

COMMON CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

[Submitted by John Cramsie, Director of General Education, 15 August 2017]

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GENERAL SUMMARY

- 1) Faculty completed 53% of requests for individual assessments (IARs), 57% of requests for FPR/FPR-H assessments, and 52% of requests for SRS/SCH-150 assessments.
- 2) Students across departments and programs make good progress in the first year completing the Common Curriculum; they typically complete four to seven CC requirements (pp. 7-8).
- 3) Students in the class of 2020 sample who completed at least one LCC courses chose the language track by 63% compared to 37% for the cultural analysis track (8-9).
- 4) The number of students across department and programs who completed the SCLB and SET requirements improved overall, though the disparity between Center 1 and Center 2 students doing so reflects the long-standing problem of inadequate seats/sections for non-STEM majors (8-9).
- 5) Students continue to prefer Economics and Psychology in completing the SOCS requirement (10-11).
- 6) Students in the 2019 and 2020 samples took a broad range of Arts and Humanities courses in completing the HUL and HUM requirements. English and Modern Languages continue to pull in the largest number of students for HUL and LCC respectively (10-11).
- 7) The connections between CC learning outcomes and the goals and objectives in the 2013 Strategic Plan have been laid out more clearly for faculty. Faculty are strongly encouraged to review this information and make better use of it in course design and assessment. This information is now available on the CC advising guide and under the resources section of the CC website (among other places).
- 8) Faculty evaluated students in learning outcome A across the levels of proficiency in fairly consistent ways in each of the four academic year samples; most students were found to be at a level of proficient or mastery with many fewer at the exceptional level (12).
- 9) There is little direct connection between the CC learning outcomes and one goal of the strategic plan: **D2-G1**, Union students will engage in disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, and will have opportunities to learn at the intersection of fields of study. It might be recalled that the General Faculty voted in 2012 to eliminate the Cluster requirement because of its failure to achieve such a goal (5-6).
- 10) Learning outcomes B (making connections or original contributions) and C (reflective learning) are areas of particular concern. The 2020 sample found the highest numbers to

date of faculty reporting no data/not observed/not applicable at 47.3% and 69.5% respectively. By comparison, almost all FPR/FPR-H and SRS faculty reported on these learning outcomes. These outcomes are directly connected to two important goals of the strategic plan and these findings indicate that the CC is failing to advance them adequately: **D1-G3**, *Union students will develop and enhance their understanding of their own and others' race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other dimensions of our diverse community and cultures*; **F2-G4**, *Union students will develop a sense of themselves as a "whole person," with the skills necessary for the pursuit of life-long learning, global citizenship and effective work with others, through co-curricular programs that complement the academic mission*. The Director of General Education will run two workshops each in winter and spring terms to help faculty with these learning outcomes (12, 21).

- 11) FPR/FPR-H: Between 14 and 22% of students were found to be at a developmental or insufficient level with the main learning outcomes related to critical and analytical thinking (A1-A4; see below pp. 4-5); 21% of Fall term students and 20% of winter term students were found to be at a developmental or insufficient level in the clear and proper expression of ideas. FPR-H students were consistently half or less likely to be evaluated at these levels. The balance between content instruction and learning outcomes continues to be an issue with FPR sections, based on interviews with students in the Class of 2017 sample (14-15).
- 12) SRS: students in SRS continue to struggle with learning outcomes A3 (evaluation of evidence) and A4 (developing an evidence-based argument): from 22% to 26% of students were found to be at a developmental or insufficient level. Winter term students also struggled with the presentation of research findings (A5), with 29% found to be at a developmental or insufficient level. Other than the development of a research topic, Spring SRS students were found to be at a developmental or insufficient level from 19% to 26% across all learning outcomes (A2 to C). Fall SRS are broadly similar to the overall patterns, but only 27% of sections reported. SCH-150 students clustered in the mastery category for all learning outcomes with fewer in proficient, a few at developmental, and none found to be insufficient. Students were not found to be exceptional in any learning outcome except outcome C, which might be accounted for by Honours students completing the course in the first year (15-16).
- 13) We completed the first assessment sample with the class of 2017, including the Student Reflective Response and follow-up interviews. Student responses in both cases were low but nonetheless revealed information relating to inconsistencies between FPR sections and the value of the LCC requirement (17-19).
- 14) FPR/FPR-H assessment has now been incorporated within the responsibilities of the Director of General Education's office; transferred from the Dean of Studies (21-23).
- 15) The Director of General Education and Director of Writing Programs from Fall 2017 have joint responsibility for faculty development for FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150. Each term will feature of faculty institute devoted to faculty development for these programs (22-23).
- 16) The Director of Assessment reviewed the Common Curriculum assessment process in Summer 2017; most recommendations have been put in place as of this date; the Gen Ed Board will be with others in 2017-2018.

The primary goals of Common Curriculum assessment are to 1) support reflective teaching and faculty development, 2) encourage pedagogical and curricular innovation, 3) promote transfer of best practice in the Common Curriculum to instruction in other courses, 4) provide a systematic foundation for the on-going evaluation of specific program requirements with a view to improvement, even replacement. We also use this process to review and amend Common Curriculum assessment itself. Our progress on those goals will become more robust and thorough now that the program is full phased in and we will have year-on-year completed assessment portfolios for each academic class. This year, we assembled and completed assessment of the class of 2017. Additionally, the Director of Assessment (DofA) this year reviewed and reported on the CC assessment program. I discussed the assessment report with the DofA. This annual report reflects changes already made and identifies those to be made in 2017-18 and beyond to respond to the DofA's recommendations.

I. COMMON CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following learning outcomes with instructions and explanations have been revised to meet recommendations in the DofA's review of the CC assessment program. Through the Common Curriculum, Union students will develop the breadth of knowledge and flexibility of mind needed to participate in meaningful conversations relevant to particular disciplines, the Academy, local society, or the global community. They will do so by achieving the following learning outcomes across the breadth of Liberal Arts represented in the Common Curriculum requirements. In doing so, they will advance important foundational and differentiating goals in the Union College Strategic Plan (2013).

- A. **Communicate Critical and Analytical Thinking.** *Students will examine, evaluate, and apply problem-solving techniques to evidence, data, objects, artefacts, arguments, and theories according to the diverse analytical traditions of the Liberal Arts; students will communicate clearly and correctly the results of such analysis.* **Explanation:** this learning outcome emphasizes the need to learn and practice critical thinking in the breadth of disciplines and analytical traditions in the Liberal Arts. **Assessment:** instructors assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments. Learning outcome A encompasses the following learning goals in the Strategic Plan and assessment of it should incorporate those goals: **F1-G6:** Union students will graduate with the skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively, work both independently and collaboratively, have developed information, technological, and visual literacy, be prepared to live and work in a culturally-diverse world, and understand ethical considerations and act upon them; **D2-G2,** Union students will receive a broad and deep education that includes exposure to important and distinctive connections within and across the full spectrum of disciplines, including the arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering; **D2-G3,** Union students will learn through a combination of theory and practice, using both critical thinking and expertise.
- B. **Make Connections or Original Contributions.** *Through their writings, theories, problems, designs, objects of art, and other projects students will make connections or*

original contributions to questions and concerns relevant to a particular discipline, multiple disciplines, the Academy, local society, or the global community. **Explanation:** this learning outcome emphasizes the importance of deliberately using students' coursework to engage issues, debates, schools of thought, and the like relevant to particular disciplines as well as the Academy, local society, or the global community. **Assessment:** instructors assess student learning in this outcome by evaluating a representative sample of assignments. Learning outcome B encompasses the following learning goals in the Strategic Plan and assessment of it should incorporate those goals: **F1-G3**, Union students will develop an attitude of inquiry: they will ask questions that matter, and develop the capacity to engage complex challenges with skill, creativity, and confidence; **D2-G1**, Union students will engage in disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, and will have opportunities to learn at the intersection of fields of study; **D2-G4**, Union students will develop a diverse set of skills that can be applied across a spectrum of disciplines and future careers; also relevant components of goal **D2-G2**.

- 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, including possible career and life paths.* **Explanation:** this learning outcome may be viewed as asking the students to draw together the practical, intrinsic, and idealistic value of the Liberal Arts as they relate to being a life-long learner and reflecting on a meaningful life. **Assessment:** the Gen Ed Board assesses learning outcome C indirectly through a student reflective essay and student interview; instructors provide direct assessment of this learning outcome **if** it is observed in their classes. Learning outcome C encompasses the following learning goals in the Strategic Plan and assessment of it should incorporate those goals: **F1-G2**, Union students will discover lifelong intellectual interests and strive to excel in them; **F2-G4**, Union students will develop a sense of themselves as a "whole person," with the skills necessary for the pursuit of life-long learning, global citizenship and effective work with others, through co-curricular programs that complement the academic mission; also relevant components of goal **D2-G4**.

ADDITIONAL FYP/FYP-H LEARNING OUTCOMES for Outcome A

First-Year Preceptorial (FYP) and Honors Preceptorial (FYP-H) have more specific learning outcomes under Learning Outcome A, as follows:

A1. DISCUSS IDEAS: critically and respectfully engages in dialogue with others about ideas in texts as well as those expressed in class.

A2. READ TEXTS CRITICALLY: shows an understanding of/ability to evaluate complex and sophisticated ideas from multiple and diverse perspectives.

A3. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS:

A3a. Supports a focused thesis, including analysis of evidence to support conclusions.

A3b. Organizes information logically and clearly in essays that guide readers through the text

A3c. Expresses ideas clearly and appropriately, with few, if any, grammar, usage, and spelling errors

A3d. Integrates evidence into one's own argument (e.g., uses quotations appropriately, correct citation, etc.).

A4. INCORPORATE REVISION into the writing process as a means of improving critical thinking and the expression of ideas.

ADDITIONAL SRS/SCH-150 LEARNING OUTCOMES for Outcome A

The Sophomore Research Seminar (SRS) and Scholars Research Seminar (SCH-150) have more specific learning outcomes under Learning Outcome A, as follows:

A1. DEVELOP A RESEARCH TOPIC: Formulate a clear, focused research question or thesis appropriate to the topic of inquiry.

A2. FIND EVIDENCE: Identify and locate evidence appropriate for examining a research question or thesis.

A3. EVALUATE EVIDENCE: Critically and ethically analyze evidence obtained for examination of a research question or thesis.

A4. DEVELOP AN EVIDENCE-BASED ARGUMENT: Develop and organize a logical argument grounded in the analysis of evidence that supports or refutes a research question or thesis.

A5. PRESENT RESEARCH FINDINGS: Present a logical analytical argument supported by evidence in an appropriate written form without errors of grammar, usage, and spelling.

A6. PRACTICE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CITATION: Incorporate and cite evidence in a manner that meets the professional standards of the discipline most appropriate for the topic of inquiry.

ASSESSMENT EVALUATION RUBRIC

Faculty assess all CC learning outcomes according to this standard rubric of proficiencies.

- **Exceptional:** Demonstrates complete learning of the outcome with original and creative contributions; learning exceeds the highest standards for the level and difficulty of the course.
- **Mastery:** Demonstrates complete learning of the outcome without mistakes or flaws; learning meets the highest standards for the level and difficulty of the course.
- **Proficient:** Demonstrates complete or nearly complete learning of the outcome without mistakes or flaws; learning meets the acceptable standard for the level and difficulty of the course.
- **Developmental:** Demonstrates incomplete learning of the outcome and features some minor mistakes and flaws; learning meets the acceptable standard for the level and difficulty of the course.
- **Insufficient:** Demonstrates little or no learning of the outcomes and features frequent, sometimes major mistakes and flaws; learning is below the acceptable standard for the level and difficulty of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES and THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The content and distribution requirements (i.e. overall structure) of the Common Curriculum advances students' breadth of knowledge per goal F1-G5 in the Strategic Plan, that Union students will graduate with deep and broad knowledge; deep knowledge is advanced by majors and minors. There are three goals in the Union College Strategic Plan that general education can, should, and sometimes does contribute to, but which are not well integrated into the program as it exists or its learning outcomes. They are: **D2-G1**, Union students will engage in disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, and will have opportunities to learn at the

intersection of fields of study; **D1-G3**, Union students will develop and enhance their understanding of their own and others' race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other dimensions of our diverse community and cultures; **F2-G4**, Union students will develop a sense of themselves as a "whole person," with the skills necessary for the pursuit of life-long learning, global citizenship and effective work with others, through co-curricular programs that complement the academic mission. The Common Curriculum predates both strategic plans by some years. The program from its inception struggled to build into it true interdisciplinarity per D2-G1 and the deliberateness of students engaging in interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary work in the CC can be highly variable. This is a challenge that any future general education program should address and resolve; otherwise, the academic requirements of the college should be evaluated and revised to ensure all students meet this goal, for example, by requiring an interdisciplinary minor for any student who does not major in a program with strong interdisciplinary content. Finally, the weak, uncertain focus on goals D1-G3 and F2-G4 is the most significant disconnect between general education and the college's strategic priorities. Particularly because of the emphasis they place on understanding cultural complexity and empowered global citizenship, both of such critical importance for our students and our mission as an institution contributing to a sustainable and just future, these goals must have a prominent and essential place in any future general education program at the college.

II. COMMON CURRICULUM PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

General Profile of Samples by Academic Concentration. The class of 2017 sample was made up of students from across the campus. For the class of 2018, the Gen Ed Board decided to create a sample of just students who entered as declared majors in Center 2, Sciences and Engineering. For the class of 2019, the Gen Ed board decided to create a sample of just students who entered as declared majors in Center 1, Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. We hoped with these focussed samples to evaluate and compare the experiences of students in the Common Curriculum from respective centers, to look for ‘divides’ between C.P. Snow’s ‘two cultures’ as well as commonalities and shared experiences. We returned to a general sample of students across the campus for the class of 2020.

Faculty Response Rate to IAR Requests. We continue to seek improvements in the response rate from faculty, the percentage of faculty who receive an assessment request that actually submit and IAR; *see Table CC1.*

2013-2014 (pilot year)	34%
2014-2015	51%
2015-2016	45%
2016-2017	53%

We consider a minimum response rate for a viable sample to be 35%, though undesirable. We want to obtain a minimum response rate per annum of 50% with a goal of 70% as the standard. To achieve better response rates, we improved our notification system to faculty. We send department chairs/assessment coordinators an email with the assessment assignments for their colleagues. Many faculty (rightly) view assessment as another ‘unfunded mandate’ imposed on them. The Common Curriculum assessment suffers from this association. We have worked hard to make the process ‘cost-effective’ and useful, but it still represents a genuine demand on faculty time. We hope the response rate will rise as we improve how we close the loop through ‘faculty development’ initiatives and demonstrate how the findings lead to program improvements. For now, we have probably reached a point when senior administrative support (including the Director of Assessment) is needed.

Timely Completion of Requirements. We found, overall, students in the all three samples made good progress toward completion of the program in the first year. *See Table CC2.*

Number of CC courses completed	Class of 2017 (General)	Class of 2018 (Center 2)	Class of 2019 (Center 1)	Class of 2020 (General)
1	0	0	0	0
2	3.8%	0	0	0

3	7.7%	0	15%	0
4	11.5%	14%	11%	9%
5	26.9%	19%	30%	33%
6	26.9%	43%	26%	28%
7	19.2%	19%	11%	28%
8	3.8%	5%	4%	2%
9	0	0	3%	0

On an ordinary schedule, students complete nine courses per academic year. All students complete FPR/FPR-H in the first year and Scholars complete the SCH-150 (Honours SRS). Students in Center 2 typically also complete courses that fulfil the SCLB, SET, and QMR requirements in the first year. For students in both centers, we define making good progress in the first year as completing between 4 and 6 courses, especially as students seek out general education requirements as part of the academic advising process or explore their interests across program upon arrival at college.

Common Curriculum Requirement	Class of 2017 (General)	Class of 2018 (Center 2)	Class of 2019 (Center 1)	Class of 2020 (General)
FYP/FYP-H	100%	100%	100%	100%
SRS/SCH-150	15% (SCH-150)	14% (SCH-150)	19% (SCH-150)	5% (SCH-150)
Literature (HUL)	62%	57%	37%	60%
Arts and Humanities (HUM)	58%	38%	78%	74%
Social Sciences (SOCS)	77%	62%	78%	81%
Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning (QMR)	50%	86%	52%	63%
Natural Sciences with Lab (SCLB)	42%	67%	26%	53%
Science, Engineering, Technology (SET)	54%	86%	33%	65%
Languages and Cultures (Course 1/2)	NA	45%	74%	56%
Languages and Cultures (Course 2/2)	NA	23%	44%	19%
LCC – Students on Languages Track ¹	38%	22%	28%	35% / 63%
LCC – Students on Cultures Track	46%	23%	46%	21% / 37%
LCC – Students on Study Abroad Track	0	0	0	0

¹ Total percentage of students on Languages Track and Cultures Tracks should equal percentage of LCC Course 1/2. The first percentage records the percentage out of the whole sample. The second percentage records the percentage out of the students who completed at least one LCC course in 2017-2018.

Students in the 2020 sample made better progress on all requirements save HUL compared to the 2017 sample. This may reflect a pattern from the 2019 sample of pursuing HUM courses more readily than HUL. Both the 2019 and 2020 results also likely reflect the completion the comprehensive CC designation review in 2016; a number of Arts and Humanities courses that carried HUL designation were, upon review, stripped of that designation and coded as HUM only.

The improvement in completion of SCLB and SET in the 2020 sample was most welcome, though there is no evidence that the general disparity between Center 1 and Center 2 has changed significantly from the pattern in the 2018 and 2019 samples. Better advising is beginning to have an effect here as is improved enrolment management by the Director of Advising, but the long-standing problem of inadequate seats/sections for non-science majors remains. As long as it does, we will continue to fail Center 1 students by denying more of them the opportunity engage these subjects in their first two years. Additionally, it is difficult to predict the impact of the disruptions in course offerings that may be associated with the rebuild of the Science and Engineering complex beginning in 2017.

Finally, the college is set to undertake an overhaul of its general education program. There is a strong likelihood that a language requirement will become part such an overhaul. The distribution of 2020 students undertaking and completing the LCC requirement favors the Languages track: 63% of those completing one or more LCC courses did so in the language track, compared to 37% in the Cultural Analysis track. The overall percentages for the entire sample represent an encouraging trend for languages from the previous three samples. If that trend continues, it will lay a stronger foundation a foreign language requirement in a new general education program.

Breadth in the Common Curriculum. As DofGE, I discussed findings in the Mechanical Engineering ABET accreditation report with Brad Bruno in Mechanical Engineering. ABET faulted ME in its review of Performance Criterion 4 under SO (h) concerning the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and social context: 25.8% of students surveyed in the senior exit survey were either neutral or disagreed that ‘The General Education Curriculum at Union was effective in providing me with a broad education.’ I brought together assessment information relevant to this concern and sent it to Mechanical Engineering in 18 February 2016. It is worth expanding the perspective to consider the breadth of course selections among students in all the samples. Tables CC4a, CC4b, CC4c provide the first year distributions for the samples of 2018, 2019, and 2020. Beginning with the 2018 sample, the annual report will include a comprehensive report on distribution of course selection for all students in the sample, not just first year distributions.

Table CC4a. Number of courses completed among departments for selected CC requirements after two years for the Class of 2018 (Center 2)

Requirement	HUL	HUM	SOCS	Languages and Cultures	
				LCC 1	LCC 2
Classics	1	2			1
English	15	2			1
Modern Languages	2	4		6	7

Music					
Philosophy		3			
Religious Studies		1			
Visual Arts		1		1	
Anthropology				4	1
Economics			2		
Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSW)					
History			2	3	
Political Science			3		
Psychology			7		
Sociology			3		1
Total Courses	18	13	17	14	11
Students in Sample	22	22	22	22	22

Table CC4b. Number of courses completed among departments for selected CC requirements after two years for the Class of 2019 (Center 1)

Requirement	HUL	HUM	SOCS	Languages and Cultures	
Department				LCC 1	LCC 2
Classics		1		5	2
English	9				
Modern Languages	1	3		7	6
Music		1			
Philosophy		7			
Religious Studies		2			1
Visual Arts		8			
Anthropology			1	6	2
Economics			6		
Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSW)			2		
History			3	1	1
Political Science			4		
Psychology			2		
Sociology			4		
Total Courses	10	22	22	19	12
Students in Sample	27	27	27	27	27

Table CC4c. Number of courses completed among departments for selected CC requirements after one year for the Class of 2020 (General)

Requirement	HUL	HUM	SOCS	Languages and Cultures	
Department				LCC 1	LCC 2
Art History				1	
Classics	7	6		2	2
English	14	1			

Modern Languages	1	6		14	5
Music		2			
Philosophy		6			
Religious Studies	2	3			1
Theatre Arts	1	5		1	
Visual Arts	1	3			
Africana Studies			1		
Anthropology			1	3	
Economics			6		
Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSW)			2		
History			10	3	1
Political Science			4		
Psychology			9		
Sociology			2		
Total Courses	26	32	35	24	8
Students in Sample	43	43	43	43	43

We should continue monitor advising and course planning that encourage the concentration of STEM students in basic introductory courses. Twelve of the fifteen 2018 students who completed their HUL with an introductory English course did so in their first year: 55% of students in the sample completed the HUL requirement in the first year in this way. By contrast, the nine 2019 students who completed their HUL requirement similarly represented only one-third of the sample; many more of those students chose to forgo completing HUL with an introductory English course in the first year and may well seek out other HUL options in their second and third years, perhaps in Classics (enrolments in whose courses are not well-represented in the 2018 sample) or Modern Languages. Those 2019 students also enrolled in more Philosophy and Visual Arts courses than their 2018 counterparts. They also distributed themselves across the social sciences more broadly; over-representation in Economics no doubt reflects broader national trends nation-wide in favour of lucrative business training. Only two of twenty-two students in the 2019 sample who completed their SOCS did so with PSY 100. Seven of the seventeen students in the 2018 sample who completed their SOCS did so with PSY 100. Especially given the recent increase in STEM rhetoric from the Board of Trustees and senior administration, we would do well to encourage all students to seek out more diverse intellectual experiences and global perspectives in their CC courses and avoid a check-box mentality; this might be particularly valuable or important for Center 2 (STEM) students.

The 2020 sample reveals a couple of patterns worth noting. First, the concentration of SOCS courses in Economics and Psychology continued, with the addition of History courses. Second, Modern Languages and English continue to take the highest number of enrolments in LCC and HUL respectively. Finally, the 2020 sample reveals an increased breadth of distributions among the Arts and Humanities departments as a whole compared to either the 2018 (Center 2) or 2019 (Center 1) samples. Again, we would hope to see students continue to spread themselves more widely in the Arts and Humanities programs, and programs more generally.

Student Proficiencies in Learning Outcomes. We have aggregate proficiency data for all three learning outcomes now that the process has been underway for two years. See Table CC5.

Table CC5. Proficiency Levels across Learning Outcomes A, B, C in Year One (% of students at the assigned proficiency level in individual assessment reports/IARs)						
Proficiency Level / Sample Year	Learning Outcome A Critical and Analytical Thinking		Learning Outcome B Making Connections		Learning Outcome C Reflective Learning	
	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)	2017 (General)	2018 (Center 2)
Exceptional	5.1%	4.7%	10.2%	6.3%	8.5%	7.8%
Mastery	28.8%	32.9%	20.3%	28.0%	15.3%	12.5%
Proficient	44.1%	26.6%	30.5%	31.3%	18.6%	25.0%
Developmental	20.3%	32.8%	13.6%	21.9%	6.7%	15.6%
Insufficient	1.7%	3.1%	0	10.9%	1.7%	0
NA/NO/ND	0	0	25.4%	1.6%	49.2%	39.1%
Proficiency Level / Sample Year	2019 (Center 1)	2020 (General)	2019 (Center 1)	2020 (General)	2019 (Center 1)	2020 (General)
Exceptional	14.3%	10.6%	15.9%	9.1%	11.1%	7.6%
Mastery	31.7%	35.2%	28.6%	14.5%	17.6%	4.6%
Proficient	33.4%	37.5%	19.0%	20.6%	6.3%	12.9%
Developmental	20.6%	14.5%	12.7%	7.5%	6.3%	5.4%
Insufficient	0	2.2%	0	1.0%	0	0
NA/NO/ND	0	0	23.8%	47.3%	58.7%	69.5%

NA/NO/ND = Not Applicable / Not Observed / No Data

Learning outcomes B and C are renewed areas for concern. We have the worst results to date for faculty reporting NA/NO/ND for students in the 2020 sample. We particularly want to improve the coverage of learning outcome B as it directly addresses linking student learning in CC courses to broader social and global issues/questions/challenges – a vital step for helping the CC assist the college in achieving its strategic goals for global learning and action. The continued weakness of learning outcome B is the best evidence in support of overhauling general education at Union College to emphasize integrated global learning and the deliberate focus on themes of wider importance for our students' intellectual and personal development into effective global citizens. Results for FPR/FPR-H and SRS (below) are significantly better and suggest that these kind of foundation courses, especially in the first year, can and should play an important role in achieving these learning goals in a new general education program.

Table CC5. Proficiency Levels across Learning Outcomes A, B, C (% of students at the assigned proficiency level in individual assessment reports (IARs))						
Proficiency Level /	Learning Outcome A Critical and Analytical Thinking		Learning Outcome B Making Connections		Learning Outcome C Reflective Learning	
	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017

Sample Year	(Year 1)	(Years 2-4)	(Year 1)	(Years 2-4)	(Year 1)	(Years 2-4)
Exceptional	5.1%	4.0%	10.2%	4.0%	8.5%	8.0%
Mastery	28.8%	28.0%	20.3%	32.0%	15.3%	16.0%
Proficient	44.1%	48.0%	30.5%	28.0%	18.6%	20.0%
Developmental	20.3%	16.0%	13.6%	16.0%	6.7%	12.0%
Insufficient	1.7%	4.0%	0	0	1.7%	4.0%
NA/NO/ND	0	0	25.4%	20.0%	49.2%	40.0%

The 2017 sample is our first complete student sample. We are hesitant to draw too many particular conclusions from the raw data for several reasons. First, it is the pilot sample through which faculty learned and implemented the new assessment process for the first time; the DofGE and Gen Ed Board also revised and improved the process and the online platform throughout the first year of the sample. Second, the first year of the sample witnessed the worst faculty response rate, depriving us of assessments across all students and CC requirements. Finally, despite the overall improvements in faculty reporting found in table CC1, the reporting for years two, three, and four of the 2017 sample did not improve significantly over the first year. For these reasons it is very difficult to trust evidence of either static proficiency in learning outcomes or improvements. With fuller data for the 2018 sample, we will be able to analyze broader patterns like these at the level of individual students. The report for the 2018 sample will include analysis of this kind.

III. COMMON CURRICULUM SPECIAL ASSESSMENT: FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150

Because of the importance of these foundational courses in the CC, instructors complete both whole class and individual student assessments of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150. Instructors complete and submit an individual assessment report for students in their sections who are part of the academic year assessment sample. Instructors also complete and submit a whole class assessment of all the students in their individual sections. Instructors complete the additional outcomes for learning outcome A listed above for their respective courses; they complete the same assessment of learning outcomes B and C as for other courses that fulfil CC requirements.

FPR/FPR-H Assessment Results

Table CC6a. Aggregate FPR Assessment Results Fall 2016 (% of all students with 56% of sections reporting)							
Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO	
Learning Outcome							
A1. Discuss Ideas	18	31	33	13	4	1	
A2. Read Texts Critically	15	33	36	14	1	1	
A3a. Focused Thesis with Evidence	18	32	34	13	2	1	
A3b. Logical Organization	14	35	36	12	2	1	
A3c. Clear and Proper Expression of Ideas	15	26	38	18	3	1	
A3d. Integrates Evidence	20	24	38	16	1	1	
A4. Incorporates Revision	21	36	32	7	1	3	
B. Connections or Contributions	20	28	28	9	1	14	
C. Reflective Learning	15	21	31	10	0	24	
Table CC6b. Aggregate FPR Assessment Results Winter 2017 (% of all students with 56% of sections reporting)							
Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO	
Learning Outcome							
A1. Discuss Ideas	21	39	23	12	4	0	
A2. Read Texts Critically	20	35	31	10	4	0	
A3a. Focused Thesis with Evidence	19	34	31	12	4	0	
A3b. Logical Organization	19	37	29	14	2	0	
A3c. Clear and Proper Expression of Ideas	19	31	31	19	1	0	
A3d. Integrates Evidence	16	31	31	16	6	0	
A4. Incorporates Revision	19	35	26	14	6	0	
B. Connections or Contributions	20	36	30	12	2	0	
C. Reflective Learning	20	31	33	14	5	1	

Table CC6c. Aggregate FPR-H Assessment Results 2016-2017 (% of all students with 60% of sections reporting)

Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO
Learning Outcome						
A1. Discuss Ideas	28	28	31	14	0	0
A2. Read Texts Critically	19	47	25	8	0	0
A3a. Focused Thesis with Evidence	22	39	28	8	3	0
A3b. Logical Organization	25	33	33	8	0	0
A3c. Clear and Proper Expression of Ideas	19	33	36	8	3	0
A3d. Integrates Evidence	22	28	44	6	0	0
A4. Incorporates Revision	28	42	28	3	0	0
B. Connections or Contributions	17	44	39	0	0	0
C. Reflective Learning	28	31	42	0	0	0

SRS/SCH-150 Assessment Results**Table CC7a. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Fall 2016 (% of all students with 27% of sections reporting)**

Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO
Learning Outcome						
A1. Develop a Research Topic	20	41	29	6	4	0
A2. Find Evidence	24	39	29	4	4	0
A3. Evaluate Evidence	18	37	27	14	4	0
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	20	39	24	12	4	0
A5. Present Research Findings	16	41	39	4	0	0
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	18	49	29	4	0	0
B. Connections or Contributions	10	35	43	6	4	2
C. Reflective Learning	8	33	45	8	4	2

Table CC7b. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Winter 2017 (% of all students with 90% of sections reporting)

Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO
Learning Outcome						
A1. Develop a Research Topic	4	38	43	13	2	1

A2. Find Evidence	6	28	50	13	1	1
A3. Evaluate Evidence	5	26	47	19	1	2
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	4	28	45	20	1	2
A5. Present Research Findings	3	29	35	28	1	3
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	1	34	43	13	6	3
B. Connections or Contributions	2	29	42	19	1	17
C. Reflective Learning	4	23	41	9	0	23

Table CC7c. Aggregate SRS Assessment Results Spring 2017 (% of all students with 40% of sections reporting)

Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient / NO = Not Observed	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF	NO
Learning Outcome						
A1. Develop a Research Topic	19	32	39	8	2	0
A2. Find Evidence	3	36	36	19	7	0
A3. Evaluate Evidence	7	27	41	20	5	0
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	7	31	41	17	5	0
A5. Present Research Findings	17	25	36	20	2	0
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	10	29	42	14	5	0
B. Connections or Contributions	8	31	37	20	3	0
C. Reflective Learning	8	31	39	19	3	0

Table CC7d. Aggregate SCH-150 Assessment Results 2016-2017 (% of all students with 20% of sections reporting)

Proficiency Level EXC =Exceptional / MST = Mastery / PRF = Proficient / DEV = Developmental / INSF = Insufficient	EXC	MST	PRF	DEV	INSF
Learning Outcome					
A1. Develop a Research Topic	0	75	17	8	0
A2. Find Evidence	0	67	25	8	0
A3. Evaluate Evidence	0	58	33	8	0
A4. Develop and Evidence-based Argument	0	67	25	8	0
A5. Present Research Findings	0	83	8	8	0
A6. Practice Professional Standards of Citation	0	83	17	0	0
B. Connections or Contributions	0	92	0	8	0
C. Reflective Learning	9	83	0	8	0

IV. STUDENT REFLECTIVE RESPONSES and INTERVIEWS: CLASS of 2017

Seniors in the 2017 assessment sample had the opportunity to complete the Student Reflective Response (SRR) below.

STUDENT REFLECTIVE RESPONSE

THE COMMON CURRICULUM...

First-Year/Honors Preceptorial engages you in the exploration of ideas and diverse perspectives through critical reading, thinking, and writing.

Sophomore/Scholars Research Seminar ensures you have an early hands-on experience thinking and working as an academic researcher devoted to a term-length project.

Arts and Humanities enables you to find yourself and your voice in creative expression and the exploration of works of the imagination.

Literature expands the moral imagination needed to understand yourself and your fellow human beings through literary analysis, interpretation, and reflection.

Social Sciences confront you with the complexity and challenges of our world by analyzing the societies we create.

Natural Sciences (with Lab) changes the way you think about the natural world when you understand the scientific method and put it to work.

Science, Engineering, and Technology introduces you to Union's unique commitment to teaching Science and Engineering as Liberal Arts and examining their impact on our humanity.

Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning equips you with unique insights and skills necessary to solve complex problems.

Language and Culture Courses empower you as a citizen of a global community to contribute across cultural boundaries and shape our shared future.

OUR BIG PICTURE GOALS...

The Common Curriculum aims to challenge your intellect, open your mind to new perspectives and ways of thinking, teach academic skills, and prepare you to engage life beyond Union:

- The diverse subjects and disciplines examined in the Common Curriculum help you appreciate **the breadth and complexity of human knowledge** for its own sake.
- The Common Curriculum **trains your mind to be flexible and adaptable** by engaging ideas and subjects beyond just your major or a focus on job/career-preparation.
- Common Curriculum courses **teach practical skills** in critical thinking, the construction of evidence-based analyses and arguments, and the ability to communicate effectively in writing and in person.
- The Liberal Arts explored in the Common Curriculum encourage you to **ask big questions about humanity, about life, ethics, and meaning.**

YOUR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS...

Thinking about the last three years at Union, how have your experiences in the Common Curriculum made a positive impact on your learning?

If you could ADD one thing that would make general education at Union College truly unique and meaningful, what would that be?

Three students completed the SRR; students in the sample received multiple requests to complete the SRR that included the invitation to the Spring reception and notification that they would receive a gift in acknowledgement of their contribution and participation. We will work to improve the response rate with the Class of 2018.

Student Responses to Question 1. *Thinking about the last three years at Union, how have your experiences in the Common Curriculum made a positive impact on your learning?*

Student 1: The Common Curriculum here at Union has given me the opportunity to explore other areas of study beyond my major that I would not have necessarily taken the initiative to look at if the Common Curriculum was not in place. I got to take a few Literature classes that I really enjoyed but would not have considered taking if it weren't for the Common Curriculum. I was also able to find my second major through the Common Curriculum Language and Culture Courses. If The Common Curriculum did not exist I would have missed out on so many opportunities to explore topics that I might find interesting.

Student 2: I have been able to explore educational topics I would not have naturally

Student 3: The Preceptorial and the SRS were both foundational courses that elevated my writing skills and introduced me to professors outside of my immediate field that I went on to build relationships with. I believe that those two courses are necessary for students of Union College, and that they are the strongest part of our Common Curriculum.

Student Responses to Question 2. *If you could ADD one thing that would make general education at Union College truly unique and meaningful, what would that be?*

Student 1: As a math major I have always struggled to comprehend why people do not like math. Furthermore, as a math major, I had difficulty finding WAC credits that I could take while still keeping on pace with both of my majors (math and French). If I could add one thing I would add an additional QMR credit along the lines of a life skills class like personal finance (keeping on budget, paying taxes, etc) I think many people struggle with these kinds of things post grad but if everyone had to take a class in the subject I think that would be really successful. But that is a far-fetched dream of mine because I know not many people appreciate math the way that I do. Beyond that I would make it a bit easier for people to get WAC credits. I know science classes have labs that count towards WAC credits. I was and still am frustrated by the fact that I have written dozens of pages of proofs for all of my math classes over the last three years but only got a WAC credit for one of them.

Student 2: Mandatory African American History Class

Student 3: I would say restructuring our "Linguistic and Cultural Competency" requirement. Sixty percent of Union students study abroad, and that alone fulfills the LCC requirement, which means that the majority of Union's students do not need to take an arts or humanities course on Union's campus. I think that this is incredibly problematic seeing as we are a liberal arts institution, and I think that the departments in the arts and humanities suffer as a result of this broad requirement.

The Gen Ed Board and the Director of Assessment met with two students in the sample who completed the SRR to discuss their experiences in the Common Curriculum. One student is a guide in Admissions who regularly met with prospective students and parents and gave them a tour of the campus. This revealed several interesting points for further attention. First,

Admissions staff write the information about the Common Curriculum provided to student guides without any communication with the DofGE, faculty, or the Gen Ed Board. I will follow up with Admissions about how they craft their information for prospective students. Prospective students frequently ask about whether or not Union has a language requirement and our Math requirements. Typically these questions are not asked with a positive attitude about either. Parents are more receptive to how the CC and LCC in particular (including the language track) push students outside their comfort zones than the students. One wonders if this is consistent among prospective students; if so, how is Admissions failing to interest students who have a positive view of languages and a broad liberal arts education? This student also spoke positively about the SRS, especially the opportunity to complete the term-length research project and the presentation skills learned. This student also would like to have seen more team-taught thematic courses as part of CC requirements in place of checking the box with any course in a department or division.

One student who was an Engineer echoed the common frustration that Engineers or students in high structured programs in the STEM fields miss out on opportunities for a broader education and the chances to take courses that really interest them because of conflicts with major requirements. This student also talked about the importance of study abroad for Engineers as a corrective to this.

Both students discussed FYP. One student stated that the student's FYP did not focus much on teaching foundational skills related to critical reading, writing, and speaking. It focused primarily on content. By contrast, the other student reported that the student's FYP focused on teaching argumentation through several in-class workshops. According to this student, FYP focused on teaching skills by way of engagement with the course content. This signals another common issue with FYP, the lack of consistency across sections in teaching the foundational learning outcomes in critical reading, thinking, discussion, and argumentation in writing. The DofGE and Director of Writing Programs, who now share joint responsibility for FYP (and SRS) faculty development (see below), will make this a priority in the Fall 2017 workshops and those held throughout the rest of the 2017-18 academic year.

V. CLOSING THE LOOP

The primary goals of Common Curriculum assessment are:

- A. to support reflective teaching and faculty development
- B. to encourage pedagogical and curricular innovation
- C. to promote transfer of best practice in the Common Curriculum to instruction in other courses
- D. to provide a systematic foundation for the on-going evaluation of specific program requirements with a view to improvement, even replacement.

The Gen Ed Board continues to focus overwhelmingly on goals one through three. We see the focus on real classrooms, teaching, and student learning as the essential value of assessment for the program. This is how we close the loop with assessment:

- 1) The questions on the IAR are designed so that faculty scrutinize the pedagogical foundation of assignments with learning outcomes directly in mind. We see evidence that faculty are doing so in the narrative portion of the IARs and, since 2014, in new course proposals, where faculty are expected to explain how their courses will address CC learning outcomes.
- 2) Faculty currently have direct access to Common Curriculum assessment at three points: a) enrolment in the Nexus course *Teaching the Common Curriculum* explained below; b) the program website that contains all the relevant assessment documents and annual reports; c) the college assessment website. For 2017-2018, the DofGE will add an executive summary of approximately 1-2 pages to make the assessment findings user-friendly.
- 3) Each faculty member is enrolled in *Teaching the Common Curriculum* as a primary support. The folder for Common Curriculum Assessment includes a) practical information, b) pedagogical guides for teaching and evaluating learning outcome A, c) samples of IARs organized by CC requirements, and d) sample IARs designed highlight great teaching in the CC. This folder assists faculty in completing the IAR and in studying teaching and learning in colleagues' classes. We would like the course will evolve to include a dedicated resource folder for each of CC requirement; it currently includes materials for the SRS/SCH-150 faculty workshops, syllabi, and assignments. The initiative for creating these resources currently comes from the DofGE and Gen Ed Board, but much more faculty input will be encouraged.
- 4) The annual assessment report should be a tool for departments and programs to align their courses to the CC learning outcomes and evaluate their success in doing so. We will also follow-up directly with chairs and directors whose departments and programs seem most affected by our annual assessment and recommendations.
- 5) The annual assessment report provides guidance for the Gen Ed Board in the course approval process. More simply put, it gives the board a basis from which to look for strengths and weaknesses in courses proposed for Common Curriculum credit based on best practice and areas of concern. The board now gives faculty better, more specific guidance on revision and resubmission of courses, supported by the resources available in TCC.
- 6) From 2015 through 2017, the Gen Ed Board completed a comprehensive review of courses carrying CC designations and used assessment data to guide its work.
- 7) The DofGE has responded to the DofA's review of the CC assessment process with the following steps: a) the program learning outcomes are now more readily displayed and accessible on the program website; b) the program learning outcomes have been incorporated into the advising worksheet and program policies online; the annual

assessment report has integrated reasonable benchmarks in appropriate instances (e.g. faculty assessment response rate, timely completion of CC requirements); revision of the course proposal form to require that all syllabi submitted include CC learning outcomes when they apply for CC credit.

- 8) The DofGE will annually convene a set of assessment workshops, typically two per term following this pattern:

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS 2018		
TERM	Workshop 1 Theme: Learning Outcome	Workshop 2 Theme: Best Practice
	DofGE will facilitate faculty discussion of assessment data for specified learning outcomes, student progress across CC requirement and over time, strategies for improving student outcomes, and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes for the college's mission. Workshop in week 1 or 2.	DofGE will recruit and work with faculty to lead workshops and conduct teaching demonstrations that emphasize pedagogical choices, lesson design, assignment design, and innovative teaching focused on one or two related CC requirements. Workshop in week 8 or 9.
FALL*	A. Critical and Analytical Thinking	Literature (HUL) – for Fall 2018
WINTER	B. Connections or Original Contributions	Languages and Cultures (LCC) – to explore the one CC requirement that most explicitly addresses the goals in the Strategic Plan (D1-G3, F2-G4) that are not well represented in the program as a whole
SPRING	C. Reflective Learning	Sustainability and Social Justice – to explore topics that more directly engage outcomes B and C and are of interest with a view to creating a new general education program.
* Due to the time and scheduling constraints involved with implementing this new set of workshops, there will be no Fall 2017 workshop on learning outcome A or best practice. Those will occur in Fall noted here.		

FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 Faculty and Program Development. As of 1 September 2017, the DofGE and the Director of Writing Programs (DofWP), with the Gen Ed Board and Writing Board respectively, share joint responsibility for faculty and program development concerning FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150, including assessment. Note that under the current faculty constitution, the DofWP sits on the Gen Ed Board ex officio but with full input on the program.

Work Plan: Assessment. All CC assessment is collected and stored electronically via the WebApps platform. The Gen Ed Board, DofGE, and Kathy Basirico administer, aggregate, and review information for all parts of the CC assessment. DofWP will take the lead in reviewing FPR/FPR-H assessment with the DofGE and Gen Ed Board and prepare the appropriate section of the annual report at the beginning of spring term (no FPR/FPR-H sections are taught in spring term and academic year assessment is completed with the end of winter term). DofGE will take the lead in reviewing SRS/SCH-150 assessment with the DofWP and Gen Ed Board and prepare the appropriate section of the annual report for submission at the start of term.

Work Plan: Faculty Development. The DofWP (working with the Writing Board) will take the lead responsibility for faculty development for FPR/FPR-H and work jointly with DofGE on SRS/SCH-150 faculty development (and other CC faculty development as needful or desired). In particular, DofWP and DofGE jointly plan for and carry out a faculty institute each term. Faculty institutes will occur over consecutive weeks at a common hour, feature a common theme, and provide focussed instruction and training that integrates FPR/FPR-H with SRS/SCH-150 faculty and provide course specific workshops for each individually. Faculty institutes are open to all faculty and faculty teaching in either core course are strongly encouraged to attend all workshops. The DofWP and DofGE take the lead in preparing materials in advance of faculty institutes and producing a summary update of each institute/session for Nexus or/and program websites. The year-long schedule will typically follow this pattern:

TERM	FPR/FPR-H	SRS/SCH-150
FALL	<i>Theme: Course Design and Improvement</i>	
	Workshops focusing on mentoring and troubleshooting. Workshops in weeks 3, 5, 7 (alternating with SRS/SCH-150)	Workshops focusing on training new faculty and supporting faculty teaching new SRS/SCH-150 sections. Workshops in weeks 2, 4, 6 (alternating with FPR/FPR-H)
	DofWP and DofGE will take the lead in developing these workshops jointly, including two joint, linked workshops in weeks 4 and 5 for both FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 (to discuss best practice for analytical and research-based writing in succession).	
WINTER	<i>Theme: Teaching Demonstrations</i>	
	Workshops in Weeks 3, 5, 7	Workshops in Weeks 2, 4, 6
	DofWP and DofGE will recruit and work with faculty to lead workshops and conduct teaching demonstrations that emphasize pedagogical choices, lesson design, assignment design, discussion facilitation, in-class writing assignments or workshops, oral and poster presentations, effective content, and the like.	
SPRING	<i>Theme: Assessment and Program Improvement</i>	
	Week 3: Review Assessment Data with faculty in both courses	
	Week 4: Consider program improvements based on assessment data and taking	

	stock of experiences with the course over the academic year with faculty in both courses	
	Week 6: work with faculty teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year	Week 6: work with faculty teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year
	Week 7: work with faculty in both courses teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year, focus on analytical and research-based writing	

Based on these faculty institutes, the Gen Ed Board, DGE, and DofWP close the loop with these kinds of initiatives:

- 1) Improve the SRS/SCH-150 folder in TCC as a site devoted to faculty development and teaching strategies for the course.
- 2) Develop and share among SRS/SCH-150 faculty exercises that focus on the critical and ethical evaluation of evidence and its effective incorporation within an argument.
- 3) Develop and share among SRS/SCH-150 faculty exercises that focus on the effective incorporation of evidence within an argument.
- 4) Improve deliberateness with which links between pedagogical strategies and learning goals are communicated to students in syllabi, assignments, and in overall instruction.

VI. INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT and ADMINISTRATIVE RATIONALIZATION

With the approval of the Gen Ed Board, the DofGE submitted the following proposal to complete the transfer of academic and curricular responsibilities for FPR/FPR-H from the Dean of Studies office. The working plans for assessment and faculty development are already in place. A determination on this proposal in its entirety is expected in Fall 2017.

REVISED PROPOSALS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RATIONALIZATIONS OF ACADEMIC AND CURRICULAR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE COMMON CURRICULUM

[3 August 2017; John Cramsie, Director of General Education]

1) ADMINISTRATIVE RATIONALIZATION of FPR/FPR-H

Proposal. Beginning with and appropriately phased in over the 2017-2018 academic year, the Gen Ed Board asks that the administrative responsibility for the academic components of FPR/FPR-H be rationalized as follows:

Dean of Academic Departments and Programs:

- Recruitment and allocation of staffing for FPR/FPR-H; **unchanged**

Director of General Education (working with the Gen Ed Board):

- Provide information and support related to the Common Curriculum, including FPR/FPR-H, during new student orientation in Fall 2017, working with appropriate offices.
- Collect and review FPR/FPR-H course evaluations beginning in Fall 2017 (see proposal below); **reassigned from the Dean of Studies' office**
- Collect and review SRS/SCH-150 course evaluations beginning in Fall 2017 (see below)

Director of General Education and Director of Writing Programs (working with the Gen Ed Board and Writing Board):

- Collect, review, and report FPR/FPR-H course assessments beginning Fall 2017; **reassigned from the Dean of Studies' office**
- Plan and schedule FPR/FPR-H faculty development activities beginning with Fall 2017; **reassigned from the Dean of Studies' office**
- Collect, review, and approve FPR/FPR-H descriptions and new course proposals beginning with courses to be offered in 2018-2019; note that the FPR-H will involve additionally working with the Director of the Union Scholars program; **reassigned from the Dean of Studies' office**

Dean of Studies:

- Enrollment management of FPR/FPR-H sections/students; **unchanged**
- Funding for and administration of FPR/FPR-H instructor stipends (\$250); **unchanged**

Explanation. The Gen Ed Board has for several years been concerned about the administrative structure of the academic and curricular responsibilities for FPR/FPR-H. Currently the Dean of Studies administers FPR/FPR-H. Under Kimmo Rosenthal, General Education was the responsibility of the Dean of Studies. When the college created a Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies (Doug Klein), all of general education except FPR/FPR-H was committed to that position. The Dean of Studies (Kristin Bidoshi) retained responsibility for FPR/FPR-H because it played an important role in the Dean of Studies' responsibilities for the first-year experience and the successful integration of new students into campus life. With the abolition of the deans of

Interdisciplinary Studies and Engineering, a faculty Director of General Education took responsibility for providing academic and administrative leadership for the Common Curriculum in collaboration with administrative offices and governance groups, as well as articulating the vision and goals of the program. One of the position's goals was to develop a coherent sense of purpose and mission for the program, most obviously reflected in the creation of an integrated program assessment encompassing all the CC requirements.

The Gen Ed Board does not see a good rationale for continuing to assign the academic and curricular responsibilities for FPR/FPR-H to the Dean of Studies office. In this we are also in agreement with the Director of Assessment, following the 30 January meeting between the Directors of General Education, Assessment, and Writing Programs to discuss the rationalization of assessment within and between the CC and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC).

It makes sense to have the academic and curricular responsibilities assigned in the first instance to the DofGE, who has responsibility for the administration of the CC and chairs the faculty governance body charged with overseeing the CC and formulating plans and policies relating to general education programs. Because FPR/FPR-H is a foundational course for the CC and WAC, it makes sense that the DofGE and the Director of Writing Programs share joint responsibility for 1) assessment, 2) assessment follow-through in faculty development and program improvement, and 3) course proposals/approvals. Both directors will agree a working plan (see below) for their respective roles (and that of the governance boards they chair) in completing these three tasks. (Because SRS/SCH-150 is also a foundational course for both the CC and WAC, both directors will further develop and implement plans to collaborate on assessment and assessment follow-through in faculty development and program improvement for SRS/SCH-150.) It should also be noted that the Director of Writing Programs sits on the Gen Ed Board (*ex officio*).

Finally, in the context of developing a new general education program, it would be particularly desirable to rationalize the academic and curricular responsibility for general education now, in this way. Among other advantages, it will establish and develop the strong working partnerships between the Gen Ed Board, DofGE, DofWP (with the Writing Board) that will be important for the success of any new first-year seminar course(s), new WAC-foundation courses, courses meant to further and support any kind of research across the curriculum or research-based writing requirement(s), or other components of a new general education program. Course approval, assessment, and faculty development will be critical components no matter what shape a new program takes and those responsibilities should be made administratively coherent now.

WORKING PLAN for shared responsibilities between DofGE and DofWP (jointly developed 12 April 2017). Note that under the current faculty constitution, the DofWP sits on the Gen Ed Board *ex officio* but with full input on the program.

Working Plan: Assessment. All CC assessment is now collected and stored electronically via the WebApps platform. The Gen Ed Board, DofGE, and Kathy Basirico administer, aggregate, and review information for all parts of the CC except FPR/FPR-H. The DofGE with the Gen Ed Board completes an annual assessment report of the Common Curriculum except FPR/FPR-H; annual report is completed in spring term and submitted to the Director of Assessment in September. We will integrate responsibility for FPR/FPR-H assessment into this process. DofWP will take the lead in reviewing FPR/FPR-H assessment with the DofGE and Gen Ed Board and prepare the

appropriate section of the annual report at the beginning of spring term (no FPR/FPR-H sections are taught in spring term and academic year assessment is completed at the end of winter term). **Work Plan: Faculty Development.** The DofWP (working with the Writing Board) will take the lead responsibility for faculty development for FPR/FPR-H and work jointly with DofGE on SRS/SCH-150 faculty development (and other CC faculty development as needful or desired). In particular, DofWP and DofGE jointly plan for and carry out a faculty institute each term. Faculty institutes will occur over consecutive weeks at a common hour, feature a common theme, and provided focussed instruction and training that integrates FPR/FPR-H with SRS/SCH-150 faculty and provide course specific workshops for each individually. Faculty institutes are open to all faculty and faculty teaching in either core course are strongly encouraged to attend all workshops. The DofWP and DofGE take the lead in preparing materials in advance of faculty institutes and producing a summary update of each institute/session for Nexus or/and program websites. The proposed schedule for 2017-2018 is:

TERM	FPR/FPR-H	SRS/SCH-150
FALL	Theme: Course Design and Improvement	
	Workshops focusing on mentoring and troubleshooting. Workshops in weeks 1, 3, 5, 7 (alternating with SRS/SCH-150)	Workshops focusing on training new faculty and supporting faculty teaching new SRS/SCH-150 sections. Workshops in weeks 2, 4, 6 (alternating with FPR/FPR-H)
	DofWP and DofGE will take the lead in developing these workshops jointly, including two joint, linked workshops in weeks 4 and 5 for both FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 (to discuss best practice for analytical and research-based writing in succession).	
WINTER	Theme: Teaching Demonstrations	
	Workshops in Weeks 3, 5, 7	Workshops in Weeks 2, 4, 6
	DofWP and DofGE will recruit and work with faculty to lead workshops and conduct teaching demonstrations that emphasize pedagogical choices, lesson design, assignment design, discussion facilitation, in-class writing assignments or workshops, oral and poster presentations, effective content, and the like.	
SPRING	Theme: Assessment and Program Improvement	
	Week 3: Review Assessment Data with faculty in both courses	
	Week 4: Consider program improvements based on assessment data and taking stock of experiences with the course over the academic year with faculty in both courses	
	Week 6: work with faculty teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year	Week 6: work with faculty teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year
	Week 7: work with faculty in both courses teaching new courses in the program in the coming academic year, focus on analytical and research-based writing	

Working Plan: Course Proposals and Approvals. The Gen Ed Board currently approves SRS/SCH-150 course proposals based on a completed syllabus and proposal form that explains the pedagogical approach to research-based writing, the resources to research the topic (including sample research projects), and the research methodologies relevant to the topic and the expertise of the instructor. The Gen Ed Board will assume final authority for FPR/FPR-H course approvals in a like manner.

In Fall 2017, the DofWP will take the lead working with the Writing Board and DofGE to develop an appropriate FPR/FPR-H approval process. New course proposals and descriptions will be submitted to the DofWP, for review by the Writing Board in the first instance. The DofWP will report out to the Gen Ed Board for final approval; the Gen Ed Board will typically affirm the determination of the Writing Board unless it determines there is a significant problem associated with that determination. DofGE, DofWP, DADP, and Dean of Studies in Fall 2017 will establish a fixed schedule by which any reviews and approval of existing and new FPR/FPR-Hs will be completed to permit enrolment for the coming academic year. (SRS/SCH-150 deadlines and enrolment processes are already in place.)

The Gen Ed Board does not have concerns about the administrative responsibility for enrolment management assigned to the Dean of Studies office or the responsibility for recruitment and allocation of staffing for FPR/FPR-H assigned to the Dean of Academic Departments and Programs. It does not seek any changes in those arrangements.

2) REVIEW OF SRS and FPR/FPR-H COURSE EVALUATIONS

Proposal. The Gen Ed Board considers it very important that the administrator tasked with the academic and curricular management of SRS and FPR programs be assigned the responsibility to review course evaluations for both of these core courses in the Common Curriculum. (SRS course evaluations are currently kept on file in a faculty member's home department and by the program assistant for the Director of General Education. FPR evaluations are currently kept on file in a faculty member's home department and the Dean of Studies office.) Beginning immediately for SRS and in 2017-2018 for FPR (assuming the preceding administrative rationalization is approved), the Director of General Education will review course evaluations for the SRS and FPR programs. The DofGE will do so for the following purposes:

- To identify aggregate patterns that might suggest the value of particular faculty development activities and programming to be offered campus wide.
- To identify any sections of these courses that presented difficulties for faculty members, students, or both, particularly as revealed by narrative comments. In appropriate cases, the DofGE will work constructively and confidentially with the DADP to review recruitment and allocation of staffing for courses in both programs.
- At the initiative of individual faculty members, the DofGE will offer appropriate practical support and encouragement aimed at improvement.

Explanation. This process with respect to SRS fell through the cracks of the administrative reorganization that created the DofGE position. It has been in limbo since. The Gen Ed Board considers it very important that the academic administrator responsible for the SRS program be expected to review and use the course evaluations in these specific, limited ways. The Board's

Arts and Humanities division representative served for six years as Dean of Studies. She spoke strongly to the value of reviewing SRS course evaluations in these ways, drawing on her experience reviewing FPR evaluations for the same purposes. The use of evaluations in these ways can positively encourage effective instruction and faculty development in two very challenging courses (especially pedagogically) as well as promoting a high standard of instruction and learning program-wide. The Gen Ed Board asks that this proposal take effect immediately for SRS and in due course for FPR, depending on the proposed academic rationalization.