

Draft Proposals for Integrating HIPs into the Gen Ed Curriculum

Chairs and Directors Meeting, April 10, 2020

Below are short descriptions of four proposals to integrate more high-impact practices into the General Education curriculum. The first could be implemented relatively easily, but the other three would represent significant additions/changes to the General Education program and would likely require 1-3 years of discussion, planning, and revision. Initiatives such as these are being widely adopted at many universities because research has demonstrated that they have a major impact on student success, retention, and graduation rates. All of these proposals could be implemented on either an optional or mandatory basis. These proposals are works-in-progress and should be understood as early-stage outlines that are intended to sketch out their key ideas and to gauge whether there is sufficient support to move forward with the planning process necessary to implement these ideas. Suggestions are welcome.

Proposal 1 Integrating HIPs into Existing Gen Ed Courses

This proposal is intended to facilitate the integration of high-impact practices into individual Gen Ed courses. It has two parts:

- A paid summer workshop on HIPs and how to easily integrate them into Gen Ed courses
- A stipend for instructors who integrate a specified number (perhaps 3-5) of learning activities with high-impact characteristics into their Gen Ed courses.

Faculty who have received previous training in HIPs, for instance through the UW Teaching Fellows or Teaching Scholars program or the ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices, can opt out of the summer workshop and still receive the stipend for implementing HIPs in their Gen Ed courses.

Proposed Schedule

Fall 2020-Spring 2021 Plan summer workshop on integrating HIPs into existing Gen Ed courses.

Summer 2021 Hold summer workshop on integrating HIPs into existing Gen Ed courses.

If there is sufficient demand, additional summer workshops could be scheduled either annually, every other year, or as needed, depending on the level of interest.

Proposal 2 GNED 100 with First-Year Learning Communities

Proposal 2A: GNED 100: Interdisciplinary Learning and Problem-Solving

This proposal envisions the creation of a three-credit required Gen Ed course, provisionally titled GNED 100: Interdisciplinary Learning and Problem-Solving, intended to prepare incoming freshmen for the challenges of college-level learning. Incoming freshmen would be encouraged and/or required to complete this course early in their undergraduate career. Transfer students entering with a certain number of credits could be exempted from this requirement.

The course's goal would be to equip students with the skills, habits, and mindset necessary to succeed in college and also an understanding of how a wide array of skills, knowledge, and experience can benefit them in solving real-world problems and other ways. Students would study and implement basic college skills such as time management, note-taking and study techniques, critical thinking skills, a growth mindset towards learning, and the importance of disciplinary norms. This instruction would likely be particularly valuable and impactful for first-generation students. The curriculum would also include studying and practicing the use of interdisciplinary thinking to solve real-world problems, which would help demonstrate

the purpose and value of the Gen Ed program to students. The following two books provide an example of the kind of readings that could be paired together as required readings for the course:

Matthew L. Sanders, *Becoming a Learner: Realizing the Opportunity of Education* (Hayden-McNeil, 2018)
Valerie A. Brown, John A. Harris, and Jacqueline Y. Russell, eds., *Tackling Wicked Problems: Through the Transdisciplinary Imagination* (Routledge, 2010)

GNED 100 would count towards fulfilling a Gen Ed requirement in either Humanities and the Arts, Social and Behavioral Science, or Natural Science, depending on the home department of the instructor teaching that particular section and/or the thematic focus of a given section. The General Education Committee would create a checklist of essential readings, activities, and learning outcomes that each section of the course must achieve, but individual instructors would be able to customize their section's syllabus and curriculum to reflect their discipline, interests, or research focus, with the proviso that, in addition to the methods of their own discipline, instructors also demonstrate and incorporate approaches drawn from disciplines other than their own. This disciplinary focus within an interdisciplinary framework would allow students to enroll in sections of GNED 100 that aligned with their intended majors and careers while also introducing them to the real-world value of interdisciplinary thinking and problem-solving.

Proposal 2B: First-Year Gen Ed Learning Communities

This proposal envisions the creation of first-year Gen Ed learning communities designed to augment the learning goals of GNED 100. A learning community is a group of students who are engaged in a shared learning experience that extends beyond the boundaries of a single course. Learning communities and first-year experiences have both been shown to improve student success, retention, and graduation rates, especially among first-generation students.

This first-year Gen Ed learning community would be created by having the same group of students co-enroll in GNED 100 and another Gen Ed course and providing them with additional support to help them succeed in both classes. The co-enrollment would allow the students to put the techniques taught in GNED 100 into practice into the second co-enrolled Gen Ed course and to support one another's learning in both courses. If departments or colleges have their own first-year courses, such as meta-major stem courses, GNED 100 could be combined with these discipline-specific first-year courses for an even more impactful first-year learning experience.

Proposed Schedule

Fall 2020-Spring 2021	Develop a skeleton curriculum, learning goals, and rubrics for GNED 100 and a structure for first-year Gen Ed learning communities.
Fall 2021	Pilot several sections of GNED 100 with first-year learning communities.
Spring 2022	Assess success of pilot sections of GNED 100 and learning communities. If needed, revise the curriculum and learning goals for GNED 100 and/or the structure for first-year learning communities.
Fall 2022-Spring 2023	Develop plans for implementing GNED 100 and first-year learning communities across the university starting in Fall 2023.
Fall 2023	Roll out GNED 100 with first-year learning communities for the incoming freshman class.

Proposal 3

GNEED 400: Interdisciplinary Thinking Beyond the Classroom

This proposal envisions the creation of a one-credit capstone course for the General Education curriculum, provisionally titled GNEED 400: Interdisciplinary Thinking Beyond the Classroom. This course would allow students to reflect on the value and potential use of the Gen Ed courses they have taken and their potential to complement the courses in their major and intended future career. It is intended to complement and expand on capstone requirements within the student's major.

The curriculum of the course would consist of the creation of an ePortfolio containing eight documents completed by the student over the course of their Parkside career. Two of the documents would be a resumé and sample cover letter for the student's intended profession. Three would be projects drawn from work done in courses taken as part of the student's major. Another three would be drawn from General Education courses the student has taken outside their major, with one each coming from the Humanities and the Arts, Social and Behavioral Science, and Natural Science. The final document would be an essay written by the student explaining how these six projects will help the student achieve their chosen goals in their career and in other aspects of their life. Reading assignments would be very minimal and there would be no tests or exams. The course would be focused almost exclusively on students working with the course instructor to draft, revise, and improve the documents in their portfolio and bring them up to professional quality.

To compensate for the addition of a new required one-credit Gen Ed course, if desired, the credit load of GNEED 100 could be reduced to two credits, thereby maintaining the existing level of required Gen Ed courses. Alternately, GNEED 400 could be expanded into a three-credit course to more easily accommodate students' course loads and instructors' teaching loads.

Proposed Schedule

Fall 2023-Spring 2024	Develop a curriculum, learning goals, and rubrics for GNEED 400.
Fall 2024	Pilot several sections of GNEED 400.
Spring 2025	Assess the success of pilot sections of GNEED 400 and, if needed, revise the curriculum and/or learning goals for the course.
Fall 2025-Spring 2026	Develop plans for implementing GNEED 400 across the university starting in Fall 2026.
Fall 2026	Roll out GNEED 400 courses for graduating seniors.

Questions for Chairs and Directors

Would these proposals benefit your students?

Do these proposals align with your existing learning outcomes or curriculum or with any intended curricular innovations you plan to implement in the future?

What problems or obstacles do you foresee in implementing these proposals?

Which of these proposals seem most useful to you?

Do the proposed schedules seem achievable to you?

How could these proposals be improved?