assignments, opportunity for revision, and 35% of course grade.
- Course learning objectives were cross listed with general education learning goals addressed within each objective
- Proposals identified the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives
- 15 week "topical outline" focused only on discipline content in proposal, no focus on instruction time related to development of learning goal skills
- 2012 Faculty Survey, 2012 Syllabus Review, 2014 Learning Goal Mapping Survey – "Spotty" focus on learning goals

PROPOSED

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

- Unchanged
- Next year – discuss possibility of moving general education seminar from senior to late sophomore/early junior year

LEARNING GOALS ADDRESSED

- All courses target critical thinking
- Foundation courses target critical thinking & their skill focus
 - ENG 1001 & 1002 Critical Thinking & Writing and Critical Reading
 - CMN 1310 Critical Thinking & Speaking and Listening
 - MTH Gen Ed – Critical Thinking & Quantitative Reasoning
- General Education (Senior) Seminars target all 5 learning goals
- Courses in the other 3 General Education Segments focus on critical thinking, a specific learning goal associated with their segment, and a third learning goal chosen by the department as most appropriate for the course
 - Communication in the Arts & Humanities (choose Writing and Critical Reading, Speaking and Listening, or both)
 - Quantitative Reasoning in the Natural Sciences
 - Citizenship in the Social & Behavioral Sciences (choose Civics, Diversity, or Ethics focus)
- Integrate course content with learning objectives, explicit instruction, practice, assignments, and feedback for the learning goals associated with the course