Outline of an Assessment Plan for General Education

I. Mission

The General Education program aims to provide students with (a) broad knowledge of human cultures and the natural world, including the social and natural sciences as well as the arts and humanities; (b) advanced intellectual and practical skills, including the capacity for effective written and oral communication, logical reasoning, analysis, problem solving, and the basic quantitative, information, and technological literacy needed for the 21st century; and (c) a sense of personal and social responsibility, including sensitivity to and knowledge of other cultures, recognition of diversity, and the capacity to take charge of and effectively manage their own well-being (health and finances). IU South Bend is further committed to high-impact practices, such as first-year experiences. Together, these will provide students with the knowledge, skills, and sense of personal and social responsibility necessary for them to become active, engaged, informed, and responsible citizens and workers, over their lifetimes, whatever their career path might be after graduation.

Note: In adopting this mission for its General Education program, IU South Bend follows the commitment of the campus and the State of Indiana to the LEAP framework for higher education.

II. Goals of General Education

A. Fundamental Literacies – Students will obtain a broad knowledge of the ways in which communication takes place through written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy

- **Written and Oral Communication** – Students will be able to communicate effectively both in writing and orally, in public and interpersonally, using appropriate materials, and to work effectively in teams

- **Quantitative Reasoning** – Students will have basic mathematical skills and appreciation for statistical concepts and methods, and be able to apply these not only to pre-given calculations, but generally, to real-world situations and problems described in prose

- **Critical Thinking** – Students will gain the general skills needed to think and reason logically, to reflect on and articulate their own reasoning, to understand the nature of evidence and properly assess evidential support, and to analyze and solve real-world problems.

- **Information Literacy** – Students will be aware of how information is gathered, assessed, and disseminated, and will be able to find, judge, select, and use information effectively, using the technologies of the 21st century.

- **Visual Literacy** – Students will be able to understand meaning in a visual message/image and read, perceive, understand, create/produce, use, and appreciate visual images in a variety of settings.

- **Computer Literacy** – In the 21st Century preparation for life beyond the university surely includes learning how to use computers for a variety of tasks.

B. **Common Core** - Students will obtain broad knowledge of the physical and natural world, human behavior and social institutions, literacy and intellectual traditions, and art, aesthetics and creativity though interdisciplinary study demonstrating the productive relationships among disciplines and by emphasizing the value of fundamental literacies from the general-education curriculum
C. **Contemporary Social Values** – Students will demonstrate familiarity with the culture, society, and values of a global society, or explore knowledge and traditions grounded in global cultural paradigms, as well as develop a sense of personal and social responsibility.

- **Non-western Cultures*** - Students will have knowledge of and sensitivity to diverse global cultures.
- **Diversity in U.S. Society*** – Students will have knowledge of and sensitivity to racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the United States.
- **Health and Wellness*** – Students will be able to manage effectively their own well-being (e.g., their health).

*Note 1: Each of these goals will be associated with specific learning outcomes designed by a team of faculty who teach the course in collaboration with the General Education Co-Directors.

*These courses have not yet had Student Learning Outcomes created. Draft outcomes are in section III.

III. Learning Outcomes for the General Education Goals

A. **Fundamental Literacies**
   - **Written Communication**
     As a result of taking Written Communication, students will be able to…
     - Develop a thesis that establishes a position in relation to sources, goes beyond common knowledge, can be debated, and provides control, direction, and purpose to the paper;
     - Incorporate concrete examples in most body paragraphs to develop the thesis;
     - Incorporate an organizational structure that presents paragraphs in a meaningful progression;
     - Demonstrate control over grammar errors while maintaining the sentence-level flexibility to clearly articulate ideas;
     - Demonstrate sustained engagement with evidence (i.e. quotations) using appropriate citation form.
     - Engage in writing as a social process that includes multiple drafts, collaboration and reflection.

   - **Oral Communication**
     As a result of taking Written Communication, students will be able to…
     - Create messages appropriate for the intended audience(s);
     - Use appropriate supporting materials to communicate credibility and explain complex concepts to audiences;
     - Organize messages to support a purpose, following an organizational pattern;
     - Demonstrate an understanding of ethics and authenticity in communication with others.

   - **Quantitative Reasoning**
     As a result of taking Quantitative Reasoning, students will be able to…
     - Explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g. equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)
     - Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g. equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)
     - Perform mathematical calculations
• Communicate quantitative evidence in support of an argument for various purposes and audiences (including general audiences)

• **Critical Thinking**
  As a result of taking Critical Thinking, students will be able to…
  • Identify stated reasons that support a claim
  • Construct arguments for and against a claim
  • Use widely accepted standards for evaluating the quality of evidence and reasoning

• **Information Literacy**
  As a result of taking Information Literacy, students will be able to…
  • Identify different source types in order to cite sources effectively
  • Classify sources of information according to type based on an understanding of the information universe
  • Distinguish scholarly publication from other types of publication and understand the nature of scholarly communication and knowledge production
  • Demonstrate an understanding of the academic research process including topic exploration and identification of a focused research question or problem
  • Select the appropriate search environment for their research need
  • Select appropriate discipline specific search methodologies
  • Search for their topic in databases using effective Boolean search strings, appropriate limiters and other advanced search techniques
  • Judge sources based on reliability and appropriateness for fulfilling a specific information need using an appropriate evaluation model
  • Identify and discuss authority markers for different contextual needs
  • Examine the biases that exist in their own information use and habits and recognize bias when they encounter it in a source

• **Computer Literacy**
  As a result of taking a course in Computer Literacy students will be able to …
  • Know the basic terminology of computer hardware and software.
  • Perform essential file manipulation functions using one or more modern computer operating systems.
  • Utilize basic features of common packaged software programs, including word processors, spreadsheets, databases, web browsers, and presentation software.

• **Visual Literacy**
  As a result of taking Visual Literacy students will be able to …
  • Understand historical perspective of visual conventions, including both western and non-western cultures.
  • Explain the grammar and expressive potential of visual forms, applies rigorous methodologies developed by social sciences, sciences, and humanities for the study of perception and interpretation of the visual world.
  • Be makers as well as interpreters, i.e. through the fabrication of visual essays and statements using new or traditional media.
  • View and understand information presented in modes used in a variety of disciplines and areas.
B. Common Core

• Art, Aesthetics, and Creativity
   As a result of taking Art, Aesthetics, and Creativity, students will be able to…
   • Practice making art within artistic disciplines;
   • Engage with and critique works of art;
   • Demonstrate knowledge of cultural contexts of artistic disciplines (e.g. aesthetics, ethics, movements);
   • Demonstrate knowledge of artistic terminology, techniques, and/or materials;
   • Reflect on the creative process and its implications for personal, communal, academic, and/or professional pursuits.

• Human Behavior and Social Institutions
   As a result of taking Human Behavior and Social Institutions, students will be able to…
   • Demonstrate an understanding of how individuals and institutions influence each other
   • Identify institutional and/or social power imbalances, such as injustice, inequality, disparities—and how these impact individuals, and/or institutions.
   • Identify various approaches to understanding Human Behavior and Social Institutions

• Literary and Intellectual Traditions
   As a result of taking Literary and Intellectual Traditions, students will be able to…
   • Construct an interpretation or argument based on texts from literary, historical, or philosophical traditions;
   • Analyze or evaluate texts in their cultural, intellectual, and/or historical contexts;
   • Apply general concepts, terms, and/or methods of analysis to the particular course topic;
   • Analyze or evaluate primary and secondary sources.

• Natural World
   As a result of taking Natural World, students will be able to…
   • Demonstrate scientific literacy through an understanding of concepts, terminology, and fundamental theories, from at least one area of the natural sciences
   • Experience an experiment or observation or data analysis
   • Use information or data from primary literature to evaluate scientific arguments
   • Recognize a scientific approach to problem solving

C. Contemporary Social Values

• Non-Western Cultures**
  By taking courses in Non-Western Cultures students will be able to…
  • Demonstrate an understanding of the historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural underpinnings of a culture or society outside of the U.S.
  • Compare and contrast other cultural worldviews, practices, and social ideas with their own, and thus demonstrate an awareness and respect for the value of human diversity
  • Analyze the diverse consequences of globalization, including its impacts on various social formations (e.g. identity, culture, art, communities, media, markets, nation-states, etc.) and/or the environment
  • Demonstrate a critical understanding of the ethical dimensions of global citizenship
• **Diversity in U.S. Society**
  By taking courses in Diversity in U.S. Society students will be able to…
  • Recognize the ways multiple factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, disability, and sexual orientation shape individual lives, and how they intersect with one another.
  • Recognize the historically-shifting impact of these intersectional factors.
  • Recognize students' own position in relation to these factors and their responsibilities as citizens in a diverse democracy.
  • Demonstrate knowledge of the role and contributions of one or more underrepresented groups in the development of the United States.
  • Demonstrate specific knowledge of cultural, historical, social, economic, and/or political factors that shape aspects of one or more diverse groups;
  • Recognize and articulate differences, expectations, and/or challenges experienced by one or more underrepresented groups; and
  • Explain ways in which identity is developed and how it is transmitted within and by members of the group or groups.

• **Health and Wellness**
  By taking a course in Health and Wellness students will be able to…
  • Demonstrate skills and knowledge of physical fitness concepts through the performance of activities that will enhance lifelong commitment to personal fitness and wellness
  • Understand holistic health concepts in a manner that invokes personal responsibility for health and wellness
  • Make lifestyle changes geared toward the maintenance of healthy living and the prevention of disease and illness

**These Student Learning Outcomes are drafts generated by the General Education Task Force or taken from the General Characteristics online and will be revisited by faculty teaching in these categories in fall 2019.

IV. General Principles for Assessment of General Education

1. All courses or activities that count for the General Education program must be approved by the General Education Committee, appointed by the Academic Senate.
2. All such courses or activities must demonstrate that they address the student learning outcomes and general characteristics listed for the General Education requirement they fulfill, by providing full course descriptions and syllabi upon application.
3. Both individual instructors who conduct General Education courses and activities, and their supervisors (including department chairs and Deans), bear the responsibility for making sure the course is offered as described, and making sure that courses are approved for General Education before they are listed as such.
4. No course shall be allowed to be listed on the Schedule of Classes as fulfilling a General Education requirement unless it has already been officially approved to fulfill that requirement. This includes variable titles of course numbers/prefixes already approved.
5. The Director/Co-Directors of General Education will have the authority to remove a class purporting to fulfill a General Education requirement from the Schedule of Classes if it has been found to have been listed without the appropriate approval.
6. After their initial approval, all courses or activities must be periodically reviewed and assessed, to ensure that the General Education outcomes and general characteristics continue to be addressed.
7. The General Education Director/Co-Directors, General Education Committee, and the Assessment Committee will be responsible for a rotating assessment and review.
8. In each two-year review of General Education categories, a chosen set of General Education courses will submit syllabi for a set of specific sections, based on a systematic sample selected by the Director/Co-Directors of General Education from among those sections offered during that time period.
9. Courses whose syllabi and assignments are found to no longer meet the learning outcomes for the General Education requirement they purport to fulfill will be required to revise those courses before they are offered again so they once again address those learning outcomes and general characteristics, or the course will be removed from the list of courses that meet that General Education requirement.
10. In addition to this overall, rotating two-year review of classes, General Education will be subject to periodic assessment, as described in the next section, to determine whether and how well we are fulfilling the General Education learning outcomes and general characteristics.
11. Any instructor who teaches a General Education class agrees to participate in the assessment schedule, requests for information, and delivery of specified assessment tools and measures.
12. The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate has the sole responsibility for determining who serves on the various Senate committees responsible for General Education; the Director/Co-Directors of General Education shall be appointed by the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
13. The General Education learning outcomes, as well as the assessment measures and delivery schedule, will be managed by the Senate General Education Committee and Assessment Committee, with the oversight and coordination of the Director/Co-Directors of General Education, located in Academic Affairs.
14. The goals and learning outcomes for the General Education program belong to the faculty, who, through the Academic Senate and its elected officials, are ultimately responsible for their definition, implementation, and management.

V. Proposed Basis for Assessment Measures and Procedures

Note: This section outlines specific procedures to be followed for assessing General Education.

1. All General Education classes will be assessed periodically, on a specific schedule to be managed jointly by the Assessment Committee and General Education Committee.

With respect to General Education course assessment:

1. Each course that counts for a General Education requirement will undergo regular assessment.
2. This will be done on a rotating basis, according to the table listed in Appendix A.
3. For each General Education category, a sample of courses shall be chosen through systematic sampling. Every course will be assessed, but not every section. The Department Chair/Program Directors will work with the General Education Director/Co-Directors to determine the number of sections needed for a sample, which will typically be between 50-75% of the sections offered of a course.
4. Additionally, every student in the selected section(s) will be assessed.
5. Selected sections will designate an assignment or assignments for the class, which reflects the student learning outcomes, to be used for the purpose of General Education assessment; the designation of the assignments will be done by the instructor.
6. Instructors for these sections will complete a rubric assessing each of the student learning outcomes covered on an assignment or assignments for all students.
7. The data from the rubrics will be entered into the assessment management software and
reviewed by the Assessment Committee. A summary report of the results shall be made available to the department(s) or unit(s) managing the courses, as well as publicly with other Assessment Committee reports; this data will be suitable for use in course revision and improvement.

8. If a specific class is found not to be adequately addressing the General Education requirement for which it has been approved, and is not revised to do so by the next term, that class will no longer count for that requirement and will have to be resubmitted for approval when and if it has been revised.
Appendix A.

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*the timeline for assessment will continue in this order every two years. It will be updated in Fall 2021 to reflect the new General Education curriculum.*