

Progress Report from the General Studies Task Force

March 26, 2018

Our report at this time is a **progress report** and we can give only a very general outline of the direction our work is taking

1. Task Force:
 - a. The Task force was established by Senate President Arnold Maltz. UAC members suggested TF members to Arnie, who reviewed and forwarded nomination to the Provost, who added a couple of people to round out disciplines and campuses and established the Task Force
 - b. The members of the Task Force, their departments, and campuses with which they are affiliated
 1. Shirley Rose, Professor, English Department, and President of Tempe Assembly
 2. Joan McGregor, Professor, School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies, and President-Elect of the Tempe Assembly
 3. Tannah Broman, Principle Lecturer, Exercise Science and Health Promotion, Downtown campus
 4. Sara Brownell, Assistant Professor, School of Life Sciences
 5. Megha Budruk, Associate Professor, School of Community Resources and Development, Downtown campus
 6. Darryl Morrell, Associate Professor, Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering Program, Poly campus
 7. Scott Barclay, Professor and Director, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, West campus
 8. Fred Corey, Task Force Chair, Office of the Provost
 - c. *The TF's charge is develop a General Studies design that meets the following criteria*
 1. *organize general education around large goals that reflect the aspirations of ASU as a New American University;*
 2. *design general education around competencies in critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, written and oral communication, the scientific method and other cornerstones with a focus on outcomes rather than inputs or check sheets;*
 3. *incorporate critical reflections on American institutions as a framework for informed civic engagement; and*
 4. *implement comprehensive platforms such as portfolios that allow for holistic assessments of student learning and the hallmarks of an ASU education.*
3. Task Force has met three times (2/14, 2/26, 3/12) to review the current General Studies program design (circa 1980s) and initiatives to revise General Studies since then and discuss possible revisions.
 - a. TF has decided to build on the excellent work of the 2013 NextGenEd Committee, which included Mark Lussier and Helene Ossipov as representatives of the Senate.
 - b. The NextGenEd report proposed a new design that would develop general studies competencies in *inquiry, collaboration, innovation, and engagement* rather than developing content-dependent knowledge; and be organized around themes rather than around subject area distributions.

- c. By means of a CFP outlining design principles and expectations, academic units will be invited to collaborate within and across colleges to develop theme-based pathways for fulfilling a GenEd requirement designed around fostering *inquiry, collaboration, innovation, and engagement*, beginning with an introductory course and ending with a culminating experience.
4. The Task force is proposing that the University conduct a small scale pilot of the new design
 - a. This would begin next year and take a “proof of concept” approach that evaluates effectiveness before scaling up.
 - b. Even for the foreseeable long term, we anticipate leaving the current General Studies structure in place as an option for students who transfer in and others for whom the new skills-based thematic approach is not appropriate.
5. Protocol/process: as this Gen Ed review and revision is a University Senate initiative and curriculum is the responsibility of faculty,
 - a. We suggest that at this time, rather than a formal review of the design, which is still in progress, the UAC simply authorize a pilot of the new design, specifying the size, length, and timeline for evaluating the pilot, in order to assure that the work of the students involved will be recognized as meeting graduation requirements.
 - b. If there is interest, the Task Force may schedule a faculty forum before the end of the Spring 2018 semester to present the proposed design for the pilot and hear faculty issues, concerns, and suggestions
6. Since this report (at 3/26 Senate meeting) is **a progress report only**, we invite Senate members attend the forum to suggest issues and concerns to keep in mind as we proceed.

Report submitted by Shirley Rose