

**General Education Assessment Committee
AY 2017-18 Report**

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Executive Summary

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) is tasked with assessing the general education curricular reform efforts currently being undertaken by the UVA College of Arts & Sciences. The GEAC is composed of 16 faculty and staff from across the College of Arts & Sciences and the University as a whole, each with expertise relevant to the committee's task, and appointed by Dean Ian Baucom.

Central to our charge is the assessment of the New College Curriculum—a model approved by the Arts & Sciences faculty in May, 2016 for pilot implementation and testing. This curriculum was designed to provide:

1. an assertion of the values, purposes, and commitments of the Arts & Sciences faculty regarding undergraduate general education;
2. a shared intellectual experience and collaborative inquiry among students;
3. a synthesis and connection across disciplines and objects of knowledge;
4. a mechanism for the College faculty to make specific claims about general education, and the ability to revise these claims (and subsequently the curriculum) over time, and
5. an institutional body of Fellows who engage in sustained reflection and revision while teaching in the curriculum.

The above statements regarding the New College Curriculum's purpose, goals, and objectives are adapted from the original General Education Committee's document, "The New College Curriculum" (in a section called "Why change?"), included in this report as Appendix [A](#). Given these stated intentions, the GEAC has approached its work according to the following research questions:

1. To what degree is the New College Curriculum's model in alignment with its stated purpose and objectives?
2. What are the New College Curriculum's impacts on College faculty, both generally and those directly associated with the program?
3. What is the New College Curriculum student experience, specifically
 - a. in the first-year Engagement courses,
 - b. in the program but outside the Engagement courses, and
 - c. compared to students in the Traditional Curriculum?

As we will describe in more detail in this report, our initial studies reveal that the New College Curriculum has demonstrated substantial progress towards its intended goals. The College administration reports that the roll-out of the first pilot year of this new curriculum has met original expectations. In addition, our studies have revealed great enthusiasm for the program, particularly from—but not limited to—external reviewers and College faculty associated with the program. These studies have also identified concerns by both faculty and staff regarding the long-term sustainability of the program. As we are submitting this report before the first year is complete, we describe our plans to assess the academic experience, including associated learning outcomes, of the New College Curriculum at the end of this first year.

An Introduction to the New College Curriculum

After several years of planning and development, the UVA College of Arts & Sciences began the pilot test of its new General Education program, the New College Curriculum, in Fall 2017, with an inaugural cohort of approximately 600 first-year students. This program is the first large-scale reform of the College's General Education requirements in over forty years, and proposes to "put the curriculum back at the center of College life—a curriculum that makes specific claims about the values, commitments, and purposes of a liberal education"¹. If fully adopted by faculty vote, the New College Curriculum will replace the existing Area and Competency requirements (currently titled the Traditional Curriculum) as the College's primary General Education program.² A vote of the College faculty in Fall 2017 authorized the New College Curriculum's pilot implementation to continue into Academic Year 2018-19 with an increased cohort size of approximately 1,000 entering first-year students. This extended pilot will allow for a comprehensive review of the New College Curriculum (including comparative studies). The GEAC plans to have its final report completed in Summer 2019, in time for a final faculty vote in Fall 2019, to accept or reject full adoption of the program. To learn more about the rationale behind general education curriculum reform in general and the New College Curriculum proposal in particular, please see the original General Education Committee 'white paper' document, included here as Appendix [A](#).

The New College Curriculum is subdivided into three components, 1) Engagements, 2) Literacies, and 3) Disciplines, as illustrated in Figure 1.

¹ "A General Education for the 21st Century," Appendix [A](#).

² At full implementation, Arts & Sciences students will default into the New College Curriculum upon matriculation. Students will have the option to apply to the Forums program, an alternative General Education Curriculum. Some students will also be awarded Echols Scholars status, a designation that significantly reduces the general education requirements necessary for graduation.



Figure 1. The three components of the New College Curriculum: 1) Engagements, 2) Literacies, and 3) Disciplines.

The Engagements form an 8-credit, first-year shared experience that helps students to develop intellectual sensibilities they can deploy across all realms of inquiry and to have recourse to an intellectual framework that will help guide them through their subsequent studies. The faculty responsible for designing and teaching the Engagement courses are the College Fellows, a rotating cohort of faculty members drawn from across the departments and disciplines who, each from the standpoint of their own discipline, reach beyond that discipline to address one of the four areas of Engagement inquiry. These areas are: 1) Engaging Aesthetics, 2) Empirical and Scientific Engagement, 3) Engaging Differences, and 4) Ethical Engagement.

The second component of the new curriculum is the Literacies. These were designed with the recognition that, in order to navigate a rapidly transforming global community, students must master particular intellectual arts of knowing, doing, and reasoning embedded in the languages of world vocation and citizenship. The Literacies thus are meant to equip our students with fluency in a range of idioms they will need to engage multiple communities and multiple forms of thought. These include: 1) World Languages, 2) Rhetoric for the 21st Century (i.e., first writing and second writing requirements) and 3) Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis.

The final component is the Disciplines, in which students will explore a wide range of objects of knowledge from a range of perspectives grounded in disciplinary thinking but with an invitation to cross-disciplinary exploration and thinking. These include: 1) Artistic, Interpretive, and Philosophical Inquiry, 2) Chemical, Mathematical and Physical Universe, 3) Cultures and Societies of the World, 4) Historical Perspectives, 5) Living Systems, 6) Social and Economic Systems and 7) Science and Society.

More detailed information about these three components can be found in Appendix [A](#).

General Education Assessment Committee Report Introduction

In Fall 2016, Dean Baucom assembled a faculty committee, The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), to plan an extensive assessment of the newly proposed General Education (GE) curriculum, also known as the New College Curriculum. This committee, consisting of 16 faculty and staff from across the College of Arts & Sciences and the larger University, spent the 2016-17 academic year developing an assessment plan that would consider the many outcomes, processes, and stakeholders of general education at UVA. Assessment began in September 2017 and will continue through the 2-year pilot implementation of the New College Curriculum, with numerous component studies, investigations, and explorations occurring and recurring over that period.

In this report, this committee presents its current findings to the faculty of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences from the first pilot year of the New College Curriculum. It is important, however, to draw attention to two important notes: 1) because an interim report from the GEAC was due to the faculty in April 2018, this committee's report includes only one full semester's worth of assessment data, and 2) all of our assessments are ongoing and will continue into the 2018-19 academic year. Therefore, some data sets are incomplete, and a collection of others is not yet started, as they will comprise data that will only be available after students have completed (or nearly completed) the first year of the New College Curriculum (Engagement Courses).

With these caveats in mind, we present below an executive summary of our findings through March 2018. For clarity and coherence, we have placed our findings into 5 categories, each reflecting the work of a separate subcommittee of the GEAC and concerned with investigating topics, outcomes, and/or stakeholders of interest:

- 1) Curriculum Model: This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the pedagogical and organizational model of the New College Curriculum, as well as its larger significance in the context of modern higher education.
- 2) Faculty Experience: This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the New College Curriculum's impact on College faculty in general, as well as department/program chairs and faculty advisors.
- 3) Courses: This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the courses of the New College Curriculum, in particular the Engagements, from both instructor and student perspectives.
- 4) Direct Learning Outcomes: This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the degree to which students (in both the New College and Traditional Curricula) have achieved specific learning outcomes related to the Engagements' themes and objectives.
- 5) Supplementary Learning Outcomes: This subcommittee is responsible for assessing additional, significant learning outcomes of students in the New College and Traditional Curricula, as well as the student experience in navigating their first year of their GE experience.

Following the executive summary, this document contains reports by each of these five subcommittees, followed by various appendices including: full, detailed reports for individual studies; instruments used or currently being developed; and other associated documents where appropriate. All relevant appendices are referenced within the corresponding individual subcategory report. Anonymized data may be requested from Sarah Kucenas, GEAC Chair.

Subcommittee Reports

Curriculum Model ([full report](#)): This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the pedagogy and organization of the New College Curriculum as a whole, as well as its larger significance in the context of modern higher education. This committee specifically collected assessment data in the following three areas:

- 1) external reviews of the New College Curriculum proposal by faculty from peer institutions who have led recent and analogous curricular reform efforts at their home institution (Appendices [B](#), [C](#)),
- 2) focus groups from among the College Fellows and Engagements graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) regarding their experience designing and teaching the first-year Engagements courses (Appendices [D](#), [E](#)), and
- 3) internal reviews from the College of Arts & Sciences leadership regarding the programmatic status and effects of the curriculum implementation thus far (Appendix [F](#)).

These studies have shown great enthusiasm for the New College Curriculum from both external reviewers and faculty involved in the program (the current College Fellows). Both groups praise the pedagogical objectives and model of the program. The external reviewers laud its innovation and execution in the larger context of liberal arts education, while the College Fellows speak favorably of the impact the program has already had on their professional lives. Both groups also expressed concerns about the sustainability of the program going forward, in particular the College's continuing ability to recruit faculty from a range of disciplines, preserving the program's vibrancy and rigor, and ensuring that it has sufficient institutional support. Engaging GTAs did voice serious concerns and frustrations regarding the effective use of their time and talents in the program, but these have already been addressed in revisions to the present and future discussion section format of the Engagements. Outside of these issues, the GTAs provided favorable feedback. The administration (Dean's Office leadership) reported general satisfaction with the roll-out of the pilot program, noting that actual costs were in-line with anticipated projections and that the College has successfully fielded three diverse cohorts of College Fellows. Please see this subcommittee's [full report](#) for more details.

Faculty Experience ([full report](#)): This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the New College Curriculum's impact on College faculty in general, as well as department/program chairs and faculty advisors. Specifically, this committee collected data on:

- 1) perspectives from department chairs and program directors regarding the effects of the New College Curriculum's implementation (both current and anticipated) (Appendices [G](#), [H](#)),

- 2) perspectives from faculty lower-division advisors regarding how the advising experience has differed between the New College and Traditional Curricula (Appendix [I](#)), and
- 3) perspectives from College faculty regarding the impact of the New College Curriculum implementation on their work and departments (Appendices [J](#), [K](#)).

There was significant variability in the data collected, both between and within these three studies. The faculty advisors we spoke to expressed concerns primarily about challenges associated with the newness of the New College Curriculum but indicated an expectation that many of these challenges would naturally resolve over time. These advisers expressed general enthusiasm for the program. College faculty who participated in our survey expressed a wide variety of perspectives (positive and negative), but the predominant theme was concern over the impact of the curriculum on department enrollments and resources—specifically that the New College Curriculum could impact their teaching missions and that significant numbers of faculty would be diverted towards the Engagement courses at the expense of departments/programs. Finally, department chairs and program directors echoed all of these sentiments, but were, in general, cautiously supportive. While the overall results of these studies indicate a generally positive faculty experience with the New College Curriculum up to this point, they reveal a number of areas of concern that warrant further attention by the College and New College Curriculum leadership. Please see this subcommittee’s [full report](#) for more details.

Courses ([full report](#)): This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the courses of the New College Curriculum, in particular the Engagements, from both instructor and student perspectives. Specifically, this committee collected assessment data concerning:

- 1) the degree to which the first-year Engagement courses were designed with high-quality, learning-focused practices in mind, as represented indirectly through course syllabi (Appendices [L](#), [M](#)),
- 2) students’ perception of significant learning activities in their Engagement courses (Appendices [N](#), [O](#)), and
- 3) students’ assessment of their Engagement course experiences via a custom course evaluation instrument (Appendix [P](#), [Q](#)).

While all of these studies are still ongoing, with only a semester’s worth of data currently collected, the initial results are very positive. The Engagement courses are designed in strong alignment with known elements of effective, learning-focused courses (Syllabus Review) and with high-impact educational practices associated with positive academic outcomes (Student Engagement Surveys), and the courses are being effectively and favorably received by most students (Student Engagement Surveys and Course Evaluations). Please see this subcommittee’s [full report](#) for more details.

Direct Learning Outcomes ([full report](#)): This subcommittee is responsible for assessing the degree to which students (in both the New College and Traditional Curricula) have achieved specific learning outcomes related to the Engagements themes and objectives (Appendix [R](#)).

This study will occur at the end of the Spring 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters so that students will have essentially completed their first year. While we have no results yet, faculty are

encouraged to review the prompts we will be using (Appendix [R](#)). More information about the status and development of this study can be found in this subcommittee's [full report](#).

Supplementary Learning Outcomes ([full report](#)): This subcommittee is responsible for assessing additional, significant learning outcomes of students in the New College and Traditional Curricula, as well as the student experience in navigating the first year of their GE courses. Specifically, this committee is conducting:

- 1) investigations of the outcomes students may experience as part of the New College Curriculum not planned for in the Direct Learning Outcomes assessment, compared with student experiences in the Traditional Curriculum, and
- 2) student experience navigating the various resources and processes related to GE course requirements, selection, registration, etc. (Appendix [S](#)).

As with the Direct Learning Outcomes assessment, these studies will occur at the end of the Spring 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters so that students will have essentially completed their first year. We encourage faculty to review this subcommittee's [full report](#) for more information about the status and development of these studies.

Conclusions

Although this committee is still in the early stages of our assessment work, we find that the New College Curriculum has demonstrated substantial progress towards its intended goals, on a schedule and budget consistent with what had been anticipated, and has generated considerable enthusiasm among faculty and students for its achievements. Implementation has entailed tensions and stumbles (though perhaps nothing unpredictable for a program of this scale), and concerns about the program's sustainability exist. Our preliminary assessments, however, have identified no major obstacles that would prevent the New College Curriculum from achieving its goals, and preliminary evidence suggests that it will achieve those goals impressively. Though we have not yet completed comparing the outcomes of the new curriculum with its predecessor's, we note that we have found no evidence at this time that the changes that the new curriculum entails will be at the expense of merits associated with the old one.

This report, to the full faculty of the College and Graduate School of the Arts & Sciences—including the conclusions within—has received full endorsement by the General Education Assessment Committee.

- Sarah Kucenas (Chair), Associate Professor of Biology, Cell Biology & Neuroscience
- Chad Dodson, Associate Professor of Psychology
- Kateri DuBay, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
- Judy Giering, Director of Learning Design & Technology
- Dan Gingerich, Associate Professor of Politics and Director of the Quantitative Collaborative
- Elizabeth Gorman, Associate Professor of Sociology
- Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas, Associate Professor of Education
- Karen Kafadar, Commonwealth Professor and Chair of Statistics

- Victor Luftig, Professor, English, and Director of the Center for the Liberal Arts
- Rachel Most, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Programs
- Lois Myers, Associate Director and Assessment Coordinator of the Office of Institutional Assessment & Studies
- Bo Odom, Manager of Curricular Implementation & Assessment Coordinator
- Brian Paljug, Education & Assessment Specialist
- Michael Palmer, Professor, General Faculty and Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence
- Karl Shuve, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- Frederick Smyth, Director of Undergraduate Studies for Psychology

The New College Curriculum: Overview

In this section, we provide a more detailed review of the components of the New College Curriculum, to complement the proposal document presented in Appendix A. We also present an exploration of the student populations of the College's various General Education programs, via institutional demographic data.



Figure 2. The three principle components of the New College Curriculum.

Engagements: The Engagements are a series of four courses taught during the first-year of an undergraduate's tenure at UVA. From their first moment on Grounds, students will engage four intellectual dispositions that are generally deployed across all realms of inquiry and provide an intellectual framework to help guide them through their subsequent studies while at UVA. The Engagements are:

- **Engaging Aesthetics:** In these courses, students learn to identify, to describe, and to analyze aesthetic phenomena, to understand the social role and ongoing evolution of human creative expression, and to develop their own approach to creative expression.
- **Empirical & Scientific Engagement:** In these courses, students learn to analyze claims about the material and social worlds by formulating questions and testing hypotheses based on observation and experience.
- **Engaging Differences:** In these courses, students learn to critically reflect on their own situations and perspectives in relation to their expanding knowledge of other human experiences, seeking to cultivate a framework for informed reflection on human diversity and social complexity while developing empathy as a foundation for democratic citizenship.
- **Ethical Engagement:** In these courses, students learn to reflect upon and evaluate human conduct and character, to consider the ethical components of individual and collective behaviors, and to engage in the articulation of ethical questions and moral deliberation.

The faculty responsible for designing and teaching the Engagements are the College Fellows, a rotating cohort of faculty members drawn from across the departments and disciplines.

Literacies: The literacies are sets of courses designed to equip students with fluency in a range of idioms critical to meaningful vocation and engaged citizenship in local, national, and global communities. They include:

- **World Languages:** a progression through the intermediate (2020) level of coursework in a non-native language.
- **Rhetoric for the 21st Century:** coursework that provides experience with written, oral, and digital forms of expression. This 6-credit requirement includes a first-year 3-credit expository writing (ENWR) course and a 3-credit second writing course.
- **Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis:** coursework that prepares students to navigate a world increasingly awash in numbers and data. This 6-credit requirement is fulfilled through existing courses that enable students to apply mathematical and computational skills to help them to understand and to solve real-world problems.

The Disciplines: This component is a reformulation of the modern distribution requirements. The Disciplines ask student to explore the many different forms of understanding embodied in the varied disciplines of the Arts & Sciences, but with an emphasis on the lateral connections between forms of disciplinary knowledge. The seven categories from which students must take a course include:

- **Artistic, Interpretive & Philosophical Inquiry:** courses that develop in students an ability to interpret, to evaluate, and to participate in artistic expression and abstract argument
- **The Chemical, Mathematical & Physical Universe:** courses that develop in students a knowledge of past and present attempts to identify the material composition of the physical world and universe and the forces that govern their interaction.
- **Cultures & Societies of the World:** courses that introduce students to the wide variety of societies, institutions, and cultures around the world.
- **Historical Perspectives:** courses that provide students with a broad perspective on changing human experience.
- **Living Systems:** courses that develop a knowledge of principals of how living systems work and interact with the environment.
- **Science & Society:** courses that provide students with a basic understanding of the relationships of scientific knowledge, technology, and society.
- **Social & Economic Systems:** courses that introduce and reflect on social patterns and structures around the world.

To fulfill the Disciplines requirement, courses utilized must come from six different departments. Finally, a modification to the requirement is offered for students enrolled in Bachelors of Science degrees (detailed fully in Appendix [A](#)).

Curriculum Population Exploration

A brief descriptive analysis of students in the various General Education Curricula is provided here.³ Curricular programs include the New College Curriculum, Traditional Curriculum, and Forums curriculum. Echols Scholars who did not participate in either the New College Curriculum or the Forums curriculum have been captured as a fourth group.

Curriculum	# Students	% Students
Total	2899	100.00%
New	574	19.80%
Traditional	2046	70.58%
Forums	92	3.17%
Echols	187	6.45%

Table 1. Number and percentages of students in the four GE programs.

First, we observed gender distributions across the three curricula and Echols population.

Curriculum	Female		Male	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Total	1739	60.23%	1160	39.77%
New	362	63.59%	212	36.41%
Traditional	1216	59.43%	830	40.57%
Forums	59	64.13%	33	35.87%
Echols	102	56.68%	85	43.32%

Table 2. Number and percentages of female/male students in the four GE programs.

There was no significant difference between the number of women and men who enrolled in the New College Curriculum and either those who enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum or the total population of Arts & Sciences students.

Next, we collected data regarding US citizenship:

Curriculum	Non-US		US	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Total	331	11.83%	2568	88.17%
New	71	12.37%	503	87.63%
Traditional	232	11.83%	1814	88.17%
Forums	11	13.04%	81	86.96%
Other	17	9.63%	170	90.37%

Table 3. Number and percentages of non-US/US citizens in the four GE programs.

³ Data used for this analysis was obtained from institutional records. We employed list-wise deletion with missing data, and coded binary variables for demographic identifiers (gender, citizenship, first generation status, and race/ethnicity).

Again, there was no significant difference between the number of non-US citizens who enrolled in the New College Curriculum and either those enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum or the total cumulative population of Arts & Sciences students.

We also collected data regarding first-generation status (students reporting that neither mother nor father had completed an undergraduate degree).

Curriculum	First-Generation		Not First-Generation	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Total	297	10.24%	2602	89.76%
New	88	15.33%	486	84.67%
Traditional	186	9.09%	1860	90.91%
Forums	15	16.30%	77	83.70%
Other	8	4.28%	179	95.72%

Table 4. Number and percentages of first generation/not first generation students in the four GE programs.

Here, the proportion of first-generation students who enrolled in the New College Curriculum ($M = 0.16$, $SD = 0.362$) was significantly higher than those who enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum ($M = 0.11$, $SD = 0.318$), $t(2618) = 2.622$, $p = .015$, and significantly higher than the general first-year A&S population in total ($M = 0.12$, $SD = 0.323$), $t(573) = 2.318$, $p = .021$.

Finally, we collected data regarding average SAT score (converted from ACT score where necessary⁴) and median income of home ZIP code⁵.

Curriculum	SAT	ZIP Income
Total	1401.24	\$96,078.73
New	1392.80	\$92,394.06
Traditional	1394.69	\$96,658.94
Forums	1391.76	\$95,193.94
Other	1516.73	\$101,392.77

Table 5. Average SAT scores and average median home ZIP incomes of the four GE programs.

While students in the New College Curriculum did not demonstrate a significant difference in average SAT scores when compared to students in the Traditional Curriculum or the A&S first-year cohort in total, results regarding the median income for these students were significant. When compared to students in the Traditional Curriculum ($M = \$96658.94$, $SD = \$40,455.49$), students in the New College Curriculum had a lower median income ($M = \$92,394.06$, $SD = \$38,716.13$), $t(2484) = -2.201$, $p = .028$. When compared with the entire first-year cohort ($M = \$96078.73$, $SD = 40287.17$), the median income of students in the New College Curriculum was likewise lower $t(542) = 259.77$, $p < .001$.

⁴ ACT to SAT conversion retrieved from <https://www.studypoint.com/ed/sat-act-concordance/>

⁵ Median income per ZIP code data is from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

We also identified significant differences in Forum student populations, both in gender and first-generation status. Significant differences were also measured in the Echols Scholars population: relatively high median incomes (as associated with ZIP code), high SAT scores, and lower proportions of first-generation status.

Finally, we analyzed the differences in race/ethnicity between students in the different curricula. The institutional data included 9 values for race/ethnicity. (A breakdown is provided in Table 6.)

Race/Ethnicity	Total	NCC	Traditional	Forums	Other
African American	215 (7.42%)	62 (10.81%)	140 (6.84%)	6 (6.52%)	7 (3.74%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	2 (.0006%)	1 (.002%)	1 (.0004%)		
Asian	419 (14.45%)	74 (12.89%)	300 (14.66%)	14 (15.22%)	31 (16.58%)
Hispanic	171 (5.89%)	44 (7.67%)	110 (5.38%)	7 (7.60%)	10 (5.35%)
Multi-Race	119 (4.10%)	33 (5.75%)	69 (3.37%)	8 (8.70%)	9 (4.81%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4 (.001%)		4 (.002%)		
Non-Resident Alien	133 (4.59%)	25 (4.36%)	98 (4.79%)	6 (6.52%)	4 (2.14%)
Unknown	178 (6.14%)	32 (5.57%)	132 (6.45%)	5 (5.43%)	9 (4.81%)
White	1658 (57.19%)	303 (52.79%)	1192 (58.26%)	46 (50.00%)	117 (62.57%)
Grand Total	2899	574	2046	92	187

Table 6. Number and percentages of different race/ethnicities in the four GE programs.

Notably, only two student groups demonstrated significantly distinctive enrollment patterns. There was a significantly higher proportion of African American students who enrolled in the New College Curriculum ($M = .11$, $SD = .311$) when compared with those who enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum ($M = .07$, $SD = .253$), $t(797.458) = 2.804$, $p = .005$ and with the A&S first-year cohort in total ($M = .07$, $SD = .262$), $t(573) = 2.932$, $p = .004$. Conversely, there was a significantly lower proportion of White students who enrolled in the New College Curriculum ($M = .53$, $SD = .500$) when compared with those who enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum ($M = .58$, $SD = .493$), $t(910.084) = -2.325$, $p = .020$ and with the A&S first-year cohort in total ($M = .57$, $SD = .495$), $t(573) = -2.020$, $p = .044$.

We also note significant differences between the total first-year population and Forum students in the percentages who identify as African American (a lower % in the Forums) and multi-race (higher), and between the total first-year population and Echols students in the percentages who identify as African American (lower) and White (higher).

Curriculum Model

The New College Curriculum represents a significant transformation of the College's existing General Education requirements. The task of this subcommittee was to assess the 'big picture' of the New College Curriculum, from its pedagogical foundation to the execution of its design. To put the program in the context of modern liberal arts and sciences education, we commissioned external reviews by distinguished academics who had overseen recent and analogous General Education (GE) reform at their own institutions. To consider the program's execution on the academic and instructional sides, we collected feedback from the current Engagement course instructors (the College Fellows) and graduate student teaching assistants (GTAs). Finally, to consider the effects and status of the New College Curriculum's implementation thus far, we requested information from College of Arts & Sciences leadership and administration.

External Review

The three administrators who were commissioned to write an external review of the New College Curriculum were:

Dr. Harry J. Elam, Jr.
Senior Vice Provost for Education
Vice President for the Arts
Olive H. Palmer Professor in the Humanities
Stanford University

Dr. Lu Ann Homza
Dean for Educational Policy, 2013-2017
Class of 2006 and Class of 2009 Professor of History
College of William & Mary

Dr. Suzanne Shanahan
Nannerl O. Keohane Director of the Kenan Institute for Ethics
Associate Research Professor of Sociology
Duke University

Each reviewer has led recent, analogous efforts at a peer institution to reform, or to attempt to reform, their institution's General Education curriculum, and therefore, has meaningful insight into the process, purpose, and pitfalls of such efforts. Guiding questions were provided which asked about the modern role of the liberal arts and sciences, and, specific to UVA, the New College Curriculum model (Engagements, Literacies, and Disciplines), the College Fellows cohort design, logistical concerns, and our assessment plan.

Overall, the reviews were extremely positive. The reviewers spoke highly of the Engagements taxonomy and design, with universal agreement that the four Engagements (and their subsequently defined content and learning outcomes) represent fundamental, diverse spheres of "knowledge, critical inquiry, intellectual and practical application." The reviews also noted the positioning of the Engagements as a first-year experience and resultant benefits, including the

epistemic and pedagogical retraining of student inquiry appropriate to the transition from secondary to post-secondary environments, the provision of a common intellectual experience, and the requisite exploration of multiple ways of knowing represented by the interdisciplinarity of the College Fellows. They also praised the role of the College Fellows, underscoring the importance of a cross-disciplinary, tenured or tenure-track cohort of faculty leading an endeavor such as the Engagements. Skepticism regarding the Engagements model was mostly directed towards administration of the program, specifically questions as to whether a sufficient number of faculty would be able to be recruited each year, as well as concerns regarding how discussion sections would be integrated within the Engagement courses.

The three reviewers were unanimous in their assessment that the priorities of the Literacies—intermediate proficiency in a language other than English, competency in written communication, and facility with quantitative analysis—are all critical for student success. In particular, the reviewers felt that data skills are “fundamental to work across disciplines and jobs.” Reviewer comments were also largely unanimous regarding the Disciplines’ requirements. Notably, they all praised the curriculum for the emphasis on disciplines (rather than departments) in its distributional model and they considered this to be an essential feature. The reviewers did articulate concern that the Literacies and Disciplines could foster a “box-checking” mentality among students, but they acknowledged that this was an inherent drawback of all distributional models, not just the one being piloted by UVA. However, the reviewer most reticent about distributional models acknowledged that if she were “inclined to recommend any distributional model, this [i.e., the New College *Disciplines* model] would be it.”

The reviewers noted that it will take attention to detail, commitment to rigor, and sustained financial and personnel support for the new curriculum to scale up to full implementation and be successfully maintained. Finally, the reviewers felt that the assessment plan was robust and comprehensive, though, they recognized the complexity and difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of educational programs, especially the limitations of assessing education programs and learning outcomes in such a brief time span.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix B: External Review \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix C: External Review \(compiled reviews\)](#)

College Fellows’ & TAs’ Perspectives

The GEAC subcommittee invited the first cohort of College Fellows to a focus group in December 2017 to discuss their experiences to date and 13 (of 15) were able to attend. The Fellows were specifically asked to discuss:

- a. their experience developing the first-year Engagement courses,
- b. their experience of teaching these courses,
- c. the formative aspects of membership in the College Fellows “community of practice,”
and
- d. their general thoughts on the New College Curriculum.

Emergent themes from the conversation are summarized below. See the associated full report for a more thorough discussion and supporting quotes (Appendix [D](#)).

Course diversity: Fellows remarked on the unusual student diversity (by multiple definitions) in their Engagement courses, having been accustomed to teaching more homogeneous groups of students in their home disciplines. This was described as highly positive, both in terms of generating vibrant, significant classroom discussion, and in terms of encouraging student interactions and relationships that may not have otherwise developed.

Quality of classroom discussion: Fellows also commented that the Engagement courses were designed intentionally to cut across several disciplines, in contrast to departmentally-centered curricula. They felt that this allowed for greater flexibility in classroom discussion (which was taken advantage of and enjoyed by students). Likewise, Fellows reported that students had already begun to bring in ideas and perspectives from other Engagement classes, an early fulfillment of the curriculum's intent to integrate the intellectual sensibilities of the Engagements while providing a cumulative academic experience.

Student behaviors and outcomes: Fellows praised the initiative and energy many students brought to these courses and attributed much of this approach both to the courses themselves, and to the students' unique positions as first-years. The age and (in)experience of the students, coupled with the focus on cultivating habits of mind rather than conveying specific disciplinary material, allowed Fellows to introduce students to important academic qualities and skills such as self-motivated learning and effective reading.

Course design and preparation: Fellows found the course design and planning resources—both formal (e.g., course design workshops) and informal (e.g., conversations with other Fellows)—to be of considerable formative value. Several said the professional development would certainly enhance their future departmental teaching. Many remarked that they had not previously approached their course design and in-class teaching with such intentionality, planning, and craftsmanship.

Overarching New College Curriculum themes and purpose: Faculty Fellows were very excited by how the “big picture” of the New College Curriculum was positively impacting both their relationships with student learning (e.g., students were seeking to integrate topics from multiple courses—something not realized in the fellows' previous courses) and their individual approach to teaching (e.g., fellows were able to design courses with the full understanding of the larger curricular identity, themes, and goals). Fellows observed that many of their students seemed to be “getting it.”

College Fellows' “community of practice:” Unanimously, the Fellows praised the College Fellows cohort experience, describing it as novel, inspiring, significant, helpful, and supportive. They praised both the concept and actual experience of working together with faculty from different departments and disciplines, and they expressed an interest or desire not just to continue this kind of work in their own careers, but to see it spread more widely across the University.

Concerns about the future: Fellows did express several concerns about the future of the program. First, they were concerned about the scalability of the experience, which many believed to be reliant on smaller, more intimate classes—an issue as projected course enrollment caps will double once the program is fully implemented. Second, they were concerned about whether future faculty cohorts will take similar ownership of and initiative towards the program. Finally, they were concerned about whether it will remain possible to recruit diverse cohorts of faculty to serve as College Fellows in the long term, in particular from certain disciplines or departments that they suggested may not feel as connected to, or invested in, the first-year Engagements.

Graduate student teaching assistants expressed enthusiasm for the idea of the program but disappointment and frustration in their role in its execution during the first semester of this pilot year. Primarily, they voiced concerns regarding: 1) the ineffective use of their time and talents in their assigned courses, either for grading or in-class assistance, and 2) failure to deliver on the ideal of their discussion sections because of a lack of support, training, and organization.⁶ Despite these frustrations and concerns, the teaching assistants did speak favorably of the program as a whole and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have been involved.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix D: College Fellows Perspective \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix E: Teaching Assistants Perspective \(report\)](#)

Implementation Status & Effects

To complement the above perspectives external and internal to the program, an additional review was requested of College of Arts & Sciences leadership to help us to assess the status and effects of the New College Curriculum's implementation thus far. In particular, the GEAC is interested in the degree to which the actual roll-out of the curriculum has met prior projections. For this, a questionnaire was issued to the Dean's office in April 2018. The returned report (Appendix [E](#)) offers no immediate implementation concerns and notes that actual costs are running in-line with projected costs. The report indicates that many of the perceived consequences of implementing this curriculum remain positive, while noting that the long-term sustainability of the program, particularly the scaling up of a program led by a diverse cohort of faculty from all disciplines, remains a challenge—and is consequently a key focus of the College leadership and administration. The report also briefly describes the current staffing and student cohort projections for the New College Curriculum pilot phase and the staffing structure for program support. It implicitly echoes a theme found elsewhere in this report: the New College Curriculum seems to be successful in and of itself and relative to other general education efforts but poses challenges to the resources of the College as a whole.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix F: Implementation Status & Effects \(Dean's office report\)](#)

⁶ The New College Curriculum program leadership had been made aware of these issues independently of our investigation and have already made significant changes to address these concerns in both the short term (Spring 2018 semester) and long term.

Conclusions

Both the External Review and College Fellows' & TAs' Perspectives studies identified very positive results regarding the planning and execution of the New College Curriculum. The external reviewers praised the program's innovative model in the context of modern liberal arts education, while the College Fellows commented on the remarkable and singular experience they have enjoyed so far regarding course preparation, classroom discussion, and the "community of practice." The concerns voiced by the Engagement teaching assistants have been addressed. The College leadership and administration expressed that the curriculum implementation has thus far met programmatic expectations. Finally, all groups raised concerns regarding the sustainability of the program, particularly regarding recruiting faculty from a range of disciplines, preserving the program's vibrancy and rigor, and ensuring that the program has sufficient institutional support.

Faculty Experience

The experience of College faculty in relation to the new curriculum's implementation takes many forms, from chairs' broad concerns about the impact on the staffing of their departments' courses to individual instructors' conversations with students about their understanding of liberal education. Towards assessing these varied responses, the Faculty Experience Subcommittee surveyed department chairs and program heads, met with a representative focus group of first-year advisers, and sent out a questionnaire to all College faculty. Below, we provide brief summaries of the findings of this subcommittee.

Chairs & Directors Perspective

In order to understand the effects of the New College Curriculum on departments and programs, we sent a short survey to department chairs and program directors in late September 2017, and again in February 2018 (survey in Appendix [H](#)). The survey specifically investigated three areas:

- 1) the chair or director's familiarity with the New College Curriculum,
- 2) effects of the New College Curriculum on the chair or director's department or program, and
- 3) the overall response of the chair's/director's department or program regarding the New College Curriculum.

The survey elicited 27 responses across various departments and academic programs throughout the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Those chairs and program directors with faculty participating in the College Fellows program had the most thorough working knowledge of the New College Curriculum. A theme that emerged several times in the survey was the shortage of faculty knowledge about the New Curriculum, a barrier to describing its current or likely future, local effects on individual programs. Many did say, however, that the loss of one or more faculty from departmental teaching assignments had already affected, or would affect in the future, their ability to maintain full undergraduate and graduate offerings. Having anticipated that smaller departments and programs might be more negatively impacted by the new curriculum, we investigated departments and programs' reported burdens relative to the size of their faculties and found, to our surprise, no correlation. What was unsurprising, given the College's recruiting efforts, was that the current faculty participating as College Fellows are respected, popular, and ornamented teachers who would inevitably be missed while teaching outside of their departments or programs.

Another concern noted by several respondents to the chairs and directors' survey was the worry that the 8 credits required of first-year students in the New College Curriculum would prevent some students from pursuing introductory coursework in departments with large credit requirements, particularly in the sciences. Indeed, some respondents commented that it was unclear how B.Sc. degrees could be completed by students if the new curriculum barred completion of introductory coursework in their first year. We note that those who designed this curriculum took care to consider all the possible majors and degree possibilities of College undergraduates, including modeling B.Sc. degree paths to completion. This subcommittee has recommended that the Supplementary Learning Outcomes subcommittee investigate if students

are able to complete the introductory coursework for those degree programs in question—a study which will be conducted at the end of each academic year. See also the Supplementary Learning Outcomes subcommittee’s current assessment of the student experience, which considers students’ navigability through their degree requirements.

Finally, the “pulse” of the faculty from the chairs’ perspective was quite variable. Some departments noted significant enthusiasm for the changes resulting from implementation of the New College Curriculum, while others stated that some of their faculty were “actively hostile.” Most departments and programs had not spoken as whole faculties about the pilot program, but many chairs and directors noted that of the faculty who were at least aware of the new curriculum, most were encouraged and “cautiously optimistic.”

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix G: Chairs & Directors Perspective \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix H: Chairs & Directors Perspective \(survey\)](#)

Faculty Advising Review

This subcommittee invited to a lunch-time discussion a representative group of twelve College faculty from among those not teaching in the Engagements courses but currently serving as advisers to students in both the New College and Traditional Curricula. Of these, eight attended the session, which met for an hour on November 17, 2017, immediately preceding the Fall 2018 advising and course registration period. Among them were Association Deans, COLA instructors, and faculty from several different departments. A digest of their comments may be found in [Appendix I](#).

There was a general recognition among those at the session that they were being questioned at an early stage of the curriculum’s implementation. The conversation thus emphasized initial challenges, including misinformation, lack of information, resultant confusion, and some accompanying discontentment. This discontent was recognized, however, as specific to the curriculum’s novelty, and particularly to the new curriculum’s being implemented while its predecessor was still in place. Several advisers offered specific suggestions about resources they wish they had access to so as to be able to provide better and more timely information to their advisees. Advisers also identified the structural conflict between the SIS restriction that students may initially register for only 15 credits, and the College’s advice for students to take five classes (impossible with 4 credits per semester dedicated to Engagement courses). This issue was described as a source of anxiety and inconvenience for students intending to enroll in 4-credit math, science, or creative writing classes. When speaking about their advisees, advisers described some who were immensely enthusiastic about the Engagements courses and who were beginning to make “bigger... connections” beyond the traditional disciplines. Advisers also identified, on the other hand, a few students enrolled in the new curriculum who wanted to leave it. In sum, advisers noted few problems that could not be addressed as the curriculum became better known and understood, particularly if the information provided to advisers were improved. The College has continued to update and disseminate advising materials for faculty since this focus group was held.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix I: Faculty Advising Review \(report\)](#)

Faculty Perspective

In February 2018, an online survey was distributed to all College of Arts & Sciences faculty on behalf of the General Education Assessment Committee, asking to what degree and how they had been affected by the development and implementation of the New College Curriculum. We received responses from 120 faculty members. Twelve respondents (10%) reported that they had been greatly affected by the new curriculum, 20 (17%) reported that they had been moderately affected, 39 (33%) reported that they had been minimally affected, and 49 (40%) reported that they had not been affected at all.⁷

Among respondents who reported that they had been affected to some degree, several themes emerged. Perhaps the most commonly raised theme, consistent with the chair and director's survey referred to above, was the impact of the new curriculum on enrollments in departmental courses and course offerings. Respondents expressed a concern that the Engagements seemed to be drawing students away from departmental courses, resulting in lower enrollments. The opposite view, however, was mentioned in regard to the Literacy/Discipline requirements—that these might increase enrollments in some departments. Another theme was the impact on departmental curricula and how reallocation of faculty time to the New College Curriculum would impact course offerings. For the most part, these comments described negative impacts and expressed the view that this aspect of the new curriculum had not been sufficiently thought through. Finally, there was also voicing of intellectual excitement over the new curriculum. COLA instructors noted that they had observed greater engagement and enthusiasm in their New Curriculum students. Others wrote that the new curriculum appealed to prospective faculty hires, or that they themselves were intrigued by the possibility of teaching an Engagements class in the future.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix J: Faculty Perspective \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix K: Faculty Perspective \(survey\)](#)

Conclusions

In summary, the data this subcommittee has collected demonstrates that the faculty experience connected with the pilot implementation of the New College Curriculum has generally been positive. Advisers' principal concerns are susceptible to resolution, and many or most may, in fact, be resolved as the program becomes more familiar. There is broad concern at the departmental/program level that the loss of teaching faculty to the Engagements makes offering a full and diverse set of courses more difficult, but chairs' concern about the impact on their departments and programs does not correlate with the size of the department or program. The

⁷ Four College Fellows responded to the survey, unsurprisingly reporting that they had been greatly affected. They are included in the first group mentioned above.

concern about the Engagements' reducing departments' enrollments, expressed both by the chairs and directors and by the faculty more generally, can only be accurately assessed when more students have enrolled in the new curriculum. With full implementation of the New College Curriculum, and long-term planning that allows departments or programs to have more notice about their faculty members' participation, the Engagement courses' burden on departments with College Fellows may be mitigated.⁸

⁸ N.B.: When fully implemented, only 5% of faculty in the College will be teaching in the New College Curriculum each year, which would mean departments could plan and stagger their faculty participation to meet the needs of their respective programs.

Courses

The Engagement courses were designed as the cornerstone of the first-year academic experience and serve as the most prominent feature of the New College Curriculum. These courses were designed to introduce four “distinct ways of apprehending the world,” or “intellectual arts of knowing, doing, and reasoning... [that] provide students with an inquiry-based framework for critically reflecting on the knowledge they will acquire in college, the literacies they are asked to master, and the application of these knowledge and skills in their future lives.”⁹ A key objective of this assessment was to investigate the academic experience—both intended and achieved—of these courses. The Courses subcommittee pursued this charge through three complementary approaches. Please note that none of these studies was designed to be fully comparative with respect to Traditional Curriculum courses (though the Syllabus review does have a comparative component). Instead, these studies evaluate the degree to which the Engagement courses were designed in alignment with known best practices in higher education pedagogy and investigate how those designs were both executed by the College Fellows and received by students.

The first study (“Syllabus Review”) employed a syllabus rubric constructed and validated by UVA’s Center for Teaching Excellence¹⁰ to investigate the degree to which the Engagement courses were designed with learning-focused best practices in mind (as represented in their syllabi). The second study (“Student Engagement Surveys”) utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement’s (NSSE) comprehensive list of “engagement indicators” that are known to be associated with positive academic outcomes, such as student learning and retention,¹¹ to identify and to assess the learning activities/practices conducted within the Engagement courses. The final study (“Course Evaluations”) employed a course evaluation instrument developed by Patrick Meyer of the UVA Curry School of Education,¹² designed using known best practices in higher education pedagogy and teaching. Together, these approaches seek to provide a comprehensive and thorough investigation of the academic experience of the first-year Engagement courses, both individually and as a cohesive component of the New College Curriculum.

Syllabus Review

To indirectly measure the quality of the overall designs of the Engagement courses, syllabi were analyzed using a peer-reviewed rubric. The rubric measures the effectiveness of syllabi as learning tools by providing qualitative descriptions of components that distinguish high-quality,

⁹ University of Virginia. (n.d.). The New College Curriculum Engagements [Web page]. <http://gened.as.virginia.edu/new-college-curriculum/engagements>

¹⁰ Palmer, M. S., Bach, D. J., & Streifer, A. C. (2014). Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (1), 14-36. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tia2.20004>

¹¹ National Survey of Student Engagement. (n.d.). Engagement Indicators [Web page]. http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/engagement_indicators.cfm

¹² Meyer, J. P., Doromal, J. B., Wei, X., & Zhu, S. (2017). A Criterion-Referenced Approach to Student Ratings of Instruction. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(5), 545-567.

learning-focused syllabi and by using a quantitative scoring system that places syllabi on a spectrum from content-focused¹³ to learning-focused.¹⁴ It is flexible enough to accommodate a diverse range of academic levels, disciplines, and learning environments.

The rubric focuses on four main criteria typical of learning-focused syllabi: (1) learning goals and objectives, (2) assessment activities, (3) schedule, and (4) overall learning environment. Each criterion is broken down into multiple components, which are each scored on the strength of supporting evidence (strong/moderate/low). The maximum score possible is 46 with content-focused (i.e., least learning-focused) syllabi falling in the range 0–16, transitional (i.e., moderately learning-focused) scoring between 17–30, and learning-focused resulting in scores between 31–46.

Analyses of a wide range of syllabi by UVA's Center for Teaching Excellence has shown that the vast majority of UVA syllabi typically fall in two lower-scoring groups. For example, the 54 syllabi analyzed as part of the validation study for the tool had an average total score of 9.4, and only 2 of the 54 syllabi scored in the learning-focused range.

Syllabi for each of the Engagement courses offered during the 2017-18 academic year were assessed by two reviewers. The total scores and criterion-summed scores for the 26 syllabi for the Engagement courses compare very favorably against UVA syllabi previously scored by the Center for Teaching Excellence¹⁰. Key observations include:

- The average score for all Engagements syllabi is 35.9 (out of 46).
- Twenty (20) of these syllabi fall in the learning-focused range; 6 in the transitional range; 0 in the content-focused range.
- Every Engagements syllabus has a non-zero score for every criterion.
- Two Engagements syllabi scored the maximum 46 points.
- Average scores for Engagement syllabi for each rubric component were as follows: learning goals & objectives = 10.5 out of 12; assessment activities = 11.5 out of 16; schedule = 4.6 out of 6; overall learning environment = 9.3 out of 12.

¹³ Content-focused syllabi emphasize course content, rules and policies, and serve primarily a contractual purpose.

¹⁴ Learning-focused syllabi emphasize learning and serve primarily as a learning tool. They are built from principles of backward-integrated design, educative assessment, active learning, evidence-based pedagogies, and student motivation.

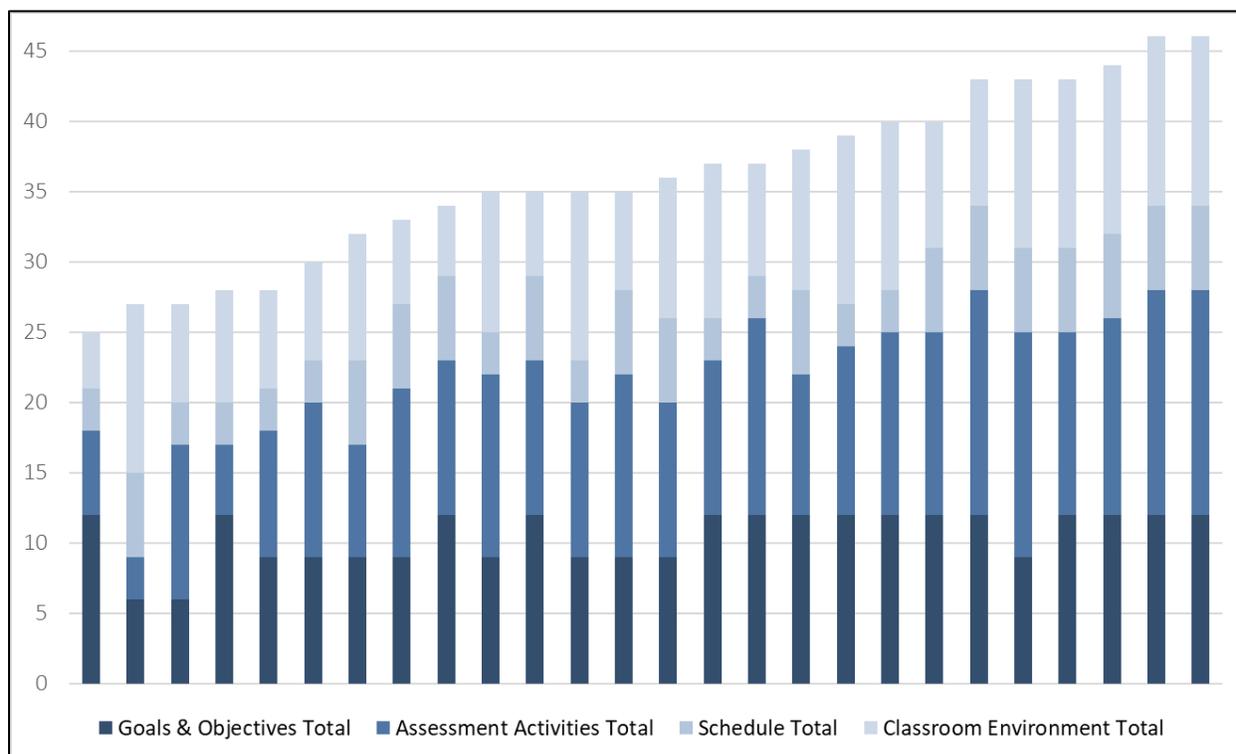


Figure 3. Total scores (out of 46) and criterion-summed scores for the twenty-six syllabi for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 Engagement courses.

These data suggest the articulated designs of the Engagement courses are aligned with high-quality, learning-focused courses. Even syllabi that scored in the transitional range feature many of the essential components, including learning goals and objectives.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix L: Syllabus Review \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix M: Syllabus Review \(original guide & rubric\)](#)

Student Engagement Surveys

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has developed a list of “engagement indicators” that are known to be positively associated with student learning, retention, and other educational outcomes.¹⁵ This list (provided in detail in Table 7) was used to investigate the many significant learning practices that may be occurring in the New College Curriculum’s first-year Engagement classes, and the first-year experience in general. College Fellows were asked to identify significant learning activities asked of students in their course. For each activity, they were then asked to identify several associated engagement indicator items (Table 7) that would be performed by students over the course of completing that assignment. This information was then used to create surveys for students about their Engagement courses. Each student had a

¹⁵ National Survey of Student Engagement. (n.d.). Engagement Indicators [Web page]. http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/engagement_indicators.cfm

chance to identify which indicator items they believed had been performed during the course activities.

Engagement Indicator	Indicator Items
Higher-Order Learning (HOL)	(HOL-1) Applied facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
	(HOL-2) Analyzed an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
	(HOL-3) Evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source
	(HOL-4) Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information
Reflective & Integrative Learning (RIL)	(RIL-1) Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
	(RIL-2) Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
	(RIL-3) Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
	(RIL-4) Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
	(RIL-5) Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
	(RIL-6) Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
	(RIL-7) Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	(QR-1) Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
	(QR-2) Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
	(QR-3) Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information
Learning with Peers (LWP)	(LWP-1) Explained course material to one or more students
	(LWP-2) Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Table 7. List of NSSE Engagement Indicators and items used in this study.

As only a semester’s worth of data is available for this report, we hesitate to draw any conclusions at this time, and the cumulative nature of the Engagement Courses experience warrants a complete annual result for full analysis. That said, the data we have collected thus far is promising, as shown in this study’s full report (Appendix N). Taken as a whole, the Engagement courses were designed to cover a wide range of NSSE engagement indicators and their associated component items, and the relative rankings of those items appear in line with the program’s overall design and objectives. In addition, students report performing available indicators with high likelihood:

- average indicator achieved 76% of the time;

- minimum indicator (“combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments”) achieved 51% of the time; and
- maximum indicator (“evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source”) achieved 90% of the time.

These conclusions imply that the Engagement courses are delivering a high-impact academic experience.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix N: Student Engagement Surveys \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix O: Student Engagement Surveys \(example survey\)](#)

Course Evaluations

In lieu of the UVA Provost’s standard course evaluations, this subcommittee employed the Teaching Quality Student Rating Inventory (TQSRI), a tool developed by Patrick Meyer of the UVA Curry School¹⁶ in alignment with a teaching framework derived from the work of Fink¹⁷ and Arreola¹⁸, and in consultation with selected expert teachers at UVA. The TQSRI is notable for its items that are: (a) grounded in current instructional design principles, (b) widely applicable to multiple pedagogies, (c) criterion - referenced and thus comparable across evaluations, and (d) formative in their feedback to faculty (e.g., the College Fellows have been able to use the course evaluations to improve course design and implementation). These qualities make it superior for our purposes in comparison to the tool administered each semester by the Office of the Provost.

For this study, the TQSRI was administered to students in the New College Curriculum after each 7-week Engagement period during the 2017-18 academic year. Results and discussion provided at this time rely on data collected for Fall 2017 Engagement courses only. In this survey, scores are out of a possible 5, with 5 being the maximum.

Generally, the data describe excellent evaluations for the Engagement courses with only some variation between individual courses. The academic rigor of the courses was rated high ($M = 4.10$, $SD 0.88$), as was faculty interaction ($M = 4.44$, $SD 1.19$). Organization and structure of the courses ($M = 3.88$, $SD 1.17$) and assessment and feedback ($M = 3.92$, $SD 1.15$) were both scored moderately high. Note that these scores should not be compared with traditional ratings generated by the UVA Provost’s survey because the two tools ask qualitatively different questions.

¹⁶ Meyer, J. P., Doromal, J. B., Wei, X., & Zhu, S. (2017). A Criterion-Referenced Approach to Student Ratings of Instruction. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(5), 545-567.

¹⁷ Fink, L. D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁸ Arreola, R. A. (2007). *Developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system: A guide to designing, building, and operating large-scale faculty evaluation systems* (3rd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company Inc.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix P: Course Evaluations \(report\)](#)
- [Appendix Q: Course Evaluations \(survey\)](#)

Conclusions

While both the “Student Engagement Surveys” and “Course Evaluations” assessments are works-in-progress and require a complete year’s worth of data for full analysis, the results thus far are positive:

- The “Syllabus Review” study shows that the initial Engagement syllabi are written in strong alignment with high-quality, learning-focused principles.
- The “Student Engagement Surveys” study show that the Engagement courses are designed to provide high-impact educational experiences, and moreover, are achieving that design (according to student self-report).
- The “Course Evaluations” study shows students’ favorable response to their Engagement courses and instructors.

Direct Learning Outcomes

The Direct Learning Outcomes Subcommittee has planned an assessment of direct learning outcomes to be conducted in late April 2018 and 2019, at the end of the New Curriculum's first year courses. By then, students will have participated in the full Engagement experience. Below, we provide a work-in-progress account of the planned assessment.

Direct Learning Outcomes Assessment

The General Education Committee that designed the New College Curriculum did not describe explicit learning outcomes for each Engagement domain, but during the design phase of the Engagement courses the College Fellows described expected learning in their courses. While specific Engagement courses vary in both topic and pedagogy, they are all unified by common themes, goals, and expectations. These descriptions were analyzed and refined to articulate domain-specific learning outcomes for EGMT 1510: Engaging Aesthetics courses, EGMT 1520: Empirical and Scientific Engagement courses, EGMT 1530: Engaging Differences courses, and EGMT 1540: Ethical Engagement courses.

The direct learning outcomes assessment will employ two essay prompts in which a random sample of first-year students will be asked to respond to a significant contemporary issue by making recourse to Engagement domains. One prompt asks students to invoke empiricism and ethics while confronting the topic of police using body cameras. The second asks students to analyze Wall Street's 'Fearless Girl' statue by using aesthetics and differences. In each case, students are presented with a newspaper article describing the issue and then asked to analyze the issue, creating a clear and logical argument to support their analyses. We expect around 200 first-year students in total to participate. We will employ stratified, random sampling of students in the New College and Traditional Curricula, divided evenly between the two prompts.

Both prompts were pilot-tested among second-year students. While the draft of the 'Fearless Girl' prompt proved satisfactory and needed only minor revisions, the 'police body cameras' prompt failed to encourage students to engage the prompt empirically. After significant revision, the 'police body cameras' prompt was pilot-tested among first-year students who had completed courses in both Empirical & Scientific Engagement and Ethical Engagement. This pilot test proved satisfactory for implementation.

Graders were recruited in April in parallel with participant recruitment. The full assessment will be conducted at the end of April, with grading following shortly afterwards. Current rubrics follow the example of the AAC&U "Inquiry and Analysis" VALUE rubric.¹⁹

While the design of this study was originally intended as a case-control study, whereby students expressing interest in the New College Curriculum were randomly divided into a case group and a control group (i.e., those who participate in the New College Curriculum and those who participate in the Traditional Curriculum), the College administration admitted all interested

¹⁹ Association of American Colleges & Universities. (n.d.). Inquiry and Analysis VALUE Rubric [PDF file]. <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/inquiry-analysis>

students into the New College Curriculum this year. This study is therefore being conducted during AY 2017-18 as an observational experiment. Once the study is conducted, the subcommittee and the larger committee will discuss, interpret, and decide how to present the results. The General Education Assessment Committee, in conversation with the A&S administration, anticipate that a case-control study will be made available during AY 2018-19. To that end, the work of this subcommittee has centered primarily on the validity and rigor of the prompts and study execution.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix R: Direct Learning Outcomes Assessment \(prompts\)](#)

Supplementary Learning Outcomes

The task of the Supplementary Learning Outcomes subcommittee was to investigate what aspects of the student experience are the other studies missing, and how might we assess them? More specifically, we considered elements of the first-year experience that may or may not have occurred in the classroom, but are certainly related to the General Education program. At this time, two studies are in development, both to be conducted at the end of the Spring 2018 and 2019 semesters and described below: a “supplementary learning outcomes investigation” and a “student navigation & satisfaction survey.” While most of our current attention is focused on the first-year Engagement courses, our 2018-2019 report to the faculty will include additional studies related to students’ progress through the other components of the New College Curriculum (i.e., the Literacies and Disciplines).

Supplementary Learning Outcomes Investigation

While the New College Curriculum explicitly outlines a number of intended learning outcomes for first-year students enrolled in Engagement courses, both the College Fellows and General Education Assessment Committee expect that participation in the Engagements may result in achieved academic outcomes both unexpected and significant. The goal of this study is to identify those supplementary learning outcomes not explicitly identified in the curriculum design, and then to determine whether any difference exists among the identified outcomes between students enrolled in the New College Curriculum and those enrolled in the Traditional Curriculum. This study is currently in the recruitment and implementation stage.

The GEAC will first conduct a focus group with students in the New College Curriculum to identify outcomes from the Engagements consistent with the design of the courses. The focus group will be held mid-Spring 2018. Participants will include students, nominated by College Fellows and Teaching Assistants, who have contributed to the ongoing conversation about Democracy and Education from diverse perspectives and demonstrated a commitment to the work of the classroom. Guiding questions for the focus group are listed below:

- General question: What do you think you have gained from your Engagements classes, and the New College Curriculum experience as a whole?
- Tell us about something you’ve taken away from your experience in the Engagements.
- What have you learned about (a) citizenship, (b) vocation, and (c) what is good?
- Tell us about the experience of your Engagement classes and how that compares with your other courses.
- How, if at all, have your relationships with the College Fellows been different from those with your other instructors?
- How, if at all, has working with students in the Engagement classes been different from working with students in other classes?

Results from the focus group will be analyzed for common themes and specific, measurable learning outcomes. These results will then inform the design of a multiple-choice survey related to the first-year academic experience—the main component of this study. A battery of questions will be designed that asks students to self-report whether their first-year academic experience

exposed them to learning consistent with priorities identified during the initial focus group. The survey will be distributed to all first-year students (both in the New College Curriculum and Traditional Curriculum), and analyses of the data will seek to identify any significant differences between the two populations.

General limitations to the design of the study include the low reliability of self-reported data regarding learning. The GEAC recognizes this limitation and will design the items not to ask what students learned during their first year but rather their exposure to the types of learning in accordance with best practices in higher education program and learning outcomes assessment.

Student Navigation & Satisfaction Survey

In addition to the academic outcomes we will investigate, in all studies previously described, the GEAC recognizes that the general education requirements and New College Curriculum in particular, have a tremendous impact on students' lived 'professional' experience at UVA. This includes how they interact with their advisor, their ability and process of registering for classes, and the other students they meet and form relationships with. This "Student Navigation & Satisfaction Survey" is an attempt to investigate this aspect of the New College Curriculum's impact on student life. The completed survey draft is available for your review (in Appendix [S](#)). It will be distributed electronically via Qualtrics to students in all general education curricula at the end of the Spring 2018 semester.

The survey is divided into several conceptual themes and areas of interest:

- course planning priorities in terms of major, pre-professional programs, General Education requirements, academic exploration, etc.,
- understanding of and progress towards the requirements of their General Education program,
- effective use of and satisfaction with the various resources students use to navigate their General Education requirements, and
- impact of the first year on students' development and values (academic, civic, etc.).

For more information, please refer to:

- [Appendix S: Student Navigation & Satisfaction Survey \(survey\)](#)

Appendix A: General Education Committee Proposal

We provide here a lightly edited version of the 2013-2106 General Education proposal describing the New College Curriculum. Edits to the document were made to capture the current implementation of the curriculum. This includes an update to the Engagements “Design Principles” and “Descriptions and Learning Outcomes,” which have gone through two rounds of revisions with the hiring of two College Fellows cohorts.

Previous iterations of this document were submitted to CEPC in March 2015, provided to the faculty ahead of the May 2015 vote, and posted on UVA’s general education website.

April | 2018

The New College Curriculum

Committee on General Education: University of
Virginia College of Arts & Sciences

A General Education Curriculum for the 21st Century

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Introduction

This document details in narrative form the principles, structure, and function constituting the College of Arts & Sciences new general education curriculum: The New College Curriculum. As an effort shepherded by the faculty of the College (dating back to 2010), this reimagined curriculum aspires to build a scaffold on which students will develop the knowledge, habits, and practices necessary for flourishing in an increasingly complex world profoundly changed by the knowledge economy.

Why change?

While our students may have flourished in their majors, their experiences under the previous GE curriculum were characterized by a flurry of prerequisites and one-off courses. A curriculum is not just a formal list of requirements but instead an assertion of values, purpose, and commitment. Previous iterations of the curriculum implicitly endorsed the primary values of individual choice and variety of experience. The values of shared intellectual experience and collaborative inquiry among students, as well as synthesis and connections across disciplines and objects of knowledge, were missing. Furthermore, the College faculty had no mechanism to corporately make any specific claims about general education or work to revise them over time. We believe these latter values to be as important as the former, and thus have redesigned the curriculum to incorporate shared experience, synthesis and integration. We have further designed an institutional body comprised of College faculty who will consistently engage in sustained reflection and revision of the curriculum while teaching in its core component.

Foundations for a Liberal Arts & Sciences General Education Curriculum

Purpose of General Education

We propose that the purpose of a general education program is to inculcate sensibilities that are generally deployed across all realms of inquiry, and thus in all aspects of living. Such an education has liberating potential because it offers students substantial ways of thinking about what they will see and do throughout their undergraduate studies. A general education prepares them for an empirically informed, ethically aware, aesthetically charged, culturally attuned use of freedom, both in making choices about their further studies and in all aspects of their lives beyond the Bachelor's degree. A general education enables a fluency necessary to engage multiple communities and multiple forms of thought. And a general education guarantees that students are exposed to the various forms of disciplinary thinking across the academy, that they might develop capacities to evolve, change and adapt to a world that is in constant flux.

Yet any discussion of general education at UVA must be framed within our understanding of the broader values that undergird a liberal education at a 21st century public research university. The liberal education should indeed liberate the individual and prepare him or her to flourish as an engaged citizen-intellectual. It should equip students for lives of purposeful vocation in a dynamic, rapidly-changing world and foster the wisdom necessary to live as citizens of a range of communities. It should deeply involve students both in the acquisition of knowledge and in

the discovery of knowledge – as designers, shapers, and creators of new forms of understanding, research and apprehension. Thus, our students should leave the University prepared to seek delight, to invent the unprecedented, and to contribute to the flourishing of the Commonwealth and the global common good.

The shared student experience at UVA for the last forty-plus years has been less a curriculum than an extra-curricular life. As a faculty deeply vested in the pursuit of knowledge both valuable in itself and for the purpose of lives well lived, we want to put the curriculum back at the center of College life – a curriculum that makes specific claims about the values, commitments, and purposes of a liberal arts and sciences education. We want to provide our students shared curricular touchstones that will guide their exploration and bind their common pursuits. And we want to foster sensibilities and intellectual habits of scholarly practice by introducing our students to the standards of the highest scholarship while asking students to confront ambiguity. In doing so, we are confident that our students will be prepared to live with knowledge that will supersede our own and to make sense of knowledge as it changes.

The Student Experience of General Education

When our students first arrive on grounds, it is with a sense of curiosity and optimism about the path ahead of them. How the curriculum respects and encourages this mindset is critical to unlocking our students' passion for learning, supporting their drive to persevere through uncertainty, opening them up to connections across academic and co-curricular domains, and enabling their individual human flourishing. An inquiry-driven curriculum that develops intellectual sensibilities and metacognitive awareness in multiple domains will help students achieve these goals. Thus, the General Education Curriculum is our first opportunity to enact the values of a liberal education and create an environment in which students further ignite their curiosity and optimism for their time at UVA and beyond. In accordance with this belief, we offer the following tenets of the student experience:

A participative learning experience encourages the acquisition and discovery of knowledge, the synthesis of that knowledge, and production of original work. Uncovering their roles as co-discoverers of scholarship, research and understanding will help students find their voices and realize their potential to contribute to vital conversations.

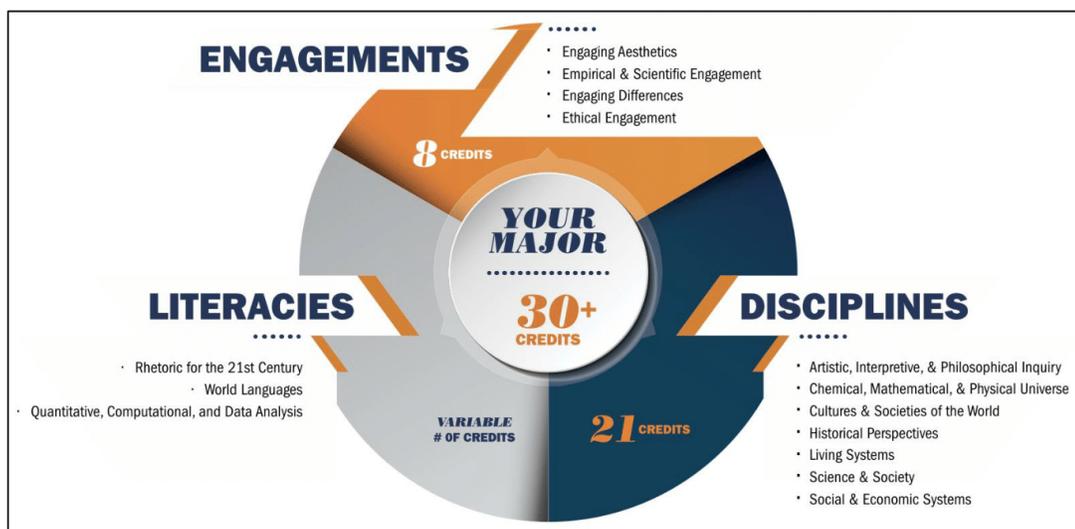
Experiential learning enables students to bridge theory and practice, make connections across disciplines, identify with multiple perspectives, and gain the fluency needed to interact with diverse communities. This prepares our students for engaged citizenship in multiple communities and readies them to contribute to the flourishing of the common good.

Continual reflection by students helps them recognize their potential and develop frameworks for future inquiry as they move into the disciplines and beyond UVA. As we equip students for lives of purposeful vocation in a dynamic world, students' reflective practices will allow them to tap into their own strengths, motivations, and talents and understand what their future contributions might be.

A New Model for General Education

The committee proposes a General Education curricular structure subdivided into three components:

1. Engagements
2. Literacies
3. Disciplines



Engagements

The first component of the new curriculum begins the process of engagement with unknown knowledge/uncertainty and seeks to cultivate in students four intellectual sensibilities that are generally deployed across all realms of inquiry. Designed as a first-year experience, the *Engagements* serve as the foundation of the general education experience and provide an intellectual framework guiding our students not only through their subsequent studies but in application of the knowledge and skills they acquire in their future lives as engaged citizen-intellectuals. They are:

Aesthetic Engagement – In this class students will learn to identify, describe, and analyze aesthetic phenomena, understand the social role and ongoing evolution of human creative expression, and develop their own approach to creative expression.

Empirical and Scientific Engagement – In this class students will learn to analyze claims about the material and social worlds through formulation and testing of new questions and hypotheses based on observation and experience.

Engaging Differences – In this class, students will learn to critically reflect on one's own situation and perspective in relations to one's expanding knowledge of other human experiences, seeking to cultivate a framework for informed reflection on human diversity

and social complexity while developing empathy as a foundation for democratic citizenship.

Ethical Engagement – In this class students will learn to reflect upon and evaluate human conduct and character, consider the ethical components of individual and collective behaviors, and engage in the articulation of ethical questions and moral deliberation.

The Engagements are taught by a cross-College body of faculty who, each from the standpoint of their own discipline, will reach beyond that discipline to address one of the four areas of inquiry noted above. Much has been debated as to whether these courses serve as “pre-disciplinary” or “trans-disciplinary” educational experiences. While the development of these sensibilities is neither opposed to disciplines, nor opposed to the seriousness of thought and the acquisition of specific content that gives substance to thought, this curricular component seeks to inculcate habits of mind that are necessary (or necessarily *a priori*) to developing disciplinary knowledge, at least knowledge in its sophisticated forms.

As the core of the general education experience – and liberal education in the College of Arts and Sciences – this shared experience provides a basis for students to educate one another in the remainder of their time at UVA. With the same touchstones they will do their further choosing not only as individuals, but as members of a mutually informing community whose members can assume the same vocabularies for discussing those choices. The ways of thinking proposed in these courses will therefore frame students’ experience in the second and third components of the general education experience – the *Literacies* and *Disciplines*.

(For further information regarding the content and structure of the Engagements, please refer to [Appendix A: Engagements](#)).

Literacies

The second component of the new curriculum was designed with the recognition that, in order to navigate a rapidly transforming global community, students must master particular intellectual arts of knowing, doing, and reasoning embedded in the languages of world vocation and citizenship. The *Literacies* thus equip our students with fluency in a range of idioms they will need to engage multiple communities and multiple forms of thought. These include

World Languages - Courses satisfying the World Languages requirement develop students’ communicative competence in a world language other than their own at an intermediate proficiency level.

Rhetoric for the 21st Century - The Rhetoric for the 21st Century literacy provides experience with rhetorical arts (i.e., written, oral, and digital forms of expression) at three levels – a first-year writing course that includes written, oral, and digital assignments; a course offered from among the departments that meets certain parameters regarding sufficient written, oral, and digital projects; and engaged writing as a form of inquiry and reflection in the core *Engagement* courses.

Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis – The Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis literacy enables students to apply mathematical skills to understand and solve real world problems. Through this requirements students will develop quantitative literacy in both theory and application.

As a faculty, we believe these literacies are essential to individual flourishing, the flourishing of the common good, the capacity to contribute to the discovery of new knowledge, and the ability to thrive in a heterogeneous and ever-more-cosmopolitan globe. The Literacies compliment the Engagements by deepening students' capacity in forms of expression used by highly literate members of our society – namely the rhetorical, translingual, and mathematical arts. We refer here not to a set of basic skills but to arts learned, practiced, and applied through one's life.

(For further information regarding the content and structure of the Literacies, please refer to [Appendix B: Literacies](#)).

Disciplines

In this third key component of study, students will explore a wide range of objects of knowledge from a range of perspectives grounded in disciplinary thinking but with an invitation to cross-disciplinary exploration and thinking. We want to expose our students to the best of our faculty as they perform the practices of reasoning embodied in their lives as scholars across the various disciplines of the arts and sciences (e.g., literature, astronomy, economics, statistics, or the studio arts). Therefore, courses in the *Disciplines* component will fundamentally be taught by departments and other existing programs.

In this 21-credit component (the largest of the three sub-components of the General Education curriculum), faculty introduce students to more distinct scholarly communities and traditions—what have come to be termed *Disciplines*. No one discipline can claim exclusive right to any intellectual tradition, but each practice is institutionalized, sustained, and embodied in distinct disciplinary traditions. Thus, the distributive nature of the Disciplines component is not tethered to specific departments but rather different kinds of research and modes of thought – realms that reflect the lateral connections between disciplinary knowledge. These include:

- Artistic, Interpretive, and Philosophical Inquiry* – Courses that develop in students an ability to interpret, evaluate, and participate in artistic expression and abstract argument
- The Chemical, Mathematical and Physical Universe* – Courses that develop in students a knowledge of past and present attempts to identify the material composition of the physical world and universe and the forces that govern their interaction.
- Cultures and Societies of the World* – Courses that introduce students to the wide variety of societies, institutions, and cultures around the world.
- Historical Perspectives* - Courses that provide students with a broad perspective on changing human experience.
- Living Systems* – Courses that develop a knowledge of principals of how living systems work and interact with the environment.
- Science and Society* – Courses that provide students with a basic understanding of the relationships of scientific knowledge, technology, and society.
- Social and Economic Systems* – Courses that introduce and reflect on social patterns and structures around the world.

In the process of exploring these distinct scholarly traditions and communities, students have a chance to observe, practice and reflect on the ways in which the sensibilities developed in the

first year as part of the *Engagements*—aesthetic, empirical, ethical, and the engagement of difference—are deeply embedded in a wide range of contexts and disciplines. The design of the curriculum invites faculty to articulate these interconnections in ways that may not be immediately evident to students—how science might be informed by ethics and aesthetics, for example, or how literary study might mobilize empiricism and engage difference. Likewise, the intellectual arts developed in the *Literacies* begin to interweave with disciplinary knowledge as students are called on to develop and explain their thinking in a wide variety of disciplinary contexts (e.g., consulting non-English-language news sources to analyze world politics, analyzing a scientific claim based on their developing quantitative literacy, or deploying their developing rhetorical abilities to articulate and defend theoretical claims).

(For further information regarding the content and structure of the Disciplines, please refer to [Appendix C: Disciplines](#)).

The College Fellows

At the core of the new General Education curriculum are the College Fellows, a College-wide body of faculty members and post-doctoral teaching fellows drawn from across departments and programs. Appointment to the College Fellows is for fixed terms. It is the responsibility of the College Fellows to steward the aims of the General Education curriculum, including making specific claims about general education and working to revise these claims over time. This stewardship comes in many forms, from continuous dialogue and reflection concerning the fundamental ends of general education to teaching in the curriculum's core *Engagements* component.

Role and Responsibility of the College Fellows

Representing the College as a whole, the College Fellows design and teach in the core Engagement courses for first-year students. This work includes building on the work of previous cohorts to further define the Engagement experience for students and faculty. In particular, this may include the revision of the Engagements “Design Principles” and “Descriptions and Learning Outcomes.”

All members of the College Fellows teach in the Engagements, with a teaching load equal to two-thirds of the instructional effort within the faculty member's department(s).

For the duration of their term, College Fellows will participate in activities to build collegiality and a shared vision of the undergraduate experience. This will take the form of regular meetings and colloquia among the Fellows. This may also include College Fellows-sponsored events such as lectures for the University community, symposia, and seminars regarding the liberal arts and sciences at UVA.

Appendices

Appendix A: Engagements

This 8-credit experience, designed and taught by a rotating cohort of College faculty, invite students to engage in four distinct practices of inquiry fundamental to advanced learning in all disciplines. These are: Engaging Aesthetics, Empirical & Scientific Engagement, Engaging Differences, and Ethical Engagement.

The *Engagements* are designed and taught by a College-wide body of committed scholar-teachers: the College Fellows. In addition to a reduced teaching load, the College Fellows would hold the responsibility for serving as a corporate body to consider the purposes and aims of the General Education. Thus, the College Fellows would not only design the Engagements but reflect on the goals, structure, and delivery of these core courses.

In order to guide the work of the appointed College Fellows, a set of provisional **design principles** for all Engagement courses and a set of provisional **descriptions and learning outcomes** for each engagement domain are offered. These are dynamically designed with the intent of perennial debate on behalf of the College Fellows.

Engagements Design Principles

Our work together as College Fellows...

- * will frame enduring and emerging questions—both in scholarship and in the lives of our students—that reflect the principles of a liberal education; prepare students for engaged participation in multiple communities; and seek the flourishing of the self, our local communities, the Commonwealth, the nation, and the globe;
- * will model and encourage a sense of intellectual wonder, generosity, and curiosity by exploring and reflecting on different habits of mind by Engaging Aesthetics, Engaging Differences, in Ethical Engagements and Empirical and Scientific Engagements that are common to multiple disciplines;
- * will be oriented to learning as a process of both flux and fixity, and will embrace the ambiguity and humility at the heart of engaging and creating knowledge;
- *will introduce students to how scholars frame inquiry, analyze problems, and create knowledge in the liberal arts;
- *will invite our students to encounter the liberal arts and sciences as a capacious and constantly expanding intellectual community;
- *will orient our students to key questions that have long animated intellectual conversations;
- *will equip students to articulate provisional analyses that reflect an openness to debate and differing values and a commitment to exploring knowledge and truth.

Engagements Descriptions and Learning Outcomes

The Engagements describe distinct ways of making sense of and acting in the world. Each concerns the capacity to pose particular types of questions. These courses focus on the intellectual arts of knowing, doing, and reasoning at the heart of a liberal education. Engagement courses provide students with a framework for reflecting on the knowledge they will pursue in college as scholars, the literacies they are asked to master, and the application of this knowledge and these skills in their future lives of purposeful vocation as engaged citizen-intellectuals. The Engagements are distinct but also overlap in deep and important ways. All of them are concerned with not only what it means to know the world but to live in it.

Engaging Aesthetics

How do our creative expressions help us make sense of ourselves, each other, and the world? How can we understand the power of encounters with art and the natural world to move, convince, or even transform us?

A general education should help you explore our world through the lens of human creativity in its many forms. In their shaping of materials, language, space, and sound, artists, architects, writers, composers, and makers of all kinds reinterpret the world, showing us vital ways of thinking about our present, our past, and the natural environment. We will explore how works of art provoke our most visceral emotional responses and invite engaged intellectual reflection and interpretation. Aesthetic Engagement courses will help you:

- think critically about the nature of art and artistry;
- describe and analyze aesthetic experiences and objects;
- reflect on the historical, geographical, and cultural differences that shape human responses to aesthetic experience; and
- respond to and take stock of the moral and ethical capacities of the arts, whether in everyday life or at moments of social, political, and environmental crisis.

Empirical & Scientific Engagement

How do we know and make sense of the world with evidence drawn from experience? How are facts and evidence identified, collected, analyzed and interpreted?

A general education should help you make sense of the world and cosmos by analyzing observable evidence and using formal and quantitative reasoning. Both within and beyond the university, you will encounter claims about the natural and social worlds and be confronted with situations that require you to evaluate and make decisions based on evidence. Empirical methods are a crucial component to addressing and answering such a broad range of essential questions. We will explore how questions and hypotheses are formulated and evaluated. Empirical and Scientific Engagement courses will help you:

- define and delimit the empirical;
- develop a framework for discerning types of knowledge based on what is empirically observable in the natural, physical and social worlds;
- evaluate supported claims about the natural and social worlds by framing empirical questions and interpreting the claims in the context of new data; and
- articulate the limitations of using empirical approaches to describe complex phenomena.

Engaging Differences

What kind of good is difference? In an increasingly pluralistic world, how might we live alongside each other and pursue a common good?

A general education should help you explore the ways in which people are and are perceived to be different. Both within the university and beyond, you will encounter an ever-greater range of forms in which human difference is realized across space and time, including distinctions of culture, religion, and nationality, as well as those of class, race, gender, sexuality, ability, privilege, and power. If these differences can challenge our abilities to understand one another, they are also occasions for deeper knowledge. Engaging Differences courses will help you:

- analyze and evaluate the richness and complexity of variable experience;
- reflect upon the social inequalities historically produced and patterned along some lines of difference;
- consider how difference functions across social and temporary boundaries; how imbalances can lead to lasting structural injury; how we live, perform, and express our differences and develop biases and construct forms of discrimination; and
- understand different lives and cultures in a spirit of a common good to make sense of human experience.

Ethical Engagement

How do we relate to ourselves, others, and the world? What are the behaviors, habits, and dispositions that constitute a good or successful life?

A general education should help you reflect upon and deliberate about your lives as ethical agents. Ethical engagement is inevitable—even ignoring conflict and controversy is itself an ethical decision. Both within the university and beyond, you will encounter questions of right and wrong, liberty and obligation, justice and mercy; you will be responsible for whatever conception of the “good” you use to structure and orient your life. We will consider how to understand ethical reflection and practice while acknowledging that some differences on ethical questions are irreconcilable. Ethical Engagement Courses will help you:

- articulate, evaluate and respond to ethical questions;
- reflect upon ethical traditions, your own and those of others;
- grapple with the culturally-located and historically-rooted contexts of ethical action and reflection;
- recognize yourselves as ethical agents within your communities and the broader world; and consider what it means to live a good life.

Appendix B: Literacies

World Languages (Varying Credits; Proficiency through 2020)

Every student in the College of Arts and Sciences should be able to communicate in a language other than his or her native language. Courses satisfying the requirement develop students' communicative competence in a language (students should be able to listen/understand, speak, read and write in meaningful contexts at the intermediate proficiency level or above). Language courses also expand students' knowledge of one or more of the cultures that speak the chosen language through engagement with authentic cultural products. This requirement helps prepare College students to interact and collaborate within multilingual communities in their community and around the world.

Students completing the language requirement will realistically perform at a range of levels, with intermediate level being a minimum. Actual outcomes for each student will vary based on the nature of the language (cognate or non-cognate) as well as on the skill assessed (listening and reading skills tend to progress ahead of speaking and writing skills, for example). Some students will complete the sequence performing well above the intermediate level in some if not all areas.

Proficiency may be evaluated in five areas: speaking, writing, listening, reading, and cultural competence. Speakers at the Intermediate level are able to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. Writers at the Intermediate level can create with the language and communicate facts and ideas in order to meet practical writing needs, such as composing and responding to messages, notes, and requests for information. Listeners at this level can understand information conveyed in predictable, sentence-length speech on familiar topics in face-to-face conversations or in everyday contexts such as announcements, straightforward instructions, or directions. Readers can understand information conveyed in texts in familiar formats, such as weather reports, announcements, or advertisements. Learners combine all four skills with ongoing engagement with the practices, products, and perspectives of the cultures studied in order to communicate with cultural competence and understanding.

Rhetoric for the 21st Century (6 Credits)

We believe that all students need thorough experience with what we call “Rhetoric for the 21st Century”—by which we mean the written, oral, and digital forms of expression used by highly literate members of our society. In order to develop their capacity with the various arts of rhetoric, we propose that all students in the College of Arts and Sciences take a first-year writing course that includes written, oral, and digital assignments; that they engage in writing regularly as a form of inquiry and reflection in core Engagement courses; and that they take a course that meets the second writing requirement, from among the departments, which includes written, oral, and digital projects.

Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis (6 Credits)

The Quantification, Computation, and Data Analysis literacy enables students to apply mathematical skills to understand and solve real world problems. Through this requirement students will develop quantitative literacy in both theory and application. Students fulfill this requirement by completing two 3- or 4-credit courses that include some or all of the following:

- a. Theoretical concepts and structures of mathematics and statistics including (but not limited to) pure mathematics, logic, and theoretical statistics.
- b. Manipulation and interpretation of mathematical expressions.
- c. Application of computational and analytical methods in order to manipulate, organize, summarize, and evaluate quantitative information and experience.
- d. Theoretical and/or practical interpretation and communication of data in order to solve real-world problems

Courses fulfilling this requirement should be primarily focused on quantitative and/or computational methods and analysis, rather than the use of such methods in a course with some other primary focus.

Appendix C: Disciplines

The faculty has established the *Disciplines* requirement to ensure that all students have the background and breadth for further learning in a variety of disciplines. In this component of study, students will explore a wide range of objects of knowledge from a range of perspectives grounded in disciplinary thinking and particular scholarly practices. Courses that comprise the Disciplines component are taught by departments and other existing programs.

All undergraduate students must earn 3 credits in each of the seven Discipline categories listed below.

In order to ensure that students are exposed to the broad range of disciplinary thinking throughout the College, students must fulfill this requirement by taking courses from at least six different departments. Though courses may be cross-listed among several Discipline categories, courses may only count towards fulfilling one Discipline category for each student.

The Disciplines Categories

Artistic, Interpretive & Philosophical Understanding

A liberal education should develop in students an ability to interpret, evaluate and participate in artistic expression and abstract argument. Cultivating these sensibilities fosters a more profound understanding of and connection to one's own subjective experience of a mutually perceivable world. Courses in this category will develop a student's capacity to conceptualize shared meaning from words, objects and performance, which is fundamental to the activities of all other disciplines.

The Chemical, Mathematical & Physical Universe

A liberal education should develop in students a knowledge of past and present attempts to identify the material composition of the physical world and universe and the forces that govern their interaction. Such knowledge is crucial to understanding the environment in which we live and inspiring the technologies we have developed to navigate and function in that environment. Courses in this category should introduce students to basic concepts and facts in the physical sciences and help students relate them to their lives as citizens and apply them to contemporary problems.

Cultures & Societies of the World

A liberal education should introduce students to the wide variety of social systems, institutions, and cultures around the world. Courses in this category will expose students to the legal, political, religious and cultural systems of a broad range of societies and help students understand how beliefs, ideas, and practices are socially organized. Such courses should also help students understand connections between and among different societies.

Historical Perspectives

A liberal education should provide students with a broad perspective on changing human experience. Sympathetic yet incisive study of the past gives us ways of seeing our own world anew. It helps us to understand why people made the choices that they made and lived the way they did; to appreciate the consequences of those choices and ways of living; and to see how our own circumstances came to be. Knowledge of the past is produced through a range of methods and concepts that allow us to interpret words and other artifacts. Courses in this category introduce students to students to these methods and help them to understand particular aspects of past lives here and around the globe.

Living Systems

A liberal education should develop a knowledge of principals of how living systems work and interact with the environment. Human health, environmental impacts on ecosystems, emerging viruses, and human behavior are examples of topics that impact all students and require an understanding of living systems in order to make educated personal and societal assessments and decisions. Courses in this category introduce students to basic concepts in the natural and social sciences and help them relate this knowledge to their lives as citizens and contemporary problems.

Science and Society

A liberal education should provide students with a basic understanding of the relationship of scientific knowledge, technology, and society. Courses in this category are concerned with two broad sets of questions: first, with the methods, practices, and commitments of the sciences and technology (for example, what is a scientific fact? what is the scientific method?); and second, with the impact and relationship of science and technology to society and social concerns. Such courses may be found but not limited to scholarship in sociology and science, law and science, anthropology and technology, environmental science and political theory, or technology and philosophy, bioethics, environmental humanities, and history of science.

Social & Economic Systems

A liberally educated student should be able to identify and reflect on social patterns and structures around the world. Courses in social and economic systems help students understand the complex relationships among individuals, institutions, ideas, markets, and historical events. These courses are concerned with the nature of social interactions and the analytical and interpretive methods of making sense of it. Students in these courses will consider these relationships in social, cultural, economic, and political spheres.

Bachelor of Science Discipline Requirements

The following modifications to the Disciplines requirements are granted to those students enrolled in a Bachelor of Science program:

1. Students enrolled in a Bachelor of Science degree may elect to take 9 credits in one or two of the three following categories (rather than 3 credits in each): The Chemical and Physical Universe, Living Systems, and Science & Society.
2. Students enrolled in a Bachelor of Science degree may double-count one course (3 credits) towards fulfilling two of the following three categories: Cultures and Societies of the World, Historical Perspectives, Social and Economic Systems. The course in question must be listed in both categories for which it will count. Though the course may be listed in more than two categories, it may only count as fulfilling two categories.
3. Bachelor of Science students must fulfill the Disciplines component by taking courses in five different departments.

Appendix D: Modified General Education Curriculum Requirements for Transfer Students

All internal and external transfer students to the College of Arts and Sciences must complete both the Literacies and Disciplines requirement.

In addition, transfer students must complete one additional course (3 credits) in three of the four following Discipline categories: Artistic, Interpretive, and Philosophical Inquiry; Cultures and Societies of the World; Historical Perspectives; Social and Economic Systems. Students must fulfill the distributional requirement by taking courses in at least 6 different departments.

To account for the time necessary to revise the UVA & VCCS Guaranteed Admissions Agreement, the proposed General Education curriculum requirements for transfer students will take effect in AY 2020-2021. Until then, transfer students must satisfy the current College Area and Competency requirements as provided in the current Guaranteed Admission Agreement: [UVA & VCCS Guaranteed Admission Agreement](#).

Appendix B: External Review (report)

Introduction

Three distinguished academics were approached and commissioned to write an external review of the New College Curriculum: Dr. Harry J. Elam, Jr. of Stanford University; Dr. Suzanne Shanahan of Duke University; and Dr. Lu Ann Homza of the College of William & Mary. Each reviewer is from a prestigious institution that has recently undergone General Education reform (or an attempt at such), and therefore had meaningful insight into the process, purpose, and pitfalls of such efforts. While we highly recommend reading their reviews in full, this report provides a summary of their responses to our specific guiding questions.

Q: What are your thoughts on the purpose and role of the liberal arts in American higher education? On the purpose and role of general education requirements? To what degree, and in what ways, does UVA's New College Curriculum align with your beliefs and expectations regarding the liberal arts and general education?

Our reviewers each expressed similar views on the role of liberal arts in American higher education, including a deep belief in the power of its role in forming students who are prepared to face their futures. They see the liberal arts and sciences - defined as inclusive of humanities, arts, sciences, and social sciences - as a means of educating students to fulfill many roles: in their chosen vocations, as members of many communities, and as contributors to efforts helping to solve the big problems that face our world today. As one reviewer stated, "a liberal arts education for our world should insure that students are prepared to listen actively, to think critically and creatively, to apply adaptive learning and to understand that pressing complex problems require integrative and interdisciplinary solutions."

The reviewers noted the challenges facing higher education in America today and the particular questioning of the value of a liberal education. In the face of such questioning, each reviewer stated a re-commitment to a liberal education as a rich and meaningful path toward the honing of one's intellect, encountering and mastering different modes of thinking, and the development of the skills necessary to engage in meaningful dialog. They further recognized that achieving the promise of a liberal education cannot occur by accident; a rigorous and intentional curriculum is required.

The three reviewers endorsed the College's effort to develop and propose a new general education curriculum and suggest that the curriculum is very much in line with the principles and goals of a liberal education. They noted the breadth and depth of the curriculum, and pointed to the Engagements as an innovative and exciting way to launch students into their educations. They felt that the literacies addressed important foundational skills while crossing the disciplines enabled students to explore multiple fields of study. Overall, there is consensus that an education founded on the liberal arts is meaningful and valuable and the College's new curriculum does an effective job of realizing such an education.

Q: The Engagement courses offer incoming first-year students a shared academic experience designed to cultivate the diverse mindsets fundamental to learning in the liberal

arts. What are your thoughts on the general concept or purpose of the Engagements? On the specific implementation of that concept?

Overwhelmingly, the reviewers praised the design and taxonomy of the four intellectual dispositions inhabited in the Engagements. There was universal agreement that the four Engagements (and their subsequently defined content and learning outcomes) represent fundamental, diverse spheres of “knowledge, critical inquiry, intellectual and practical application.” One reviewer remarked the selection of these four categories - Aesthetic Engagement, Empirical and Scientific Engagement, Engaging Difference, and Ethical Engagement - and exposure to their content are “necessary for students to become successful citizens and global leaders in our modern world.”

External reviewers lauded the trans-disciplinary nature of the Engagement design, suggesting the Engagements should foster “intellectual agility” and “adaptive learning.” The reviews also noted the positioning of the Engagements as a first-year experience and the resultant benefits, including the epistemic and pedagogical retraining of student inquiry from secondary to post-secondary environments, the provision of a common intellectual experience, and the requisite exploration of multiple ways of knowing inherent in the interdisciplinarity of the College Fellows.

Criticism of the Engagements was mostly relegated to the administration of the program, including questions of space, resources, and continued diversity. While the reviewers praised the current diversity of Engagement courses and the resulting opportunity for students to enroll in courses based on particular interests, each reviewer remarked on the necessity of such diversity for a sustainable program. As one reviewer put it, “Maintaining this intellectual diversity over time will be important both to maintain the rigor of learning outcomes but also ensure enduring disciplinary breadth of faculty participation.”

One reviewer took exception to the seven-week structure of the Engagements, suggesting the ambition of the stated learning outcomes may outpace the courses themselves. However, the other reviewers complimented the seven-week design, one noting a “novel advance,” releasing the curriculum from the structure of the semester and instead relying on the learning outcomes.

Finally, all three reviewers noted possible concerns related to the discussion sections and lecture series. While each described the potential for these components to drive the capacious yet integrated reflection of the Engagements, they reiterated the need for these components to be coherent, intimate, and consistent in messaging. Both components have the potential to drive against the purpose of the Engagements if they exist as “independent operations and, in effect their own courses.” The reviewers suggested more information regarding the administration, pedagogy, and integration of these components was warranted.

Q: Our proposal calls for creation of the College Fellows, a College-wide body of faculty members drawn from across departments and programs. The College Fellows will be responsible for the design, instruction, and cultivation of the first-year Engagement courses. What are your thoughts on such a community of practice, and what it should include or exclude in terms of mission, requirements, incentives, activities, etc.? What are

your thoughts on our College Fellows program, either in general or regarding our implementation?

All three reviewers underscored the import of a cross-disciplinary, tenured and tenure-track cohort of faculty leading and endeavor such as the Engagements. In comparison to prevalent general education programs that populate first-year courses with “a large auxiliary instructional staff,” the reviewers collectively lauded A&S for cultivating a community replete with experts who “can incorporate their knowledge of the College’s various departments and their understandings of the needs of the incoming student body.”

Three strengths of the College Fellows cohort model were identified throughout each of the reviews. First, the model signals a dedication to the Liberal Arts & Sciences, both through its placement of highly-trained and dedicated faculty at the core of the program and as a resourced priority. In turn, the reviewers expect extant departments and faculty will open themselves to the value of general education in their curricula and among their faculty (e.g., hiring, promotion and tenure, and teaching/pedagogical interests). Second, the College Fellows model institutes a body responsible for continuously reviewing the purpose, functionality, and coherence of the curriculum while providing avenues for innovation and experimentation. As a community of practice (that rotates and refreshes from year-to-year), the reviewers suggested the College Fellows could retain the nimbleness and perspective necessary for the Engagements to remain a dynamic curriculum; a curriculum whose values and claims are open to modification and whose implementation is reflexive to contemporary events, student needs, and faculty collaboration. Finally, the College Fellows model serves a professional development role, asking individual instructors to reflect on their course design process and in particular learning outcomes. This serves not only the faculty and their individual pedagogy but the New Curriculum as well, as one reviewer put: [the model] supports ongoing faculty engagement and reflection about [the] learning outcomes and how to best achieve them, without which there will be inevitable decoupling between idea and implementation - the curse of many curricula.”

One review in particular was enamored with the potential for the model to set UVA apart as leaders in first-year learning. The reviewer remarked that while not explicitly mentioned in the description of the community of practice, implicitly the program signals its “embrace [of] student-based learning and other advances in teaching pedagogy such as active learning.” The reviewer continues...

This is a chance for the Fellows program to focus not simply on content, but on the kind of learning that is particular to first-year students. The Fellows need to think and work together on how not only to deliver a curriculum that is attuned to the needs of first year students but how to structure such a program pedagogically. The Fellows program represents a place that UVA can be a leader in terms of developing and articulating a plan for first-year teaching and learning.

While each of the reviewers felt the current incentives for the Fellows Program seemed appropriate (e.g., stipend, departmental backfill, reduction of teaching load), all expressed a concern regarding (a) the ability of the program to continually recruit interested, dedicated, and capable faculty while (b) maintaining the diversity necessary to represent the richness of A&S

faculty, both demographically and of certain scholarly traditions such as those in the natural sciences and quantitative fields. As one reviewer notes, that the application process is currently open and democratic provides greater buy-in for the collective, democratic work on which the Engagements rely. And yet, all three reviewers expressed doubt at the ability for the Fellows to “perpetuate faculty interest over time,” or at least without some structural reform to the appointment process.

Finally, one reviewer raised several practical issues of infrastructure that were not covered in the materials provided for review. While the general concern for the administration of the curriculum is warranted, the GE Assessment Committee is aware that many of these concerns are addressed by the general administrative structures of the program. More information on the current administration of the program, including efforts to improve administration of the program, can be found in the response document provided by College Fellows Co-Directors Sarah Betzer and Chad Wellmon.

Q: The Literacies requirements aim to equip students with the necessary skills and fluencies needed to succeed in a rapidly-changing world. What are your thoughts on the idea of course requirements related to essential, modern literacies, fluencies, or skills? On our specific implementation of the idea?

The three reviewers were unanimous in their assessment that intermediate proficiency in a language other than English, competency in written communication, and facility with quantitative analysis were all critical for student success. One reviewer notes that “if you are going to require literacies, these are the critical three,” and another suggests that data skills, in particular, are “fundamental to work across disciplines and jobs.” Moreover, all were generally agreed that the required coursework to complete the literacies requirements should be sufficient, although one reviewer was hesitant about the number of required language classes and also recommended that it might be advantageous for students to take two classes in the same quantitative field, since a single course might not “build sufficient capacity.”

One reviewer did express skepticism regarding the use of coursework to promote literacies, since this tends to encourage students to treat them in an “instrumental manner”—as boxes they “begrudgingly check”—rather than as “critical lenses” through which to view and to analyze the world around them. She does not, however, suggest other possible alternatives, and admits that they are few.

Q: The Disciplines requirements promote student exploration of the different scholarly practices and disciplinary thinking that exist throughout the College of Arts & Sciences. The Discipline categories are deliberately non-departmental, and instead reflect the richness, breadth, and interconnectedness of the liberal arts and sciences. What are your thoughts on general education distribution requirements in general? On our specific implementation in the Disciplines?

The reviewers were largely unanimous in their comments on the disciplines requirements. Notably, they all praised the curriculum for the emphasis on disciplines in its distributional model (rather than departments), which they consider to be an essential feature. One writes that

this model allows students to be “startled” when they see a departmental course linked to a discipline they did not expect, and another remarks that they build coherently on the plan of the first-year Engagements. The reviewers focused on the potential for making interdisciplinary connections that is embedded in the disciplines requirements.

There was some concern that any distributional model can foster a “box-checking” mentality among students, who become narrowly focused on fulfilling certain requirements and can miss out on interdisciplinary connections. Two reviewers pointed specifically to the lack of a “shared academic experience” in the disciplines, although by highlighting different aspects. But even the most critical of the reviewers concluded by saying that if they were “inclined to recommend any distributional model, this would be it.”

One suggestion that was proposed to help students navigate the disciplines more productively is more robust academic advising. This reviewer noted that the advising materials seemed designed to help students check off boxes, rather than think deeply about connections between the disciplines. They encouraged the writing of new materials that would help advisors stimulate conversations with their advisees during the course selection process.

Q: What logistical issues do you perceive or foresee regarding the New College Curriculum’s sustainability and scale?

The reviewers note that it will take attention to detail, commitment to rigor, and sustained financial and personnel support for the new curriculum to scale. Areas that the reviewers specifically mentioned include faculty, the Engagements curriculum, and other curricular questions.

With regard to faculty, the reviewers point to a need to sustain faculty interest, continue to review incentives for recruitment of faculty as College Fellows, and ensure that participation as a College Fellow does not harm tenure or promotion efforts. One reviewer specifically noted the importance of recruiting College Fellows from the sciences as well as the humanities. One reviewer asked how departments will sustain commitment to faculty serving as College Fellows and how that might be fostered within the College.

Several concerns about the Engagements’ were raised. Reviewers asked how the discussion sections would be integrated with the Engagement courses and how the College would ensure enough coverage by graduate teaching assistants, and most importantly. They asked whether the variety of courses designed for the Engagements would be sufficient for student interest over time, and how the shared elements of the Engagements would be negotiated and determined each year without becoming stale.

General curricular questions round out this section. The issue of staffing the literacies - courses with generally small student enrollments per course - was raised, as well as how the writing literacy might engage with the sciences in a more formal way. Finally, one reviewer pointed out the necessity of providing pedagogical professional development to faculty because of the unique aspects of both the Engagements and Literacies.

Q: The General Education Assessment Committee has crafted and begun implementing a comprehensive, rigorous, multi-faceted assessment of the New College Curriculum’s pilot phase. Do you have any thoughts regarding the validity, effectiveness, or usefulness of assessment in curricular reform, either in general or specific to our plan?

The reviewers felt that the assessment plan was robust and comprehensive. At the same time, they recognized the complexity and difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of educational programs. Most comments related to student learning and experiences as described below.

Regarding students, the reviewers indicated interest in long-term assessment in order to best understand the impact and outcomes of the new curriculum. To that end, one reviewer suggested extending the pilot longer than three years - at least long enough for the first cohort to graduate. They advised including qualitative assessment of student work and using student surveys for understanding deeper issues such as how the Engagements might “impact their attitudes toward the importance of the four areas of the Engagements.” Surveying seniors and graduates will also be important in order to see how the curriculum affected them well after completion. The measurement of student learning outcomes was pointed out as very difficult; approaches that include control groups and rubrics were encouraged. Finally, the reviewers were curious to know whether the customized end-of-course evaluations asked students about their own learning.

Several other insights included the importance of understanding where students are getting their information from and reconciling that with the Advisor survey; using the syllabus review as not only a form of assessment but as a tool to improve future course design, and investigation of how students move through the literacies and disciplines and if or how their Engagements experience informs that path.

Appendix C: External Review (compiled reviews)

We provide here the full, original review documents provided by our three external reviewers. These reviewers were given a number of documents describing the New College Curriculum in detail (largely similar to the paper presented in Appendix [A](#)), as well as the guiding questions which were listed in Appendix [B](#).



Stanford University

HARRY J. ELAM, Jr.
Senior Vice Provost for Education
Vice President for the Arts
Freeman-Thornton Vice Provost
for Undergraduate Education
Olive H. Palmer Professor
in the Humanities

**University of Virginia Report
College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum**

- 1. What are your thoughts on the purpose and role of liberal arts education? On the purpose and role of general education requirements? To what degree, and in what ways does UVA's New College Curriculum align with your beliefs and expectations regarding liberal arts and general education.**

I find UVA's New College Curriculum an exciting and innovative approach to liberal arts education and general education. On the whole, this proposed program is in line with current thinking, including my own, on the value of liberal education and reforms in general education. Traditionally, the idea of a liberal arts education holds that such a course of study should enable freedom of thought and individual self-development for each student. Liberal education, then, constitutes an education for individual freedom. A liberal arts education liberates us to be human and to consider questions that matter to human existence.

Although the assumption has grown over time, liberal arts education is not and should not be tied exclusively to the humanities. Rather, other disciplines from the sciences, social sciences, and engineering are equally liberal and equally able to develop the powers of the mind and help in producing enlightened citizens who possess a passion for lifelong learning. Today, perhaps more than ever, given the pressures of our rapidly changing world, a liberal arts education demands integrative learning across disciplines, exposure to thinking critically as a humanist, social scientist, scientist, and engineer. A liberal arts education for our world should insure that students are prepared to listen actively, to think critically and creatively, to apply adaptive learning and to understand that pressing complex problems require integrative and interdisciplinary solutions.

UVA's New College Curriculum is very much in line with these principles of liberal arts education that I have outlined here. With its well-thought-out conjunction of the Engagements, Disciplines, and Literacies, the Curriculum intends to provide students with critical thinking skills, practical learning experience and opportunities to appreciate and understand new knowledge. The program is capacious enough to include learning within the arts as well as the sciences, social sciences and humanities. As currently structured, the new program appreciates the need for rigorous discussion within a liberal arts education as well as space for the investigation of "fundamental dispositions." This new curriculum also notes the necessity for specialized first year courses as well as for scaffolding exploration, breadth and depth throughout the student's college career. My sense is that the new curriculum enables freedom and self-development.

Breadth should serve as a fundamental element of a liberal arts education. Through breadth, a student acquires knowledge and skills that are different from, but complementary to, those in a concentrated field of study. By connecting knowledge in one area with skills from another, students are able to surpass the limits of any one discipline and become a more adaptive learner. Still for many students the notion of academic breadth acquired through taking a required set of courses has seemed antithetical to the principles of intellectual freedom, which remain at the center of liberal arts education. Rather than enabling their free choice, general education requirements, they have felt, constricted their freedom and have served only as hindrance; thus, general education has become something that students needed to get out of the way before they can turn to their major. At Stanford, we have sought to overcome this unfortunate tension between breadth and intellectual freedom by structuring a new interdisciplinary breadth system based not on a conventional disciplinary approach but rather on what we termed capacities. Students must take courses and acquire capacities in key areas of thought that we believe are critical to 21st century citizenship. The new system has allowed students to have more freedom in selecting breadth courses left to our students to choose based upon their own interests and educational objectives.

From my reading of the breadth requirement in the UVA New College Curriculum, I can see that UVA has taken a similar approach to what we have done at Stanford. The seven disciplinary categories of “the Disciplines” requirement purposefully represents a “new disciplinary taxonomy.” Thus, while there is distribution, the categories do not simply map onto conventional delineation of fields. The courses in any of the seven disciplines stretch across many departments. The disciplines intend to show the “richness, breadth and interconnectedness of the liberal arts.”

In addition, the “Literacies” also form an important component of the new distribution requirement. What I find of particular note here is in the inclusion of a “Quantitative, Computational and Data Analysis” requirement for all students. Given the growth of big data and the usages of computational and data analysis in virtually all fields, such a requirement is truly a necessary aspect of preparing students for 21st century citizenship. By including this requirement, UVA is both forward-looking and responsive to the needs of re-thinking liberal arts education so that it stays relevant to our world today.

2. The Engagement courses offer incoming first year students a shared academic experience designed to cultivate the diverse mindsets fundamental to learning in the liberal arts. What are your thoughts on the general concept or purpose of the Engagements? On the specific implementation of that concept?

As the cornerstone of the New College Curriculum, the Engagements are truly exciting and well-designed and as such may prove to be an innovative model that other institutions emulate. The idea of “having students engage the world from the moment they arrive” suggests that these courses will have real world meaning and application for the students, even as these courses may look back in time or focus in on close reading and literary analysis. The four categories selected for the Engagements—Engaging Aesthetics, Empirical & Scientific Engagement, Engaging Differences, Ethical Engagement—seem to me to be exactly the right categories for encouraging the “innovative, creative, ethical, and critical thinking” necessary for students to become successful citizens and global leaders in our modern world. These four areas equally represent diverse spheres of knowledge, critical inquiry, intellectual and practical application. What the Engagement requirement signals is that students need to thoughtfully “engage” in each one of these areas, not just from the inception of their college careers, but through their lives.

What I find equally significant is that every student will be required to take courses in each of the four areas during their first year. This provides for a common experience, which so many studies have shown is crucial

to establishing community and enabling student achievement in the first year. This structure prevents students from front-loading major requirements in the first year, instead focusing in on the Engagements and discovering the intersections of these four Engagement areas. With the freedom of time present in our new breadth requirement at Stanford, what we have unfortunately discovered is that most science and engineering majors are on the whole not on the whole not taking humanities courses in the first year but front-loading STEM requirements. Only 33% of students now take humanities in the first year. This would not be possible in the UVA New College Curriculum, as all students must take all four Engagements in that first year.

The structure as well as the flexibility represented by the Engagements should prove fundamental to their success and implementation. That students can fulfill this requirement in a variety of ways—either in 7-week or 14-week courses— will be helpful. Also, it appears that there will be a sufficient number of courses in each area to appeal to students’ diverse interests and needs.

The Discussions and Lecture Series strike me as being both areas of promise and potential concern. Certainly, the issues presented in all four Engagement areas demand serious and rigorous discussion and the full year discussion sections, capped at fifteen students, will provide for space for this activity. What was not clear to me in reading the materials is who will lead the discussion sections, which is critical. Because of their intimacy and also their consistency—that the students stay in the discussion sections all year—these sections have the potential to be *the most important space* for delivery of the Engagements. Accordingly, the teams leading the discussion sections need to meet consistently with and collaborate with the College Fellows teaching the Engagements to ensure that they are collectively providing common messaging. How the discussion sections take up the materials from lecture or reading assignments need to be in line with what the Engagements are trying to accomplish. The tendency is for such sections to be independent operations and, in effect their own courses, which has the potential to work against what the Engagements intend to accomplish.

The Lecture Series runs a similar risk. With the Lecture Series, students need to understand how what they are studying in the Engagements relates to the lectures and vice versa. Even as the College Fellows have chosen wonderful first lecturers and notable speakers, first-year students may not understand why they must attend or may only view these lecturers as part of requirement. The Lecture Series are intended to be a lively part of Engagements First-Year Experience, exposing first-year students to exciting new ideas and groundbreaking scholarship. The students are expected to be active participants who listen attentively and ask questions. Careful mediation beforehand, educating the students to the value of the lecturers and the significance of the invited speakers, will be key. The Common Read, *Our Declaration*, an excellent book by Danielle Allen, equally needs to be woven into the fabric of the program, and as indicated a subject to which the Engagements and the Discussions continually return.

I find the general descriptions of the Engagement areas, on the whole, quite good. The example courses also represent effectively the range of courses found in any of the four areas. The learning objectives are clear and student-centered. Still, I must call your attention to the description of learning outcomes for Engaging Diversity. This section begins, “A general education should help you explore the ways in which people are and are perceived to be different.” I find this wording problematic, as it limits and even takes discussion of difference in wrong directions. It is too easy to just say “we are all different,” but that statement does not, then, lead to greater understanding or interaction. In questions of race, for example, it’s not so much a matter of exploring how people are different from white people, but in critically engaging how differences are negotiated. In addition, neither the description nor the learning outcomes themselves discuss the dynamics of power that are at play and that have a significant impact on how race, diversity, and difference

operate in our society. In my opinion, this should be a critical component of any course within this Engagement.

- 3. Our proposal calls for the creation of the College Fellows, a College-wide body of faculty members drawn from across departments and programs. The College Fellows will be responsible for the design, instruction and cultivation of the first-year Engagement course. What are your thoughts on such a community of practice, and what it should include or exclude in terms of mission, requirements, incentives, activities, etc.? What are your thoughts on our College of Fellows program in general or regarding our implementation?**

I find the College Fellows an extremely exciting and particularly innovative solution to approach the often very complex demands of teaching first-year curriculums. Structuring first-year curriculums, necessarily, requires that you have the teaching staff to implement it. Whereas several schools that have first-year core curriculums depend on hiring a large auxiliary instructional staff, this program will rely on the A&S tenured and tenure-track faculty to deliver the courses. Thus, in designing and teaching the courses within the New College Curriculum, these faculty can incorporate their knowledge of the College's various departments and their understandings of the needs of the incoming student body.

The idea of building a community of practice engaged in first-year pedagogy is quite compelling. The time allotted for College Fellows to engage in workshops around course design sounds quite good and appropriate. I also appreciate that there will be ongoing activities and pedagogical check-ins for the Fellows throughout the academic year. What I do not see in the description of the College Fellows program, but I believe is implicit—it is also expressed in the descriptions of learning outcomes for the Engagements—is how the program will embrace student-based learning and other advances in teaching pedagogy such as active learning. This is chance for the Fellows program to focus not simply on content, but on the kind of learning that is particular to first year students. The Fellows need to think and work together on how not only to deliver a curriculum that is attuned to the needs of first year students but how to structure such a program pedagogically. The Fellows program represents a place that UVA can be a leader in terms of developing and articulating a plan for first year teaching and learning.

I think that the general incentives for the College Fellow program sound appropriate. The idea of compensating faculty for these courses recognizes that teaching and constructing these additions to the curriculum will take additional time. In addition, the work in developing these courses may be outside the parameters of their conventional departmental teaching. I also like the idea of having faculty apply to teach in this program as this will compel them to think about why they want to work with first year students and what they bring not only to the teaching but to the operation of the College Fellows program itself.

What is at issue, with the open and democratic application system for the Fellows program, is its ability to attract enough faculty from diverse departments to offer courses across the Engagements. Can such a program be sustained in terms of generating faculty and delivering the range of courses that you want? The fact that the Engagements are owned not by the individual faculty member but by the Fellows program as a whole faculty is potentially a good way of maintaining continuity, generating courses and reinforcing continuity. However, perpetuating faculty interest over time may still be an issue. How do you generate more interest in the program other than that of those particular faculty who are already committed to teaching first-year students? If it is in fact limited to those dedicated few, should they be continued in the program? Will the appointments be renewable after the initial 2.5 year period? While I like the idea of faculty in the College Fellows being relieved of courses' certain departmental teaching load, it is important as outlined that the home departments will be supplied with additional funds and post docs to cover the

courses that they lose when their departmental faculty are in the Fellows program. Such departmental support may be very helpful in developing departmental buy-in for the program. I also like the notion of “Modified Terms” for faculty, with teaching requirements in their home departments that they must maintain.

4. The “Literacies” requirements aim to equip students with the necessary skills and fluencies needed to succeed in a rapidly-changing world. What are your thoughts on the idea of course requirements related to essential modern literacies, fluencies, or skills, On our specific implementation of the idea?

Overall, the placement of data skills, language acquisition and communication instruction all under the notion of modern literacies is an excellent one. It foregrounds how each of these areas represent a different type of literacy and that each of these areas are ones in which our students need dedicated training.

As I mentioned earlier, I believe that data skills are fundamental to work across disciplines and to jobs, even in this ever-changing economy. The ability to analyze quantitative information as well as to apply such data analysis to real world problems seems fundamental in our contemporary society. What I would hope to see in the implementation of this requirement is that courses in various disciplines should satisfy this requirement. Accordingly, courses in big data across the social sciences and the digital humanities should be included in this requirement as well as courses in statistics, mathematics and computer science.

I also see the language requirement as an important one. Still, it has become increasingly difficult to defend such a requirement in world that has produced such technologies as Google Translator and as people across the globe increasingly speak English. The old joke, “What do you call someone who speaks only one language?... American,” has become increasingly true. Still, I think the requirement of having students reach intermediate proficiency in a foreign language is an important one, one that we have at Stanford and will continue. Foreign language proficiency still opens up doors and possibilities for students as they study, travel, and work overseas. What I do not yet see mentioned under the World Language literacies is what is possible for students in terms of overseas studies, internships, research and service; these programs would encourage and enable their language proficiency.

Writing and communication are skills that need to be continually honed. Moreover, the 21st century presents new modalities of communication that equally need to be practiced. Notably, the Rhetoric in the 21st Century requirement recognizes the importance of training in oral and digital forms as well as writing. While I think the requirement of two courses is good, I also believe that there needs to be specialized communication work in the student’s particular field or major. A student needs to recognize what may be required in scientific writing or philosophical argumentation depending on their major. I do not see here a writing in the major requirement, but believe that such a course could be a part of every students’ major requirement or part of the New Curriculum.

5. The Disciplines requirements promote student exploration of the different scholarly practices and disciplinary thinking that exist throughout the College of Arts & Sciences, The Disciplines categories are deliberately non-departmental, and instead reflect the richness, breadth and interconnectedness of the liberal arts and sciences. What are your thoughts on general education distribution requirements in general? On our specific implementation of the Disciplines?

One of the strengths that I see within the Disciplines breadth requirement is the seven areas are not strictly based in any one field or department. Rather, they are purposefully interdisciplinary. With this structure in place, students will have additional choices. In addition, they should be able to understand better why a course is placed in a specific Discipline and what disciplinary knowledge they should expect in this course. The fact that each student must take courses from 6 different disciplines assures that they will get a rich and varied intellectual experience. Moreover, it may encourage them to explore and to take academic risks. What I didn't see in the report is whether they will be able to take courses within the Discipline pass/ fail. There is divergent scholarship on pass/fail for general education. While some think it enables students to be more daring in their course selection, others believe it makes them more complacent and less rigorously engaged in required courses.

In choosing this new interdisciplinary direction in breadth categories, UVA A&S move away from the notion that any particular body of knowledge is essential, and instead emphasize that knowledge in a set of potentially intersecting categories, which should form the foundation for breadth. This is not to say that disciplinary knowledge is unimportant, but rather that it should work in consort with students' interests and needs. By migrating to a model based on these seven essential categories, the New College Curriculum realigns the relationship between breadth as a general education requirement and the training received within a major previously assigned in the former traditional curriculum.

The new curriculum delivers the important message that general education—achieving breadth—is not preparatory to, secondary to, or even parallel with the education obtained in a major field. Rather it should be interwoven in ways that inform the major study while providing students with knowledge and critical learning, while simultaneously benefiting from deep knowledge associated with the particular disciplinary categories. The required seven courses from six different disciplines should not in any way be a burden. Instead, it should complement leaning in the major and be part of the process of life-long learning.

6. What logistical issues do you perceive or foresee regarding the New College Curriculum sustainability and scale?

- Sustaining faculty interest. Will it be possible over time to keep faculty engaged in the program and keep them applying to be College Fellows? (The incentive structure may need to be reviewed yearly.)
- Will there be the diversity of courses necessary to satisfy student interest and demand within the Engagements? Will there be faculty representation for the Sciences as well as the humanities and social sciences in the College Fellows?
- How will the Discussions and Lectures Series work with Engagements? How can you avoid the danger of the Discussions becoming self-sustained units?
- How will the interests and commitments of the various departments to the first-year program be sustained over time? Will the courses offered by their faculty in the New Curriculum count as the departments' contribution to general education at the college?
- Given the current diversity of the faculty, can there be sufficient courses in Engaging Diversity or courses that deal with race, gender, socio-economic class in other parts of the New College Curriculum?
- Can there be enough of the two required writing courses within the current structure of this Literacies requirement? Why are the writing courses limited to the humanities? What of scientific writing?

- How will the experience be for students in the required data analysis courses within the Literacies requirement? Will these courses be able to break down into discussion sessions of no more than 16 students? Will there be a sufficient number of TAs?
 - What happens to truly advanced students who may want a graduate course to substitute for a Disciplines requirement? Is this something that the program would allow? Who will handle the petitions in such a case?
 - How will student-based learning and advanced training in pedagogy relevant to first-year students be woven into the program, both in terms of the College of Fellows and other aspects of the program, including the Legacies and Disciplines?
7. **The General Education Assessment Committee has crafted and begun implementing a comprehensive, rigorous, multi-faceted assessment of the New College Curriculum's pilot phase. Do you have any thoughts regarding the validity, effectiveness, or usefulness of assessment in curricular reform, either in general or specific to our plan?**

On the whole, the plan for assessment does indeed look comprehensive and rigorous. I do, however, strongly feel that a three-year pilot is too short. It doesn't give enough time for one complete class to graduate from UVA with these new requirements in place. It doesn't allow a senior to reflect back on their experiences within the Engagements as first-year students. I will comment on the various aspects of the plan outlined in the report:

Curriculum Level

External Review

Needless to say, I think that the external review is an excellent idea. It is very good to get outside perspectives and support.

Chairs & Directors Perspective

With this group, I think focus groups will be key to understanding how departments and program are interfacing with the New College Curriculum.

Student Navigation & Satisfaction Review

With this review it will be important to ask questions beyond just satisfaction. How did the program impact their overall experience at UVA? How do they understand their purpose at UVA after the program? How did the program impact their attitudes toward the importance of the four areas of the Engagements? In addition to the survey of sophomores, it will be good to survey seniors and see what they feel in retrospect about the program and what they carry with them.

Faculty Advising Review

It will be important to see how students are fulfilling the new requirements and how this relates to the advice they are getting from their faculty advisors versus their peers. Also, when are they taking the Disciplines?

Course Level

Syllabus Review

With the syllabi, it will be important to see how faculty are using learning outcomes and how this impacts their development of content and requirements for the course.

Student Engagement Surveys

My issue here is the timing of this survey. While it will be good to survey the students directly after the course, it will also be important to return to them to see how and if their perspectives have changed and what they appreciate more over time.

Engagement Course Evaluations

How do these modified course evaluations evaluate learning? Do they ask students questions about what they learned and whether they felt the courses sufficiently covered the learning outcomes?

College Fellows & TAs Perspectives

The repeated self-assessment of and reflection by the teaching and design teams will be crucial to the overall success of the program.

Learning Outcomes Level

Direct Learning Outcomes

Having the control group of students within the Traditional Curriculum will be important and helpful in comparing and assessing what students have learned in the new program. Still, how will the assessment of learning outcomes be accomplished? The self-report of students on what they learned is certainly valuable. It is also insufficient to have students determining what they learned as the only measure. There need to be other mechanisms for evaluating the success of the learning outcomes in a particular course.

Harry J. Elam, Jr
Stanford University



DATE: Feb 1, 2018

TO: Brian Paljug, Education & Assessment Specialist

FROM: Suzanne Shanahan, Keohane Director, Kenan Institute for Ethics

RE: University of Virginia New College Curriculum Proposal

It is long since a trivial observation that the liberal arts and sciences is under siege across American campuses. Twenty-first century global socio-economic, technological and environmental changes are prompting a fundamental paradigm shift in higher education as students, families and communities try to respond to this changing landscape. How knowledge is constituted, created and shared is rapidly evolving, because the demands of work and citizenship are changing. The diverse, global knowledge economy into which undergraduates will graduate will demand unprecedented flexibility, creativity, collaboration and empathy. Students are no longer just preparing for jobs, they are inventing new ones. With information on anything and everything available as never before, the ability to evaluate, assess, contextualize, understand and communicate plural perspectives will be more important than ever. Like others, then, I would argue this represents a moment to double down not abandon the liberal arts and sciences. By creating a shared scholarly community, a liberal arts and sciences education offers students the opportunity to learn to learn for a lifetime. It cultivates global citizens with local commitments who will innovate, create, lead and serve across fields. And thus whatever vocation a student may pursue she does so armed with the tools, understandings and ways of being in the world that will make them uniquely successful.

In this national context and after almost fifty years, it is exciting to see a new curriculum at the University of Virginia which definitively reaffirms the importance of a broad liberal arts education. The new curriculum is rigorous, creative and compelling. The curriculum clearly and elegantly affirms a set of shared values and defines a unified purpose for the UVA scholarly community. It makes knowledge both for its own sake and in pursuit of the good life a priority. It also surely marks UVA as a definitive leader in undergraduate education.

That said, I personally remain cautious about highly proscriptive, elaborately defined, requirement centric curricula. In practice, curricula at highly selective research universities harness the wisdom of the faculty to render coherent the process by which students sample from the overwhelming abundance of course offerings and experiences. This coherence is usually summarized by a set of requirements to ensure students partake diversely and wisely. But requirements can only take us so far, because they only specify what a student cannot avoid. As much as one might wish it to be otherwise, it is important to recognize that satisfying requirements does not necessarily equal learning or understanding. Requirements then can often confuse means and ends. Requirements can also reify the instrumental approach of students and their families concerned about future job prospects, value for money, etc. Accordingly, too often requirements become boxes to check or detours from more

important ventures rather than opportunities to engage rigorously. Any effective liberal arts education needs to be able interrupt this narrow instrumentality.

Engagements. This concern is why the **Engagements** are such a critical and clever element of this new curriculum. From my perspective, the first-year **Engagements** are the key innovation and core strength this new UVA curriculum. Above and beyond the specific foci of the **Engagements**, they do three crucial things. First, they set the tone and context for what will follow. Second, they help forge a scholarly community replete with shared norms, values and expectations. Third, they offer the tool-kit to enable successful navigation through the UVA scholarly experience. In sum, they provide a mechanism to disrupt the prevailing means ends calculus. The addition of the **Engagements** clearly shifts the UVA curriculum from its former distributional model to a shared general education model.

Further, there is much to commend in the content and learning outcomes of the **Engagement**. They are brilliantly conceived and constructed. I can only imagine the faculty consensus building their articulation required. The **Engagements** represent the pledge so elegantly outlined in rationale for a new curriculum. Importantly too, the **Engagements** strike an important balance between more traditional and more contemporary (for lack of better terms) ways of engaging the world. It is also frankly unusual not to look at such a list in other curriculums nationally and not wonder “what about x?” or “why didn’t you include y?” or revert to categories which are more obviously purely disciplinary. The trans-disciplinary quality of each of these 4 **Engagements** is a strength.

That UVA students will come to appreciate in their first year that there are in fact different epistemological frames with which to understand the world in their first year is tremendous. The list of course options within the **Engagements** is diverse and offers a range of compelling frames with which to understand the different **Engagement** logics. Maintaining this intellectual diversity over time will be important both to maintain the rigor of learning outcomes but also ensure enduring disciplinary breadth of faculty participation.

The structure of the **Engagements** is robust both in terms of modular form and reliance on College Fellows. That the length of an **Engagement** is determined by the learning objectives not the extant semester is a novel advance. Combining the individual **Engagements** with the **Lecture Series, Discussions** that crosscut **Engagement** classes is an ingenious way to have cross perspective conversation (thereby also strengthening the learning outcomes within each Engagement), have thematic and intellectual coherence, including shared take-aways and further build a common experience for students. They also seem important building blocks for ongoing scholarly communities especially given the final capstone projects.

The **College Fellows Program** is an essential programmatic element. It is ingeniously crafted and well-structured and resourced community of practice. I imagine it is already the envy of many colleges and universities across the country. More importantly, it does important work for the curriculum in three different ways. First, it foments faculty investment in the curriculum making it clear to current and new faculty that undergraduate education is a resourced priority. Second, it enables ongoing programmatic/curricular coherence as well as innovation/experimentation because it is, by definition,

a collaboration forum. There is a refresh method built into the structure. Third, it encourages and supports ongoing faculty engagement and reflection about learning outcomes and how to best achieve them, without which there will be inevitable decoupling between idea and implementation—the curse of many curricula. Being flexible over time about structure, impact on departments and incentives seems critical. Bottom line: The **College Fellows** model seems to mitigate many problems curricula face upon implementation and which only worsen with time. My only caution would be to ensure that the **College Fellows** remains diverse both demographically and in terms of discipline. I can imagine a significant long range challenge may well be engaging natural and quantitative science faculty.

Literacies: I agree that all well-educated citizens ought to be multilingual, in possession of excellent writing skills and quantitatively fluent. They are important building blocks for further education and for life more generally. If you are going to require **Literacies** these are the critical three. I am, however, less enamored with course requirements as the sole mechanism to promote these modern **literacies**, fluencies or skills. (I recognize I am a clear outlier in this position and understand that alternatives are few.) These **Literacies** are critical lenses with which to experience the world knowledgeably and thoughtfully but most students unfortunately engage them in a highly instrumental manner—as those boxes they begrudgingly check. I also wonder whether the extent of these requirements achieves optimal proficiency. Two required rhetoric classes seems right there are further opportunities to write in a discipline. I am less sure about the level of language proficiency or whether classes in two different quantitative fields builds sufficient capacity. Here I might ideally imagine two in the same field being of greater impact. Logistics might, of course, make that challenging.

Disciplines. The role of the **Disciplines** in the new UVA curriculum is critical and builds nicely upon the strength of the first-year Engagements. Exploring different scholarly practices and thinking seems an essential part of the Liberal Arts and Sciences and the structure of the Disciplines enables that consideration. That the **Disciplines** transcend departments is an important innovation to achievement of the extant goals. I also respect the evergreen nature of these trans-departmental ways of doing scholarly work. That is, they aren't overly trendy or contemporarily focused. Balance here can be tricky. Too often new curricula pick foci that quickly date them.

But again, as an outlier, I am less in favor of distribution requirements. Further, I am skeptical of the impact of a single course in a broad area. It feels a bit like being required to try a bite of everything on a menu. This concern is magnified when such courses are not purpose build to achieve newly crafted learning objectives, but are rather existing classes that are simply re-categorized. The lack of stated learning objectives for these different areas makes it hard to tell the extent to which my caution is warranted. Furthermore, I do appreciate this model for its logical consistency, thoughtfulness, parsimony and politics. Put differently, if I were inclined to recommend any distributional model, this one would be it.

Logistics. I foresee no particular logistical concerns. This curriculum is meticulous. It clearly has broad faculty and institutional support. Simply maintaining the pledge it represents, then, will require vigilance.

Assessment. The assessment plan is detailed, rigorous and well-conceived. An ongoing challenge will likely be robust direct measures of learning outcomes. But that is a challenge in any assessment plan. Especially interesting will be the student outcomes related to the Engagements and the extent it will be possible to assess outcomes dynamically and longitudinally to enable UVA to understand how their impact magnifies or diminishes over the course of a student's education. I also hope there will be opportunities to explore whether the compelling foundation the Engagements offers will impact learning outcomes in the other areas. So some sort of dynamic, longitudinal assessment would be interesting. Not sure it is part of the plan but might be instructive to compare outcome in the new curriculum to the Forums Curriculum. And finally as an ethicist, I would of course love to see measures that also explore whether this new curriculum impacts moral development and how students are evolving not only as members of the scholarly community but as citizens and future leaders.

To reiterate, UVA should be commended on what is a rigorous, thoughtful crafted and creatively implemented new curriculum. It makes UVA an unequivocal leader in liberal arts education nationwide. I do, however, want to flag three minor tensions perhaps worth simply keeping on the radar as UVA moves forward. First, I worry about flexibility and the extent to which this curriculum makes it harder for students to intellectually explore and experiment in a manner unfettered by distribution or major requirements. Are their sufficient degrees of freedom to explore and experiment? Is this structure allowing UVA students to take sufficient responsibility for their own education? Second, I think the elements of exemption for BS majors might be problematic over time as they create a potentially very popular alternative pathway at UVA –especially given the growing relationship between STEM majors and pre-professionalism amongst undergraduates nationally. Two pathways tug at the strength of a common, shared curriculum. I understand that limits on degrees of freedom and majors with many requirements makes this necessary. But is there any way to reconsider major size as a next project? It is clear that the size and import of the major can undermine even a thoughtfully crafted curriculum by diverting student and faculty energy as well as focus. I am in no way suggesting consideration of the major should have been part of this review. Nor do I imagine any sane curricular process that addresses both the major and general education simultaneously. I simply note that the BS exemption puts in bold relief the tension between the major and other expectations. And the exemption only side steps the inevitable structural tension between the growing demands of specialization in the sciences and breath across areas. This tension necessarily undermines a student's experience of the liberal arts. Third, this is again a thoughtfully built out curriculum. But this detailed framework also means that it may lack the structural flexibility necessary for adaptation—to add or delete. But as I note earlier, one of the virtues of the College Fellow Programs is that it makes this pitfall less likely. I conclude with a question or observation (not a critique). Why no research requirement? Any single curriculum can't do everything but engaging students directly in research seems an apt way to magnify many of the stated learning outcomes UVA outlines so was curious if it was considered.

Congratulations.





WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

LYON GARDINER TYLER DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

January 15, 2018

Mr. Bo Odom
Manager of Curriculum Implementation
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Virginia
cgo3tc@virginia.edu

Dear Mr. Odom,

Thank you for the opportunity to read about UVA's new College Curriculum. It is always provocative to see what other universities are doing with general education. I have responded to the guiding questions **in bold below**.

Best wishes,

Lu Ann Homza
Professor of History
Dean for Educational Policy, 2013-17

What are your thoughts on the purpose and role of the liberal arts in American higher education? On the purpose and role of general education requirements? To what degree, and in what ways, does UVA's New College Curriculum align with your beliefs and expectations regarding the liberal arts and general education?

Training in the liberal arts has been an organizing principle for American higher education for more than a century. While the content of that education has changed over time, its goals have not. A person educated in the liberal arts understands how to read, speak, debate, collaborate, assess evidence, construct arguments based on evidence, and solve problems. Persons educated in the liberal arts have a sense of their place in the larger world. A liberally educated person evinces understanding and empathy toward difference, in all its variety. A liberally educated person should be a life-long learner, with a sense of citizenship and responsibility to others.

Within a liberal arts education, general education is a sequence of courses that moves students toward these goals while simultaneously introducing them to ways of thought, communication, and argument, according to different disciplines. General education should teach students how to apply their growing knowledge to solving problems. It should be inquiry-centered. It should ask students to be agile thinkers. General education should be a shared experience for all undergraduates, irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds. Ideally, courses in general education are valued and taught by

tenure-eligible faculty; they are sites for the exploration of new knowledge. Rather than something to get out of the way as a student finds a major, general education classes should teach the skills that undergird success in the major. In the best of all possible worlds, general education classes form a scaffold, as one requirement builds on another. General education classes should also be intentional and make clear why they are required.

UVA's New College Curriculum evinces – sometimes explicitly, other times, implicitly -- a number of these values and ambitions. It requires foundational skills in two writing requirements and a foreign language requirement; those competencies are rounded out by mandates that students take Rhetoric in the 21st Century, and Quantitative, Computational, and Data Analysis. The New College Curriculum features the exploration of different ways of knowing through the four Engagement classes taken in the first year. Finally, the New College Curriculum asks students to take courses in seven disciplines. It seems clear that students will understand that they are deliberately learning different academic approaches through the Engagements, which should make them think about intellectual agility. The Engagements stress group projects and discussion, both of which should make them think about collaboration and oral communication skills. The two Engagements classes that speak to difference and ethics aim to develop students' self-awareness, compassion, and citizenship. Meanwhile, the Disciplines requirement, which exposes students to a range of subjects, should help them become aware of their abilities and interests.

The Engagement courses offer incoming first-year students a shared academic experience designed to cultivate the diverse mindsets fundamental to learning in the liberal arts. What are your thoughts on the general concept or purpose of the Engagements? On the specific implementation of that concept?

I think the general concept of the Engagements is in keeping with the best current literature on general education. In the materials provided to me, however, the aims of the Engagement courses appear somewhat rambling. In sequence, the goals are listed as:

- Ways of apprehending the world;
- Creating engaged citizens and intellectuals;
- Creating a shared academic community;
- Exposing students to preeminent and ground-breaking scholarship

These ambitions don't necessarily conflict, but their relationship, and the process of achieving them, should be clarified. Reaching all four goals through seven-week classes that are grounded on discussion and group work seems difficult, unless the "preeminent and ground-breaking scholarship" is the text that the students will be examining, which exemplifies a way of apprehending the world. The students then would create a shared academic community in their specific Engagements class as well as in the mandatory, semester-long Discussion Sections.

I would also note that in the specific instances of Engaging Aesthetics, and Empirical and Scientific Engagement, the ambitions appear so large that questions inevitably arise about the depth of the skills taught, and whether such skills can be achieved. For example, Engaging Aesthetics says:

- **In this class, students will learn to identify, describe, and analyze aesthetic phenomena, understand the social role and ongoing evolution of human creative expression, and develop their own approach to creative expression.**

Empirical and Scientific Engagement reports:

- **In this class, students will learn to analyze claims about the material and social worlds through formulation and testing of new questions and hypotheses based on observation and experience.**

I am nervous about the claims made in these two instances. I suspect SACSCOC would be apprehensive as well about the ability to reach one's "own approach to creative expression," and carrying out the "formulation and testing of new questions and hypotheses based on observation and experience" in seven-week courses. If these Engagements have to be extraordinarily focused in order to manage their goals, then their descriptions should explain that restriction.

Finally, there is a practical problem in the description of the Engagements. The New College Curriculum report stipulates in multiple places that the aim is to take two Engagement courses per semester, and students cannot take more than one Engagement course at a time. This makes sense so long as all the Engagement courses are seven weeks in duration. But then, the possibility of four-credit, fourteen-week Engagement class appears (pp. 15, 17), along with the stipulation that if a student does one of the fourteen-week classes, s/he cannot enroll in another one (p. 17). Does that language mean simultaneously enroll, or subsequently enroll? The scenario implies that if a freshman took one fourteen-week Engagements class in Fall 2018, and then two, seven-week Engagement classes in Spring 2019, she would not finish the Engagements requirement in the first year. And how can the intellectual heft of a fourteen-week class be compared to that of a seven-week class in terms of assessment? Are the fourteen-week classes designed for a specific student population, perhaps?

Our proposal calls for creation of the College Fellows, a College-wide body of faculty members drawn from across departments and programs. The College Fellows will be responsible for the design, instruction, and cultivation of the first-year Engagement courses. What are your thoughts on such a community of practice, and what it should include or exclude in terms of mission, requirements, incentives, activities, etc.? What are your thoughts on our College Fellows program, either in general or regarding our implementation?

In William & Mary's experience with its Center for the Liberal Arts – whose Fellows mentor and spur the creation of general education courses – such communities do a wonderful job of fostering faculty connections across disciplines. Over the last three years, we have seen new intellectual groupings appearing everywhere. UVA's College Fellows undoubtedly will see the same results. However, there is a disconnection between the ambition to bring general education into the center of the Arts & Sciences' experience, and the confinement of teaching general education to the College Fellows alone. Rather than general education infiltrating the academic departments, it appears it will be cordoned off. The result will be two tiers of faculty, and I wonder how the College

Fellows' activities will be viewed by their departments in merit evaluations, tenure, and promotion.

As far as their activities go, the College Fellows should spend time

- **recruiting other faculty into the cohort, via workshops;**
- **talking to each other about what is and is not working;**
- **training non-academic sectors of the university (Admissions, Advising, Advancement, etc.) in the goals and structure of the new Curriculum**
- **speaking at new-student orientations about the new Curriculum**
- **working with Assessment to create rubrics that are appropriate for measuring outcomes.**

There are a number of practical issues that haven't been addressed in the document here, which could affect the way the College Fellows work. Who selects them? Who organizes them? Who establishes their priorities? If they select each other, you run the risk of self-replication. If 7% of UVA's faculty becomes College Fellows, that probably is too large a body to function without a director and an associate director. If the College Fellows are expected to organize the outside speakers, that becomes event planning, and in our experience, that needs to be carried out by professionals. If the speakers involve security planning and visa issues, the same point applies. Where is the infrastructure, in other words, that will allow the Engagements to be implemented?

Finally, a statement in the document says "the Discussions are incubators for a final project created democratically by the full cohort of first years." This sentence raises a slew of unanswered questions: democratically created how? Where is the final project performed? Is it graded, and by whom? When in the academic year do the Discussions take up the planning for the final project? Given the size of UVA's first year class, this goal seems daunting. I cannot imagine how the College Fellows will pull it off.

The Literacies requirements aim to equip students with the necessary skills and fluencies needed to succeed in a rapidly-changing world. What are your thoughts on the idea of course requirements related to essential, modern literacies, fluencies, or skills? On our specific implementation of the idea?

General education curricula always include such requirements; there is nothing controversial about UVA's packaging of this concept. It can be complicated, though, to figure out the relationship of Instructional Technology and Library professionals to such classes: when it comes to digital literacy, for example, do those professionals guide or assist? One important piece that seems to be missing from the descriptions of these literacies is instruction in how to assess the veracity of information pulled from the web, and standards of attribution.

The Disciplines requirements promote student exploration of the different scholarly practices and disciplinary thinking that exist throughout the College of Arts & Sciences. The Discipline categories are deliberately non-departmental, and instead reflect the richness, breadth, and interconnectedness of the liberal arts and sciences. What are your thoughts on general education distribution requirements in general? On our specific implementation in the Disciplines?

I think most administrators and faculty try to walk a line between optimism and pessimism where distribution requirements are concerned. We want students to explore, yet we direct them toward particular knowledge domains because we don't trust them to approach subjects that seem alien or hard. Distribution requirements like UVA's have noble purposes; I very much like the fact that the Discipline categories here are non-departmental, which allows undergraduates to be startled when they see courses linked to a particular Discipline that they did not expect.

Still, so long as students can place out of the Disciplines via AP or IB credit, students are not going to have a shared academic experience. The same holds for students pursuing a B.S. degree, whereby the Discipline requirements undergo a significant shift. Have the faculty thought about what happens to students who change their minds about their majors, vis-à-vis the Discipline requirements? W&M routinely enrolls freshmen who intend to go to medical school, but find they cannot succeed in college-level science classes. Under your new Curriculum, what happens to such students if they switch from a B.S. to a B.A.?

Finally, the primary intellectual challenge with distribution requirements is to prevent them from becoming a random checklist of items. Appendix D, "The New College Curriculum Checklist," offers students and their advisors exactly that, nothing more. William & Mary overhauled all its advising materials to encourage conversations among students and faculty about ways in which disciplines might converge and differ as students were making their class choices. UVA might wish to do the same.

What logistical issues do you perceive or foresee regarding the New College Curriculum's sustainability and scale?

The compensation for the College Fellows and their departments is generous. So long as there are not negative repercussions for the faculty teaching the Curriculum in terms of merit, tenure, and promotion, I would think recruitment would not be difficult. Once the Curriculum is scaled up to encompass all first-years, I would anticipate difficulties with classroom space and class scheduling.

The Engagements are not "owned by faculty, but by College Fellows as a whole." Does this mean that only faculty willing to repeat already-constructed-classes can become Fellows? When do the Engagements change in terms of subjects? How often does the Common Reading change? How are the outside speakers proposed and approved? Is UVA seeking connections among the outside speakers, Common Reading, and Engagements, and to what degree? These links need to be spelled out somewhere.

The General Education Assessment Committee has crafted and begun implementing a comprehensive, rigorous, multi-faceted assessment of the New College Curriculum's pilot phase. Do you have any thoughts regarding the validity, effectiveness, or usefulness of assessment in curricular reform, either in general or specific to our plan?

I endorse the understanding of assessment promoted by the American Association of Colleges and Universities [AACU]. AACU sanctions what its officers often call

“authentic assessment.” This sort of assessment is much more challenging to design and carry out than a questionnaire about content knowledge. Authentic assessment asks students what they think they know, and how they are learning; it revolves around specific learning outcomes that should be formulated in consultation with the faculty teaching the courses being assessed. Authentic assessment involves the qualitative evaluation of student work by faculty. Levels of achievement have to be laid out clearly, so that the same student work can be judged similarly by different individuals.

Concrete learning outcomes for the new College Curriculum would increase the transparency of its ambitions for the university, students, and families. With transparency comes intentionality, which is another key value of AACU: students need to know what the aims of academic work are; once they know, they can begin to assimilate those goals for themselves and measure their progress in a self-reflective way. Explicit learning outcomes hold both students and faculty accountable. They also make it easy to explain to any audience what the new College Curriculum intends to achieve. The faculty have voiced goals for the competencies, literacies, Engagements, and Disciplines of the new Curriculum. For assessment, those goals need to be framed as questions-to-be-answered through student work. Ideally, such questions would allow surprises.

Overall thoughts, impressions, and feedback about the New College Curriculum and general education at UVA.

I congratulate the College of Arts & Sciences on the effort to revise general education. Such revisions are always time-consuming and politically fraught. The Competencies, Literacies, Engagements, and Disciplines are well-thought out in theory, and I think they will prove very attractive to potential students. One missing element, from my point of view, is the lack of a timeline that would illustrate when undergraduates will fulfill the new requirements. If UVA intends the New Curriculum to last longer than sophomore year, it should say so; an integrated curriculum, in which each part builds on another over a significant duration of time, is deemed highly effective by experts.

There are some remaining elements in the general education literature that UVA might wish to consider incorporating into the New College Curriculum as it develops. First, I did not see any explicit links between general education and the majors: writing and talking about the ways in which general education is a platform for the major would help to raise consciousness of general education’s importance. Second, one of the most interesting elements in the current literature is a concept called “signature work.” Signature work is a capstone project that encapsulates a student’s academic experience in the major, but it also can be imagined as exemplifying the skills learned in general education. Finally, smaller liberal arts colleges, such as Bates, have acted on a vision of “co-educators.” In this scheme, everyone on campus, from janitorial staff to the President’s officers to tour guides, is imagined as invested in the general educational goals of the university. The concept is a tremendous morale-booster. If some smaller version of it could work at UVA, it would help your students gain a shared academic experience.

Appendix D: College Fellows Perspective (report)

Introduction

The GEAC subcommittee invited the first cohort of College Fellows to a focus group in December 2017 to discuss their experiences to date; 13 (of 15) were able to attend. The Fellows were specifically asked to discuss:

- a. their time/experience developing the first-year Engagement courses;
- b. the experience of teaching these courses;
- c. the formative aspects of membership in the College Fellows “community of practice”;
- d. general thoughts on the New College Curriculum.

Themes are ordered by when they appeared in the transcript. Quotes within each theme are similarly ordered, with each bullet indicating a cohesive quote from a single participant (lightly edited for clarity and readability). Multiple quotes under a theme may have significant time between them, which is not represented in this thematic ordering. Quotes pertaining to issues completely outside our purview were omitted. There were a few instances where there was a significant point made not captured in a quote; we indicate these under the appropriate theme in brackets.

Note that the summary below is an accurate representation and fully inclusive of all feedback from the focus group. The responses from the faculty were overwhelmingly positive and this is reflected in the summary below.

Course diversity

The College Fellows noted that teaching the Engagements was different than much of their previous teaching experiences, specifically in relation to the diversity and breadth of students in their courses. Many of the Fellows had been teaching third- and fourth- year students, students majoring in the Fellow’s discipline, or students with an interest in the course content. In the Engagement courses, the Fellows encountered first-year students and a great variety in type of student, whether that describes race, academic preparation, or other identities. Overall, this experience was seen as positive and one that resonated with the intention of the Engagement courses.

- “I got to know a much broader range of students that I got to know in my normal classes . . . I have more African American students, I have more international students . . . who were extraordinary. I have student athletes, which I almost never have, and . . . I have students who were absolutely uninterested in anything that I was doing in the classroom, and that never happens to me, because they take a course on [my discipline] because they're interested in [my discipline.]”
- “My discussion sessions were also . . . very vibrant . . . Students were very participatory, and were bringing lots of different perspectives, because there were science oriented students, there were art oriented students. There were students who had taken environmental sciences and had things to say about [course topic]. There were students

who had taken classes that were more aesthetics oriented . . . for the interdisciplinary nature of the course, the discussion level was very, very high . . . So yeah, I would say that the varied background contributed to the discussion, to the high level of discussion. And the number of international students and the diversity of the student population was also pretty great I thought.”

- “One thing I hadn't anticipated was all of them really eagerly just downloading all this knowledge that they had, so I found myself constantly having to get them to elaborate or me having to explain, you know we had a lot of people who had gotten fives on the AP [topic] exam . . . constantly toggling back and forth between negotiating not just where students came from and various others identities but just epistemologically, they all felt invited, which was good, to contribute what they knew . . . I felt like a tight rope walker sometimes, just trying to manage that.”
- “The highlights . . . I think that the diversity of the class, [in my discipline] it's incredibly homogenous . . . [and] much less people of color and so it was literally like I had been taken to a different university and frankly one that I would much rather work at. And I just couldn't believe in those sessions just how diverse and all of the operative knowledge about what we read about, who talks in the classroom seemed to be utterly upended.”
- “I had few examples of students saying to me, ‘I would never have been able to do this if I hadn't been with this other student in the same group, and we've talked about these things, and we come from such radically different perspectives.’ It seems to me that that's in many ways what we're really trying to do here.”

Quality of classroom discussion

College Fellows were pleased with the quality of classroom discussion that evolved throughout the Engagement courses. They especially liked when the students began integrating what had been learned in one Engagement with another Engagement course. Students were generally ready and willing to participate.

- “They were an eager bunch, so there was a lot of talking . . . good talking. There was a lot of participation without having to force it. We didn't cover nearly the amount of concept I thought we would. Just because we had so much fun with what we were covering, and so I didn't push it, I didn't say, ‘We have to stop here.’ Because it wasn't like I was giving them knowledge that a major would need. You know, I thought, it's good that we were crossing where we were.”
- “I mean I liked that about the teaching in the second seven weeks . . . [students would say] ‘I also read the thing from my other engagement.’ and I thought that was really exciting to hear them talk about that . . . it's not like they had this totally comprehensive idea about what the new curriculum was, but they were like, there was a thing happening here. And you see continuity between classes, and I thought that was really great . . . So that was a highlight for me I think, hearing students talk about the different engagements they did and the students who had been in all different engagements talking about that and seeing them somehow as parts of the puzzle that they were trying to put together was cool.”

Student behaviors and outcomes

Several College Fellows noted that the Engagement courses were markedly different from other courses first-year students typically take. They noted the eagerness of the students and the fact of their openness to what a college learning experience “should” be. The Fellows believe that students are being challenged through the rigor of the courses, but also are rising to the challenge, whether it is through challenging texts or team projects.

- “I was very pleased with their willingness to follow through on projects of their own making and design with some support and then to engage in peer review of each other. So in both my classes, there were these overarching projects. And when I've tried experiments like that in upper level classes, paradoxically, although they're more intellectually advanced, they're more calcified with respect to how they receive knowledge. And these [students were] really enthusiastic about trying this out, and they didn't push back because I think they didn't know any better. So this was a way of saying that you can do this kind of thing in college, and they appreciated that.”
- “I would say that's really part of the success that I felt about the courses . . . they're hungry for more knowledge. There's more investigating to do when you're going and looking for other courses to take. And so I got questions like, ‘What books do you recommend?’ Or as a physics major, ‘What else do I need to know about [topic]?’ “
- One of the students said to me, ‘Your course is my hardest course.’ And I said, ‘Really? Why is that?’ And they said, ‘Well, because of the readings.’ And I said, ‘Well are the readings too long?’ And they said, ‘No, but you really have to read them’ . . . This [course] should . . . be difficult, but difficult in a good way. This is not onerous. But a lot of the other courses that they're taking, maybe in their introductory year are, they were taking first year Spanish, or certain math, in preparation for Comm, or whatever, so the preparation that we're doing is for them actually quite unique. For some of them. Anyway.”

Course design and preparation

The College Fellows found the course design process to be extremely valuable, particularly for courses that were going to be different than those they typically taught. They appreciated the intentional planning for the courses and were grateful to learn from each other, noting that working with faculty from multiple disciplines helped expand their own thinking about course design. The Fellows feel that the courses ultimately designed for the Engagements reflected these intentions and the shared approach to course design.

- “I think . . . that the planning process in ways that I only realized while we were teaching, I think I never felt more prepared for a semester.”
- “I would say that the plan prepared me for that in the sense that we are all very different scholars and we spent a lot of time together and we never totally agreed, but then what that did for me was say, “Oh wow, look at all these different approaches.” And so it made me very aware when I was teaching my class of, “Oh shoot, maybe we should think about with this perspective.” And otherwise I would have just been thinking from the [discipline] perspective.”

- “I think it was really interesting, because . . . it's surprisingly rare how often I talk to my colleagues about teaching. We talk about research quite frequently, and there's forums for when we have visiting scholars coming into talk, we talk at lab meetings . . . There's any number of ways that we talk about research, but there's very few ways that we talk about teaching. But talking to colleagues here during the planning, I got all kinds of interesting ideas, just sort of learning what they said, don't this assignment, do that assignment, and it was kind of new. If I watch all of you guys teach more often, maybe I'll have other ideas, instead of the same old stuff, but it is because we don't do that a lot. So, that was a unique experience.”
- “To state what is obvious to us and make it explicit, I think that the design of these courses that we've worked so hard on were to do with at least two things. To get students engaged. How do we engage the students? And how do we get them to make the knowledge that they're getting usable? That's not something I normally do in my classes, and that's something I think . . . all of us knew we were doing and we were doing it.”
- “Well I'd like to say . . . that the preparation that we had with Judy and her team . . . was incredibly helpful and totally changed the way I think about running classes completely and . . . I think worked really well.”

Overarching New College Curriculum themes and purpose

The College Fellows designed Engagement courses with intentional regard to the purpose of the Engagements and they were pleased to see this intention being received and understood by students. Students are developing a new understanding of what knowledge is and how to approach a topic through a particular mode of thinking or habit of mind. As a result, students feel that courses are meaningful and in some cases, helping to broaden their thinking about what comprises a rich learning experience. In numerous cases, the Fellows spoke with students who intend to take disciplinary courses related to a topic they explored in an Engagement course, an unexpected outcome on the part of the Fellows.

- “I think for me as someone who's kind of junior, I often feel like I teach as part of a curriculum, I know what sort of competency I'm filling in, but I don't understand the sort of philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of what the larger goal is. It's often vaguely stated, ‘We want to introduce students to the school's literary methods.’ And it's like, ‘Well, okay, well what does that really mean?’ I really do have much more of a robust sense of what the goals are and . . . the logic of the fuller vision was more operative for me in the classroom. So in addition I think to finding all these techniques, it also felt like, ‘I want you to be thinking about these things or trying out these different methods, but also because we're working towards this comprehensive idea of what general education will look like.’”
- “ I think too that something that I felt was really surprising and I think delightful in some ways is that students in my classes thought that I had designed this class since the advance of August 11th and 12th. They thought that everything that I had, everything that was on the syllabus, that everything was so relevant to helping them understand what it meant to be at this institution at a time of racial crisis, that they were like, ‘Well, why did we have this class? Because white supremacists came to the university.’ It's like, ‘I've been working on this since March.’ . . . And I think because they thought that, and I would

say, "I didn't just do this two days ago." I mean, I couldn't have done it. But they thought that it was so in tune to what the university needed and what they needed to understand the place where we are now that it seemed completely intact with. And that I thought was pretty gratifying in ways that I hadn't anticipated."

- "One of the things I've been getting from students a lot . . . is that they didn't know that knowledge can work this way . . . that the way that they have been taught has not been this way . . . it's been about sucking in a lot of content, and that several students have said to me, "I didn't really understand that you could have courses that have a sense of urgency for how I see myself in the world and what the issues are." The courses that they're taking seem to all be . . . courses that they feel have opened their eyes to what knowledge can be and that that in and of itself has brought an urgency to their own lives in how they see and think about the world and that's been really amazing to hear."
- "The diversity of the faculty that they've been exposed to in terms of perspectives has been really eye opening for them too. One student said to me, "I took Professor [name's] class and what I realized after taking that is that within that class there was sort of an introduction to the [topic] . . . I would never have thought that I would be interested in taking an [topic] class, but now I really wanna take it having taken her class. So the exposure to arts and sciences for them has also been really eye-opening in terms of what they think they want to now do. And seeing them as advisees when they come in and say, "I wanna do Comm School." And then changing their minds and saying, "Actually I wanna do classics and computer science because I want to be a cryptographer." Because I took something in the engagements that's made me change my mind in how we think about language."

College Fellows “community of practice”

The College Fellows were strongly positive in their reflection of the community of practice that developed. Post-docs felt that they were an equal part of the community. Fellows learned from each other and enjoyed the interdisciplinary nature of their conversations. Importantly, several Fellows feel that what they learned and did through this community of practice would inform work they do back in their department. They felt, in some ways, that it was a luxury to have this experience, one that was singular in their teaching careers.

- "From my perspective as a post-doc it's been really nice. It's been . . . incredibly wonderful to have all these different people from different disciplines weighing in, and participating, and being collegial. Because it's not a department dynamic, nothing's been established, right? Just sitting in the course development sessions where we break out into our [Engagement groups], and people say, "Oh, have you read this, or this might be useful. Actually, for an assignment what if you tried this?" Everybody's been so generous, it's just been so fantastic. And you get inter-disciplinary, you get people suggesting text from [a discipline] or texts from [another discipline]. Things that one might be familiar with but not necessarily your first go-to for your course, right? Because, you come from a particular disciplinary background. So it's been awesome."
- "It even starts at the simple service level. I mean, you just saw a conversation happen at lunch where we talked about course paths. So from a professional development standpoint, there's no manual . . . that you come in with and it tells you how to teach at

university. There's advice and things like that. But we don't spend a lot of time talking about it. Even surface, simple things simple assignments, I don't talk to my colleagues in [department] about that very often.”

- “When I got a letter from Ian Baucom, and I signed it to be a [college] fellow . . . I just thought that was a word, two words. I figured I was going to teach some new course, and I was going to do it largely the way I normally teach . . . on my own. I had no conceptions that I was going to be a part of the group. We heard from other universities about how they're doing that and none of them were part of a group. I think what makes this singular. And I've tried to learn from them about how to make a class . . . more open, and a course that students participate more. But if it hadn't been for this group I wouldn't have had virtually any ideas at all about how to even try to do something like that.”
- “I was just going to say on a tangential note, I think that you've created a kind of model for working the way that we do. But I think it would also be helpful if at a certain point to think about that model and how it could be applied to incoming faculty... A lot of faculty they come in and they're just droned to teaching, which is fine, I mean, it can be. But I just wonder whether this model can somehow be abbreviated in a kind of one to two week forum to where taking some of the principles from it and applying to a more broadly at the university.”
- “It helps with the curriculum design and majors too. I sit on the undergraduate committee in our department [and] I feel like a lot of the ideas, the inspirational ideas I have, come from listening to this type of conversations that we've had. With more thinking like, what is the experience we want a [department] major to have? My own thinking has changed a little bit through this exercise. Whether, it's faculty development, whether it's curriculum development . . . take some of the principles and apply them in there. I think that's we're all certainly going to do. I think it's going to be a better major because of that.”

Concerns about the future

The area that the College Fellows expressed concern about is the viability of the Engagement courses and College Fellows program as it scales up. This was related to three different areas: the student experience, recruitment of future College Fellows, and future cohorts of College Fellows' ownership of the curriculum.

As the course enrollments increase, several Fellows wonder how that will change the teaching and learning dynamic and what this might mean for the student experience. They are concerned about their ability to replicate a highly engaging and interactive class with larger numbers of students in the course.

Despite the positive experience that the College Fellows have had so far, they are also concerned about the ability to attract faculty to serve as future Fellows. Through conversations with their departments, they believe that some faculty will not consider the opportunity and that some departments are more likely to support applicants to the Fellows program than others. Without a strong commitment on the part of faculty across the College, the Fellows worry about the sustainability of the Fellows model.

Finally, they believe that future cohorts of Fellows face the challenge of owning the Engagements curriculum and not merely inheriting what has gone before. The first cohort had the unique opportunity of developing the Engagements curriculum from the ground up, and while that was a rich experience, they don't believe future cohorts should take that on. However, they do believe future cohorts should re-examine and reflect upon the curriculum each year to be sure that it does not become rote or stale. How this charge is conveyed to future cohorts and how those cohorts take up the charge are important questions the Fellows believe need to be addressed.

- “My concern is this might be great for my 35-person class, but what's going to happen when it's a 50-person class? Or what's going to happen [when] a 70-person class is a 90 or 100? How can you maintain whatever we're doing that seems to work with the chemistry of this size group? What happens when it's larger?”
- “Maybe we've done the right thing for 500 . . . I wonder if those large questions can continue to be a part of the way that we, and future cohorts discuss what we're doing here. Because I have, I've just really enjoyed working with people and I've loved our class, and so on. But I just want, honestly, to be a work in progress in the years ahead.”
- “But in particular it's maintaining what I felt like we have had, but we had it because we had to invent it. We did invent it. And so, how can we maintain what I think is crucial? Which is a constant reflection . . . How can future fellows maintain that constant reexamination of it? Because if not, then this could easily fall into a rote repetition that will encounter many of the other problems that curricula have? I worry about that.”
- “I was just going to say one of the things I'm concerned about here is recruitment of faculty. I'm very worried about it and I'm particularly worried about the sciences. I feel very privileged to have been a part of this first cohort and also privileged that we have had the students that I did this semester. Really a fabulous experience. But I don't think I can convince my colleagues unfortunately.”

“I think one of the crucial challenges that future cohorts will have, will be how to articulate and understand the relationship of the engagements in the new curriculum to the broader college. Understanding that there isn't the need to have 100% participation. In fact, we don't want that . . . this has been intellectually compelling in a way that's been productive, encouraging, and energizing for me. And we need to ensure that it continues that way.”

Appendix E: Teaching Assistants Perspective (report)

Introduction

The first cohort of graduate student teaching assistants for the first-year Engagement courses was invited to a focus group in December 2017 to discuss their experience so far in the New College Curriculum; 10 (out of 17) were able to attend. In addition to grading and facilitating a specific Engagement course, TAs were responsible for leading a bi-weekly (i.e., every other week) discussion section with students from a variety of different Engagement courses; even as students changed Engagement courses halfway through the semester, their discussion section stayed the same. TAs were specifically asked to discuss the process of planning and running their discussion sections, their perception of the first-year student experience in the New College Curriculum, the value of the discussion sections (actual or possible), what it was like being in this collaborative, non-disciplinary TA community, and how the experience relates to their academic career.

In general, TAs expressed enthusiasm about the potential of the New College Curriculum and identified many positive experiences from working with students in their discussion sections and their fellow TAs. That said, there was significant frustration regarding: 1) not being utilized effectively in their assigned courses, either for grading or in-class assistance, and 2) failing to deliver on the ideal of their discussion sections because of a lack of support, training, and organization. Thankfully, the New College Curriculum program leadership was aware of these issues independently of our investigation, and have already begun making changes to address these concerns in both the short term (Spring 2018 semester) and long term (future years) through a significant revision of the discussion section model. We include a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis of the TA conversation below, and encourage the College Fellow, Engagements program administrators and staff to keep these comments in mind as they continue to iterate on this component of the curriculum.

Strengths

TAs identified several strengths of their position in the New College Curriculum model, in particular regarding the first-year student experience. They praised the opportunities they had in the discussion sections to tie Engagement course content to the students' lived first-year experience at UVA. They thought "talking about the university and talking about [course material] in terms of culture of the university and the history of the university" was very successful and generated deep, meaningful conversations. TAs also were successfully able to use Socratic methods to challenge students' ideas or assumptions, which students found both valuable and enjoyable. Finally, they praised the interdisciplinary nature of the Engagement courses, finding them both innovative and professionally valuable. Several TAs reported that the liberal arts institutions they were applying to jobs at were attracted to their participation in this program, both because of the experience working with first-year students, and because of being exposed to a variety of disciplinary content and teaching methods. TAs in particular were grateful to have had the opportunity diversify their classroom activity portfolio with new and innovative activities designed by the College Fellows.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses identified by the TAs primarily concerned a lack of adequate planning and support for their discussion sections, and in particular how the discussion integrated with the Engagement course content. They observed that they were often leading discussions outside of their disciplinary strengths without having been given the tools to do so effectively. Similarly, since the Engagement courses themselves were variable in content, it was challenging or impossible to tie them together in discussion sections with the minimal material they had been given. One TA said, “I think the rhetoric on the syllabus is very aspirational, but somebody needs to be able to make those [interdisciplinary] connections... the discussions about the university or whatever the subject matter is have been good, but it hasn’t been that kind of interdisciplinary conversation I think this was designed for.” They also expressed initial frustration with the discussion’s year-long writing project, saying that the project felt rushed, the electronic platform did not function, grading was difficult, and that it seemed thematically disconnected from the rest of the Engagement courses and first-year experience. Regarding their Engagement course assignment, TAs voiced concerns about being poorly-utilized in the classes they had to attend, or being unable to keep up with grading what they considered an excessive number of assignments for 7-week courses.

Opportunities

Given their position between students and their instructors, TAs offered a number of valuable suggestions for how to improve the discussion experience in particular, and the first-year Engagements experience in general. They spoke enthusiastically about the possibility of discussion sections being a time for students to integrate their learning—across their classes and Engagement courses, as well as with their personal background and current experiences at UVA. They suggested that the discussion sections would benefit from a somewhat reduced, more focused collection of texts or objects to consider. To help connect the Engagement courses to the discussion sections, TAs suggested that College Fellows might integrate a common weekly theme or question into their classes that students could then bring to their discussion sections to consider and engage with together. Similarly, TAs said that it would be useful to have met with the College Fellows (either their assigned instructor, or as a group) both earlier and more frequently, to facilitate increased coordination between the Engagements and discussion sections. Finally, they found the TA community itself very valuable, in particular the diversity of scholarship present, and the sense of security it provided. One TA said, “there are things that I’m stronger at and there are things that I’m weaker at. The fact that I can tap into this group of people with such great experiences, who are all excellent teachers and are all so dedicated to this enterprise, to be able to draw on their experiences... it helps that I can draw on everyone’s experience here to interact with students who don’t think like me.”

Threats

Finally, TAs identified a number of threats to the success of the discussion sections and the role of TAs in general. They said that there are currently too many things for TAs to keep track of: lectures, multiple courses in multiple domains, a final year-long project, readings, discussion keywords, etc.: “there were just so many different things that I was trying to intellectually tie

together that I myself didn't understand sometimes." They suggest that this burden needs to be reduced, or that TAs need to be better informed or supported regarding all these different components, or both. As a specific example of what might help reduce this burden, TAs said that their time in the Engagement classes was largely pointless and could be dropped. They expressed serious concern about the ability of the model's interdisciplinary discussion sections to succeed, both given their lack of interdisciplinary training and the fast-moving, wildly disparate nature of the different Engagement classes that were supposed to come together in these sessions. This was exacerbated by a perceived lack of ownership over their discussion sections, and that were told to teach something they themselves did not fully understand, and had not been adequately prepared for. Finally, they cited the difficulty of participating in this novel, innovative, interdisciplinary experience at the same time as pursuing other professional commitments, such as finishing a dissertation or applying to jobs.

Summary

As mentioned before, the New College Curriculum leadership has already taken steps to address many of these issues and frustration. TA workload was changed and lessened for the Spring 2018 semester, and a significantly different discussion section model will be implemented next academic year—one that will assign TAs to one Engagement domain that they are intimately familiar with. Planning sessions ahead of each 7-week module will be implemented, and professional development opportunities will be offered to align the TA workload with their professional commitments, including completion of their dissertations and job pursuits.

The ability of the program to self-assess and address such issues promptly is to be commended. That said, many of the concerns expressed by the TAs relate to the challenging-but-foundational need to tie the different Engagement themes together in some common space, which will necessarily involve significant logistical and pedagogical challenges. That said, the TAs also identified many strengths of and opportunities for the program, and expressed great enthusiasm for its potential. We encourage the New College Curriculum leadership to consider this feedback from the 2017-18 TAs as they continue to develop the program in future years.

Appendix F: Implementation Status & Effects (Dean’s office report)

The following questionnaire was distributed to the College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s office in April 2018, to provide an administrative perspective on the status and effects of the New College Curriculum implementation thus far.

Q: Has the financial impact of the New College Curriculum been greater, less than, or equal to the College’s projections? On the basis of the pilot, what impacts or effects on the hiring of faculty, administrators, and graduate students are now anticipated if the Curriculum becomes permanent?

Projected costs and actual expenses for the New College Curriculum (NCC) pilot have not varied significantly from the preliminary plan. We estimate coming in 1-2% under budget for FY 2018. The Office of the Dean, along with the co-Directors of the College Fellows Program, are considering options for slowing the scaled growth of the budget, largely in response to programmatic changes in the NCC (e.g., changes to course development funding, GTA participation). The shift is one of timing, and not total budget—which at full implementation remains roughly as originally projected.

We have, for example, modified the scaled growth of the faculty who participate in the College Fellows for AYs 2018-2021 to better reflect the anticipated cohort sizes for the pilot years. The anticipated sizes for the pilot cohorts in AY 2018-19 and AY 2019-20 were revised down once the yield from marketing efforts in May 2017 revealed the significant challenge of offering three GE choices to students. Below is a table with the revised cohort projections and associated Fellows appointments.

Academic Year	Original Projections		Revised Projections	
	Cohort Size	New Fellows Appointments	Cohort Size	New Fellows Appointments
2017-18	600	13	n/a	n/a
2018-19	1200	15	800-1200	11
2019-20	1800	15	1200-1800	13

This modification to projected faculty appointments is due to the revised estimates of cohort sizes during the pilot and not to matters related to budget. Associated savings from these estimates have reduced the budget projections for the remaining pilot years, but long-term budget forecasts for full student participation in the program remain constant.

The program presently funds two administrative staff: one Manager of Curricular Implementation and one Education Outreach Specialist. The Manager for Curricular Implementation serves as the de facto DUP (e.g., directs scheduling, assessment, hiring, planning, and programming) and reports directly to the co-Directors of the Engagements and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs. The Education Outreach Specialist’s primary responsibilities include coordination of general education assessment and programming. As the pilot winds down and the cohorts grow, it is anticipated that the job duties of the Education Outreach Specialist will transition to full programming.

The projected need for teaching assistants has been revised down after piloting the curriculum for a year. The TA position description was changed to focus more on Engagement-level teaching discussions and away from grading responsibilities. This reduced the needed number of TAs by 2 in AY 2018-19 and by 5 at full scale.

Q: How has the burden on the College—on administration, staff, and faculty—resembled or deviated from what was expected during the pilot? What consequences, negative or positive, for the College’s endeavors can now be anticipated should the Curriculum become permanent? Would sustaining the program require resources that weren’t originally projected or anticipated?

From the standpoint of the Dean’s Office, the administrative load of the NCC has largely been as anticipated. Dedicated staff in the College (listed above) play a major role in supporting the curriculum and related assessment efforts. We perceive no additional administrative burden for departments beyond our preliminary expectations.

It is, however, worth noting that one entirely expected consequence of the pilot has come to the fore, and that relates to the funding that is available to departments as a result of their faculty participating as Fellows. On the plus side, departments now have the resources to bring in additional postdocs, esteemed visiting professors, and to support graduate teaching initiatives. A related challenge, however, is that talented tenure-track faculty are participating in the NCC, a number of whom had been teaching large and/or popular courses in their home departments. Although funding is available to replace their teaching, some departments have found it challenging to find someone capable of filling the Fellows’ shoes in the classroom. This has certainly not been the case in every department, but we do think this is an issue we will need to think through for the next cycle, and certainly if the NCC becomes permanent.

Re: Sustaining the Program—The budget for the program is comprehensive. At this time, we foresee no additional costs beyond those currently forecasted.

Q: How difficult has it been to recruit faculty for the Engagements courses, for administrative roles, and for other duties in relation to the Curriculum? How difficult do you expect such recruitment to be in the future? If the Curriculum becomes permanent, what are the projected numbers of faculty, administrators and other personnel required each year at full implementation?

For the last three hiring cycles, the College of Arts & Sciences has been able to recruit the needed number of outstanding faculty for appointment to the College Fellows. However, the applicant pool for Fellows has not yet been fully representative of the diversity of A&S’s many disciplines. In the particular, the sciences have been under-represented. Recruitment efforts have not been as robust as may be necessary, and the hiring process was delayed in AY 17-18 to coincide with the faculty vote to extend the pilot program—two reasons that may account for the less disciplinarily diverse applicant pool. To the extent faculty from the sciences participate, have good experiences, and tell their colleagues about it, we may see an uptick in participation.

However, we will need to pay close attention to this issue and should focus more effort on recruiting faculty from departments who have yet to participate.

If the curriculum becomes permanent, 15 Fellows will need to be appointed to the College Fellows cohort each year. Fellows serve a two-year teaching term, so no more than 30 faculty FTEs are teaching at any given time. This population of Fellows is enhanced by a cohort of 3-year postdocs (12 total). And as noted above, the program will continue to require two staff administrators dedicated to the coordination of course scheduling, program development, faculty development opportunities, hiring, and budget oversight.

The strength of the postdoctoral candidate pool each year has been overwhelming. In the last two years alone over 200 qualified applicants have applied to teach in the program. We see no reason why the present ability to hire immensely qualified Postdoctoral Fellows should change. We project hiring approximately 4-6 postdocs annually. The seven current Postdoctoral Fellows hold graduate degrees from NYU, Vanderbilt, Stanford, Michigan, Duke, and UVA.

Q: In what ways, if any, have the College’s curriculum-related goals, timelines, or priorities shifted during the pilot?

The NCC remains a top priority for A&S and occupies a signature position in the current Capital Campaign. Over the next seven years, we envision raising \$75 million for the NCC alone—funds that will ensure an ongoing stream of support for the departmental backfill program, the College Fellows, development of new Engagements, speaker series, and other enrichment activities.

Regarding the implementation timelines, we still expect a continued growth of the program towards full implementation for AY 2020-21. Should conditions necessitate changes to the timeline, we have designed contingency implementation plans that would postpone full adoption to AY 2021-22.

If anything, the centrality of the NCC to A&S’s academic strategic plan has only increased since the faculty voted to approve the pilot. As the Democracy Initiative has begun to coalesce and gain momentum, it is also generating strong resonances with other priority areas –most saliently, the NCC. A core strategic question for A&S has been “What do democracies need from their universities? And, specifically, what does this democracy need from this university?” We see the NCC as one important answer to that question. We believe the NCC and the Democracy Initiative will be mutually reinforcing, and each will gain strength from association with the other—in terms of academic programming and events, course development (e.g., Forums), faculty collaboration, and fundraising success, among other areas. The NCC is already drawing significant donor interest, and we have no reason to doubt our ability to generate the philanthropy necessary to sustain it over time. Indeed, we may be able to take advantage of success and donor interest in the NCC to raise funds for other, related—but perhaps more difficult to ‘market’—priorities, including graduate fellowships or postdocs.

Appendix G: Chairs & Directors Perspective (report)

Overview

Below is a summary of results from an online survey that went out to program chairs and directors in September 2017, and again in February 2018. The survey investigated three areas of concern: 1) the chair's understanding of the New College Curriculum, 2) the real effects of the curriculum on the chair's department of program and 3) the overall "pulse" of the chair's department regarding the new curriculum. The survey received 27 responses across various departments and academic programs.

This appendix of our generalized Survey of Departmental Chairs and Program Directors Report presents a summary of results according to four motivating questions:

1. Which departments have committed faculty members to the new curriculum as College Fellows?
2. Which departments have chairs that perceive the new curriculum's effects to be onerous on his or her department or program?
3. For those departments with faculty serving as College Fellows, which have experienced notable positive effects as a result of using their backfill funds?
4. As reported by their chair, which departments regard the new curriculum with concern or approval?

New Curriculum Perceived as Onerous

In our survey, several departments/programs reported the new curriculum's effects as onerous in some significant (real or expected) way.

- "Our curriculum is tight and cumulative, like a language program, and we would have to replace any faculty who took a course leave with an adjunct instructor, which tends to impoverish the program they teach in - many of our sub-major concentrations have a single faculty member, something we have been trying to change for years. We basically are running with less than the minimum number of faculty to teach all the courses we need due to retirements and departures."
- "We have, for the next four semesters, lost our best and most popular instructor. This will likely result in an overall decrease in enrollment in the department, in part because the instructor is not teaching classes and because they are no longer able to motivate students to take additional courses in the department."
- "We have a high course enrollments. It is hard for the major to have faculty step away from the courses that they usually teach. Faculty that have opted to do it teach hundreds of students, they are effectively not replaced. We'd need a larger number of faculty if more were participating in the new undergraduate curriculum. This in part reflects relatively large class sizes (especially at the non-majors level), the fact that stronger faculty are more likely to participate, and stronger faculty tend to teach larger classes."
- "We would like to participate, because it will draw attention to our field, but our own courses and program, especially the graduate, would suffer from lack of TT faculty."

- “As noted above, it could be a problem in my department. Our faculty generally teach large undergrad classes and highly specialized grad classes. In general, we need to replace faculty who are on leave, and finding replacements is not easy. And, my understanding is that replacement funds are not provided for fellows. So, I don't see how this could work for us. But, if a faculty member wanted to participate, I would reach out to the Dean to see if it was possible.”
- “Our member of the Fellows is one of the most popular instructors; his classes were also large, which means that for a Department that is flooded with majors, his partial absence is hard to replace.”
- “Her absence leaves us with a teaching gap in the areas she would normally teach, which are crucial to our major, thus forcing us to hire adjunct labor.”
- “We will need to find a replacement to teach the course we need to teach in [department] due to a missing instructor or, if the new curriculum course can actually replace one of our courses or similar in nature to it, it will be fine.”
- “He was teaching one of our most popular introductory courses; his leave corresponded to a time when this course had to increase its enrollment 3 fold. In addition, his research expertise is in a field where the department has been planning to build a new program. We had to postpone those initiatives until he returns to the department.”
- “We have high demand for 3000- and 4000-level courses for our majors, so the impact would be relatively strong. I would support a colleague becoming a Fellow, however.”
- “We would have to find someone else to teach that faculty member's course. We are so thinly spread as it is (e.g., I as the chair have taught an overload each of the 4 years I've been here) that we'd probably end up having to cancel the class - which would create problems for students trying to graduate on time.”
- “We simply cannot allow faculty from this department to volunteer for this duty now. If we did lose faculty members to these new appointments, it would not be possible to offer the courses needed for our undergraduate students to graduate on time, much less to grow the graduate program to which we have recently committed. Until this department is more fully staffed, it will simply be impossible for faculty to participate in the College Fellows program.”

Positive Effects from Backfill Funds

The following departments reported notable positive effects from using the funds provided by having a faculty member serving as a College Fellow:

- “I'm planning to use [the backfill funds] to extend the postdoc position of a wonderful faculty member who teaches in an important area that is underrepresented at UVA.”
- “We have hired a wonderful post-doc!”
- “We are using the funding to support a Post-Doc, teaching one course per semester. Our first post-doc has proven a real winner.”
- “Current plans are to fund graduate students to offer upper level seminars in lieu of a TA. We have developed this into a formal program with a teaching mentor and grad students taking the CDI. This has the benefit of providing some real teaching experience for grad

students and a small interactive course for undergraduates. I think this program is a great outcome of have some extra, flexible funds.”

- “In the first year, the funds were used to hire a visit asst. professor (actually a recent and very promising Ph.D. in our department who is on the job market); for the second year, we hope to conduct a search for someone from outside who might bring to the department something not currently covered by it.”
- “In the case of one of our College Fellows, we have hired an Assistant Professor for a two-year period in his field.”
- “This year, we have arranged to pay 50% salary of two advanced postdoctoral fellows, who will teach a course each, while completing their postdoctoral publications in the department. We have a similar plan for one other postdoc next year. We are also planning to use the remaining funds on graduate student enhancement.”
- “Used it to [help] hire a new tenure-track assistant professor.”

Overall Department Perspective

The following department chairs reported that their faculty viewed the new curriculum with approval or enthusiasm:

- “I think the general feeling is one of wait-and-see. They're cautiously optimistic.”
- “There seems to be a hope that the new College Engagements might provide a better equipped undergraduate population ready and prepared to undertake original creative research early on in their undergraduate careers... A good number of professors in [department] participate in the College Fellows program, in my estimation. They are quite committed to its successful outcome. Others are happily waiting to see if the improvements materialize.”
- “We recall general agreement that reform was an excellent idea... the gen ed requirements were understood to be ripe for reform.”
- “What I can summarize here is that I think (and most [department] faculty would agree) the curriculum reform is absolutely necessary. I hope there will come a clarity on how the enrichment courses can be taught without imposing burden on the departments.”

The following department chairs reported that their faculty viewed the new curriculum with concern or skepticism:

- “There is concern among the faculty that the disciplines will not give students the breadth and depth of experience as our past area requirements. As it was implemented by the College, departments were allowed to tag courses with up to two discipline tags. Many departments tried to tag many courses with two disciplines, and they attempted to have courses that covered many areas. As a result, for example, there are now music and science classes that satisfy the historical perspectives requirement. There was, we believe, inherent value in taking a history class from a faculty member in the history department. The history faculty member was educated in the field and is an expert in the methods and nature of their subject. Now, however, if a class's content simply covers past events, it can be given the historical perspectives tag without the instructor necessarily having any formal training in history. Some believe this is a significant loss in the new system...”

Many faculty are concerned the new general education requirements will result in decreasing enrollments in our general education courses. They are concerned that decreasing enrollments will reflect badly on the department, and that it will affect future hires and support.”

- “There is general confusion and apprehension among my faculty, but some willingness to cooperate. Our fear is that we will lose enrollments in larger courses that traditionally fill with first years.”
- “I cannot imagine how this small pilot program will scale up to include all incoming students. In addition, it seems another obstacle to transfer students' assimilation into the University.”
- “My faculty provided extensive comments when [the new curriculum] was being considered. Please review these comments. Most of them still hold today. Mostly, my interested faculty are supportive of the changes to the area requirements... Many people on my faculty are deeply skeptical and concerned about the engagement classes... As expected, the overwhelming majority of faculty teaching the engagement courses are from humanities departments. This suggests a serious problem with a model that is supposed to engage faculty across the college. ... Other concerns that have been raised have to do with sequencing of courses, scheduling conflicts (some students in the engagements are not able to sign up for our courses), and that the engagements crowd-out other options (e.g., double majors)... The bigger concern is that our best students... start taking advanced math and econ in the second year, if not sooner. These students might be derailed from pursuing excellence. ... Faculty are also concerned that engagements classes will lack substance. It forces students to take ill-defined engagement courses in areas with little student demand and diverts a lot of resources to them. In general, the required engagement courses are much less valuable than the courses that students would take in the absence of this requirement. ... Finally, as suggested above, many have suggested that the reform is a way to force students to take many more humanities courses and a fewer social science and science courses. And, to transfer resources in this way too.”
- “We have several faculty who are deeply concerned about whether students can fulfill the science requirements needed for our major while completing the new general requirements. Other faculty think that enrollment in science courses will suffer because of the changes in the general requirements. I don't completely agree with these positions but it is something we are paying close attention to as the new curriculum rolls forward.”
- “Most don't know too much about it. We are also all a bit overwhelmed by the variety of different things going on: Forums, Engagements, USems, Colas, Pav seminars, etc.”

Appendix H: Chairs & Directors Perspective (survey)

(Italicized text indicate the researchers' notes, and will not be included in the actual survey. Each page will be its own page on the Qualtrics implementation, and presents the prompts for a single category as indicated at the top of the page.)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey regarding how the planning and implementation of the New College Curriculum has impacted your department or program. The College of Arts & Sciences appreciates your time, and will use your responses to help assess and improve the New College Curriculum. Please do your best to provide complete information. However, if you cannot respond to an item, feel free to leave the response blank. Your identity and responses will be held in strict confidence.

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

(Section 1: Chair/Director's general understanding of the New College Curriculum)

1. What is your understanding of the motivation for revising the College's general education curriculum? [TEXT BOX]
2. What is your understanding of the model of the New College Curriculum? [TEXT BOX]
3. Is this understanding shared amongst your department's faculty? Please elaborate. [TEXT BOX]
4. Have you endorsed any members of your department as College Fellows?
 - Yes
 - No
5. Why or why not? [TEXT BOX]

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

(Section 2: Perceived/real effects of the New College Curriculum implementation)

The core instructional faculty for the New College Curriculum are the College Fellows, who teach the first-year Engagement courses. A faculty member who serves as a College Fellow is removed from their departmental/programmatic teaching obligations for four concurrent semesters, beginning with a Spring term and ending in the Fall of the following year. In return, their department receives \$60K backfill funds per academic year.

(If participant selected “yes” to Question 4, display the following)

6. How are you planning to use your \$60K backfill funds per academic year? [TEXT BOX]
7. Can you describe how your departmental/programmatic curriculum is or might be affected by his/her absence? [TEXT BOX]

(If participant selected “no” to Question 4, display the following)

6. Can you describe how your departmental/programmatic curriculum might be affected if a member of your faculty were to participate? [TEXT BOX]
7. Do you believe you have the relevant information to make an informed answer to the previous question? [TEXT BOX]

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

(Section 3: General pulse of the department regarding curricular reform)

8. If there are any comments from faculty regarding the need for revising the College's general education curriculum that you want to share, please do so here. [TEXT BOX]
9. If there are any comments from faculty regarding the New College Curriculum that you want to share, please do so here. [TEXT BOX]
10. Is there general agreement among your department faculty on any of these comments? Please elaborate. [TEXT BOX]

[FINISH]

Appendix I: Faculty Advising Review (report)

Overview

November 17, 2017, Monroe Hall Conference Room

Attending: 8 (of 12 invited) current advisers of first-year students in both the old and new curricula, none teaching in the Engagements; two of the three members of the Assessment Committee's sub-committee studying the faculty experience, plus the College consultant to the Committee.

Representative comments from advisers on the main themes of the conversation are provided below.

New College Curriculum needs more time

- “I asked people in the new curriculum, ‘Would you recommend it to new people coming in?’ And...three of them said ‘no’ and one of them said ‘yes.’ And as the reason, they said, ‘Well, it just seems like a great idea. But they haven’t gotten it going yet.’”
- “Sometimes I think if we were to trash the Traditional Curriculum you'd be doing the new curriculum a huge favor. But at the same time there's growth in the new curriculum that has to happen before students can understand what the purpose of it is.”
- “I think the fairest thing to say is that we need more time... So I think once we get passed some of the initial difficulties, and that takes time, then we can then come back and say ‘Okay, I have to say something with a little more substance to it.’”
- “We're trying to see how the plant is growing when the seed is just barely out of the ground. So, I think it's going to have to be the case that we are going to ask for more time before the students’ assessment comes about.”

Knowledge of New College Curriculum

- “I know the old curriculum so well that I could sort of do that on the fly with my eyes closed and it’s not an issue. But you know, we’re all learning this new curriculum together.”
- “I understand the disciplines, I get it. But it was [difficult] figuring out which courses fit into which discipline and how...”
- “I think it's tricky because the areas of the Traditional Curriculum felt simpler. It was, you know, humanities, math and science...Now there are these larger themes that even as my department tried to tag more courses for this, this, well what does this actually mean? ... So it’s going to take a while...to get a grip on what fits where and, and in what discipline.”
- “It'd be lovely for us to see some of the Engagements descriptions. We could learn from them. Or post it somewhere. That would be nice.”
- “This resource needs to exist elsewhere....It needs to be a website that is not in the student information system.”

- “I found that for the students who are in the new curriculum, it would have been more beneficial to meet with them after their engagements were selected for them... It was mostly a fruitless experiment with them because we could only look at the courses they wanted to take... They couldn’t make any full-fledged decisions about putting things in their shopping cart.”
- “I think a lot of the dissatisfaction coming from the new curriculum students is relative to the Traditional Curriculum students. So they're comparing themselves. And often times with a good deal of misinformation.”
- “One student felt that, he was, I think he was just a little frustrated. He felt that there are more requirements with the new curriculum. I said, ‘Actually, if we sit down’—and we did the math—‘it's not actually. It just might feel like it upfront because you’re taking all these engagements.’ So, I think he felt a little better after that.”

4-credits of Engagements a barrier to course planning/registration

- “As I understand it, they can only enroll for 15 credits when they enroll, and, so, it, it's another situation that I come across as an advisor with Math and Science classes that are four credits. Now again, there's a situation with the Engagements. They can't enroll for the five classes that they recommended, because that adds up to 16 credits. So I'm faced with looking at their schedule, going, ‘Okay, let's figure out if you can get instructor permission in this class, then don't enroll yet. If it's a class of more than 100 and then you don't enroll in that one yet.’
- “So, maybe if the college could just change it to 16 credits. Because that would solve some of the STEM classes.”
- “It was only one day. Like from the time that first years were enrolling to the time they opened to 17. But still, there was so much anxiety.”
- “[The 4-credits present a challenge to] disciplines like creative writing where we restrict our courses to be first and second years only. So if they want to take our intermediate courses, then we have students that are like, ‘Yeah, I can't do that now.’ So, that worries us... So there were definitely some moments of understandable ‘I don't have much control over what happens because there [are] at least seven credits in the spring that I have no choice over.’”
- “They think that the classes that they're taking are not going to fulfill as many requirements in the new curriculum as they will for this one. Or the courses they bring in with them aren't going to count in terms of satisfying requirements in the Traditional Curriculum. I mean, they think they'll get more area requirements knocked out in the traditional versus the new. And then we talk them through, and I think they actually end up telling themselves, ‘Well, it's these four extra credits I'm taking that are clogging me up.’”

New College Curriculum purpose

- “[W]e don't have...a lot of students come to me for meetings to remove themselves from the new curriculum So, I'm having those conversations with students... I've heard great things said about the instructors. but I think a piece that might be missing in the content of the courses, from what I can gather, at least from the student experience of it, is this

piece of thinking about liberal arts, and less about categories to check. And I don't think students are getting the liberal arts purpose of the Engagements. Like the attempt to make things less disciplinary. Because you have faculty that haven't really had a chance to develop the language, and the perspective of teaching, not within a discipline. I mean, that's a challenge... So I think it's learning curve for faculty, I think students aren't really getting that that's the purpose, to break out of these really rigid compartments.”

- “I see a huge difference this year [in advising sessions] compared to the students that are in the new curriculum versus the Traditional Curriculum. Just in terms of the way they were talking to me, about how they were really into the courses. Not a whole lot them. But it means they were talking like, ‘I want to do that!’ They were actually trying to look for those bigger modern connections.”
- “My whole concern is that, fundamentally, I still am not comfortable with what problem we're trying to solve.”
- “I did have one student on the opposite of complaining about engagement, who just loved her engagement class and was just raving about the interdisciplinary nature of it, and being able to bring things in that she's learning in other classes. She was really engaged... she was the student that got it.”

Appendix J: Faculty Perspective (report)

Overview

In February 2018, an online survey was distributed to all College of Arts & Sciences faculty on behalf of the General Education Assessment Committee, asking to what degree and how they had been affected by the development and implementation of the New College Curriculum. 120 participants responded, with the following breakdown of impact levels:

Level of impact	Number of faculty	Percent of faculty
Greatly affected	12	10%
Moderately affected	20	17%
Minimally affected	39	33%
Not at all affected	49	40%

Table K1. Number and percent of faculty reporting various levels of New College Curriculum impact.

Common response themes had to do with the (positive or negative) impact of the first-year Engagement courses, in particular the affects these courses had on course enrollments, departmental resources, and faculty time and availability. This report details the prevalent themes at each level of impact, and provides a sample of relevant quotes from the responses.

Response Themes

Among respondents who reported that they had been affected to some degree, several themes emerged. Perhaps the most commonly raised theme was the impact of the new curriculum on enrollments in departmental courses. Respondents expressed a concern that the Engagements seemed to be drawing students away from departmental courses, resulting in lower enrollments. In contrast, at least one respondent expected the Literacy/Discipline requirements to increase enrollments in her or his department's courses. Representative comments:

- “Enrollment for large introductory courses has gone down because there is now less room for students to take required math/science courses because of the newly added engagement courses.”
- “Students we would have been teaching well in our department (or in any number of other departments) have been sucked away into classes where the standards are far lower, the courses seem to consist of nearly random sets of information, and the skills taught (such as they are) do not prepare students for anything except for more courses with the same low standards and the same degree of intellectual incoherence.”
- “I teach a 1000-level class. Enrollment is shrinking each of the last two years. I fear it is because of the new curriculum requirements, which do not adequately emphasize understanding how the world around us functions through study of the basic sciences.”
- “It seems to me I've been seeing some decrease in my enrollments in my non-New Curriculum classes). In particular, in one class I teach I used to get a lot of first-years. That class was far from full this year, yet I got only one first-year student. She told me

she was not taking the New Curriculum. So, I gather the New Curriculum is drawing the younger students away from Old Curriculum courses to some extent.”

- “The addition of an explicit ‘quantitative’ requirement [to the Literacies/Disciplines] is expected to significantly increase demand for courses in my department. We regard this as a positive development, and faculty are excited about the prospect of creating new courses to meet this need.”

A second commonly voiced theme was the impact on departmental curriculum and teaching of the reallocation of faculty time to the new curriculum. For the most part, these comments described negative impacts and expressed the view that this aspect of the new curriculum had not been sufficiently thought through. Representative comments included:

- “One of our faculty members, whose teaching is particularly crucial to our program, is serving as a College Fellow. We thought it important that our department participate in the program, and she was the natural choice. The funding for replacement instructors is helpful, but doesn't balance the loss of her teaching for us.”
- “Departmental curriculum and teaching needs are affected by the reallocation of faculty teaching effort from the department to the Engagements program. This benefits the individual faculty teaching Engagements courses and may well benefit the students in the program, but it isn't clear that sufficient thought has been given to the implications for those not participating, faculty and students alike.”
- “My teaching was affected by a faculty member who is currently teaching with the New College Curriculum. Specifically, I taught a class that would likely have been taught by another faculty who was not teaching in our department because they are part of the New College Curriculum. It is likely that I would have taught this course at some point, but I believe it happened sooner because of this faculty member's absence.”
- “The New College Curriculum substantially affects our majors' abilities to complete their required course work.”
- “Because the courses I regularly teach were designed to meet always more than one of the ‘traditional’ general requirements, they have mapped seamlessly to the New College Curriculum [Literacies/Disciplines] (with its emphasis on interdisciplinarity).”
- “My department’s courses are difficult to assign because their traditional designation as Social Science is now distributed over three disciplines—Cultures, Living Systems, and Social/Economic Systems. These are all better subsumed under the traditional designation.”
- “Along with shift to Engagements has come changes to first writing requirement (FWR), specifically that several of our lower-level ENCW courses can now satisfy FWR for select students. This has meant new pedagogical training for our graduate students teaching ENCW, and additional program support (troubleshooting registration issues, fielding undergrad questions).”

A third theme raised by a number of respondents was intellectual excitement. Respondents wrote that they had observed greater engagement in their students, that the new curriculum appealed to prospective faculty hires, or that they themselves were intrigued by the possibility of teaching an Engagements class in the future. Representative comments included:

- “I saw the impact mainly in the first-year COLA students I taught. They seemed far more engaged in the content of their classes and spoke less about ‘knocking out the requirements.’ They also seemed better equipped to make connections between classes and fields.”
- “I often talk to prospective candidates for faculty positions here, and when they ask about opportunities to do interdisciplinary teaching, co-teach across department lines, etc., I get to tell them about this initiative. It has had a lot of appeal to faculty with these interests.”
- “Honestly, I haven't really been affected. But I have enjoyed talking to my friends who have taught or are teaching as part of the program. Also, I am considering participating myself, as a Faculty Fellow in the future.”
- “I am teaching a Forum, which predated the New College Curriculum plan. What we have learned in teaching the Forum should be part of the discussion of the new curriculum. Faculty I have spoken to seem to be enjoying teaching in the New College Curriculum, and I am considering applying in the future, though rumors among students seem to show displeasure with the program, especially insofar as it clashes with upper division structures.”

Respondents also raised a variety of other themes, including classroom space; administrative work; the workload of Engagement TAs (more information on this topic, as well as programmatic actions in response, can be found in the “College Fellows & TAs Perspective” reports). Representative comments included:

- “The addition of the short one-hour ‘engagement’ courses has created a shortage of available classroom space.”
- “My chief complaint about the curriculum is that it leads to additional administrative hassle, and if there were one thing I could change at UVA, it would be to reduce the amount of time faculty spend dealing with administration, so as to free up time for teaching and research.”
- “It's come to my attention, through graduate students teaching in the engagements courses, that they are unhappily knit to the program. There's an unfairness in the load they are asked to carry across the courses: some TAs are grading a lot more than others. They were hired as if this teaching would be a special prize in their dissertation finishing year, and yet they are much busier working for these courses than this might lead one to expect.”
- “My student ended up with massive amounts of paper grading—far more than I'd give one of my own TAs over a full 14 week semester. It has not surprisingly been very difficult for her to get any of her own work done. Nobody had thought through expectations for TAs in these courses at all.”

Finally, four of the respondents reported that they were College Fellows. The experience of College Fellows is addressed in more detail elsewhere in this assessment, but representative comments offered in this survey included:

- “As a College Fellow, I've been intimately involved in the development and execution of the pilot, and I have served as a faculty adviser for first-year students in the New Curriculum.”

- “I will be teaching an Engagement, starting later this semester. I have found the preparation for that teaching to be highly instructive and highly productive for my thinking.”
- “I am a College Fellow teaching in the New Curriculum in the Engagements. The program has afforded me the opportunity and freedom to develop highly cross-disciplinary courses that would not necessarily find a clear home within traditional departmental/disciplinary configurations. The way the Engagements are framed for the students gives great freedom for diverse course content while at the same time explicitly encourages the foregrounding of thinking about different forms of knowledge and ways of thinking. Seeing the leaps in critical thinking abilities in my students and their newfound pliancy with conceptual complexity - their willingness to think across categories and question how arguments work - has been wonderful.”

Appendix K: Faculty Perspective (survey)

On behalf of the General Education Assessment Committee, thank you for participating in this survey regarding how the College's new general education program has affected you and your work. This program, the New College Curriculum, began its pilot implementation in Fall 2017 and features the first-year Engagement classes, as well as reimagined Literacy and Discipline requirements (see <http://gened.as.virginia.edu/new-college-curriculum> for more information). Please do your best to provide complete information; however, if you cannot respond to an item, feel free to leave the response blank. All responses will be held in strict confidence, and anonymized upon dissemination of the results in our final report to the faculty in April.

What is your primary department or program? [TEXT BOX]

To what degree have you been affected by the New College Curriculum, the College's new general education program which began its pilot phase in Fall 2017?

- Not at all
- Minimally affected
- Moderately affected
- Greatly affected

If you have been affected, please briefly explain how. [TEXT BOX]

If there is any other information or feedback you would like to share with the General Education Assessment Committee, please do so here. [TEXT BOX]

[SUBMIT]

Appendix L: Syllabus Review (report)

Overview

To indirectly measure the quality of the overall designs of the Engagement courses, syllabi were analyzed using a peer-reviewed syllabus rubric.²⁰ The rubric provides qualitative descriptions of components that distinguish high-quality, learning-focused syllabi and uses a quantitative scoring system that places syllabi on a spectrum from content-focused²¹ to learning-focused.²² It is flexible enough to accommodate a diverse range of academic levels, disciplines, and learning environments.

The rubric focuses on four main criteria typical of learning-focused syllabi: (1) learning goals and objectives, (2) assessment activities, (3) schedule, and (4) overall learning environment. Each criterion is broken down into multiple components. Learning goals & objective is composed of 3 components; assessment activities, 5 components; schedule, 1 component; overall learning environment, 4 components. Each of the 13 components—designated as either *essential*, *important*, or *less important*—is scored on the strength of supporting evidence. Strong evidence indicates that many (but not necessarily all) of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and match the descriptions closely. Moderate evidence indicates that a few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or only partly match the descriptions. Low evidence indicates that very few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or don't match the descriptions. The maximum score possible is 46; content-focused syllabi fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46.²³

Results and Discussion

The Figure M1 shows the total scores and criterion-summed scores for the syllabi for cohort 1 & 2 Engagement courses. Key observations include:

- The average score for all syllabi is 35.9 (out of 46).
- Twenty (20) syllabi fall in the learning-focused range; 6 in the transitional range; 0 in the content-focused range.
- Every syllabus has a non-zero score for every criterion.

²⁰ Palmer, M. S., Bach, D. J., & Streifer, A. C. (2014). Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (1), 14-36. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tia2.20004>

²¹ Content-focused syllabi emphasize course content, rules and policies, and serve primarily a contractual purpose.

²² Learning-focused syllabi emphasize learning and serve primarily as a learning tool. They are built from principles of backward-integrated design, educative assessment, active learning, evidence-based pedagogies, and student motivation.

²³ A multi-directional weighting scheme is used in order to ensure that the final score reflects the presence and quality of the most important components.

- Two syllabi scored the maximum 46 points.
- Average component-summed scores are: learning goals & objectives = 10.5 out of 12; assessment activities = 11.5 out of 16; schedule = 4.6 out of 6; overall learning environment = 9.3 out of 12.

These data suggest the articulated designs of the Engagement courses are generally aligned with high-quality, learning-focused courses. Even in cases where syllabi scored in the transitional range, they include many of the essential components, e.g. learning goals and objectives. By way of comparison, analysis of a wide range of syllabi by UVA's Center for Teaching Excellence has shown that the vast majority of syllabi typically fall in the content-focused or low transitional range.²⁴ For example, the 54 syllabi analyzed as part of the study had an average total score of 9.4, and only 2 of the 54 syllabi scored in the learning-focused range.

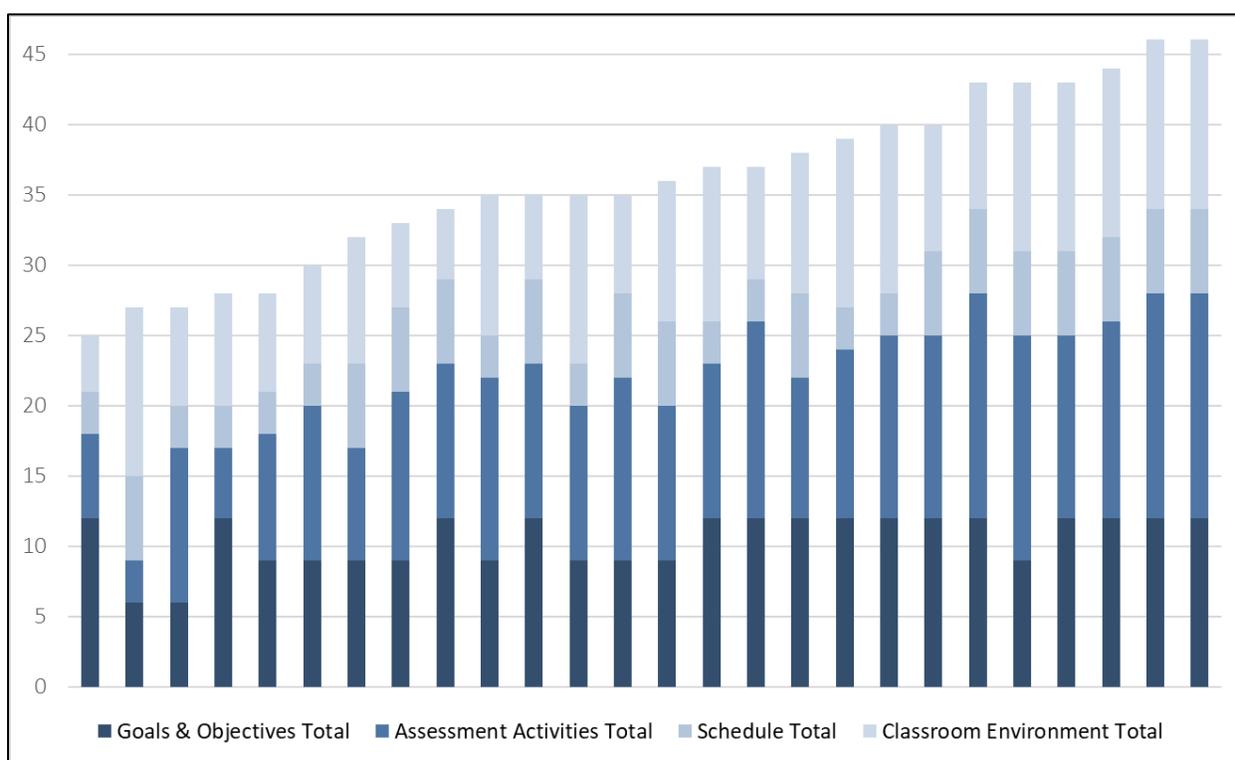


Figure M1. Total scores (out of 46) and criterion-summed scores for syllabi of Cohort 1 & 2 Engagement Courses. Includes all course syllabi except for two courses scheduled to be taught in the 2nd half of the Spring 2018 semester.

Methods

The following process was used to ensure inter-rater reliability:

²⁴ Palmer, M. S., Bach, D. J., & Streifer, A. C. (2014). Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (1), 14-36. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tia2.20004>

1. Each syllabus was initially scored against the syllabus rubric independently by two researchers.
2. Component-level and overall scores were then compared between raters. All components defined as *essential* in the rubric having a rater difference greater than 0 and all other components having a rater difference greater than 1 should be re-scored by the researchers.
3. Rescoring was done collaboratively, without knowledge of the original scores, until consensus was reached.

In most cases, this process produced differences in the total scores between raters less than or equal to 4 points (or less than 10% of the total score possible). When it didn't, consensus was reached for the *important* and *less important* components. The total score for each syllabus was then be determined to be the average of the raters' total scores.

Appendix M: Syllabus Review (original guide & rubric)

We provide here the full guide describing the development and use of the UVA Center for Teaching Excellence's Syllabus Rubric, which was used in our review of the Engagement course syllabi. For more information on this instrument, as well as past usage at UVA, we refer to the CTE website: <http://cte.virginia.edu/resources/syllabus-rubric/>

Measuring the Promise: A Valid and Reliable Syllabus Rubric

Guide to Assessing the Focus of Syllabi

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Contents:

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- Appendix D: Scored and Annotated Reference Syllabi (available as a separate document)

Overview

This rubric was designed to help quantitatively and qualitatively assess the degree to which a syllabus achieves a learning-centered orientation. The development of the rubric was guided by the literature on learning-focused course design (Fink, 2013; Hansen, 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wulff & Jacobson, 2005), teaching (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010; Biggs & Tang, 2007; Blumberg, 2008; Nilson, 2010), and student motivation (Schunk, et al., 2007; Svinicki, 2004). The rubric design was also influenced by existing literature on syllabus construction and syllabus components (Baecker, 1998; Becker & Calhoun, 1999; Canada, 2013; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton, & Wiggins, 2001; Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley, & Huitt, 1999; Habanek, 2005; Harnish & Bridges, 2011; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Parkes, Fix, & Harris, 2003; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Singham, 2007; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). It accounts for nuances in syllabi while also maintaining widespread relevance to courses in a diverse range of disciplines, levels, and institutions.

The rubric focuses on four criteria typical of learning-centered syllabi: (1) learning goals and objectives, (2) assessment activities, (3) schedule, and (4) overall learning environment. These criteria do not map onto any specific section of a syllabus (with the exception of the Schedule); instead, users are directed to search for evidence of the quality of all criteria across the syllabus.

We break down each criterion into multiple components, and provide a range of options for what evidence of proficiency in those components might look like. For example, the criterion of **Overall Learning Environment** contains components such as positive tone, fostering motivation, and high expectations, each of which syllabi may signal in a variety of ways, from giving students a degree of control over their learning experience, to offering resources to help them succeed, to opening with enthusiastic language that communicates the opportunity to wonder and ask questions about the course material without fear of criticism.

Each of the 16 components—designated as essential, important, or less-important—is scored on the strength of supporting evidence. *Strong* evidence indicates that many (but not necessarily all) of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and match the descriptions closely. *Moderate* evidence indicates that a few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or only partly match the descriptions. *Low* evidence indicates that very few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or don't match the descriptions.

You may use our syllabus rubric for research purposes as long as you provide reference to the following:

Palmer, M. S., Bach, D. J., & Streifer, A. C. (2014). Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To improve the academy: A journal of educational development*, 33 (1), 14-36.

For the norming process, we recommend users score the reference syllabi first without the aid of our scores and annotations. Then, compare scores, reading the annotations when discrepancies exist.

Questions? Contact Michael Palmer at mpalmer@virginia.edu.

Rubric

“Essential” components are shown in gold, “important” components in silver, and “less-important” components are in white.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Learning Goals & Objectives	Learning goals and objectives are not an “afterthought,” but are a central element of the course.	
	1. Explicitly or implicitly stated learning goals (i.e. long-range, high-level goals) encompass the full range of Fink’s dimensions of significant learning (i.e. knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, learning how to learn).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are often found in the course description, especially affective goals. • Implicit goals may appear in other sections of the syllabus (e.g., assessment, schedule, tips for student success).
	2. Course-level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs to describe in measurable terms what students will be able to do, value, or know at the end of the course. Like the goals they are derived from, the learning objectives map onto the full range of Fink’s taxonomy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-level learning objectives are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e., labeled section). • Learning objectives with non-quantifiable terms, such as “understand” and “know,” are avoided. For examples of strong verbs, see Appendix A: Verbs for Significant Learning. • The syllabus considers the full range of Fink’s taxonomic dimensions (including the affective ones). It is not necessary that course objectives list affective dimensions, as long as there is evidence elsewhere in the syllabus that they are being considered. • Typically, 5–8 course-level objectives are appropriate. More or fewer could be problematic.
	3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched to the course level, class size, position of the course within the curriculum, and characteristics of students taking the class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is likely difficult to assess without knowledge of the discipline and curriculum.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Assessment Activities	All major assessment activities positively support the learning objectives.	
	4. It is clear that the objectives and assessments are aligned . In other words, the major assessment activities map onto the full range of learning objectives and the degree of mapping correlates with the weighting of the assignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though a complete mapping may not be possible without input from the instructor, connections between the objectives and major assessments should exist (i.e., the each major assessment activity should map to one or more learning objectives).
	5. The basic features of the major summative assessment activities are clearly defined . The assessment instructions provide students with a rationale and, whenever possible, with an authentic task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-level assessments are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e. labeled section). Grading percentages may be included in assessment descriptions, but there should be a distinct section detailing grading (see component 8).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major assignments are described briefly (i.e., a paragraph or two). Though complete descriptions of assessment activities may not be part of the syllabus, they should be made available at the time the assessment activity is formally introduced. If not present, it is clear that rubrics or assessment criteria will be made available.
	6. There is evidence of plans for frequent formative assessments with immediate feedback from a variety of sources (e.g., self, peer, instructor, computer generated, community.) These low-stakes, formative assessments allow students to “practice” before high-stakes summative assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of formative assessments might include use of clickers, informal writing assignments, group discussions or moderated discussion board, and ungraded or lightly-graded homework assignments. Source of feedback may not always be evident. While the syllabus might not describe all forms of formative assessments in detail, the syllabus makes clear that such activities will occur throughout the course. Evidence of formative assessment might depend on a fully articulated schedule.
	7. The assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded (i.e., increasing in complexity) throughout the course, and at least one is scheduled early in the semester.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be evidence in the assessment descriptions or in the schedule that complex assignments build slowly over the semester or are continually re-examined with the introduction of new material. Evidence of pace and scaffolding may depend on disciplinary knowledge. Without a fully articulated schedule, it may not be possible to fully determine the pace and degree of scaffolding.
	8. Grading or student evaluation information is included in the syllabus but clearly separated from information about assessment of learning (with the possible exception of the weight or percentage of the assessment in the overall course grade). Importantly, the grading scheme aligns with the learning objectives and supporting assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grading scheme should clearly reflect the importance of each learning objective. For example, if learning to write in the discipline is a key learning objective, writing assignments should dominate the grading scheme.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Schedule	The course schedule is a learning tool that guides students through the learning environment.	
	9. Syllabus offers fully articulated and logically sequenced course schedule , listing topics/readings/questions in chronological order along with assignment due dates. Thus structured, the schedule allows for flexibility where appropriate. A schedule is necessary in order to fully evaluate the syllabus. A missing schedule may lead to low scores on components 6 and 7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The schedule is not merely a list of content topics. It contains enough information (e.g., topics, context, questions, dates) to guide students through the course. It also clearly indicates when additional information will be provided at a later date.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Overall Learning Environment: Promise, Tone, Inclusivity	The learning environment is supportive and invites students to engage in and take ownership of their own learning.	
	<p>10. The tone of the document is positive, respectful, inviting, and directly addresses the student as a competent, engaged learner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive, respectful, inviting tone is conveyed throughout the document. • Personal pronouns (e.g., you, we, us) are used, rather than “the students,” “the course,” or “they.” • The focus of the document is on learning and possibilities and not policies and punishments. • The syllabus contains a “promise” that will be fulfilled through mutual effort by instructor and students if the learning goals and objectives are met. Evidence for “promise” could include the following: language that emphasizes collaborative spirit; verbs that focus on what students and instructors do, not what the course, or some other abstract entity, does; clear statement of connections between course content and paths to answering “big questions.”
	<p>11. The syllabus signposts a learning environment that fosters positive motivation, one that promotes a learning orientation rather than a performance one. The document describes the potential value of the course in the learner’s current and post-course life (cognitive, personal, social, civic, and/or professional) in a clear and dynamic way. It clearly communicates that content is used primarily as a vehicle for learning, to understand core principles in the discipline and promote critical thinking and other significant learning objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course description makes clear that students will have opportunities to <i>wonder</i> and connect it in meaningful ways to things potentially important to them. The instructor encourages students to “discover” value in the course by giving them choices along the way, such as choices in project topics, reading assignments, grading schemes. • Various course components—description, objectives, schedule—frame the content through compelling, beautiful questions or big ideas. • The instructor uses information from pre-course questionnaires, background checks, pre-course exams, etc., to tailor the learning environment. In other words, he/she considers students’ backgrounds in designing course activities and assignments and takes steps to reach out to students who might struggle in class. • The student is left in control of his/her learning. For example, mastery-based grading mechanisms (e.g., criterion-referenced, task-based, and absolute grading schemes) are used rather than performance ones (e.g., grading curves and other relative or group-referenced grading schemes). • The instructor also provides resources or instruction related to becoming a lifelong learner, either in general or in ways specific to the discipline. • The syllabus de-emphasizes course policies by positioning them late in the syllabus or in a separate document and connecting them to

		clear pedagogical purposes. The syllabus frames policies in positive ways, as opposed to lists of “do nots.”
	12. Syllabus clearly communicates high expectations and projects confidence that students can meet them through hard work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning objectives, assessments, activities, and grading scheme all indicate a high level of academic rigor (e.g. objectives that promote high-order thinking and skills development, challenging assignments, appropriate amounts of reading/writing). • The syllabus communicates that the instructor cares about students and believes each student can succeed. The syllabus communicates these beliefs by offering tips and strategies for how to meet and exceed expectations, through review sessions, appropriate office hours, additional background material, etc.
	13. The syllabus is well organized and easy to navigate . It is clear that students will need to continually interact with the document and the resources it provides throughout the course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document is readable, meaning the organization is clear, whether it contains major section headings or not, and ordered in a way that re-enforces the focus on learning. • The document clearly requires students to interact with it frequently to get reading assignments and other information.

Validity

To accurately score syllabi, the rubric assumes raters have three pieces of prior knowledge: 1) fluency with Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning (Fink, 2013a), 2) clarity on our definitions of learning goals and objectives, and 3) familiarity with alignment as a course design construct.

Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning. Our rubric is based on Fink’s notion that for significant learning to occur learners need to be engaged on multiple dimensions, including the cognitive, affective, and self-directed learning domains (2013a). Repackaging and expanding on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Anderson, et al., 2001; Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956), Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning identifies “six kinds of significant learning” (Foundational Knowledge, Application, Integration, Human Dimension, Caring, and Learning How to Learn) and organizes them in a non-hierarchical fashion. Each of these six broad categories encompasses many types of modes of thought, skills, and intellectual and affective processes that reinforce each other and contribute to learning. Syllabi that score highly on our rubric attend to all six kinds of significant learning in Fink’s taxonomy.

Definitions of Learning Goals and Objectives. Accurate scoring also depends on understanding the distinction we make between learning “goals” and “objectives.” Though in common parlance, goals and objectives may be used interchangeably as synonyms for desired outcomes, in course design settings it is useful to distinguish between a course’s longer-ranging, but perhaps less tangible goals, and the shorter-term, measurable objectives of a course.

Learning goals are high-level and long-term. Educational developers can provoke instructors to envision goals for their students by asking them what they hope students will remember or be able to do three or

more years after taking the course (Fink, 2013). Setting goals gives instructors the opportunity to think about how their courses contribute to students' learning as a whole, whether that be developing skills that will be used in subsequent courses or careers, introducing or honing discipline-specific modes of thinking, or inspiring student interest in a field that is new to them. Because they are long-ranging and more holistic in nature, goals are frequently articulated in aspirational and inspirational language in course descriptions or sections that communicate the course's long-term value for the learner.

By contrast, a syllabus's objectives are always concrete and measurable. They translate high-level goals into measurable course-level outcomes in such a way that students understand what the course intends for them to achieve. Students practice course objectives through a variety of formative, scaffolded learning activities. Course assessments then measure student mastery of those objectives.

Alignment. The last of our assumptions is that rubric users are familiar with alignment as a conceptual tool in the course development process. In a well aligned course, assessments and learning activities are directly derived from learning goals and objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Fink, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wulff & Jacobson 2005). Following the process of backward design, instructors begin by articulating objectives for student learning and then create learning activities (for both in and out of class time) and assessments that support the development of specific skills, attitudes, knowledge and values articulated in the objectives. Another way to think of alignment is for instructors to ask themselves if their in-class activities and homework assignments allow students to practice the knowledge and skills they value and if their assessments actually measure mastery of those skills.

Alignment is absolutely necessary in any learning-focused syllabus, but it is insufficient on its own to create a learning-focused document. For example, a math instructor who wishes students to memorize formulae could design a perfectly aligned course if the assessments measured memorization with multiple choice exams. The course would be aligned, but it wouldn't score well according to our rubric because it fails to address multiple dimensions of significant learning across a wide range of learning objectives. The importance of designing assessments and learning activities with an eye toward alignment, and the insufficiency of alignment as a principle on its own, explains why alignment features prominently in several components of the syllabus assessment rubric, but does not count as its own criterion.

It is worth noting that even with a lack of fluency in Fink's taxonomy or a lack of understanding of the distinction between goals and objectives or the nuances of alignment we have found that scoring tends to be quite consistent, across all components and among multiple raters, for syllabi that fall on the content end of the spectrum. But, this is not true of learning-focused syllabi, where scores vary wildly when raters do not have a clear understanding of our underlying conception of learner-centeredness.

Scoring

A sample scoring sheet is shown below. Each essential component (gold) is awarded three points, important components (silver) two, and less-important components (white) one, regardless of the strength of evidence. In other words, a rater would place a 3 in the appropriate strength-of-evidence column for component #1 and a 2 in the appropriate column for component #10. After scoring all components, each column is summed and scaled by the appropriate factor: the strong evidence sub-total is multiplied by 2, the moderate evidence sub-total is multiplied by 1, and the low evidence sub-total is multiplied by 0. This multi-directional weighting scheme is used in order to ensure that the final score reflects the presence and quality of essential components. A syllabus will not score high if, for example, it does not include meaningful objectives or fails to align the objectives with

the assessments. It could, however, score high if it exhibited strong evidence for most of the essential and important components but lacked evidence for the less-important ones, such as regular formative feedback opportunities or organization.

Criterion	Component	Strength of Evidence		
		Strong	Moderate	Low
Learning Goals & Objectives	1. Learning goals encompass full range of Fink’s dimensions of significant learning		3	
	2. Course level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs	3		
	3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched ¹			
Assessment Activities	4. Objectives and assessments are aligned		3	
	5. Major summative assessment activities are clearly defined		2	
	6. Plans for frequent formative assessment with immediate feedback	1		
	7. Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded	1		
	8. Grading information is included but separate from assessment; it is aligned with objectives		1	
Schedule	9. Course schedule is fully articulated and logically sequenced			3
Classroom Environment	10. Tone is positive, respectful, inviting		2	
	11. Fosters positive motivation, describes value of course, promotes content as a vehicle for learning		2	
	12. Communicates high expectations, projects confidence of success		1	
	13. Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction	1		
subtotals		6x2 = 12	14x1 = 14	3x0 = 0
		TOTAL		26/46

The maximum score possible is 46; content-focused syllabi might fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46. The sample scoring sheet illustrates a syllabus that falls in the transitional range. If used formatively, the instructor of this particular syllabus would quickly see that by developing more meaningful learning objectives, improving alignment, and articulating a schedule, he or she could move the syllabus toward the learning-focused end of the continuum. (A blank scoring sheet is shown in Appendix B).

Inter-rater Reliability

When used for research purposes, we recommend the following process to ensure inter-rater reliability:

1. Each syllabus should be initially scored against the syllabus rubric independently by at least two researchers.

¹ This component, though important, goes unscored in the rubric, in recognition of the fact that the correct pitching of learning objectives would be difficult to assess without intimate knowledge of the discipline and curriculum.

2. Component-level and overall scores should then be compared between raters. All components defined as essential in the rubric having a rater difference greater than 0 and all other components having a rater difference greater than 1 should be re-scored by the researchers.
3. Rescoring should be done collaboratively, without knowledge of the original scores, until consensus is reached.

This process should produce differences in the total scores between raters less than or equal to 4 points (or less than 10% of the total score possible). The total score for each syllabus should then be determined to be the average of the raters' total scores.

Data Analysis for Pre-Post Pairs

To analyze the data for pre-post pairs, we recommend calculating normalized gains (<g>) for each instructor as described by Hake (1998): $g = 100 * (\text{post total score} - \text{pre total score}) / (46 - \text{pre total score})$, where 46 is the maximum score possible. This number takes into account the possible gain between pre- and post-scores for each instructor. We define the region of low gain to be less than or equal to 0.3, moderate gain between 0.3 and 0.7, and high gain greater than or equal to 0.7. The overall normalized gain (<<g>>) should be calculated by averaging the normalized gains for all instructors. This calculation allows one to predict the gain in syllabus score an average instructor would expect to achieve after redesigning their syllabus regardless of where he/she started on the content- to learning-focused continuum.

Supplemental Rubric

We have also developed a supplemental rubric to assess the quality of learning activities. Because day-to-day classroom activities are often not evident in syllabi, we have chosen to parse this criterion out of the main rubric and leave it to the discretion of the rater—whether faculty developer or instructor—to decide if and when to apply these components.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Learning Activities	The “classroom” is a dynamic place and takes advantage of evidence-based practices.	
	14. It is clear that classroom activities, assessments, and learning objectives are aligned . In other words, the classroom learning activities directly support the assessments and help prepare students for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all classroom activities may be evident in the syllabus but there is some indication of the day-to-day structure of the learning environments. Red flags might include: exclusive use of a traditional lecture format when critical thinking is an objective; little reflective writing when self-discovery is an objective; canned homework assignments or multiple-choice tests when problem solving is an objective.
	15. The learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor relies on pedagogical strategies and classroom activities that have some basis in the literature to support their efficacy.
	16. The learning activities are likely to actively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have opportunities, for example,

	engage students in a variety of ways.	to discuss course material, work individually and in groups, teach each other, solve problems, debate concepts, simulate scenarios, and/or reflect—individually and collectively—about the meaning of their learning experiences. Individual class periods involve multiple modes of instruction and varied activities.
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When using the Supplemental Rubric, Component #14 is designated essential, #15 important, and #16 less-important; each is scored similarly to the scheme used for the main rubric. When applied, the maximum total score possible is 58 (46 for the main rubric and 12 for the supplemental one). In this scenario, content-focused syllabi might fall in the range 0–18, transitional 19–40, and learning-focused 41–58.

Learning Activities	4. Classroom activities, assessments, and objectives are aligned			
	5. Learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices			
	6. Learning activities likely to actively engage students			
	Subtotal	x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
		Total		/12

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Appendix A: verbs for Significant Learning²

DIMENSION	ACTION VERBS				
FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE—WHAT KEY INFORMATION, IDEAS, PERSPECTIVES ARE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNERS TO KNOW?					
Understanding and Remembering — developing a full understanding of concepts to a degree that allows explanations, predictions, etc.	Associate	Describe	Illustrate	Paraphrase	Repeat
	Compare	Explain	Indicate	Predict	Restate
	Contrast	Give example	List	Recite	Tell
	Define	Identify	Name	Recognize	
APPLICATION—WHAT KINDS OF THINKING, COMPLEX PROJECTS AND SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNERS TO BE ABLE TO DO/MANAGE?					
Critical Thinking — analyzing and critiquing issues and situations	Analyze	Compare	Diagram	Hypothesize	Organize
	Assess	Contrast	Differentiate	Infer	Query
	Audit	Decipher	Dissect	Interpret	Separate
	Catalog	Deduce	Distinguish	Label	Trace
	Categorize	Derive	Examine	Locate	
	Classify	Determine	Formulate	Measure	
Practical Thinking — developing problem-solving and decision-making capabilities	Advise	Choose	Diagnose	Predict	Select
	Answer	Consult	Evaluate	Prescribe	Solve
	Apply	Debate	Give evidence	Propose	Suggest
	Calculate	Decide	Judge	Prove	Test
	Certify	Determine	Justify	Rank	
Creative Thinking — creating new ideas, products, and perspectives	Abstract	Construct	Devise	Fabricate	Sketch
	Adapt	Convert	Discover	Imagine	Theorize
	Amend	Create	Draw	Improve	Transform
	Author	Design	Envision	Refine	Write
	Compose	Develop	Experiment	Reform	
Managing Complex Projects — being able to coordinate and sequence multiple tasks in a single project/case and/or multiple projects/cases)	Administer	Conduct	Facilitate	Organize	Summarize
	Assign	Coordinate	Follow up	Plan	Teach
	Coach	Delegate	Guide	Prioritize	Time-line
	Communicate	Develop	Implement	Strategize	Train
	Complete	Evaluate	Manage	Supervise	
Performance Skills — developing capabilities in carrying out psychomotor activities	Conduct	Employ	Operate	Set up	
	Demonstrate	Execute	Perform	Use	
	Do	Exhibit	Produce		
INTEGRATION—WHAT CONNECTIONS SHOULD LEARNERS BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE AND MAKE WITHIN AND BEYOND THIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE?					
Interdisciplinary Learning — connecting ideas, disciplines, perspectives, contexts	Associate	Concept map	Connect	Differentiate	Relate
	Combine	Contrast/ compare	Correlate	Link	Synthesize
Learning Communities — connecting people					
Learning and Living/Working — connecting different realms of life					

² Adapted from Teacher & Educational Development, University of New Mexico School of Medicine. (2005). *Example Action Verbs for Each Dimension of Learning*. Retrieved from <http://ccoe.rhbs.rutgers.edu/forms/EffectiveUseofLearningObjectives.pdf>.

HUMAN DIMENSION—WHAT SHOULD LEARNERS LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ABOUT INTERACTING WITH OTHERS?					
<p>Interpersonal Relationships – with peers, patients, others</p> <p>Self-Authorship – learning to create and take responsibility for one’s own life</p> <p>Leadership – becoming an effective leader</p> <p>Ethics, Character Building – living by ethical principles</p> <p>Multicultural Education – being culturally sensitive</p> <p>Working as a Member of a Team – knowing how to contribute to a team</p> <p>Citizenship in one’s profession, community, nation state, other political entity</p> <p>Environmental Ethics – having ethical principles in relation to nonhuman world</p>	<p>Acquire</p> <p>Advise</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Balance</p> <p>Be aware of</p> <p>Behave</p> <p>Collaborate</p> <p>Communicate</p> <p>Comply</p> <p>Cooperate</p> <p>Decide to</p>	<p>Describe</p> <p>Demonstrate</p> <p>Educate</p> <p>Embody</p> <p>Empathize</p> <p>Express</p> <p>Feel confident</p> <p>Give feedback</p> <p>Help</p> <p>Influence</p> <p>Initiate</p>	<p>Inspire</p> <p>Interact with</p> <p>Involve</p> <p>Lead</p> <p>Mediate</p> <p>Mobilize</p> <p>Motivate</p> <p>Negotiate</p> <p>Nurture</p> <p>Offer</p> <p>Promote</p>	<p>Protect</p> <p>Reconcile</p> <p>Reform</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>See oneself as</p> <p>Settle</p> <p>Share</p> <p>Show</p> <p>Suggest</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Sustain</p>	<p>Unite</p> <p>Critically reflect</p> <p>Resolve conflict</p> <p>Respond sensitively</p> <p>Serve as role model</p> <p>Suspend judgment</p> <p>Take responsibility</p>
CARING—WHAT CHANGES IN LEARNERS’ FEELINGS, INTERESTS, VALUES ARE IMPORTANT?					
<p>– Wanting to Be a Good Learner</p> <p>– Becoming Excited About a Particular Activity/Subject</p> <p>– Developing a Commitment to Live Right (i.e., deciding to take care of one’s health/well-being, live by a certain code)</p>	<p>Agree to</p> <p>Be ready to</p> <p>Commit to</p> <p>Decide to</p>	<p>Demonstrate</p> <p>Develop</p> <p>Discover</p> <p>Explore</p>	<p>Express</p> <p>Identify</p> <p>Pledge</p> <p>Revitalize</p>	<p>Share</p> <p>State</p> <p>Take time to</p> <p>Value</p>	<p>Get excited about</p> <p>Recognize value of</p> <p>Renew interest</p>
LEARNING HOW TO LEARN—WHAT SHOULD LEARNERS LEARN ABOUT LEARNING, ENGAGING IN INQUIRY, AND BECOMING SELF-DIRECTED?					
<p>How to Be a Better Learner – engaging in self-regulated or deep learning</p> <p>How to Inquire and Construct Knowledge – how to engage discipline-specific inquiry</p> <p>How to Pursue Self-Directed or Intentional Learning – becoming an intentional learner, being a reflective practitioner, developing a learning agenda or plan</p>	<p>Describe how to</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Inquire</p> <p>Reflect</p> <p>Self-assess</p> <p>Self-regulate</p> <p>Self-monitor</p>	<p>Construct</p> <p>knowledge about</p> <p>Develop a learning plan</p> <p>Frame useful questions</p> <p>Generalize knowledge</p>	<p>Identify sources and resources</p> <p>Identify what you need to know</p> <p>Predict performance</p> <p>Set a learning agenda</p>	<p>Take responsibility for</p> <p>Transfer knowledge</p>	

Appendix B: Blank Scoring Sheet

Award each essential component (gold) three points, important components (silver) two, and less-important components (white) one, regardless of the strength of evidence. For example, raters should place a 3 in the appropriate strength-of-evidence column for component #1 and a 2 in the appropriate column for component #10. After scoring all components, sum and scale each column by the appropriate factor: multiple the strong evidence subtotal by 2, the moderate evidence subtotal by 1, and the low evidence subtotal by 0.

Criterion	Component	Strength of Evidence		
		Strong	Moderate	Low
Learning Goals & Objectives	1. Learning goals encompass full range of Fink's dimensions of significant learning			
	2. Course level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs			
	3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched			
Assessment Activities	4. Objectives and assessments are aligned			
	5. Major summative assessment activities are clearly defined			
	6. Plans for frequent formative assessment with immediate feedback			
	7. Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded			
	8. Grading information is included but separate from assessment; it is aligned with objectives			
Schedule	9. Course schedule is fully articulated and logically sequenced			
Classroom Environment	10. Tone is positive, respectful, inviting			
	11. Fosters positive motivation, describes value of course, promotes content as a vehicle for learning			
	12. Communicates high expectations, projects confidence of success			
	13. Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction			
subtotals		x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
		TOTAL /46		

Learning Activities	14. Classroom activities, assessments, and objectives are aligned			
	15. Learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices			
	16. Learning activities likely to actively engage students			
Subtotal		x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
		Total /12		

Content-focused syllabi typically fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46 (or 0–18, 19–40, and 41–58, respectively, when using the supplemental rubric).

Appendix N: Student Engagement Surveys (report)

Introduction

A key objective of this assessment is to investigate the ways in which the College Fellows have designed course activities to their engage students, and whether the students felt they engaged with those activities.

This assessment used a list of “engagement indicators” from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that are known to be positively associated with student learning, retention, and other educational outcomes²⁵, rigorously developed and tested over several years. This list was used to operationalize and investigate the many significant learning practices that may be occurring in the New College Curriculum’s first-year Engagement classes, and the first-year experience in general. This work-in-progress report details our investigation thus far, using data from the Fall 2017 semester. Because of the cumulative nature of the first-year Engagement experience this report truly is a work-in-progress, and is intended to share the nature of the study and some preliminary findings, as well as give an impression of the full report to come.

Methodology

Since the full list of NSSE engagement indicators²⁶ span the higher education experience, this study focused only on those specific indicator items which might be intentionally experienced in the classroom. They are:

²⁵ National Survey of Student Engagement. (n.d.). Engagement Indicators [Web page]. http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/engagement_indicators.cfm

²⁶ National Survey of Student Engagement. (September 23, 2015). Engagement Indicators & High-Impact Practices [PDF file]. http://nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/EIs_and_HIPs_2015.pdf

Engagement Indicator	Indicator Items
Higher-Order Learning (HOL)	(HOL-1) Applied facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
	(HOL-2) Analyzed an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
	(HOL-3) Evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source
	(HOL-4) Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information
Reflective & Integrative Learning (RIL)	(RIL-1) Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
	(RIL-2) Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
	(RIL-3) Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
	(RIL-4) Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
	(RIL-5) Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
	(RIL-6) Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
	(RIL-7) Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	(QR-1) Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
	(QR-2) Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
	(QR-3) Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information
Learning with Peers (LWP)	(LWP-1) Explained course material to one or more students
	(LWP-2) Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Table 01. List of NSSE Engagement Indicators and items used in this study.

Approximately 2 weeks into each Engagement session in the Fall 2017 semester, Each College Fellow was asked to identify 3-5 significant learning activities asked of students in their course. For each activity, they were then asked to identify 4-6 indicator items (listed above in the right column) that students would perform in the process of completing that assignment. This information was then used to create surveys for students tailored to their Engagement course. Students were first asked which of the course's learning activities they completed, and for each of those, they were shown the instructor's list of identified indicator items and asked which items they believe they actually performed in completing that activity. An example engagement survey for a fictitious course can be found in "StudentEngagement_Survey.docx."

Surveys were issued for both Fall 2017 sessions so far; that data serves as the basis of this work-in-progress report. The response rate for the first session was approximately 40% (conducted remotely via email), and the second approximately 80% (conducted in-person during final exam

sessions). Surveys will be issued again for both Spring 2018 sessions, at which point the committee will begin a full analysis of the AY 2017-18 data. This study will be repeated in AY 2018-2019, giving a full two years' worth of data for our subsequent, and final report. Note: for now we have decided to not consider individual Engagement categories (e.g., Engaging Aesthetics, Ethical Engagement, etc.) until data from complete years are available, and instead report only total results below.

From the Instructors' Perspectives: Intended Engagement Indicators

We first approached the results from the perspective of the instructors and their course design: what indicators were intended for students to perform in their courses? For this we considered, for each indicator item, the number of times instructors selected that indicator for their course's learning activities. This can be thought of as a snapshot of the course design priorities of the Fall 2017 Engagement courses as a whole, viewed through the lens of the NSSE engagement indicator items. In Table O2 we sort the indicators by number of selections within each category, and for the figure we sort the indicators by the number of selections overall.

Engagement Indicator	Indicator Items	Total
Higher-Order Learning (HOL)	(HOL-2) Analyzed an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	50
	(HOL-3) Evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source	47
	(HOL-4) Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	47
	(HOL-1) Applied facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	34
Reflective & Integrative Learning (RIL)	(RIL-2) Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	58
	(RIL-6) Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	42
	(RIL-5) Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	39
	(RIL-3) Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	31
	(RIL-7) Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	27
	(RIL-4) Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	23
	(RIL-1) Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	12
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	(QR-2) Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	16
	(QR-3) Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	14
	(QR-1) Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	8
Learning with Peers (LWP)	(LWP-2) Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	35
	(LWP-1) Explained course material to one or more students	24

Table O2. Total number of times indicator items were specified by instructors in Engagement course learning activities, sorted by occurrence within category.

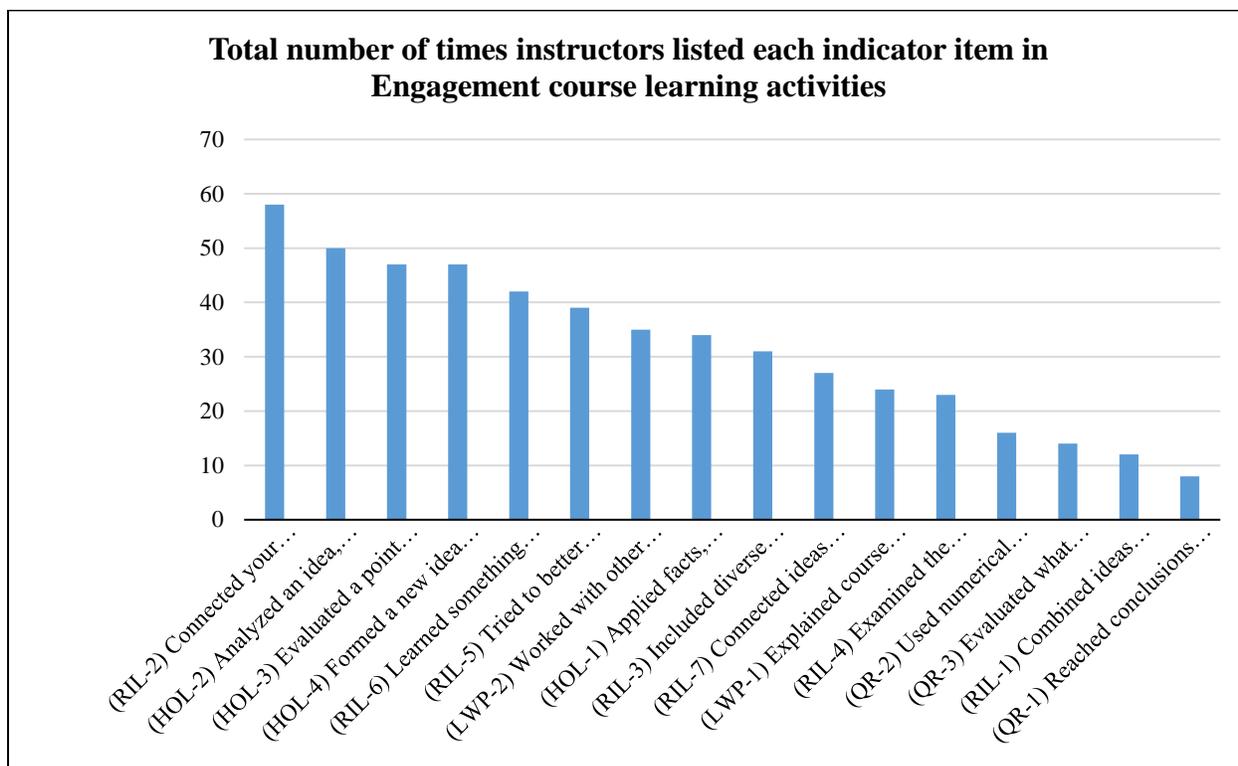


Figure O1. Total number of times indicator items were specified by instructors in all Engagement course learning activities, sorted by total occurrence.

While there is great variance across the indicator items, we observe that the “connected your learning to societal problems or issues” item appears the most frequently in activities (58 instances), which is appropriate given the New College Curriculum’s focus on citizenship and vocation. We also observe that the four “Higher-Order Learning” items feature prominently (average score of 44.5) but the three “Quantitative Reasoning” items are among the lowest scored (average 12.7). As discussed in the Introduction, this may reflect a disconnect between the NSSE engagement indicators and the intentions of the overall Engagement program, given that the Engagements focus explicitly on empirical reasoning, rather than quantitative reasoning.

From the Students’ Perspectives: Performed Engagement Indicators

We then considered student responses, that is, the number of times students reported having performed engagement indicators in their course learning activities. By this count, the item rankings were virtually identical to those presented above in the “Intended” section (and the rankings that differed were very close, and hence relatively uninteresting). Instead of pursuing this approach further, we decided to focus on the likelihood that an intended indicator was actually performed (as reported by students). That is, the percentage of the number of times students performed an indicator relative to the number of times they could have achieved that indicator, given the assignments they completed. As before, in Table O3 we sort the indicators by performance likelihood within each category, and for the figure we sort the indicators by the performance likelihood overall.

Engagement Indicator	Indicator Items	Total
Higher-Order Learning (HOL)	(HOL-3) Evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source	90%
	(HOL-2) Analyzed an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	87%
	(HOL-4) Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	74%
	(HOL-1) Applied facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	66%
Reflective & Integrative Learning (RIL)	(RIL-2) Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	83%
	(RIL-3) Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	79%
	(RIL-7) Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	78%
	(RIL-4) Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	76%
	(RIL-6) Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	73%
	(RIL-5) Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	72%
	(RIL-1) Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments	51%
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	(QR-1) Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)	81%
	(QR-3) Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information	73%
	(QR-2) Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)	69%
Learning with Peers (LWP)	(LWP-2) Worked with other students on course projects or assignments	89%
	(LWP-1) Explained course material to one or more students	69%

Table O3. Total percentage of times indicator items were selected by students in Engagement course learning activities relative to the number of times they were able to do so, sorted by occurrence within category.

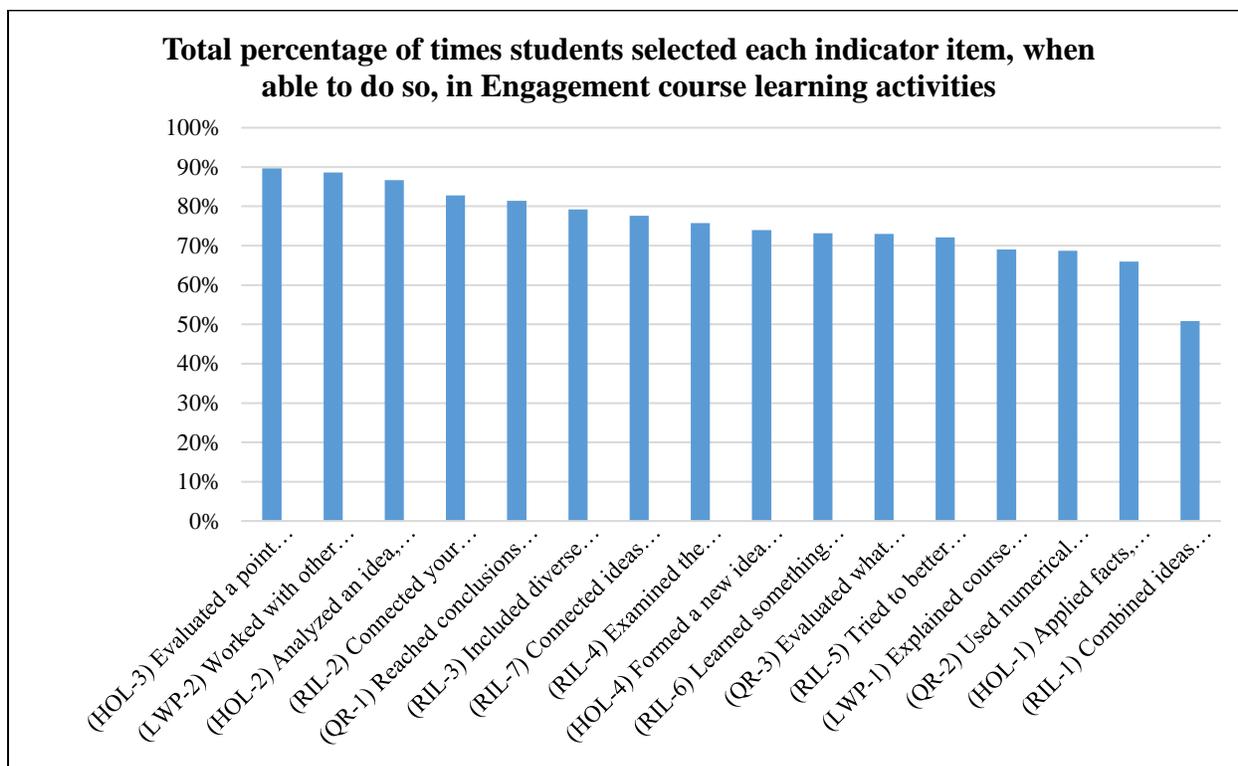


Figure O2. Total percentage of times indicator items were selected by students in Engagement course learning activities relative to the number of times they were able to do so, sorted in total by percentage.

On average, students performed an engagement indicator item 76% of the time it was available in a learning activity that they completed. The lowest percentage was “combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments” at 51%, and the highest was “evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source” at 90% (though several items were extremely close). In general, these results show that students are indeed performing the indicators intended by their instructors; that is, instructors’ course design objectives (as reported by NSSE engagement indicators) are being met with high likelihood.

Conclusions & Future Work

We hesitate to draw any conclusions at this time given that only a semester’s worth of data was available for this report, and the cumulative nature of the Engagement warrants complete years’ worth of results for full analysis. That said, the evidence seen thus far is promising. Taken as a whole, the Engagement courses are covering a wide range of NSSE engagement indicators and their component items, and the relative rankings of those items appear in line with the program’s design and objectives. In addition, students report performing available indicators with high likelihood. These conclusions together imply that the Engagement courses are delivering a high-impact academic experience, according to the NSSE research. And, the learning objectives of the course are transparent enough that students can recognize the kinds of engaged learning with which they are participating.

Appendix O: Student Engagement Surveys (example survey)

(Italicized text indicate the researchers' notes, and will not be included in the actual survey. Each page will be its own page on the Qualtrics implementation.)

Which of the following learning activities did you take part in during your most recent Engagement course, [COURSE NAME]? (Select all that apply.)

- Population experience presentation: Working in groups of 3-4, lead a 20-minute class discussion on a specific sector of college students (e.g., LGBTQ students, student veterans, first-generation college students).
- Applying to college role play: Pretend you are a high school student going to your counselor to obtain information about applying to college in 2 different settings. Consider the implications described in the college choice and social capital theories discussed in class, as well as your own college choice experience.
- College student intervention proposal: Work with a partner to develop an intervention (e.g., a program, a website) for an undergraduate population that you believe will improve their college experience. Use at least one of the conceptual frameworks from this class in designing your intervention.

(The learning activities will vary between the Engagement courses, and will be identified by the course instructor. The student will only see the activities specific to their own Engagement course. For each of the learning activities the student selects, they will be shown another page with another survey question.)

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Below are listed a number of “engagement indicators” that describe things you may have done as part of a class activity or assignment. For the specific learning activity listed below, please select all the indicators you think you performed as a part of that activity.

Population experience presentation: Working in groups of 3-4, lead a 20-minute class discussion on a specific sector of college students (e.g., LGBTQ students, student veterans, first-generation college students)

In this activity, I... (select all that apply)

- Evaluated a point of view, decision, or information source
- Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
- Explained course material to one or more students
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

(This page will only be shown if the appropriate learning activity was initially selected. The engagement indicators listed will be provided by the course instructor when they detail their course’s learning activities. They are all intended to be associated with the learning activity—the objective is to see which indicators the student associates with the activity.)

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Below are listed a number of “engagement indicators” that describe things you may have done as part of a class activity or assignment. For the specific learning activity listed below, please select all the indicators you think you performed as a part of that activity.

Applying to college role play: Pretend you are a high school student going to your counselor to obtain information about applying to college in 2 different settings. Consider the implications described in the college choice and social capital theories discussed in class, as well as your own college choice experience.

In this activity, I... (select all that apply)

- Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Tried to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
- Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

(This page will only be shown if the appropriate learning activity was initially selected. The engagement indicators listed will be provided by the course instructor when they detail their course’s learning activities. They are all intended to be associated with the learning activity—the objective is to see which indicators the student associates with the activity.)

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Below are listed a number of “engagement indicators” that describe things you may have done as part of a class activity or assignment. For the specific learning activity listed below, please select all the indicators you think you performed as a part of that activity.

College student intervention proposal: Work with a partner to develop an intervention (e.g., a program, a website) for an undergraduate population that you believe will improve their college experience. Use at least one of the conceptual frameworks from this class in designing your intervention.

In this activity, I... (select all that apply)

- Applied facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Formed a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

(This page will only be shown if the appropriate learning activity was initially selected. The engagement indicators listed will be provided by the course instructor when they detail their course’s learning activities. They are all intended to be associated with the learning activity—the objective is to see which indicators the student associates with the activity.)

[SUBMIT]

Appendix P: Course Evaluations (report)

Introduction

This study gathered student course evaluations for each Engagement. Student course evaluations are nominally intended to provide students' ratings of individual courses, yet criticism of both the utility of general course evaluations and in particular UVA's current tool abound. To that end, this subcommittee employed the Teaching Quality Student Rating Inventory (TQSRI), a tool developed by Patrick Meyer of the UVA Curry School²⁷ in alignment with a teaching framework derived from the work of Fink²⁸ and Arreola²⁹, and in consultation with expert teachers at UVA. The TQSRI is notable for its specificity of items that are (a) grounded in current instructional design principles, (b) widely applicable to multiple pedagogies, (c) criterion-referenced and thus comparable across evaluations, and (d) formative in their feedback to faculty (i.e., the College Fellows have been able to use the course evaluations to improve the course design and implementation). At present, the course evaluation tool administered by the UVA Provost's office does not meet any of these criteria and was therefore deemed an unsatisfactory tool for conducting this type of analysis.

The TQSRI consists of 29 questions across 4 categories: Organization & Structure (6 questions), Assessment & Feedback (6 questions), Academic Rigor (12 questions), and Personal Interactions (5 questions). Each question asks students to agree or disagree (on a 5 point Likert scale) with a statement about course traits known to correspond to effective college instruction. A small selection of sample items in each category is presented below; the full survey can be found in Appendix Q.

Organization & Structure (6 questions total): The instructor...

- ...clearly defined learning objectives for the course.
- ...clearly stated requirements and due dates for assignments.
- ...provided organized course materials.

Assessment & Feedback (6 questions total): The instructor...

- ...used assessments (e.g., papers, tests, assignments) that required me to demonstrate mastery of course content or skills.
- ...provided feedback on your course progress throughout the semester.
- ...provided opportunities to apply skills learned in class to real-world problems.

Academic Rigor (12 questions total): The instructor...

- ...connected coursework to content or skills taught in our other courses.

²⁷ Meyer, J. P., Doromal, J. B., Wei, X., & Zhu, S. (2017). A Criterion-Referenced Approach to Student Ratings of Instruction. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(5), 545-567.

²⁸ Fink, L. D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

²⁹ Arreola, R. A. (2007). *Developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system: A guide to designing, building, and operating large-scale faculty evaluation systems* (3rd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company Inc.

- ...explained concepts in a clear and understandable way.
- ...engaged students in classroom discussions, learning activities, or presentations.

Personal Interactions (5 questions total): The instructor...

- ...responded to communications (e.g., email, phone calls) in a timely manner.
- ...demonstrated concern for my learning.
- ...was approachable for questions or conversation about the course.

For this study, the TQSRI will be administered to students in the New College Curriculum after each 7-week Engagement period during the 2017-18 academic year. Results and discussion provided at this time rely on data collected for Fall 2017 Engagement courses only.

The survey was built in Qualtrics and administered primarily in-person to students during the exam period for the Engagements courses; students who were unable to attend were provided with a link to the survey and encouraged to complete it on their own time. There were 453 responses in total, for an overall participation rate of approximately 80%. The means and standard deviations for each category were considered for this initial analysis and work-in-progress report.

Table Q1 presents the average scores and standard deviations for each of the four categories and the combined total (scale from 1 to 5). Overall responses were high, with Personal Interaction showing the highest average score at 4.44 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.88. This finding is aligned with the goal that Engagement courses be designed with high levels of faculty-student and student-student interaction. The other scores range from 3.88 (Organization & Structure) to 4.10 (Academic Rigor). Total scores for these courses average 4.07 on a 5-point scale, a score General Education Assessment Committee considers considerably high given the nature and content of the questions. While this score is noticeably lower than the traditional scores that the UVA Provost’s course evaluation tool may assign, they should not be compared given the unique design of the TQSRI that measures qualitatively different degrees of evaluation.

Fall 2017 Engagement TQSRI Scores	Average	Std. Dev.
Organization & Structure (OS)	3.88	1.17
Assessment & Feedback (AF)	3.92	1.15
Academic Rigor (AR)	4.10	1.06
Personal Interaction (PI)	4.44	0.88
Total Score	4.07	1.09

Table Q1. Averages and standard deviations of Fall 2017 Engagement course TQSRI scores, by category and in total (1-5 scale).

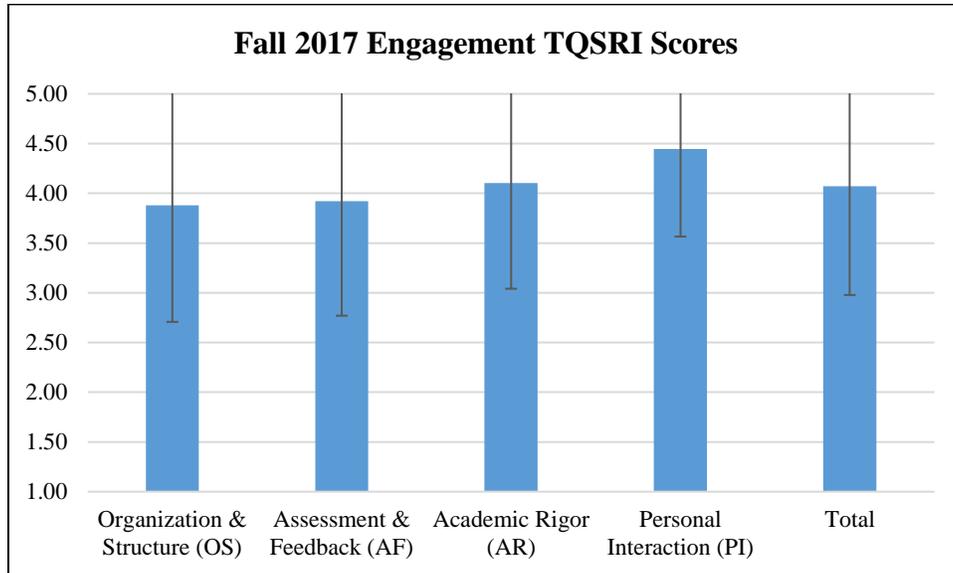


Figure Q1. Averages and standard deviations (as error bars) of Fall 2017 Engagement course TQSRI scores, by category and in total (1-5 scale).

This course evaluation survey has and will be given to New College Curriculum students in the Spring 2018 semester after each Engagement course session. Once the academic year has concluded, we intend to conduct additional analysis on these data, to investigate what significant differences may be present within categories or between courses or cohorts.

Appendix Q: Course Evaluations (survey)

(Italicized text indicate the researchers' notes, and will not be included in the actual survey. Each page will be its own page on the Qualtrics implementation. A superficially modified version of this survey will also be offered in physical form—the content will be identical.)

Thank you agreeing to participate in this survey regarding your most recent completed Engagement course! There is neither a right nor wrong answer to any question. Please do your best to provide complete information. However, if you cannot respond to an item, feel free to leave the response blank. Participation in this survey is optional, and your identity and responses will be held in strict confidence.

Name: [TEXT BOX]

UVA Email: [TEXT BOX]

Most recent completed Engagement course: [TEXT BOX]

Please continue taking the survey only if you are age 18 or older.

- I am age 18+.
- I am younger than 18.

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Instructions: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the instructor's organization of the course:

The instructor...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
clearly defined learning objectives for the course.	1	2	3	4	5
adhered to the learning objectives for the duration of the course.	1	2	3	4	5
clearly stated requirements and due dates for assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
presented the course content in an organized fashion.	1	2	3	4	5
provided organized course materials.	1	2	3	4	5
clearly explained grading procedures the basis for course grades.	1	2	3	4	5

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Instructions: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the assessment and evaluation you received from the instructor:

The instructor...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
used assessments (e.g., papers, tests, assignments) that required me to demonstrate mastery of course content or skills.	1	2	3	4	5
gave assessments that were relevant to the course learning objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
provided feedback on your course progress throughout the semester.	1	2	3	4	5
graded my assignments in a timely manner or gave timely feedback in other ways.	1	2	3	4	5
provided opportunities to apply skills learned in class to real-world problems.	1	2	3	4	5
used assignments or exams that challenged me to think critically.	1	2	3	4	5

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Instructions: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the academic rigor of the course:

The instructor...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
connected coursework to content or skills taught in our other courses.	1	2	3	4	5
helped me think about the course content in a structured and organized manner.	1	2	3	4	5
explained concepts in a clear and understandable way.	1	2	3	4	5
challenged me to think critically about the course content.	1	2	3	4	5
engaged students in classroom discussions, learning activities, or presentations.	1	2	3	4	5
helped me consider a problem or issue from multiple perspectives.	1	2	3	4	5
inspired my interest in the course.	1	2	3	4	5
incorporated information technology into instruction (e.g., video, PowerPoint, clickers, e-portfolios, Collab)	1	2	3	4	5
addressed issues of diversity and equity as it related to the class.	1	2	3	4	5
stimulated my intellectual curiosity in the course subject (e.g., Aesthetics, Empiricism, Difference, Ethics).	1	2	3	4	5
clarified my misconceptions about a topic in the course.	1	2	3	4	5
required me to explain our solutions to a problem or justify our stance on an issue.	1	2	3	4	5

[NEXT]

Survey (continued)

Instructions: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your personal interactions with the instructor:

The instructor...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
responded to communications (e.g., email, phone calls) in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5
was available outside the classroom to provide help with the course.	1	2	3	4	5
demonstrated concern for my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
treated me fairly and without prejudice towards race, nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and political affiliation.	1	2	3	4	5
was approachable for questions or conversation about the course.	1	2	3	4	5

[SUBMIT]

Appendix R: Direct Learning Outcomes Assessment (prompts)

(The essay assignment will be implemented as a Qualtrics web survey. After reading the instructions and entering their personal information, participants will be directed to one of two essay prompts.)

Thank you for your help and participation! After entering some personal information below, you will be taken to a short essay prompt describing an issue of current interest. Your assignment is to read the prompt, read the linked article, and then write a short essay in response. You have one hour to complete the entire assignment, and may stop at any time; when you are done, you will receive a \$35 Amazon gift card as thanks. Your participation in this activity will have absolutely no bearing on your grade or performance in any course, and will only be used by the UVA College of Arts & Sciences for program evaluation and assessment purposes.

To continue, please enter your personal information below.

[TEXT BOX: FIRST NAME]

[TEXT BOX: LAST NAME]

[TEXT BOX: EMAIL]

[NEXT]

Prompt: Police Body Cameras

(Participants will receive either this prompt or the next one, depending on their session. This prompt is designed to investigate students' proficiency with the learning outcomes associated with the Empirical & Scientific Engagement and Ethical Engagement courses.)

The city council of a mid-sized American city is discussing whether its police officers should be required to wear body cameras while on duty. Proponents claim that this would protect both officers and citizens while increasing transparency and accountability. Others oppose this policy because of concerns related to privacy (of both citizens and officers), expensive equipment/maintenance costs, and the subjectivity of visual evidence. See the article linked below for additional information, context, and perspectives on this issue.

Article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/20/us/police-body-camera-study.html>

To help make their decision the city council has asked for input, and you have been approached and asked to write a brief essay on this topic. Specifically, your job is not to make a specific recommendation, but to answer the following questions:

1. How would you find out if body cameras are effective? What research questions would you ask, and what evidence or data would you collect?
2. What are the ethical implications of police officers using or not using body cameras?

There is no one right answer to this question; the quality of your answer depends on clear and logical argumentation and your ability to describe and analyze the situation presented above and in the article. While you are not required or expected to use additional sources, if you choose to do so, please cite them with the author's name and source title.

Your participation in this activity will have absolutely no bearing on your grade or performance in any course, and will only be used by the UVA College of Arts & Sciences for program evaluation and assessment purposes. Use the field below to submit your essay (you may find it useful to resize the box by clicking and dragging the bottom right corner).

[ESSAY BOX]

[SUBMIT]

Prompt: ‘Fearless Girl’ Statue

(Participants will receive either this prompt or the previous one, depending on their session. This prompt is designed to investigate students’ proficiency with the learning outcomes associated with the Engaging Aesthetics and Engaging Differences courses.)

The New York City Council is currently discussing whether the now-famous ‘Fearless Girl’ statue on Wall Street should be removed in February 2018 as planned, or whether it should remain permanently. The statue was placed in March 2017 to celebrate International Women’s Day, having been commissioned by State Street Global Advisors (an investment management company) to encourage gender diversity in business leadership. Since its installation, there have been many positive and negative reactions; supporters applaud the artwork and its intended message, while opponents criticize it as a publicity stunt. See the article linked below for additional informal, context, and perspectives on this issue.

Article: <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/04/fearless-girl-reactions/523026/>

To help make their decision, the city council has asked for general opinions and feedback on this matter. You have been approached and asked to write a brief essay on this topic. Your job is not to make a specific recommendation, but to advise the city council about what they should take into account in making their decision, particularly considering perspectives of aesthetics and difference. Specifically, your memo must analyze:

1. Whether or not the ‘Fearless Girl’ statue achieves State Street Global Advisors’ stated intentions;
2. Differing points of view regarding the ‘Fearless Girl’ statue from relevant stakeholders, actors, or social groups (e.g., State Street, activists, the artists of both the ‘Girl’ and ‘Bull’ statues, etc.);
3. The degree to which art is capable of promoting equality and diversity.

There is no one right answer to this question; the quality of your answer depends on clear and logical argumentation and your ability to describe and analyze the situation presented above and in the article. While you are not required or expected to use additional sources, if you choose to do so, please cite them with the author’s name and source title.

Your participation in this activity will have absolutely no bearing on your grade or performance in any course, and will only be used by the UVA College of Arts & Sciences for program evaluation and assessment purposes. Use the field below to submit your essay (you may find it useful to resize the box by clicking and dragging the bottom right corner).

[ESSAY BOX]

[SUBMIT]

Appendix S: Student Navigation & Satisfaction Survey (survey)

(Note: [GE PROGRAM] will be replaced in the survey by a student's General Education program: the New College Curriculum, the Traditional Curriculum, or the Forums Curriculum.)

Introduction and Introductory Questions

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your answers will help the UVA College of Arts & Sciences learn about your first-year experience so far, especially related to your General Education program: the New College Curriculum, the Traditional Curriculum, or the Forums Curriculum.

We will use this information to improve our programming and support in the future. As thanks, by completing the survey you will have a chance to win a 128 GB iPad (the winner will be selected at the end of the semester).

There is neither a right nor wrong answer to any question. Please do your best to provide complete information. However, if you cannot respond to an item, feel free to leave the response blank. Your responses will remain completely confidential, and will have absolutely no bearing on any course grade or evaluation.

Please tell us your name and UVA email address:

- First Name: [TEXT BOX]
- Last Name: [TEXT BOX]
- UVA Email: [TEXT BOX]

How many credits did you take in the fall 2017 semester? [TEXT BOX]

In fall 2017, did you reduce your course load (i.e., withdraw from a course, drop without adding another course) after the start of the semester for any reason?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

How many credits did you take in the spring 2018 semester? [TEXT BOX]

In spring 2018, did you reduce your course load (i.e., withdraw from a course, drop without adding another course) after the start of the semester for any reason?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[NEXT]

Program Interests

Considering your current interests, please indicate your intended or likely major(s) below. If you do not yet know what you might want to major in, please select "undecided" at the top of the list. To select multiple majors, make your selections while holding the Control (PC) or Command (Mac) button. [MAJOR SELECTION LIST]

How confident are you that you will pursue this/these major(s)?

- Not at all confident
- Somewhat confident
- Very confident

Are you pursuing or do you intend to pursue any of the following programs or pre-professional requirements? (Select all that apply.)

- Pre-health
- Pre-law
- Commerce (McIntire)
- Public policy (Batten)
- Curry 5-year B/MT
- Other: [TEXT BOX]

In addition to their major, all College students must satisfy certain General Education requirements. Options include the New College Curriculum, the Forums, and the Traditional Curriculum; you would have made your selection the summer before coming to UVA. What is your General Education program?

- New College Curriculum
- Forums
- Traditional Curriculum
- Unsure

[NEXT]

Major Progress

(Only display this page if they indicated a likely major previously.)

Given your current interests, you indicated that you are most likely to pursue the following major(s): *(list earlier selections)*

To what degree did you consider your intended major(s) when selecting classes for the fall and spring semesters of your first year?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Significantly
- Sole focus of my planning

This academic year, how many of your classes have counted towards your intended major(s)?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5+

[NEXT]

Pre-Professional Program Progress

(Only display this page if they selected a pre-professional program previously.)

You indicated that you are pursuing or are interested in pursuing the following programs or pre-professional requirements: *(list earlier selections)*

To what degree did you consider these programs or requirements when selecting classes for the fall and spring semesters of your first year?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Significantly
- Sole focus of my planning

This academic year, how many of your classes have counted towards these programs or requirements?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5+

[NEXT]

General Education Progress

(Henceforth, students will be shown information based on their General Education program based on the program they are actually in, rather than the program they may have reported earlier.)

You are in the [GE PROGRAM], which specifies the General Education requirements over the course of your UVA studies.

To what degree did you consider the [GE PROGRAM] requirements when selecting classes for the fall and spring semesters of your first year?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Significantly
- Sole focus of my planning

Do you feel that you have made meaningful progress towards the [GE PROGRAM] requirements?

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Neutral or unsure
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

[NEXT]

First-Year Course Load

When selecting classes, how important was it to take elective classes not connected to an academic requirement?

- Very unimportant
- Somewhat unimportant
- Neutral or unsure
- Somewhat important
- Very important

Did you choose to take any classes that were in a department you were unfamiliar with?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Did you choose to take any classes on a topic you were unfamiliar with?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Did you choose to take any classes that you knew in advance would push you outside of your comfort zone?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Did you choose to take any classes that you knew in advance would be challenging when an alternative, less challenging course was available?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Thinking about your past year's courses as a whole, please rate their general level of academic rigor; not just how difficult the courses were, but how academically challenging and stimulating you found them to be.

- Very low
- Somewhat low
- Neutral or no opinion
- Somewhat high
- Very high

[NEXT]

General Education Knowledge

You are in the [GE PROGRAM], which specifies the General Education requirements you might complete at UVA over the course of your studies. Please select all of the following which you believe are required for the [GE PROGRAM]. This list is not exhaustive, and will not include all of the program's requirements. (*Note: these options will be randomly shuffled for each participant.*)

- Second Writing Requirement
- Foreign Language Requirement
- Introductory Forum Seminar
- Forum Capstone
- Engagements
- Quantification, Computation & Data Analysis
- Social & Economic Systems
- Natural Sciences & Mathematics
- Humanities
- Non-Western Perspectives

[NEXT]

General Education Knowledge, Continued

(These pages present one of the requirements for the student's General Education program, and ask them a number of questions related to their understanding of and progress towards this requirement. These requirements are:

- *Traditional Curriculum: Areas and Competency requirements.*
- *New College Curriculum: Engagements, Literacies, and Disciplines.*
- *Forums Curriculum: Writing & Language requirements, Forum course requirements*

Each requirement will appear on its own page, and students will only see the requirements relevant to their General Education program. Some question language may be changed for a particular requirement when appropriate.)

One of the requirements for the [GE PROGRAM] is [REQUIREMENT], which... *(brief description).*

Have you taken any courses that count towards this requirement?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Did you bring in any credits from outside UVA to help complete this requirement?

- Yes, fully completed
- Yes, partially completed
- No
- Unsure

Do you believe you fully understand the details of this requirement?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

To what degree do you understand the purpose of this requirement in the context of the [GE PROGRAM]?

- Strongly do not understand
- Do not understand
- Neutral or no opinion
- Understand
- Strongly understand

When do you expect to complete this requirement?

- End of first year
- End of second year
- End of third year
- End of fourth year

How difficult or easy was it to find courses that fulfill this requirement?

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Neutral or no opinion
- Somewhat easy
- Very easy

[NEXT]

Resources for Understanding GE Requirements

To what degree did you use the following resources to help you understand and navigate the [GE PROGRAM] requirements?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Significantly
[GE PROGRAM] website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic requirements (AR) report in SIS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online course lists (e.g., SIS, Lou's List)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email communications from the College	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty advisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College Fellows / Forum Leaders / Area requirement instructors (<i>depending on GE program</i>)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other UVA faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College Association Deans or office staff in Monroe Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student peer advisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other students (e.g., friends, classmates, roommates)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How helpful was each of these resources?

	Very Unhelpful	Somewhat Unhelpful	Neutral or N/A	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful
[GE PROGRAM] website	<input type="radio"/>				
Academic requirements (AR) report in SIS	<input type="radio"/>				
Online course lists (e.g., SIS, Lou's List)	<input type="radio"/>				
Email communications from the College	<input type="radio"/>				
Faculty advisors	<input type="radio"/>				
College Fellows / Forum Leaders / Area requirement instructors (<i>depending on GE program</i>)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other UVA faculty	<input type="radio"/>				
College Association Deans or office staff in Monroe Hall	<input type="radio"/>				
Student peer advisors	<input type="radio"/>				
Other students (e.g., friends, classmates, roommates)	<input type="radio"/>				

[NEXT]

Overall First-Year Experience

Finally, we wish to learn more about what you feel you have gotten out of your first year at UVA. This is the last page of the survey; thank you for making it to the end!

How much value did each of the following experiences contribute to your first year?

	No Value	Some Value	Significant Value
Engagement courses / Introductory Forum Seminar / Courses that counted towards General Education requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[GE PROGRAM] program as a whole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UVA faculty I have interacted with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courses I have taken	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My relationships with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different backgrounds and perspectives of other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The city of Charlottesville	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much impact has your academic experience at UVA had on each of the following?

	No Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
My intellectual curiosity and wonder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My understanding of the big questions facing our world today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My understanding of what knowledge is (and is not)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The value I place on genuine debate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My understanding of the role creativity plays in making sense of the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My perspectives on the richness and complexity of different experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My understanding of the best ways to ask questions and analyze problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The behaviors and dispositions I believe constitute a good life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationships I hope to cultivate in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The value I place on cultivating community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way I interact with my peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The value I place on service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The importance of being an informed citizen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The type of vocation or job I hope to pursue in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The underlying reasons why I want to pursue a particular occupation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[SUBMIT]