

COMMON CURRICULUM PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

[Adopted by the General Education Board on 15 July 2013]

II. COMMON CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES

II.A. PREMISE

The premise for these learning outcomes lies in the *Union Education* framework (in which the Common Curriculum is embedded)¹ and the recent study of the Liberal Arts by Professor Mark Roche at the University of Notre Dame. In his book *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?*, Roche identifies three complementary and conjoined purposes of a Liberal Arts education:

- 1) The **practical value** of critical thinking and communication skills learned by studying the Liberal Arts that can be applied beyond college or university education.
- 2) The **intrinsic worth** of the Liberal Arts disciplines and intellectual experiences gained by studying broadly in them.
- 3) The **idealist purpose** of the Liberal Arts in that they encourage, even demand, that one ask big, meaningful questions in the course of becoming someone who lives a reflective life.

II.B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through the Common Curriculum, students will develop the breadth of knowledge and flexibility of mind needed to participate in meaningful academic, community, and global conversations informed by the Liberal Arts. They will do so by achieving these learning outcomes:

- A. **Communicate Critical and Analytical Thinking.** Students will examine, evaluate, and apply problem-solving techniques to evidence, data, artifacts, arguments, and theories according to the diverse analytical traditions of the Liberal Arts; students will communicate clearly and correctly the results of such analysis.
- B. **Make Original Connections or Contributions.** Students will make original connections or contributions to academic, community, or global questions through their writings, theories, designs, objects of art, or other innovative projects.
- C. **Reflect on Their Learning.** Students will demonstrate the ability to link their experiences in the Common Curriculum with their intellectual development as lifelong learners.

II.C. EXPLANATION

The Common Curriculum learning outcomes embody the practical value, intrinsic worth, and idealistic purposes of the Common Curriculum (FYP, SRS, HUL, QMR, SCLB, HUM, SOCS, SET, LCC) as the foundation of a Liberal Arts education at Union.

¹ <http://www.union.edu/academic/index.php>

- **Learning outcome A** emphasizes the need to learn and practice critical thinking in the breadth of disciplines and analytical traditions in the Liberal Arts. Instructors will assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a sample of assignments for the effective communication of the results of the student's critical inquiry.
- **Learning outcome B** emphasizes the importance of deliberately connecting students' coursework with central academic questions in the respective disciplines and analytical traditions of the Liberal Arts, but also in pushing students to engage with questions and endeavors to be found more broadly in academia and in their communities and the wider world. Instructors will assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments for such connections and contributions.
- **Learning outcome C** may be viewed as asking the students to draw together the practical and intrinsic value of the Liberal Arts with its idealistic purposes as they relate to being a life-long learner and, perhaps, asking big questions. Outcome C will be assessed indirectly as explained in section IV.