

**FACULTY SENATE**  
**GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

# **Report of Findings, Fall 2017**

December 19, 2017



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of New Mexico has reviewed its approach to general education multiple times, with recommendations generated by committee or task force in 1994, 2003, 2009-10 and now, again, in 2016-17. UNM's [Mission](#) with regard to student education provides a clear statement of the three areas of learning the institution should foster: "UNM will provide students the values, habits of mind, knowledge, and skills that they need to be enlightened citizens, to contribute to the state and national economies, and to lead satisfying lives." At present, core courses in the general education curriculum rely implicitly on the university's educational mission. To be meaningful to students and to register as relevant to the university community, general education at UNM should explicitly connect educational practices — development of values, habits of mind, knowledge and skills — with outcomes: our graduates' capacity to be enlightened citizens, to contribute to the state and national economies, and to lead satisfying lives.

Due to the February 2017 passage of new legislation governing New Mexico's statewide approach to general education, UNM is now in the complex position of a required adaptation to an externally generated "one size fits all" model that will be codified for all state institutions in the Higher Education Department transfer matrix. For purposes of credit-hour fulfillment, the HED transfer matrix defines UNM's general education curriculum as equivalent to all other general education curricula in the state. The model is not specifically attuned to any of the following unique institutional aspects: UNM's 2020 objectives; UNM's student population; UNM's intertwined research and teaching mission as a Hispanic-Serving Carnegie Research I institution; the current employment environment for UNM graduates; UNM's co-curricular capacity; UNM's number of colleges, schools, undergraduate and graduate programs; or UNM's commitment to shared governance and faculty oversight over the curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

In order to respond to new state requirements without losing sight of UNM's unique characteristics as an educational institution, we recommend that the Faculty Senate, the Deans, and Academic Affairs collaborate on a two-phase approach to the [transformation](#) of General Education at UNM. Phase One involves rapidly adapting our current core curriculum to comply with the proposed state transfer model in 2018. The adaptation process presents an opportunity to strengthen and communicate the

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<sup>1</sup> UNM Faculty Handbook A.50 and A.51. <http://handbook.unm.edu>.

differential value UNM brings to general education -- through its mission, resources, and innovative faculty and staff. Phase Two, spanning a three-year period from 2018 to 2021, would involve a more comprehensive evolution of the general education program with clear leadership and faculty involvement to integrate both nationally- and UNM-tested practices for fostering student success. Phase Two will allow UNM to build its general education program into one that is recognizable statewide for its differential value. Complete and detailed recommendations may be found in Section VI below.

*Without an institutional commitment to and plan for developing Phase Two, it is likely that general education at UNM will fail to provide an integrated foundation for student achievement, despite being compliant with state requirements. Moreover, a compliance-only approach will ensure that students evaluate general education choices in terms of cost savings rather than in terms of quality, leading to a situation in which UNM will not be able to compete with lower cost institutions, including online colleges. UNM must communicate how its curricular, co-curricular and research capacities together form an enhanced general education program.*

Although state-level changes present a number of challenges for UNM, we believe a two-phase approach could result in significant positive change for the institution. Practices initiated with the adoption of Phase One will lay the groundwork for development in Phase Two of a unified general education program clearly connected with UNM's resources, flagship profile, and differential capacity to prepare students for achievement in a complex world.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The UNM Faculty Senate Task Force for General Education was formed in fall 2016 at a time of statewide change - both legislative and administrative - to the structure and standards of general education in New Mexico. The Faculty Senate developed a four-part charge for the task force, as follows:

1. Develop general education goals and a general education plan consistent with the UNM mission;
2. Evaluate proposals by the Steering Committee with respect to UNM curriculum and inform the NM Statewide General Education Steering Committee about its assessments on the proposed revisions to the General Education (GE) curriculum;
3. Consult with Provost Abdallah, Associate Provost for Curriculum Heileman, Deans of UNM Colleges and Schools, ASUNM and GPSA leadership, and the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee about goals and plans for the UNM General Education curriculum;
4. Report regularly to the Faculty Senate Operations Committee on the work of the task force, and to the UNM Faculty Senate as appropriate, and provide the Operations Committee with a written report of the task force recommendations by January 2017.

This charge reflects the Faculty Senate's desire both to monitor the activities of the NM Statewide General Education Steering Committee and to consider proactively how UNM's approach to general education might evolve in tandem with changes at the state level. Although some of the specific personalities and deadlines named in the charge above have changed (due to extensions in NM HED's own planning timelines), the FS GenEd Task Force (hereafter "task force") has now executed all elements of this charge.

This report summarizes the activities, findings, and recommendations of the task force, starting with a comprehensive analysis of General Education at UNM, in both historical and contemporary context. It then details the findings from a lengthy environmental scan process undertaken by the task force as a means of assessing areas of strength, weakness and opportunity for general education at UNM. Finally, the report outlines a vision for adaptation and transition in UNM's general education approach, consistent

with both the UNM mission and change recommendations currently proposed by the NM Statewide General Education Steering Committee.

## II. CHANGING TRENDS IN GENERAL EDUCATION NATIONALLY AND AMONG PEER INSTITUTIONS

### **The National Context:**

In the 1980s and 1990s, many higher education institutions adopted general education models organized by the premise that students should explore areas of knowledge across disciplinary fields, in particular: communication, math, social sciences, sciences, humanities, arts, and languages. Beginning in 2005, the Association of American Colleges and Universities influentially mounted Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) — an initiative that helped generalize interest in “Essential Learning Outcomes” and associated assessment [rubrics](#). As authors of the LEAP report wrote, “beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

### **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

*Focused* by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

*Practiced extensively*, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

### **Personal and Social Responsibility, Including**

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

*Anchored* through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges



### **Integrative and Applied Learning, Including**

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies  
*Demonstrated* through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.”<sup>2</sup>

LEAP brought increased momentum to higher education assessment and to an existing movement in assessment around the disciplinary and institutional creation and measurement of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Since adoption of area or disciplinary core curricula in the 1980s and 1990s, higher education has come under increasing pressure due to rising costs, a changing employment landscape, competition with “for-profit” providers, demographic shifts, and new technologies. In addition, student profiles have changed. Increasing numbers of students now move from institution to institution or experience enrollment gaps, take classes part-time while working and caring for families, enter higher education at different ages, and/or represent the first generation in a family to enter college. As education researchers Natasha Jankowski and David Marshall explain, this environment has polarized debate on higher education around “a dichotomy of utility in the economic or political worlds and purity of education for education’s sake.”<sup>3</sup>

One argument in the debate correlates the higher education degree with achievement of job skills and an applied outcome in successful employment. This argument often produces demands for higher education accountability in the form of economic results. What is the economic return on investment in higher education for a legislature, family, or student? Another argument situates higher education as crucial to the continued existence of democracy in a world divided by information silos and constrained by limited resources. How does the university develop citizens capable of informed critical thinking, rational civil conversation, cross-cultural competence and humility, and ethical engagement in public life? Yet another argument proposes that inquiry in a range of areas has value in and of itself as well as utility in promoting intellectual variety and

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<sup>2</sup> “The Leap Challenge,” Association of American Colleges and Universities.  
<https://www.aacu.org/leap/essential-learning-outcomes>.

<sup>3</sup> Natasha A. Jankowski and David W. Marshall, *Degrees that Matter: Moving Higher Education to a Learning Systems Paradigm*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, 2017.

adaptability in a changing world. How does higher education prepare students for inquiry, creativity, and innovation?

Because of its cross-cutting and non-specialized position, general education has been a lightning rod about the purpose of a university in national debate. Spanning the Associate's and the Bachelor's degree curricula, general education can be understood as the place in the curriculum in which students both discover new areas and develop habits of mind that they will practice and transfer to the entire course of the college career. The word "skills" frequently enters the general education discussion. For some, skills correspond to immediately marketable and applied job skills (for example, the ability to collect a biological sample from a patient). Disconnected from the other areas, the "intellectual and practical skills" area listed in the LEAP Essential Outcomes (above) are especially important to those who see general education in relation to employability. Arguments in favor of the streamlined teaching of applied skills are complicated by estimates that today's students will have held ten or more jobs by age 38 and that every year more than 30 million Americans work in jobs that did not exist the previous year.<sup>4</sup> These estimates suggest that the ability to integrate and transfer knowledge is crucial to employment success. Other voices in the national debate define skills as the "habits of mind,"<sup>5</sup> and intellectual resilience and flexibility that prepare a graduate to be a lifelong worker, citizen and learner. For this group, all four areas of the LEAP Essential Outcomes are important and are interdependent.

Differentially structured by these definitions of skills, new general education programs are being developed and adopted across the United States in response to legislative mandates and in relation to educational research and findings. Associate's-granting and Bachelor's-granting institutions have undertaken major redesigns of curricula in connection to discussions of missions and values.

Our survey of several of UNM's recognized peer institutions (Arizona State University, University of Arizona, University of California-Riverside, University of Houston, University of Utah), as well as three non-peer universities (Colorado State University, Rice University, Brown University), revealed that all of the schools require a total of 120-

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<sup>4</sup> Kuh, George, National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment, citing data from Department of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase "habits of mind" is used by American University in its general education curriculum.

122 credits for a degree, and all require a course on diversity, ethnicity or global and cultural awareness. The total number of general education credits ranges from 29 to 42, with requirements distributed across disciplinary areas in some cases or grouped according to stages of intellectual development, with an emphasis on integration of skills at the upper level of the General Education curriculum (See Appendix A for links). Institutions communicate the relevance of general education to preparation for the major and to lifelong learning and flexible job preparation, and some clarify pathways through general education in relation to student areas of interest.

Some of the most thoughtful curriculum redesigns have proceeded from the assumption that faculty need to be involved from the ground up in major curricular initiatives if transformation is to take place. For institutions like American University, the work of addressing LEAP outcomes comprehensively and of incorporating educational research has entailed three or more years of discussion and planning led by faculty and faculty committees, or faculty senates and academic affairs working in tandem. Universities can redesign general education learning experiences so that they foster economic, civic, and lifelong learning aptitude. Indeed, UNM's mission commits the institution to doing precisely that.

### III. STATEWIDE REVISIONS TO GENERAL EDUCATION

#### **The State of New Mexico Context:**

Responding to the national debate in 2015, provosts in New Mexico requested that the Higher Education Department initiate general education revisions with a March 2016 summit justified thus: “the current General Education Common Core reflects an approach to general education that has been abandoned by many forward thinking institutions of higher education. The approach can be described as the “smorgasbord” approach [...]. Our perspective is that the general education curriculum should be purposefully designed to teach students to think critically, communicate effectively, evaluate quantitative data, see connections among different areas of knowledge, solve complex problems, appreciate and understand diversity, and ethically reason” (Dan Howard to Barbara Damron, October 15, 2015, <http://statewide-gen-ed.nmsu.edu/summit-reading/>). After the summit, a three-pronged initiative to reform higher education in New Mexico within a single year was initiated. Ease in transfer, avoidance of course duplication, and reduced time to graduation became the watchwords of the statewide discussion.

In 2016, HED constituted four statewide bodies with the explicit goal of facilitating articulation and transfer of general education among all New Mexico institutions of higher learning, each of which has a unique mission and student population. These statewide bodies (see Figure 1) are the Articulation and Transfer Steering Committee, led by Chancellor Gary Carruthers; a set of Common Course Numbering sub-committees, organized by discipline and made up of educators from across the state reporting to HED; the Meta-Majors Committee, led by New Mexico Tech Dean of Arts & Sciences William Stone; and the Statewide General Education Steering Committee, led by NMSU Provost and EVP Dan Howard, which is tasked with developing a general education transfer matrix and related student learning outcomes. In December of 2016, the UNM Faculty Senate constituted the Faculty Senate General Education Task Force to evaluate the proposals of the Statewide General Education Steering Committee and to communicate its evaluation to the Faculty Senate in this report.

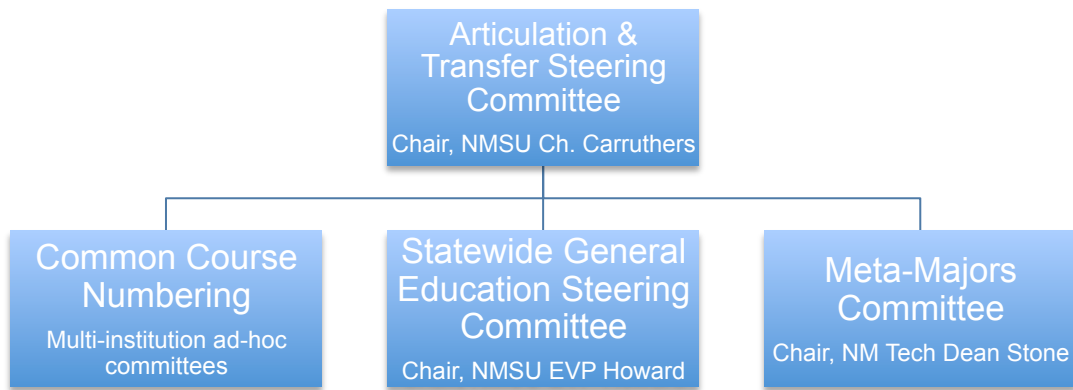


Figure 1. State Committees on General Education

**Legislative changes:**

In February of 2017, the NM state legislature passed House Bill 108 and Senate Bill 103. This legislation renews an older legislative initiative requiring common course numbering for 100-level and 200-level courses across the state. The NM Higher Education Department expanded the initiative to include 300-level courses. Amending “provisions in the Post-Secondary Articulation Act related to articulation, lower-division courses, and transfer modules,” the legislation:

- lowers the minimum general education requirement for a B.A./B.S.-granting institution from 35 to 30 credit hours;
- shifts the focus from disciplinary areas to “skills” as the foundation of a liberal arts education;
- specifies that general education is transferable between institutions as a completed transfer module as well as course by course, meaning that a student who completes the entirety of general education at one institution must subsequently be considered to have completed general education at any New Mexico institution to which the student transfers;
- reiterates achievement of common course numbering (as required in HB 282) with a 2017 completion date (since amended by HED Secretary Barbara Damron to 2018);
- mandates meta-majors;

- reiterates HED reporting to legislature;<sup>6</sup>
- instantiates school reimbursement to students for unaccepted transfer credits after student complaint;<sup>7</sup>
- explicitly identifies teaching around diversity as a part of the NM general education curriculum, as a result of advocacy by UNM students and faculty.
- does not identify any fiscal impact, despite evident IT costs associated with common course numbering.

### **Common course numbering:**

Since Fall 2016, Common Course Numbering Committees have met under direction of the Higher Education Department to identify shared student learning outcomes for 100-, 200- and, although the legislation does not specify this, 300-level courses. The HED directive, as described on its website, requires that courses from different institutions bear the same four-digit number when they share 80% of student learning outcomes (as already outlined in course syllabi preceding the common course numbering project). Some committees, however, have understood the HED charge as involving creation of entirely new student learning outcomes under a unified standard (with different interpretations as to whether the standard should involve 80% shared SLOs or 100% shared SLOs). In addition to soliciting draft common course numbering for different disciplines, HED has slated 2018 for adoption of common course numbers across New Mexico through a Banner renumbering process.

### **General education transfer matrix:**

In July of 2017, the Statewide General Education Steering Committee, led by NMSU EVP Dan Howard, arrived at consensus on a draft transfer model, while continuing to respond to comment on draft student learning outcomes for six content areas (Communications, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Math, Sciences, Fine Arts, and Humanities) and five essential skills (Critical Thinking, Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Information Literacy, Personal and Social Responsibility). At present, no plan for an interface between the Common Course numbering initiative (and associated

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<sup>6</sup> HB 108 Fiscal Impact Report (2/1/17)

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/17%20Regular/firs/HB0108.PDF.02-04-2017>.

<sup>7</sup> HB 108 differs from SB 103 in striking “language requiring HED to recommend reduced funding to an institution in the event a student’s credits failed to transfer” and it amends HED reporting requirements, “removing the requirement for HED to report to the Legislative Education Study Committee.”

Student Learning Outcomes) and the Statewide transfer matrix (and associated Student Learning Outcomes) has been explored on the state level. The Statewide General Education Steering Committee's drafts of Student Learning Outcomes associated with "Content Areas" and "Essential Skills" may be found on the [NMSU EVP's website](#). In the draft Student Learning outcomes, "proficiency" is currently defined as the level a student would achieve by the time of graduation with a Bachelor's degree and not as the level achieved on completion of General Education. The draft transfer matrix organizes essential skills in overlapping relationship with content areas (see Appendix B).

**Current status of initiatives:**

At the time of this writing, this transfer matrix and related student learning outcomes for content areas and skills remained in draft form with institutions soliciting faculty comment. The meta major initiative has been delayed. The Higher Education Department has already developed rubrics for certification of general education courses. HED is moving common course numbering, by discipline, from draft to final form.

## IV. HISTORY OF GENERAL EDUCATION AT UNM

### **Recent History:**

Development of a Core Curriculum was first proposed in 1994 by then-Provost Mary Sue Coleman. Prior to that time, each college and school had its own requirements. The committee charged with developing the Core Curriculum included Dr. Charlie Steen, who reported to the current task force about the initiative, as well as faculty representatives from every school and college.

In developing the Core Curriculum, the 1994 committee considered models at other universities and reviewed UNM student transcripts. That committee was interested in having a core that satisfied accrediting bodies' requirements and that would lead to a major while remaining flexible enough to accommodate students who changed their major. According to Dr. Steen, there was agreement that students needed to be verbal and literate with less agreement on the need for mathematics. As is true today, there was concern about articulation and transfer credits. In 2003, the UNM Core Curriculum underwent revisions that persist in its current form: <https://unmcore.unm.edu>.

During its 2009 review, the Higher Learning Commission reported that "The University's structure and process for oversight of general education institution level learning goals is not clear." Noting that UNM had collaborated with HED to identify state core learning competencies, the report pointed out that, nonetheless, "the university has not created a definitive structure for institutional leadership of the general education curriculum." The Provost's Committee on Assessment (PCA) offered leadership and support on assuring that core curriculum assessment occurred. However, as the HLC report continued, "it is not clear who has responsibility for implementation of general education policies and practices, including systematic review of the curriculum, analysis of results of assessment of student achievement of core competency goals, and use of assessment results for improving student learning (3A)" <http://accreditation.unm.edu/common/docs/archives/unm-assurance-2009.pdf>.

Partly in response to the HLC report, a second UNM task force was formed in Academic Year 2009-10. The report from that task force <http://www.unm.edu/~wac/CCFT/index-ccft.htm>, submitted May 15, 2010, identified issues with the Core as it was then constituted: lack of assessment of agreed-upon outcomes, lack of cohesion or shared



intellectual experience, transferred coursework that fulfills core requirements without providing necessary skills, and poorly articulated goals or purpose for requiring the Core. The 2009-10 task force made the following six recommendations:

- Develop a rationale, or explanation of purpose, for the core curriculum that is clearly presented and made available to students, faculty, advisors and administrators.
- Support oversight of the core curriculum in a recognizable, capable and broadly representative body of faculty, staff and administrators.
- Make faculty aware of the three existing UNM Learning Goals, which are based on LEAP's four outcomes; add to these goals LEAP's fourth outcome (Integrative Learning) to promote higher-order critical thinking skills.
- Create a set of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), more specific than the general UNM Learning Goals, to guide the Core Curriculum with a coherent vision.
- Build guidelines for faculty who want to propose courses for the core, explaining what is required for approval.
- Develop and implement a university Writing Across the Curriculum program.

The 2010 Report also proposes that allowing upper division courses to count in the Core would help transfer students and others who are prepared to take upper division courses. The 2009-10 task force Report expressed the hope that “the Core Curriculum, now confined to an impoverished list of lower-division courses [will become] a broad and deep set of learning outcomes, in the lower division and upper, in the majors and across the curriculum....”. It emphasized that UNM’s core curriculum is structured as a set of distribution requirements and that the burden for integrating knowledge across courses falls heavily on students. One result of the work of this task force was a more complete identification of UNM Learning Goals (skills, knowledge, responsibility) in program and core course assessment plans.

### **Progress since 2010:**

Data compiled since the 2010 report suggest that UNM still has not communicated the differential value of UNM’s Core Curriculum to students. An analysis of sentiment in graduate exit surveys from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016 indicates that “while the core curriculum is not an especially frequent topic area in open-ended responses, the sentiment surrounding undergraduate responses making reference to the core

curriculum is largely negative. Common themes in responses relating to the core curriculum include lack of interest in content, lack of availability of core courses, and the time fulfilling core requirements adds to degree completion.”<sup>8</sup> Roughly 45% of students transferring to UNM in the Fall semesters of 2013, 2014, and 2015 had completed all of their general education requirements at another institution. (Data for 2016 and 2017 show a much lower percentage, but this may not indicate an actual decrease because some students matriculating in these years simply have not completed their transfer of credits.) About 11% of students between 2012 and 2017 placed out of First-Year Composition through placement testing. Reliance on the core curriculum to build foundational skills is uneven. Fulfillment of mathematics and statistics requirements is delayed until the year of graduation more frequently than other requirements, although high enrollment social sciences and sciences courses and Spanish 101 also fit this category.<sup>9</sup> Math and statistics, as well as some social sciences and sciences courses and Spanish, were also the courses that students were most likely to have attempted more than once. Since assessments in the Core Curriculum are conducted on a course by course basis and rely on different benchmarks and metrics, we cannot determine program learning outcomes.

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<sup>8</sup> “Graduate Exit Surveys and the Core Curriculum,” Office of Institutional Analytics. University of New Mexico. 2016.

<sup>9</sup> “Core Courses Delayed Until Final Year Fall 2012-Spring 2017,” Office of Institutional Analytics. University of New Mexico. 2017.

## V. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

To develop understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of UNM's current core curriculum, members of the Faculty Senate General Education Task Force conducted an environmental scan that focused on opinions rather than statistics. In meetings ranging from one to two hours each, the task force met with a variety of student and faculty constituencies as well as advisors. (See Appendix C for a detailed description of all meetings and findings.) Participants included select individuals in leadership roles, motivated students and alumni, and most advisement staff. The perspectives presented here provide a representative and qualitative sample rather than an empirical survey of viewpoints. Since the work of the task force has been voluntary and unfunded, collection of new comprehensive empirical data has not been possible.

**Table 1. Groups Consulted in Environmental Scan**

Groups	Date	Method
Student Groups		
We Are the Core	02/28/17	In-person Meeting
ASUNM Senators	10/25/17	In-person Meeting
Greek Life Leadership	10/17/17	Survey
Faculty Groups		
Social Sciences Chairs	03/31/17	In-person Meeting
STEM Chairs	03/27/17	In-person Meeting
Humanities Chairs	04/03/17	In-person Meeting
Chairs from departments without offerings in core	04/18/17	In-person Meeting and Discussion
Chairs from departments with offerings in core	04/11/17	In-person Meeting and Discussion
College of Education	09/21/17	In-person Meeting

Other Constituencies		
HED Secretary Barbara Damron	02/28/17	In-person meeting and Discussion
UNM Advisors	05/17/17	In-person Meeting
UNM Alumni	09/30/17	Survey
Statewide GE Steering Cttee w/ UNM & CNM	10/03/17	General meeting and Discussion
Diversity Council	10/04/17	Invited presentation and Discussion
Dean's Council	11/3/2017	In-person Meeting and Discussion
Institute for Study of "Race" and Social Justice	11/29/17	In-person Meeting and Discussion
Diversity Req. Curriculum Committee	12/11/17	In-person Meeting and Discussion

Students' perspectives varied by academic status (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and according to membership across the organizations we surveyed: We Are the Core, ASUNM and Greek Life. Many students expressed frustration with having to take courses outside of their particular degree path. Others, usually those farther along in their degree or alumni, look upon their GenEd core as an eye-opening experience that broadened their academic view. Many students also commented on the importance of having and maintaining the diversity requirement. Providing a retrospective perspective of the GenEd Core, thirty people completed a survey that the task force distributed during Homecoming 2017. Approximately half, or 46.7%, of the respondents had taken all of their Core courses at UNM, and another 36.7% took most of their Core at UNM. While nearly two-thirds said the Core did not help them choose a major, 80% agreed that they perceived core courses as valuable during their time as students, with 96.7% agreeing in retrospect (after graduation) that core courses were valuable.

The task force also met with faculty across colleges and departments, ranks, and affiliations. A general consensus among some faculty was that despite having completed the GenEd core curriculum, students lack basic skills in math, science, and writing. This constituency views a reduction in the number of general education credits

as entailing erosion of student preparedness. Other faculty, notably in the School of Engineering, feel that the current core curriculum requires too many credit hours. The general consensus is that students coming to UNM, either as first-time college students or as transfer students, are not prepared for the rigors of college. Faculty proposed that general education curriculum could include a required course teaching incoming students how to be successful in college level courses. Some thought that it would be helpful if different programs could have different GenEd course-work requirements. Further recommendations included a stronger focus on multidisciplinary course offerings. In line with this recommendation, another suggestion was that faculty from different programs could collaborate in teaching some of the core requirements. Faculty often noted that whatever the model of GenEd adopted, it will need to be “sold” to other institutions without the appearance of unilateral decision making. These faculty pointed out that students expect to take courses that will allow them to learn job skills and that we offer courses engaging students in higher-order thinking and critical assessment of the world around them. Students may resist general education courses when they fail to see the application of what they are learning to career paths. Faculty proposed that we must clearly communicate how a GenEd Core Curriculum builds students’ capacity to be lifelong learners and to adapt flexibly to changing economies and communities. While they consider the GenEd Core as “working” from a curriculum standpoint, faculty in the College of Education expressed a critical need to find ways to better “alert” students when they have enrolled in a course that fulfills Core requirements. From this perspective, doing so will help both students, faculty, and academic advisors carefully track students’ individual progress along the Core.

Members of the task force met with the Academic Advisors’ Institute on May 17, 2017. From the general responses provided it appears that the advisors are “selling” the GenEd Core to students. In other words, advisors are explaining to students that the GenEd Core is a valuable component of their Liberal Arts Education at UNM. The advisors report that students are most concerned with how to “get the GenEd Core out of the way” and which courses are “cool.” Much of the resistance on the part of the students is that they do not perceive the relevance of the core to their degree and that the core takes a lot of time to complete. Advisors emphasized, however, that the core is a safe on-ramp to being in college and allows students to experience a range of areas of study, something that is especially important for those with undeclared majors.

The task force also met with student and faculty groups concerning the UNM diversity requirement and its relationship to the General Education Core. Discussions focused on preserving the current status of the diversity requirement, as a specific set of designated courses (in and beyond the Core) that promote awareness and understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the need to advocate for inclusive pedagogy and the teaching of race and social justice across the curriculum. For specific recommendations from the “Race” and Social Justice Institute, see Appendix G.

A discussion with UNM Deans at the November 3, 2017 Deans’ Retreat yielded a list of UNM characteristics that could be synthesized into themes differentiating the UNM general education curriculum from the general education courses offered at other institutions across the state:

1. Research excellence
2. Innovation –Rainforest
3. Urban/local/global diversity
4. Interdisciplinarity
5. Cultural awareness and humility
6. Media information literacy
7. World-class faculty
8. Community-engaged service
9. Exploration of real world problems
10. Collaborative ethos
11. Civic-oriented responsibility
12. Development of critical and imaginative problem-solvers.

The Deans’ Retreat produced a commitment to formation of a sub-committee to examine how to distinguish the value of UNM’s general education curriculum.

As a whole, the environmental scan established that neither students nor faculty view the Core Curriculum as an integrated whole in which habits of mind are formed and opportunities for the transfer of skills, knowledge and understanding are fostered. The scan demonstrated the urgency of communicating the value of general education to the UNM community.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS: GOALS AND SHAPE OF EDUCATION AT UNM**

The task force recommends that the UNM faculty and administration to adopt both a Phase 1, rapid adaptation to state requirements, and a Phase 2, reshaping of general education. Compliance with state legislation necessitates Phase 1. The state legislation and the competitive education market, make adoption of Phase 2 urgent if UNM is to demonstrate its differential capacity to educate life-long learners, well-rounded citizens, and flexible workers.

### **Recommendations for Phase I: Rapid Adaptation:**

For a first phase of rapid adaptation to the new state transfer matrix and 2017 legislation, we recommend modifying the current core curriculum to meet state requirements by shifting credit hours (see table 2 below) and by including a more explicit focus on essential skills in courses that will undergo GenEd re-certification by HED. We also recommend transitioning away from our current individual course assessment toward GenEd-program assessment. Lastly, we believe that Academic Affairs, the Dean's Council and the Faculty Senate should collaborate immediately on devising a plan for faculty leadership of the general education program. This would entail: identification of a leadership role, such as Associate Dean or Associate Provost; adoption of an implementation calendar; and commitment to immediate and long-term transformations through faculty-centered creative work and consensus.

### *Proposed Structure of Requirements*

To adapt rapidly to the state's reduction in the number of total required credit hours from 35 to 31, we propose maintaining all current content areas from the existing UNM core curriculum and distributing requirements across these areas as closely as possible to their current proportions at UNM. As discussed above, the new state structure reduces minimum credit hours in virtually every content area, and it gives each institution the flexibility of assigning nine (9) credit hours into content areas of the institution's choice. For UNM, we propose directing three (3) of these "institutional-choice" credit hours into the Languages content area, which otherwise would be erased from the GenEd requirements. We propose designating the remaining six (6) credits to any two content areas of the student's choice. We anticipate that this will have the effect of distributing the additional six credit hours across the seven content areas. It is difficult to anticipate the specific impact on GenEd enrollment of complying with the

state transfer matrix. Flexibility in distributing the additional six credit hours means that students will benefit most from general education if they are well-supported by advisement. Advisement will need to shift students towards selecting courses that complement their interests, develop their capacities, and provoke exploration. A recent study has shown that students who delay choosing a major are more likely to complete their degree in a timely way.<sup>10</sup> Advisement and faculty can play an important role in improving time to degree by encouraging students to explore disciplinary areas through GenEd courses. The tables below show how our proposed structure compares to the current state requirements (Table 2) and how it is intended to minimize impact on the distribution of student enrollments (Table 3).

**Table 2. Comparison of Current and Proposed GenEd Requirements**  
***New Mexico Common Core vs. UNM as an Independent Institution***

Content Area	Current Requirements		Proposed Requirements	
	State	UNM	State	UNM
Communications	9	9	6	6
Mathematics	3	3	3	3
Physical/Natural Sciences	8	7	4	4
Social/Behavioral Sciences	6-9	6	3	3
Humanities	6-9	6	3	3
Languages		3	0	3
Fine Arts		3	3	3
Institutional Choice	0	0	9	6*
Diversity Requirement**	0	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>

\* Allows student choice for 6 of the institutional-choice credits, which can be spread across any two areas.

\*\* Diversity requirement is in addition to the current and proposed UNMN core requirements, though it can be filled by completion of approved courses that are also used to satisfy a core requirement.

<sup>10</sup> Study finds students benefit from waiting to declare a major. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/24/study-finds-students-benefit-waiting-declare-major>



**Table 3. How will UNM be impacted?**  
***Existing vs. proposed requirements at UNM***

Content Area	Existing at UNM	Proposed for UNM		
	Existing Requirements	Required	Potential added SCH	Potential totals
Communications	9	6	+3	6-9
Mathematics	3	3	+3	3-6
Physical/Natural Sciences	7	4	+3	4-7
Social/Behavioral Sciences	6	3	+3	3-6
Humanities	6	3	+3	3-6
Languages	3	3	+3	3-6
Fine Arts	3	3	+3	3-6
Institutional Choice	0	6 credits, distributed by student choice		
Diversity Requirement*	3	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>		

\* Diversity requirement is in addition to the current and proposed UNM core requirements, though it can be filled by completion of approved courses that are also used to satisfy a core requirement.

#### *Diversity Requirement*

Over the past year, the Faculty Senate General Education Task Force has consulted with members of We Are the Core, including a standing task force member, Sraddha Patel, members of the Diversity Committee, the Institute for “Race” and Social Justice, and the Diversity Council Curriculum Committee. These constituencies have indicated that the UNM Diversity Requirement should remain unchanged. The Institute for “Race” and Social Justice contributed a set of recommendations for diversity across the

general education curriculum included in Appendix G. In practice, in light of 2017 state legislation, following this recommendation entails preserving the Diversity Requirement as a stand-alone requirement outside of the 31 credit-hour general education curriculum. Students may 'double-dip' by taking general education courses that have been approved as fulfilling the Diversity Requirement by Diversity Council Curriculum Committee.

### *Essential Skills*

State certification for general education courses will be contingent on evidence of teaching "essential skills": communication, critical thinking, information literacy, personal & social responsibility and quantitative reasoning. As a result, current core curriculum courses will need to undergo re-certification and any new courses added to the general education curriculum will need to be certified for the first time. The workload associated with this effort is significant, both for the college and Faculty Senate curriculum committees responsible for oversight and for departments and instructors revising courses to demonstrate explicit teaching and learning of essential skills. We recommend that a General Education faculty leader and/or leadership group working with Academic Affairs, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Assessment Office be asked to host workshops at which faculty can:

1. Network across disciplines to share ideas about meeting essential skill outcomes;
2. Receive direct support as they integrate selected essential skills into their course design and as they change course syllabi and assignments to meet certification or recertification requirements;
3. Become "communities of practice" engaged in working actively to develop learning across the curriculum related to all of the skills.

In addition, the Faculty Senate, working with the Curriculum Committee, may want to designate a distinct General Education re-certification working group to address the volume of course changes ensuing from compliance with the state transfer model.

### *Assessment*

The task force recommends that general education assessment should be at the program level. As with any form of assessment, this will promote awareness of outcomes of our general education curriculum as well as general oversight. Further, this will stimulate ideas for improvement in the program as a whole. Finally, by assessing at

the program level versus individual courses, this will alleviate some of the burden of assessment.

To this end, the task force recommends that assessment procedures focus on both: 1) the impact of general education on the student; and 2) the process by which this education is delivered and received. Although different measures (both quantitative or qualitative) will be needed for these two types of assessment, it will be critical to develop a meaningful and easily implementable roadmap for assessment that incorporates the state mandated essential skills.

#### *Implementation of Phase One*

Determining how to bring the current UNM Core Curriculum into alignment with state legislation and the HED administrative code is complicated by its structure as a set of courses rather than as a unified program. We recommend that changes to general education be approached as a program change and that the Faculty Senate begin to address state requirements by:

1. Advocating for a compensated oversight position and a leadership team designated by the Office of the Provost to coordinate Phase One and implement Phase Two;
2. Reviewing overall changes to the general education program, as featured in tables 2 and 3 above, through a Form C process and adopting all courses that are in the Fall 2017 UNM core curriculum into the revised general education program through temporary certification;
3. Establishing a calendar for Curricula Committee review of courses by Area that have received temporary certification to determine whether they address Phase Two transformations to GenEd. For example, current Area 1 and Area 2 courses could be reviewed in Fall 2019, current Area 3 and Area 4 courses in Spring 2020, current Area 5, 6, and 7 courses in Fall 2020. Approved courses could then undergo HED certification.

We recommend that Academic Affairs consider the recommendations in this report in early Spring 2018. We encourage Academic Affairs to develop a general education leadership plan in consultation with the faculty and the deans and to design an enforceable timeline for implementation of Phase Two. The concerns about UNM's general education curriculum expressed in the 2009 Higher Learning Commission

Report make decisive action all the more urgent in preparation for the 2019 HLC re-accreditation site visit.

We also recommend that Academic Affairs collaborate with University College and/or Innovation Academy, the Honors College, the Office for Advisement Strategies, and New Student Orientation to provide clear descriptions and graphics of the paths through general education and the relationship of the program to student learning and achievement.

### **Recommendations for Phase Two: Reshaping General Education at UNM**

Alongside the rapid adaptation proposed in Phase One, the task force recommends implementation of several reshaping practices between Spring 2018 and 2021. As an institution, we need to identify and communicate the features of the general education program that are of enhanced value to students and that differentially support student success. We must continue to support initiatives that have already contributed to improved graduation rates and time to graduation, connect co-curricular resources and experiences to the GenEd curriculum, and engage faculty in providing students with opportunities to practice and transfer “habits of mind” across the GenEd program. The following recommendations are grouped into a proposed three-year plan:

#### Year One

- Designate a compensated oversight position and a leadership team; include on this team faculty whose research and teaching concerns diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Create an Ad-hoc committee within the Curriculum Committee to consider Form B changes (certification of courses);
- Develop GenEd faculty communities of practice: design opportunities for GenEd faculty development and collaboration by clustering faculty across disciplines for sharing assignment and teaching strategies for essential skills; maintain a GenEd site for teachers and learners banking assignments, themes, information, and linking to research opportunities, community engaged learning opportunities and co-curricular resources; feature regular retreats for GenEd instructors and invited speakers; incorporate leadership and workshops from faculty with teaching and research expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Develop program-level assessment;

### Year Two

- Design communication efforts demonstrating value-added of the UNM GenEd curriculum at a majority minority HSI Carnegie I;
- Offer GenEd courses taught by leading research faculty and faculty recognized for teaching excellence;
- Coordinate GenEd curriculum with co-curricular resources and student services by educating faculty so that they can educate students and by providing easily available mechanisms for referrals and access; work with offices and units to connect the UNM co-curriculum and its range of support opportunities to the general education academic curriculum;
- Incorporate into GenEd recognized High Impact Practices, including those that have a track record of success at UNM as measured in the [Foundations of Excellence Report](#) (2014), especially Freshmen learning communities, writing across the curriculum, undergraduate research, community-engaged learning, and teaching and learning focused on diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Compete for grants enabling incorporation of research opportunities in STEM, Humanities and Social Sciences into the general education program.
- Design the online general education program deliberately and coordinate with the Center for Teaching and Learning to build a course certification process, with faculty incentives similar to the online Golden Paw incentives.

### Year Three

- Connect General Education cognition to what precedes it, what comes after it, and what comes alongside it through “tuning” discussions with departmental faculty;
- Anticipate future HED requirements for meta-majors by designing UNM-specific flexible GenEd paths, for example, “pre-Health,” “Design,” “Social Justice,” and “Open Exploration.”
- Address and improve advising communications so that advisors (and the banner enrollment system) can identify for students when they are enrolled in a core course and communicate the value of general education
- Strengthen and support “Big Question” interdisciplinary courses and pilot some of these as General Education keystone courses in which all essential skills would be used and star faculty would be the teachers.
- Strengthen descriptions and graphics of the paths through general education and the relationship of the program to student learning and achievement.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Responding to changing state requirements for general education will present challenges for UNM, yet we also see this as an opportunity for growth and institutional transformation.

The task force is most concerned that the state focus on easing transfer minimizes real differences between institutions and equates UNM's general education program with all others in the state. This puts our institution at risk of losing its hard-earned competitive advantage. UNM faculty, administrators, advisors, and students recognize UNM as an educational context in which learners gain much more than mere "credits" while undertaking their degree programs. Indeed, dramatic improvements in retention rates and time to degree indicate that UNM's educational resources — from research faculty, to advisement, to student services — offer the best indicator of student success and graduation in the state.

In response to the 2017 state legislation, UNM must make a concerted effort to transform general education by capitalizing on the strategies for supporting student success developed in the past five years. We must also communicate more effectively and urgently the value-added of UNM's general education to its many constituents. This involves quickly adapting to the new state requirements by undertaking the structural changes described above in Phase One and then generating a commitment from faculty and Academic Affairs to undertake Phase Two. Without Phase Two, changes to general education will compromise our ability to compete with other institutions and, more importantly, our capacity to provide the intellectual foundations for student success in a changing world. Through implementation of past task force recommendations, development of research-tested practices, and application of necessary resources, UNM can take important steps to fulfill its mission as the flagship institution of New Mexico. Ultimately, economic development of the state and the well-being of its citizens depends on UNM's delivery of a dynamic and exciting general education program.

## **APPENDIX A. PRACTICES AT PEER AND NON-PEER INSTITUTIONS:**

The task force queried several of UNM's recognized peer institutions (University of Arizona, University of California-Riverside, University of Houston, University of Utah) as well as three non-peer universities (Colorado State University, Rice University, Brown University) to survey approaches to general education. All of the schools require a total of 120-122 credits for a degree, and all require a course on diversity, ethnicity or global and cultural awareness. Beyond that, however, the institutions' general education requirements vary considerably:

- a) The total number of general education required credits ranges from 33-42 credits, with specific requirements typically distributed across disciplinary areas;
- b) At most institutions, core courses are chosen by students from a long, defined list. Both Rice University and Brown University have improved recruitment, however, by offering an open-core curriculum in which students take courses of their choice across required distributions without being bound to an existing list of courses;
- c) Several institutions require an advanced competency as part of the general education structure, e.g. University of Riverside has a foreign language requirement at the third or fourth quarter level proficiency; University of Arizona segregates its general education requirements into two tiers that must be taken in sequence; and Colorado State requires three credits of advanced writing as well as five credits of depth and integration that each major builds into their program. This includes a capstone experience within major that offers opportunity for integration and reflection;
- d) Several institutions have good websites that communicate well to students how core courses contribute throughout their degree paths, thus encouraging them to stagger their core completion throughout the years of study. (At the University of Arizona, this is enforced by the two-tiered structure);
- e) At most institutions, the core is incorporated into the major program by the major.

All Texas State Schools require 42 credit hours, distributed across areas, taken from a list of courses. The University of Houston has the best website displaying their core program, see [http://publications.uh.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=25&poid=2946](http://publications.uh.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=25&poid=2946).

Arizona State University requires only 29 credits, distributed across content areas, but also requires coursework in three “awareness areas”: cultural diversity in the U.S., global awareness, and historical awareness.

[https://catalog.asu.edu/ug\\_gsr](https://catalog.asu.edu/ug_gsr)

University of Utah requires 36 core courses. It is noteworthy that they include 2 mathematics and statistics courses (one in math, one in stats) see

[https://advising.utah.edu/\\_documents/grad-worksheet.pdf](https://advising.utah.edu/_documents/grad-worksheet.pdf)

Also noteworthy was the requirement at the University of Riverside to include a foreign language requirement *at the third or fourth quarter level proficiency*. See

[chassstudentaffairs.ucr.edu/petitions\\_forms/chbreadth.pdf](https://chassstudentaffairs.ucr.edu/petitions_forms/chbreadth.pdf)

University of Arizona requires 33 credit hours, distributed in two tiers, Tier 2 containing 7 courses to be taken after the 6 courses in Tier 1. See

[http://archive.catalog.arizona.edu/2010-11/gened\\_tiers.html](http://archive.catalog.arizona.edu/2010-11/gened_tiers.html)

The most complete and informative website overall found was that of CSU. The Core Curriculum information can be found at <http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/all-university-core-curriculum/aucc>. CSU require 36 credit hours, most notably including 3 credits of Advanced Writing, 3 credits of Global and Cultural Awareness, and 5 credits of depth and integration that each major builds into their program. This includes a capstone experience within major that offers opportunity for integration and reflection.



## APPENDIX B. STATE OF NEW MEXICO DRAFT TRANSFER MATRIX

### Draft General Education Model

#### New Mexico Statewide General Education Steering Committee

Content Area	Credits	Skills considered to be closely associated with the content area
Communications	6	Communication Critical Thinking Information & Digital Literacy
Mathematics	3	Communication Critical Thinking Quantitative Reasoning
Science	4	Critical Thinking Personal & Social Responsibility Quantitative Reasoning
Social & Behavioral Sciences	3	Communication Critical Thinking Personal & Social Responsibility
Humanities	3	Critical Thinking Information & Digital Literacy Personal & Social Responsibility
Creative and Fine Arts	3	Communication Critical Thinking Personal & Social Responsibility
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	

In addition to the 22 hours above, each student must complete another 9 credit hours of general education. Each institution of higher education will have the discretion to determine whether these credit hours come from the content areas above and/or from other content areas such as foreign languages, interdisciplinary studies, business, engineering, information technology, etc. Each course must be from a different content area and each must focus on two or more essential skills.

July 21, 2017

## **APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN NOTES FROM DATA COLLECTION**

### **Student Groups**

*Generalizations:* The student perspective varies by academic status (freshman, sophomore, etc.) as well as according to membership in the organizations we surveyed. For example, many students express frustration with having to take courses that are outside of their particular degree path. Others, usually those farther along in their degree or alumni, look upon their GenEd core as an eye-opening experience that broadened their academic view. Many students also commented upon the importance of having and maintaining the diversity requirement.

*Greek Life Student Leaders:* Student input was sought through in person questioning and discussion, guided by three basic questions. Eighteen students, all juniors or seniors, responded. Specifically, they were asked: 1) what they liked about the GenEd Core; 2) what they did not like about the GenEd Core; 3) what is their perception of why we have a GenEd Core.

*What Students Like About the GenEd Core:* A few students commented that they liked the diversity of courses offered and this allowed them exposure in areas outside their major. Many of these students liked the fact that the GenEd courses they took were “easy As” and allowed them to boost their GPA. One student singled out the FLC as a particularly positive experience.

*What Students Do Not Like About the GenEd Core:* A majority of the students unanimously felt that the GenEd courses were prohibitive in terms of the time it took them to graduate (too long) and the disconnect between the GenEd courses and their majors. In other words, the GenEd courses were not related to their majors and held them back in terms of graduation.

*What is their Perception of why we have a GenEd Core:* Most students understood the purpose of the GenEd Core to be a broadening experience so that students graduating from UNM would have a diverse and multifaceted education.

*ASUNM Senators:* Members of the task force met with ASUNM Senators and displayed five guiding questions (attached as Appendix F) while gathering input. Students represented all levels (Freshmen – Seniors). A total of 28 students responded.

*What was your experience in the GenEd Core?* Responses to this question were mixed. The students who had a negative response felt that the GenEd Core was a waste of time and money. The students who had a positive response felt that the GenEd Core broadened their horizons.

*What has been your experience with advisement with regard to the GenEd Core?* Responses to this question were polarized, where students had a positive impression of academic advisement or clearly had a bad experience with advisement. A number of students chose to not respond to this question.

*Did the GenEd courses you took help in your selection of a major?* Only 15 students responded to this question. Of those who did respond, 27% said that the core helped in their selection of a major and 73% reported that the GenEd Core did not influence their decision of a major.

*How did you select the courses for completing the Core?* Highly variant responses.

*What course(s) helped you build your skillset the most?* This question had seven responses. The responses were mixed and it would seem that some respondents did not understand the question.

*Comments:* The students took courses that even remotely applied to their major and/or took courses that were of interest to them.

Answers to the student responses are attached.

*UNM Alumni:* The task force was interested in a retrospective perspective of the GenEd Core and in assessing how graduates felt about this group of courses. Thirty people completed a survey that was distributed during the Homecoming events at the end of September, 2017. The actual survey questions and a spreadsheet of the responses can be found in Appendix D.

Approximately half, or 46.7%, of the respondents had taken all of their Core courses at UNM, and another 36.7% took most of their Core at UNM. While nearly two-thirds said the Core did not help them choose a major, only 20% had thought that core courses had no value while they were enrolled and only one respondent held that same view after graduating.

## **Faculty Groups**

*Generalizations:* The faculty perspective varies, often according to affiliation. Many feel that despite having completed the GenEd core curriculum students lack basic skills in math and writing. This constituency views reduction in the number of general education credits as entailing erosion of student preparedness. Faculty from some programs, notably those in the School of Engineering, however, feel that the current core curriculum requires too many credit hours.

### *Social Sciences Chairs*

Members of the task force met with the Social Sciences Chairs on 3/31/2017. The questions posed to these chairs were a pre-vetted set of standardized questions that were sent ahead of the meeting for the purposes of feedback collection from their respective faculty (see Appendix E).

### *Generalizations*

These chairs commented on the lack of preparedness of the UNM students, particularly in the area of writing. Also of concern in some areas is the amount of math required.

Along with these comments, the Social Sciences chairs expressed concern about the reduction in core classes, stating that the students are not prepared after 37 hours. Finally, the transfer system appears to not be problematic for this group.

### *Chairs (Humanities, Social Sciences, STEM)*

The questions posed to these chairs were a pre-vetted set of standardized questions that were sent ahead of the meeting for the purpose of feedback collection from their respective faculty (see Appendix E).

### *Generalizations*

These chairs felt that students are well prepared, although they comment that verbal and written communication skills could use improvement. These chairs commented that the proposed reduction in the GenEd Core Curriculum would have a negative impact on their student as it would negatively affect their preparedness for their major programs. STEM chairs were concerned about math and science preparedness of transfer students.

### *Chairs With Offerings in the Current GenEd Core*

*Task Force Members present:* Assistant Professor Ganesh Balakrishnan Electrical and Computer Engineering; Associate Dean Regina Carlow, College of Fine Arts; Associate Professor Pamela Cheek (chair of task force); Associate Provost Greg Heileman; Professor Kuppaswamy Iyengar, School of Architecture and Planning; Dean Kate Krause, University College and Honors College; Associate Professor Maria Lane, Geography; Professor Monika Nitsche, Mathematics and Statistics; and Senior Lecturer Marieken Shaner, Biology

*Guests Present:* Chair Melissa Bokovoy, History; Chair Peter Fawcett, Earth and Planetary Sciences; Chair Les Field, Anthropology; Chair Tim Krebs; Political Science; Associate Chair Kelly Miller, Biology; Dean Mark Peceny, College of Arts and Sciences; Vladimir Reche, Chair Theatre and Dance; Chair James Stone, Cinematic Arts; and chairs from: Art and Art History; Mathematics and Statistics; and Physics and Astronomy

This meeting was held on 04/11/2017 and included a presentation by chair Dr. Pamela Cheek about the state of General Education and the State Mandated changes to the GenEd Core, followed by discussion of what is effective in our current core, discussion surrounding what role GenEd plays in New Mexico and concerns.

### *What is effective in our current core?*

Generally, these faculty feel that the current core is effective. Several faculty argued that art courses have a profound and life-long impact on our students, exposing them to a topic that they may not see again in their college career. During the course of the conversation, the same argument was applied to other areas of the Core Curriculum.

*What should GenEd be at UNM?*

The general consensus is that students coming to UNM, either as first time college students or as transfer students, are not prepared for the rigors of college. Faculty noted that whatever the model of GenEd adopted, it will need to be “sold” to other institutions without the appearance of unilateral decision making. Finally, a suggestion was made for a required course that teaches incoming students how to be successful in college level courses.

*What role does GenEd play in New Mexico?*

Students come to UNM expecting to take courses that will allow them to learn skills that can be used to get jobs. What we offer are courses engaging students in higher-order thinking and critical assessment of the world around them. Students may resist general education courses when they fail to see the application of what they are learning to career paths. The proposed solution to this is that we must clearly state why a GenEd Core Curriculum builds the capacity to be a life-long learner and to adapt flexibly to changing economies and communities.

*Chairs of Departments Without Offerings in the Core*

*Task Force Members present:* Assistant Professor Ganesh Balakrishnan Electrical and Computer Engineering; Associate Dean Regina Carlow, College of Fine Arts; Associate Professor Pamela Cheek (chair of task force); Professor Kuppaswamy Iyengar, School of Architecture and Planning; Associate Professor Maria Lane, Geography; Professor Monika Nitsche, Mathematics and Statistics; Associate Chair Charles Paine, English; and Sradha Patel (student representative); and Senior Lecturer Marieken Shaner, Biology

*Guests present:* Associate Dean Charles Fleddermann, School of Engineering; and Dean Geraldine Forbes Isais, School of Architecture and Planning

*Summary:* Members of the task force met with Chairs whose departments do not have offerings in the core on 4/18/2017. Some chairs felt that the current core requires too many credit hours and that a reduction in the requirement would allow students to take more courses in their major. It was suggested that it would be helpful if different programs could have different GenEd course-work requirements. Further recommendations included a stronger focus on multidisciplinary course offerings. In line

with this recommendation, another suggestion was that faculty from different programs could collaborate in teaching some of the core requirements.

## **Other Constituencies**

### *Academic Advisors' Institute*

Task Force Members Present: Maria Lane, Pamela Cheek, Kate Krause

Advisors Present: Over 120 advisors from across the campus

Members of the task force met with the Academic Advisors' Institute on May 17, 2017. The questions the task force asked were presented ahead of time (Appendix E).

1. *How do you discuss Core requirements to students at NSO or when advising after their first semester? How do they respond?* From the general responses provided it appears that the advisors are “selling” the GenEd Core to students. In other words they are explaining to students that the GenEd Core is a valuable component of their Liberal Arts Education at UNM. It should be noted that there are some different approaches in specific disciplines. The advisors report that the students are most concerned with how to get the GenEd Core out of the way and which courses are “cool”.
2. *How do you support students when choosing specific Core courses when there are options? Does the program for which you advise provide guidelines for Core course options?* The majority of responses to these questions had to do with logistics. For example, which of the GenEd offerings fits into a student's schedule? Which of the GenEd offerings will complement the student's major? Which of the GenEd offerings might balance out a student's schedule?
3. *Do you factor in the Diversity Requirement when suggesting Core courses?* In this instance there is general consensus that the advisors try to encourage students to satisfy both a Core requirement and the Diversity requirement in a single class.
4. *Do you ever find yourself having to justify the core to resistant students? How do you explain it?* It would seem that this is in fact a common concern for UNM students. The responses from the advisors are: 1. The student has to complete the GenEd core and 2. Is it a Pre-req for a class you will need; do you have to take it for that reason? The majority of the resistance on the part of the students

is that the core is not relevant to their degree and it takes a lot of time to complete.

5. *What is working well with the core?* The GenEd core is a safe “on ramp” to being in college. Especially for students who are undecided, this allows for experiencing different areas of study.
6. *What is not working?* Much of what is perceived as “not working” in the GenEd Core is consistent with the above. For example, students perceive that the core is slowing them down and is not relevant to their careers.



## APPENDIX D. ALUMNI AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

### Student Survey Responses

Major	Year	Liked?	Didn't Like?	Purpose
Accounting	Junior	I liked that I could see other areas of study that interested me.	I didn't like taking classes that didn't pertain to my area of study	I am not completely sure why we have core classes
Elementary Ed	Senior	It was an easy "A"	It was pointless, made no impact on my degree choice. It was a waste of money because it has NOTHING to do with my degree	To weed out people who aren't college material
Bio & French	Senior	I enjoyed the variety of courses	I disliked the honors college. The honors college did not offer more core classes	I think core is good, especially for students who are unsure coming into college. I think core is often not taken seriously because it is so easy
Finance	Senior	Easy	Useless classes	Make a well-rounded student
Population Health	Junior	I thought those classes were easy and boosted my GPA	They filled up quickly and some were pointless to my major	I think it takes time away from students wanting to take a variation of classes to decide their major. The core should be less credits
Psychology	Junior	It helped me find my minor	The classes that has nothing to do with the subject of my major	To prepare students for upper level courses by giving them an educational foundation
Strategic Communications	senior	I like that Astronomy was a science option, so I didn't have to do Bio or Chem	I think some of the classes were literally high school repeated. Waste of time	Core is to get you thinking in a multifaceted way. I think there should be waivers depending on extra-curriculars
Business Finance	Senior	It was easy enough to start off college, but still prepared you	I didn't like having to take classes that didn't pertain to my degree	We have it to be well-rounded scholars and I feel like it makes sense
Bio/Anthro	Senior	I liked that some of the core curriculum prepared me for my major	Some classes were completely irrelevant to my major	I think it makes our education more well-rounded and helps us to learn something we might have not originally sought out
Public Communications & Africana Studies	Junior	I liked the opportunities for networking. I met a lot of my greatest friends. The classes were challenging, yet engaging. Especially so in my history classes		Core is necessary to ensure that one is ready for what's to come. I call it "conditioning season for college"

Bio Chem	Junior	I like that core was a GPA boost	It was pointless and didn't help my future	The reasoning was to expand our world view beyond our major, but I think its ineffective and shouldn't be in place
Sociology	Senior	Liked the arts credit	The core curriculum for Sociology should be changed to less math. Math is unnecessary and drew me back for a whole year	My understanding was to give us a basic role of everything, so we could know if we really wanted that path
Exercise Science & Physical Therapy	Senior	I thought the core curriculum was fine	There are too many classes that are unrelated to my field	I believe the core curriculum is to prepare students to be more well rounded
Applied Math		Broad diversity in subject areas	Core should be more STEM intensive. Everyone should know more math and science	To ensure that each student recieves certain diversity and depth in their studies outside of their major. Core is a great system
Bio	Super Senior	It was mostly the same at a community college/ university lol	Its tedious, its too many classes just to get into your major classes	There is a core curriculum so that way the students come to college having knowledge of the material, this helps to refresh but also grow more knowledge
Bio Chem	Junior	Classes that were different from my major	Takes up a lot of credit hours that could be used to take pre-reqs for classes	Continues to introduce students to areas of study that they would otherwise not look in to
Bio	Senior	It was interesting to look at different subjects and topics	I felt like it was just too time consuming. I feel like we should get straight into our major and finish faster	I feel like it was good alright
Bio & Spanish	Senior	General knowledge	Felt like I wasted time when I could have taken more important classes	General knowledge, and I feel it is necessary to a certain extent

### Associated Students of UNM - Survey Responses

Major	Class	Experience	Advisement	Decide Major	Completing Core	Skillset	Random Comments
		The core was helpful in finding interests, but it was tedious I felt like I was losing traction with education.					
							Con seems reasonable but I don't feel restricted
							Introduced me to the university on a personal level
Fine Arts		Good core experience	I have a great advisor and love the new lobo achieve	It didn't help			
		I think that the core is a helpful guide for which classes to take	My advisement experience has been great and my advisor is helpful	I had already decided on my major without taking the core into account			I picked the classes that would be the most helpful to me in the future
Communications	Junior		I find advisement frustrating and feel as though I know more than the paid professionals			I think the core requirement encompasses all the skills students need to attain in college	I loved my FLC
Political Science	Junior	Got the core out of the way ASAP. Wish I hadn't so it would be easier now.	I have had multiple different advisors and opinions				Holding off on the lab

Political Science	Sophomore	Core was easy as I had almost all of it out of the way because of AP					Public speaking was fun but unnecessary. The science core opened my eyes up top a lot, but I feel like students could get a lot more out of their degree and our grad rate could go up. Time consuming. Maybe freshman seminar?
Econ & Political Science	Senior	Core useful for general education	Advisement in the past has been very weak. Megan Lipert, the Econ advisor, is amazing	I realized what I wanted to do before core.			
Political Science		Core was boring. Kind of felt like a waste of time.	My advisor is good when I can get a hold of her.				I don't know. I should have studied math randomly
			bad experience with advisement. Not consistent. Not consistent with advisor, kept getting a new one	Communication and psych classes helped me pick what I wanted to study.			
Political Science	Freshman	I have just tried to fill the core requirements for now. Boring and waste of time	I have had a positive experience with advisement	It didn't influence my decision at all			What would work with my schedule best
Bio Psych	Sophomore	Unnecessary core courses	Advisement cancelled appointments	Core did not help me decide my major			Courses selected by availability

Political Science	Sophomore	Took time and money		My major was already decided		Social setting/humanities. Not arts	Found which ones matched my major
Finance	Sophomore	The courses have been easy thus far	Advisement has been helpful	It helped me realize how much I liked handling finances. English 219 helped me the most			
Bio Chem	Freshman	Generally positive experience with core	My advisor has been generally good		The classes were ones I wanted to take		
Bio Chem	Senior	Courses are helpful and can shape your career path	As a member of a special on campus program, I have received excellent advisement that I wished all students could experience.			Core allows for common intellectual understanding between students on campus	
Business Admin	Senior		Avoid it, fine, generally unhelpful.	I was undecided but I really enjoyed Econ	completed		What looked interesting. Least humble
Communications	Sophomore		I have utilized my advisor for guidance		I chose my courses based on what was the most relevant for my major		
EMS	Sophomore		Advisement has been difficult. I had to do a lot of research on my own	Core helped me decide what my interests were		English and Science	

Bio & Politcal Science	Sophomore	Negative Impact	Great advisement	I already knew my major	I chose what was most interesting	The courses in the field	
Economics & International Business	Senior	Core useful for students who might not know what they are interested in pursuing	Advisement in UAEC was poor, Major specific advisors are great				Interests based humanities classes
English & Political Science	Junior	I had a good experience with the core		I already knew what I wanted to major in			
Finance	Junior	Good experience with core classes	Bad experience with advisement at first, but when I changed my major my advisor was phenomenal				
Bio	Junior	Core was something I filled as a requirement	I have enjoyed my experience with advisement	I knew what major I wanted, but core didn't influence this			I appreciate that some core classes are flexible and can be filled with some classes in the honors college
Speech and Hearing Sciences & Communication	Junior		Pretty good, my advisors are great and know how to help me succeed	Sciences classes required made me interested in speech hearing	What looked interesting	I have taken the core classes	
ME	Junior	I think some core classes are unnecessary	Advisement has been fair	It did not help me decide my major	I took the core classes I had to		
Business Accounting	Junior		Advisors haven't helped much	Didn't help me choose my major	I finished most of my core in highschool	Science	I picked the ones that were easy

## Alumni Survey Responses

Text	Year	4=all, 3=most, 2=few, 0=0	0=not at all, 1=some, 2= heavy	2=valuable, 1=some, 0=0	2=valuable, 1=some, 0=0	Text	Value Now- Value Then
Major	Grad Year	How Many at UNM	decide major?	while a student, how valuable?	in retrospect, how valuable?	anything else?	Difference between retrospective and while a student
		3	2				
English	2018	3	1	0	1	If you want higher grad rates, make it easier to graduate!	1
Health Educati on	2016	2	0	2	2	Great way to infroduce other areas of study	0
Elem. Ed	2014	0	0	0	1		1
Business Adminis tration	2009	3	0	1	1		0
History	2009	4	1	1	1		0
Educati on	2009	4	1	2	2	N/A	0
Woman Studies	2019	3	0	2	2		0
America n Studies/ Spanish	2016	3	1	1	1		0
Journali sm/ Spanish	2008	4	0	2	2		0
Educati on	1972	3	0	2	2		0
Health Educati on	2017	4	1	1	2		1
Strategi c Commu nication s	2016	3	0	1	2	I do feel it's necessary to have a well- rounded experience in	1

						college	
Milti Media Journalis m	2017	4	0	0	0	Debt, graduate, still unemployed!	0
Commu nication / Journali sm & Spanish	2018/19	3	1	2	2		0
Journali sm	1999	3	1	2	2		0
Journali sm & Spanish	1967	4	0	2	2		0
Jorunali sm	2020	4	0	0	1	N/A	1
BS EP+s	2015	2	0	0	1		1
Political Science Business Minor	1994	3	0	1	1		0
Commu nication / Journali sm	2002	2	0	1	1		0
Business	2018	2	0	1	2		1
Classics	1995	4	0	1	1		0
Political Science & Philosop hy	2018	4	0	1	2		1
BFA	2018	4	0	0	1	N/A	1
Commu nication & Journali sm	2018	3	0	2	1		-1
Commu nication	2017	4					0



& Journalism							
Biology & History	Spring 2018	4	0	2	2	I think they are very helpful for those who come to UNM undecided.	0
Health Comm.	2010	4	1	2	2		0
Sociology	2017	4	1	1	2		1
<b>Averages</b>	<b>2009.19</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>1.50</b>		0.31
<b>Counts</b>	<b>countif 4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>		
	<b>countif 3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>countif 0</b>	<b>countif 0</b>	<b>countif 0</b>		
<b>sorted by year of graduation</b>							
Major	Grad Year	How Many at UNM	decide major?	while a student, how valuable?	in retrospect, how valuable?	anything else?	Difference between retrospective and while a student
Journalism & Spanish	1967	4	0	2	2		0
Education	1972	3	0	2	2		0
Political Science Business Minor	1994	3	0	1	1		0
Classics	1995	4	0	1	1		0
Journalism	1999	3	1	2	2		0
Communication / Journalism	2002	2	0	1	1		0

Journalism/ Spanish	2008	4	0	2	2		0
Business Administration	2009	3	0	1	1		0
History	2009	4	1	1	1		0
Education	2009	4	1	2	2	N/A	0
Health Comm.	2010	4	1	2	2		0
Elem. Ed	2014	0	0	0	1		1
BS EP+s	2015	2	0	0	1		1
Health Education	2016	2	0	2	2	Great way to introduce other areas of study	0
American Studies/ Spanish	2016	3	1	1	1		0
Strategic Communications	2016	3	0	1	2	I do feel it's necessary to have a well- rounded experience in college	1
Health Education	2017	4	1	1	2		1
Multi Media Journalism	2017	4	0	0	0	Debt, graduate, still unemployed!	0
Communication & Journalism	2017	4					0
Sociology	2017	4	1	1	2		1
English	2018	3	1	0	1	If you want higher grad rates, make it easier to	1

						graduate!	
Business	2018	2	0	1	2		1
Political Science & Philosophy	2018	4	0	1	2		1
BFA	2018	4	0	0	1	N/A	1
Communication & Journalism	2018	3	0	2	1		-1
Woman Studies	2019	3	0	2	2		0
Journalism	2020	4	0	0	1	N/A	1
Communication / Journalism & Spanish	2018 /19	3	1	2	2		0
Biology & History	Spring 2018	4	0	2	2	I think they are very helpful for those who come to UNM undecided.	0
		3	2				

## **APPENDIX E. QUESTIONS ASKED OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS**

- 1) What do you perceive as current shortcomings in the existing UNM core curriculum (or “General Education”) in terms of how well it prepares students to succeed?
  - a) What do you perceive as the existing shortcoming for UNM students in general?
  - b) What do you perceive as the existing shortcomings for your own majors in particular?
    - i) What is missing that would better prepare your majors?
    - ii) Do students take courses required by the core that are irrelevant or create obstacles to your degree programs?
- 2) The credit-hour requirement for General Education will soon be reduced at the state level to a minimum of 30 hours. This minimum will be allowable for any New Mexico institution of higher ed but will not be required. UNM will thus have the option to reduce its own core to 30 credits but will also be free to maintain the current 37 hour structure, if desired.
  - a) What positive impacts would your own department’s students experience from a reduction in GenEd credit-hours at UNM?
  - b) What negative impacts would your own department’s students experience from a reduction in GenEd credit-hours at UNM?
  - c) What impacts would you predict for UNM students as a whole?
  - d) What is the ideal number of required GenEd credit hours at UNM?
- 3) One area of focus in the state-level planning process for GenEd involves the delineation of “essential skills” that could be used to group, define, or assess General Education courses.
  - a) What skills are currently taught in your department’s existing core courses?
  - b) What skills do you consider critical for students who undertake your department’s majors?
  - c) What would be the impact on your department of using essential skills as the primary basis of course assessment?
- 4) Another area of focus in the state-level planning process for GenEd involves “meta-majors,” or groups of courses that could function as a preparatory unit for multiple different majors.
  - a) What kinds of courses adequately prepare students for your majors?

- b) Is there a standard suite of specific courses that you strongly suggest students take in preparation for the major?
  - c) Have you identified any areas of necessary preparation in your field/major that are similar to preparation required in other fields/departments?
- 5) In thinking about the specific curricular structure of your own department's majors, what concerns do you have about how state-level GenEd changes might have impact?
  - a) Do you teach lab or studio GenEd courses? How would you characterize their importance to your major or other department's majors?
  - b) To what extent is your major reliant on courses that must be delivered in a linear sequence vs in a branching or concurrent structure? (Is this intrinsic to the field? Or is it an artifact of the major, which could theoretically be changed?)

## **APPENDIX F. QUESTIONS ASKED OF ASUNM SENATORS**

- What is your experience with the core?
- What has been your experience with advisement?
- How did the core help you in deciding your major?
- How did you select the courses for completing your core?
- What course(s) helped you build your skillset the most?

## **APPENDIX G. DIVERSITY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION TO UNM FS GE TASKFORCE**

(As per conversations at Institute for the Study of “Race” & Social Justice Meeting 11/29/17 In attendance: Drs. Nancy López, Bee Chamcharatsri, Glenabah Martinez, co-chairs from Diversity Council Curriculum, Jamal Martin, Kiran Katira, Greg Cajete; Also commented on by Dr. Irene Vasquez. Draft to be sent to Assoc. Provost Pamela Cheek today 12/6/17)

- 1) Enable Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Studies Faculty (e.g., content and pedagogy experts) to offer courses throughout the core curriculum and to share inclusive pedagogies (structural and financial support is necessary so as to not add additional service burdens);
- 2) Integrate Diversity, equity and inclusion into the General Education (GE) curriculum as a distinguishing feature of UNM;
- 3) Include a skilled researcher and teacher with peer-reviewed expertise in questions of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Social Justice on any leadership team implementing and overseeing the approval of core courses;
- 4) Appoint a Dean from faculty involved in the College for Social Transformation to serve as the Associate Provost/Dean for General Education to insure substantive content knowledge and expertise on equity and inclusion curriculum that centers the lives of marginalized communities;
- 5) Establish and cultivate Communities of Practice for each of the Core Areas led by co-chairs with content and pedagogical expertise in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Experts - A simple model could be to have interdisciplinary teams (e.g., mathematics and physical science co-chair and critical race ethnic studies scholar would co-chair one community of practice; social and behavioral sciences/communication co-chair would be paired with critical race and ethnic studies co-chair; and finally a humanities, fine arts and humanities co-chair could be paired with a critical race and ethnic studies co-chair); any appointments for the the critical race and ethnic studies co-chairs could be peer-reviewed and approved as having primary content and pedagogy expertise in critical race and ethnic studies in terms of their publications, research and teaching by members of the Diversity Council Curriculum Committee and Ethnic Studies Program/Department Chairs at UNM.

DIVERSITY COUNCIL CURRICULUM COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS (approved 12/11/17 meeting)