

WOU General Education Update

A liberal arts education should be valued, respected and defended on its own terms. It is a lifelong investment and its value is not in its direct relationship to one's earning potential

Elizabeth Minnich

AACU General Education & Assessment Conference

Members of the WOU General Education program recently had the opportunity to learn about the national trends in General Education and dive into some of the current research on teaching and learning in General Education programs.



In attendance at the AACU General Education & Assessment Conference (l-r) WOU Provost Rob Winningham, General Education Committee member Camila Gabaldón, General Education Director Erin Baumgartner, General Education Committee Chair Breeann Flesch.

Some highlights of what we learned:

More than a few institutions have also recently reformed programs that were last envisioned decades ago. We had the opportunity to learn some of the strategies they are using to chart this new course on their campuses.

Development of learning outcomes and assessment of those outcomes by faculty learning communities is a common practice, enabling innovation in many programs.

First Year Seminars are a common feature in most programs. Many programs feature learning communities of these courses with another program requirement.

The importance of co-curricular activities and experiential learning in General Education is becoming an area of greater interest across the country.

General Education done well emphasizes the strengths of a liberal arts education: helping students tackle uncharted areas, gather data and insights, solving complex problems, reading the room, persuade and inspire people. These skills not only translate to career success, they translate to life success. Our job is to help communicate this aspect of Academic Excellence to students and other stakeholders.

Advising workshops

Want to learn more about advising for the new General Education program? Join us for any one of the upcoming workshops in ITC 205:

March 13 - 11:00 am - 12:00pm
 March 14 - 3:30pm - 4:30 pm
 April 18 - 3:30pm - 4:30 pm
 April 19 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Thank You:

Now that all the proposals are in and the program is effectively built for the upcoming 2019-2020 Academic Year, we'd like to pause and thank many of the people who have contributed to the General Education program renovation.

Registrar Amy Clark – this newsletter would require multiple pages to effectively list all that Amy has done in support of the General Education transition this year. Not only has Amy tirelessly supported the enormous work needed to plan for the transition, she's spotted and helped us avoid numerous potential pitfalls.

Assistant Registrar Kara Westervelt Parker – Kara has been essential in the implementation of a successful General Education petition process.

Catalog and Scheduling Coordinator Susan Hays – Susan has been working with us on the monumental task of organizing scheduling of First Year Seminars.

Graduation Evaluator David Anderson – David has been patiently helping with the processing of General Education petitions.

Transfer Articulation Specialist Kristin Mauro – Kristin organized and helped us through multiple sessions of reviewing data from the past three years of transfers from our most frequent community college partners to ease transfer articulation into the General Education course categories.

Veteran's Certifying Officer Kyler Dreyer and Veteran's Resource Center Director Colin Haines – Kyler and Colin have supported us in exploring the best way to serve our students who are veterans in gaining credit for their military training.

Student Success and Advising Director Niki Weight – Niki has provided us with invaluable assistance in crafting advising documents, planning for clear communication and support of advisors and students in understanding the new program and how to transition to it.

State WICHE Passport Facilitator Patty Flatt – Patty has been fantastic to work with on the alignment of the new General Education program to passport blocks.

Curriculum Programmer Camila Gabaldón – Camila has spent hours too numerous to count building, editing, and debugging the curriculum portal, answering questions and providing support to proposers and reviewers alike. This process would have fallen apart hundreds of times over without her.

Curriculum Committee Chair Laurie Burton – Laurie has been a thoughtful and supportive collaborator and tireless purveyor of information around the curriculum process, helping to answer any and all questions and making sure that no proposal gets left behind.

Academic Affairs Program Manager Beverly West – Beverly is to thank for the design and many features of the General Education websites and is also supporting General Education program assessment planning.

Interim Provost Rob Winningham and Deans Kathy Cassity and Mark Girod – Rob, Kathy and Mark have not only taken the time to work with us on shaping the program, they've followed up with support of team teaching and professional development.

As General Education course proposals have been approved and added to the program, we are building our advising materials. The growing list of General Education courses can be found at:

<http://www.wou.edu/gened/general-education-courses/>.

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