UWL General Education Action Team

Summer 2017

Overview, summary, and notes

The following document contains three key components:
1. Two-page summary of key findings and recommendations from a team of UWL faculty who attended a national workshop on General Education (Action Plan to Campus).
2. Additional summary notes from the meeting associated with three key elements:
    a. How to think about the structure of general education
        i. Distributive compared to integrative models
        ii. Curricular models
    b. What is the impetus for a change to UWL's current General Education Model?
3. UWL's mission statement and statement on General Education

Faculty Senate invites campus constituents to review the work included below to help create a common foundation regarding an examination of UWL's General Education Program.
The other documents at the Faculty Senate website are readings completed by the Faculty Senate General Education Working Group – also linked below.

Informational Readings
1. Gaston, P. L., & Gaff, J. G. (2009). *Revising General Education--and Avoiding the Potholes*. Association of American Colleges and Universities
2. Hanstedt, P. (2012). *General education essentials: A guide for college faculty*. John Wiley & Sons. In particular the first two chapters: "Structuring General Education" and "Some Examples of Integrative Curricular Models"
3. " Rising to the LEAP Challenge"
4. Two one-page handouts from the Chicago conference "Exploring the Revision process" and "AAC&U Exploring process
5. PowerPoint AAC&U High-Impact Practices -- focuses on GE.
6. Additionally, the AAC&U made resources available from their institute.

Strategic Planning – General Education Working Group
1. Colin Belby (GEO)
2. Sam Cocks (PHL)
3. Natalie Eschenbaum (ENG)
4. Anne Galbraith (BIO), Chair of GE Working Group
5. Shelley Hay (MLG)
6. Tav Hawkins (PHY)
7. Heather Hulett (MTH)
8. Lauren Mason (Student Senate Vice President)
9. John Nunley (ECO)
10. Ken Shonk (HIS/SOE)

Action Plan Report to UWL Campus

AAC&U 2017 Institute on General Education and Assessment

Team Members: Colin Belby (GEC – Geography), Sam Cocks (GEC – Philosophy), Enilda Delgado (team leader – Sociology; SP), Tav Hawkins (Physics; SP Transformative Education), Shelley Hay (MLG – German; Assessment Expertise)

University of Wisconsin, La Crosse is a four- year comprehensive public university with a 48 credit distributive model general education program. There is no capstone or first year experience for all students or common thread linking all of the classes together. Some members of the GEC and some respondents of the faculty survey on the GE program have indicated that there is a misalignment between the goals, student learning outcomes, and nine categories. We have concerns about UWL students seeing the value in the program and their ability to connect it to their personal, academic, and professional goals. It is also unclear the extent to which UWL faculty understand and can articulate goals of the program, its value, and how it connects to the university's mission statement. After thirty years in the existing model and the influx of new faculty to the university, and having just completed a strategic plan that calls for the evaluation and revision of the existing general education program, we are positioned to engage in general education reform. Our university already includes many high impact practices and a robust assessment of general education at the course level.

Potential obstacles that we foresee:

a. Limited personnel – concern regarding already stretched faculty (explore stipends, a director, etc.
b. Limited financial resources for professional development (Curriculum redesign and development; learning opportunities for integrative teaching; training for e-portfolios, if the university moves toward portfolios)
c. Faculty perception that any change will lead to a loss of positions. Depending on the model adopted, there may be an impact on course offerings, student demand patterns and hiring – all of which may affect both individuals and departments. There may also be new opportunities for departments. There will be pros/cons to change that differ by discipline and college.
d. Problems with discipline territoriality
e. Lack of consensus on the needed size of the program to accomplish the goals and purpose
f. Lack of consensus concerning the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse's identity and how it is related to the goals of a General Education Program.
g. Views regarding the best model(s) to use as the campus pursues a revision process

Our recommended action steps are as follows:

1. We will meet the important stakeholders (including the chair of Faculty Senate, and the campus HIPS and LEAPS coordinator, and the Provost) to present our recommendations based on what we've learned at the AAC&U General Education Summer Institute.
2. It is clear to us that we must revise our General Education program in order to build a program that addresses the short falls of our existing program.
3. We need resources in order to carry out this revision (release time, salary/stipend, director).

If we receive support, then we will pursue the following course of actions:

a. Improve our understanding of the UWL student, their backgrounds and professional interests, and anticipate demographics.
b. Provide a data based analysis based on why the program is not fulfilling our mission nor the pillars of our strategic plan.
c. Explore as a campus community the integrative models and best practices that currently exist. Possibilities may include focused reading and discussion by the campus community, and inviting consultants to campus.
d. Create communication opportunities with the campus community that mirror the discussion forums that led to a successful university strategic plan.
e. Work together to develop integrative options that will fit our campus culture and student body.
f. Further explore the potential advantages and disadvantages to our campus of adopting an e-portfolio for the purposes of general education.

Timeline:

- June 2017 – work with Faculty Senate leadership to form general education working group
- July 2017 – develop Faculty Senate website with general education materials – summaries and readings
- August 2017 – hold one-day meeting with faculty representing each department with general education offerings
- Fall 2017 - additional campus forums
- December 2017 – recommendations to Faculty Senate with timeline

Summary Notes

A. How to think about the structure of general education

UWL has a distribution model.

Summary notes of "General Education Essentials: A Guide for College Faculty" (Paul Hanstedt)

Shift from "general education" to "liberal education": "people who are independent and flexible in their thinking and capable of responding to the demands of a changing world in civic-minded, deliberate ways." (3)

First Year	General Education
Second Year	
Third Year	Major
Fourth Year	

Figure I.1. General Education as Foundational

Model in Figure 1.1. GE - "is assumed to encompass simple foundational skills that, once gained, will enable students to do the "real" work." Problems with this model:

a. fails to acknowledge that "just because a student has learned something in the first year doesn't mean he'll remember it in his advanced classes" (4).
b. "Many of the skills we consider basic and foundational really aren't really that" (4) We need more practice

Alternative Models

First Year	General	
Second Year	Education	Major
Third Year		
Fourth Year		

Figure I.2. General Education and the Major: An Alternative Perspective

First Year	General	
Second Year	Education	Major
Third Year		
Fourth Year		

Figure I.3. General Education and the Major: Another Alternative Perspective

In both of these models, GE runs throughout a 4-year curriculum, which means that students:
   a. Develop GE skills throughout their 4-years.
   b. By "having repeated practice with these skills at increasingly complex and intellectually demanding levels, students have a better chance of learning them" (5)
   c. "Majors with benefit by having students arrive…more practiced in these essential ways of thinking" (5)

Goal is to have an "institutional culture in which GE and the major are complementary…and the two kinds of programs support each other in order to create thoughtful, deliberative graduates capable of dealing with the complex challenges of global citizenship" - "In short, the whole purpose of general education is to help students succeed in their major fields, their career choices, and their jobs" (6)

More on Structuring General Education

"A program for reforming general education should be designed around each institution's character, the strengths and interests of its faculty, and the needs of its students" (11)

Distribution Model

Distribution vs. Integration

Distribution   Integrative
Model   Model

Figure 1.1. Continuum of General Education Models

Example of distribution model:

Although there is a need to be careful about generalizing, typically a distribution model requires students to take more or less the following courses:

- Two courses in the social sciences
- Two courses in the arts and humanities
- Two courses in mathematics
- Two courses in the natural sciences
- Two courses in a foreign language
- Two courses in physical education

This model goes back at least as far as the 19th century—focus on "well rounded" graduates.

Integrative Model

"Makes deliberate attempts to create explicit connections among courses, fields, majors, disciplines, and traditionally academic and nonacademic areas or, even better, is designed to create the opportunity for students themselves to draw those links." (12)

"[A]ny curriculum that goes beyond simply requiring students to take courses from different disciplines and instead expects them, with the help of their professors, to <u>explore the connections among these different areas</u>." (13)

"Interdisciplinary refers to program, courses, or assignments that put together 2 or more fields. Integrative refers to acknowledging the interdisciplinarity that already exists in a given field or topic." (13)

"Integrative approach to curriculum is not interested in connecting things that don't come together naturally or even easily. Rather, integration encourages instructors to foreground- and students to explore- the connections that already exist between or within various fields and make applications of our material an integral part of what we do"(13)

"A course can be integrative even if it focuses on a single field or topic as long as it explicitly asks—through lectures, discussion, and assignments- students to examine the implications of the course material on the nonacademic world and makes these explorations part of the criteria for a good grade in the class." (13)

"A course is truly integrative in nature when it does more than introduce material relevant to lived experience. It is <u>deliberate and explicit about making those connections </u>- and, necessarily, having students make those connections." (14)

** "Curricular models or general education courses that are integrative in nature need not require faculty to teach outside their fields" (14)

Integrative Components

Examples:

Requiring a common core that all students take, regardless of major.
- First year course
- Upper level capstone
- E-portfolios ("an online collection of artifacts (papers, presentations, and so on) from a student's relevant work in general education and other courses—are an opportunity for students to reflect on how al of their varied educational experiences, in and out of the classroom, relate to one another and their own goals for the future") (15)
- Campus-wide themes under which GE courses are organized
- Learning communities

The Trend in General Education

"Shift from purely distributional models toward models that combine distributive features with more integrative components"
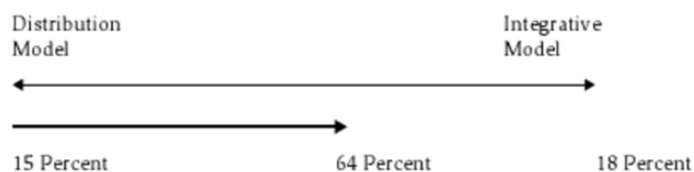
Figure 1.2. Recent Trends in American General Education

Three Curricular Models

1. The Strands Model

	Strand A	Strand B	Strand C
Social sciences			
Mathematics and the natural sciences			
Arts and humanities			

	The Consequences of Science and Technology	America and Its Relationship with the World	What It Means to Be Human
Social sciences	The Changing Face of Personal Interaction (Sociology)	Women in Leadership Roles (Political Science)	Does Personality Exist? (Psychology)
	How Your iPod Is Changing Your Brain (Psychology)	Comparative Psychology (Psychology)	Understanding Violence (Sociology)

	The Consequences of Science and Technology	America and Its Relationship with the World	What It Means to Be Human
Mathematics and the natural sciences	Cyberspying (Information Technology)	Space and Space Technology (Physics)	The Human Genome (Biology)
	Ethics and the Human Genome (Biology)	The Statistics of Gun Control (Mathematics)	Understanding Violence (Statistics)
	Vanishing Species (Biology)	The Changing Pacific (Environmental Science)	
Arts and humanities	Romanticism and the Industrial Revolution (English)	The African Diaspora (Literature)	What Is the Mind?
	Composition and Computers (Music)	Asia and Modernism (Art History)	Free Will and Other Myths (Philosophy)
			Understanding Violence (Drama)

2. The Core-Distributional Model
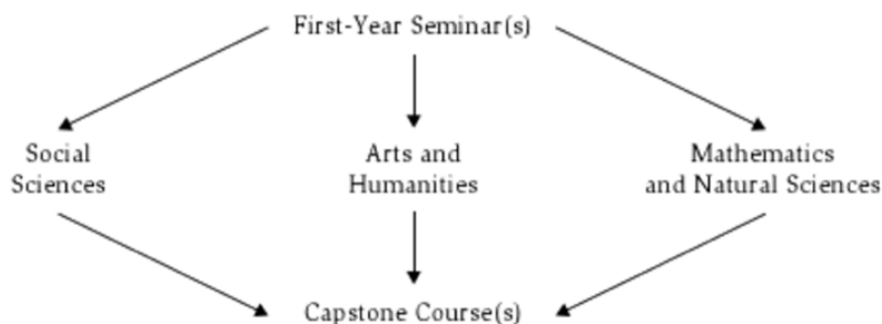
Figure 2.1. A Core-Distributional Model

"Students have a common course (first year seminar); fulfill distribution requirements; and finish in a common course. The FYS prepares students for their distribution courses. Capstone provides a synthetic experience, allowing them to draw everything together. Capstone may be in the major on in the GE program—either way, it needs to make sure it touches on both the major and GE."
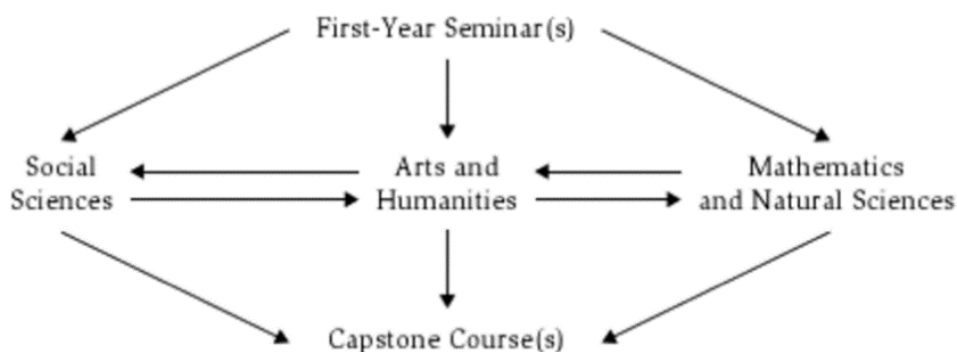
Figure 2.2. A Fully Integrated Core-Distributional Model

In this model, classes in distribution are integrative in nature—making the connections explicit.

3. Core-Only Model

Term 1	Term 2
The Contemporary Situation	The Modern World
The Roots of Civilization	Christian Impact on Western Civilization
Humanity in the Universe I	Humanity in the Universe II
Intercultural Studies I	Intercultural Studies II
Capstone I:	**Capstone II:**
Toward a Christian Humanism I	Toward a Christian Humanism Seminars

8

X number of courses all students take, regardless of their major, and taught broadly by faculty across campus. Courses are fairly interdisciplinary.

Important Considerations

There are many examples, but in the end, UWL needs to be mindful of
- Who are our students?
- What is our UWL identity?
- What do we want our students to leave with?
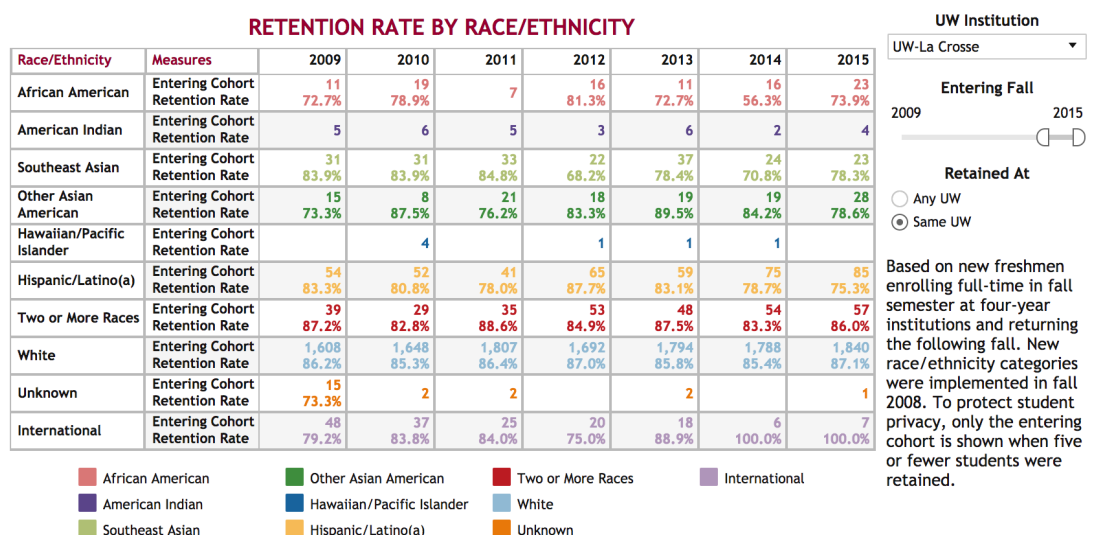- What do our students want to leave with?

B. *What is the impetus for a change to UWL's current General Education Model? (not in any particular order)*
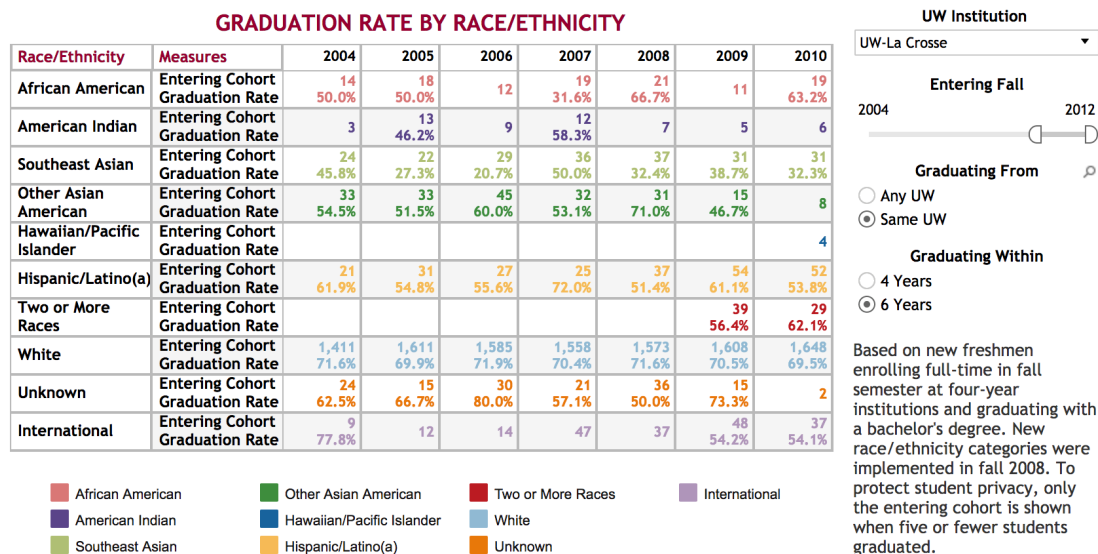
1. "Increased expectations for institutional accountability, experiments with "performance funding" and concerns regarding institutional identity and competitiveness…general education represents not merely a platform for study in the major, but a critical contributor to and determinant of an institution's overall educational effectiveness" (Gaston and Gaff)

    a. Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee action- (5/31/17):
       Outcome-Based Funding The motion includes $5 million in 2017-2018 for an innovation fund that will be used to support high-demand programs, and a total of $26.25 million in ongoing new monies tied to an outcomes-based funding model beginning in 2018-19. The Board of Regents will develop the metrics and present them to the Finance Committee for their approval next spring (Motion 253 #1, 2). UWL needs to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to potential incoming changes to state funding models. As of right now, here are some examples of potential metrics that may be impacted, and have room for improvement, within our GE program:
       i. Percentage graduation difference between majority students and Students of Color and Pell students

RETENTION RATE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

UW Institution: UW-La Crosse

Race/Ethnicity	Measures	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
African American	Entering Cohort	11	19	7	16	11	16	23
	Retention Rate	72.7%	78.9%		81.3%	72.7%	56.3%	73.9%
American Indian	Entering Cohort	5	6	5	3	6	2	4
	Retention Rate							
Southeast Asian	Entering Cohort	31	31	33	22	37	24	23
	Retention Rate	83.9%	83.9%	84.8%	68.2%	78.4%	70.8%	78.3%
Other Asian American	Entering Cohort	15	8	21	18	19	19	28
	Retention Rate	73.3%	87.5%	76.2%	83.3%	89.5%	84.2%	78.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Entering Cohort		4		1	1	1	
	Retention Rate							
Hispanic/Latino(a)	Entering Cohort	54	52	41	65	59	75	85
	Retention Rate	83.3%	80.8%	78.0%	87.7%	83.1%	78.7%	75.3%
Two or More Races	Entering Cohort	39	29	35	53	48	54	57
	Retention Rate	87.2%	82.8%	88.6%	84.9%	87.5%	83.3%	86.0%
White	Entering Cohort	1,608	1,648	1,807	1,692	1,794	1,788	1,840
	Retention Rate	86.2%	85.3%	86.4%	87.0%	85.8%	85.4%	87.1%
Unknown	Entering Cohort	15	2	2		2		1
	Retention Rate	73.3%						
International	Entering Cohort	48	37	25	20	18	6	7
	Retention Rate	79.2%	83.8%	84.0%	75.0%	88.9%	100.0%	100.0%

Entering Fall 2009 — 2015
Retained At: Any UW / ● Same UW

Based on new freshmen enrolling full-time in fall semester at four-year institutions and returning the following fall. New race/ethnicity categories were implemented in fall 2008. To protect student privacy, only the entering cohort is shown when five or fewer students were retained.

- African American
- American Indian
- Southeast Asian
- Other Asian American
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Two or More Races
- White
- Unknown
- International

GRADUATION RATE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Race/Ethnicity	Measures	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
African American	Entering Cohort	14	18	12	19	21	11	19
	Graduation Rate	50.0%	50.0%		31.6%	66.7%		63.2%
American Indian	Entering Cohort	3	13	9	12	7	5	6
	Graduation Rate		46.2%		58.3%			
Southeast Asian	Entering Cohort	24	22	29	36	37	31	31
	Graduation Rate	45.8%	27.3%	20.7%	50.0%	32.4%	38.7%	32.3%
Other Asian American	Entering Cohort	33	33	45	32	31	15	8
	Graduation Rate	54.5%	51.5%	60.0%	53.1%	71.0%	46.7%	
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Entering Cohort							4
	Graduation Rate							
Hispanic/Latino(a)	Entering Cohort	21	31	27	25	37	54	52
	Graduation Rate	61.9%	54.8%	55.6%	72.0%	51.4%	61.1%	53.8%
Two or More Races	Entering Cohort						39	29
	Graduation Rate						56.4%	62.1%
White	Entering Cohort	1,411	1,611	1,585	1,558	1,573	1,608	1,648
	Graduation Rate	71.6%	69.9%	71.9%	70.4%	71.6%	70.5%	69.5%
Unknown	Entering Cohort	24	15	30	21	36	15	2
	Graduation Rate	62.5%	66.7%	80.0%	57.1%	50.0%	73.3%	
International	Entering Cohort	9	12	14	47	37	48	37
	Graduation Rate	77.8%					54.2%	54.1%

Legend:
- African American
- American Indian
- Southeast Asian
- Other Asian American
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Two or More Races
- White
- Unknown
- International

UW Institution
UW-La Crosse

Entering Fall
2004 — 2012

Graduating From
- Any UW
- ● Same UW

Graduating Within
- 4 Years
- ● 6 Years

Based on new freshmen enrolling full-time in fall semester at four-year institutions and graduating with a bachelor's degree. New race/ethnicity categories were implemented in fall 2008. To protect student privacy, only the entering cohort is shown when five or fewer students graduated.
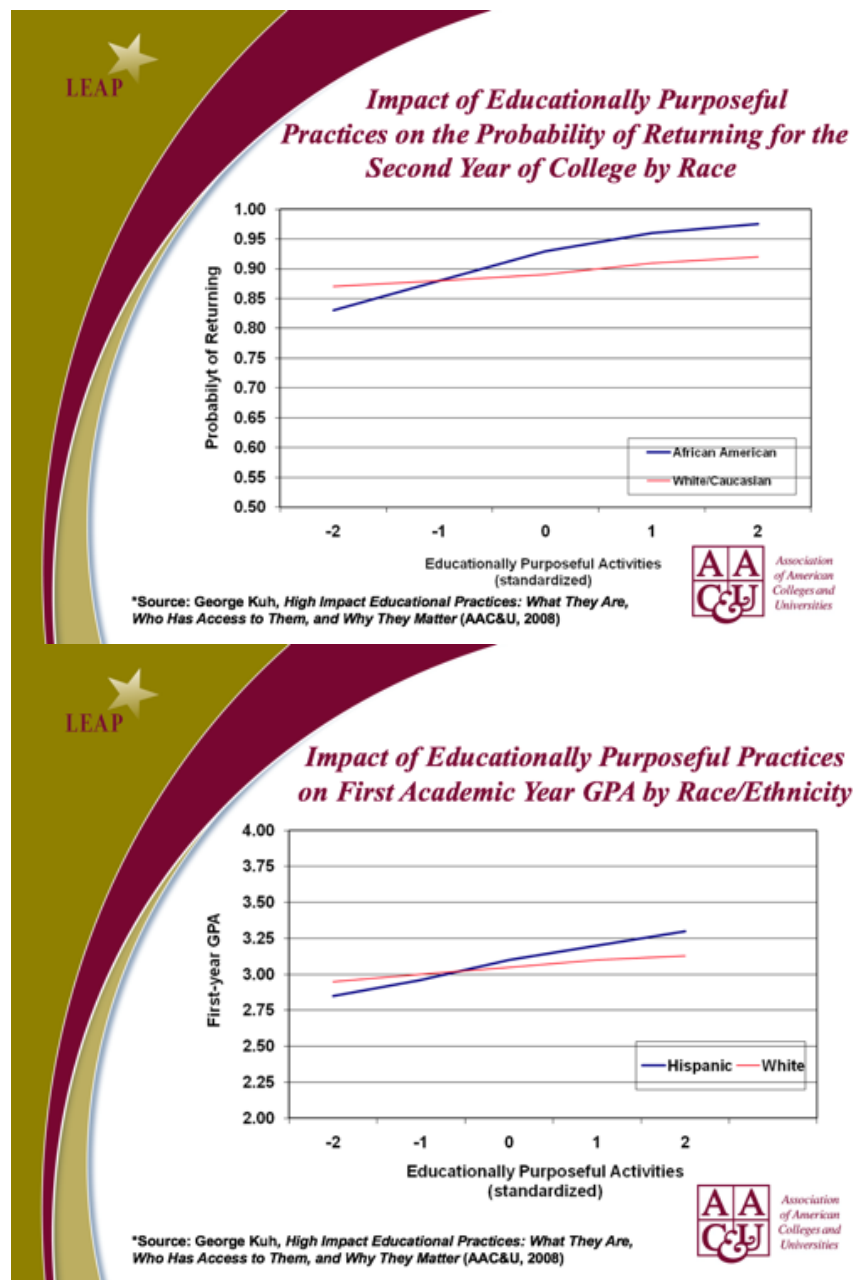
ii. Participation in high-impact practices
According to the AAC& U, member institution's breakdown of HIPs participation is as follows:
(http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2015AACUEquityReport.pdf)

	Required of All Students %	Optional %
First-year experiences that support the transition to college	60	31
First-year academic seminars	52	30
Global or world culture studies	52	41
Diversity studies and experiences	34	53
Service learning in courses	14	79
Learning communities	12	59
Undergraduate research	9	87
Practicums and supervised fieldwork	7	90
Internships	6	92
Study abroad	2	94

UWL HIPs partication rates – 2014 NSSE (Seniors only)

High-Impact Practices	Valid %/Mean
Service-Learning (n=505)	77
Capstone (n=507)	64
Internship (n=507)	60
Research (n=502)	28
Study Abroad (n=506)	23
Learning Community (n=506)	22

Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on the Probability of Returning for the Second Year of College by Race

*Source: George Kuh, *High Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (AAC&U, 2008)

Impact of Educationally Purposeful Practices on First Academic Year GPA by Race/Ethnicity

*Source: George Kuh, *High Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (AAC&U, 2008)

2. "Emerging awareness among employers that individuals presenting the benefits of an effective general education were more likely to prove more adaptable to change, more inclined to efficient and cooperative work within groups, more appreciative of diversity, and better prepared to learn on the job (AAC&U 2008) (Gaston and Gaff). Would a more integrative GE model coincide more closely with our changing workforce? See email from Provost Morgan from spring 2017 below.

3. Best practices have shifted since our GE program first adopted in 1990. "The GEMs Design Principles for General Education" (2015)
   a. **Proficiency**- "Students should achieve and demonstrate <u>progressively higher levels of proficiency</u> through problem-centered work on significant issues relevant to their interests and aim."

b. **Agency and Self Direction** – "Undergraduate education should <u>enable student to understand the intellectual and personal capacities they are developing</u> that will help them achieve their educational and professional goals…"

c. **Integrative Learning and Problem-Based Inquiry** – "Students should develop and demonstrate <u>proficiency though a combination and integration of curricular, cocurricular, and community-based learning</u>…"

d. **Equity**- GE programs "should be <u>equity-minded in design and implementation</u>"

e. **Transparency and Assessment**- "<u>Students, faculty members, and other stakeholders should understand what proficiencies are being developed in any general education program, course, or activity and how these proficiencies can be demonstrated at key milestones in students' progress toward the degree</u>."

4. Increased complexity of students' lives

5. Rapid growth of knowledge in our fields - as disciplines are becoming more integrative, we need to be deliberate in making connections of new knowledge and ideas for our students.

Gateway Course Passage (courses identified for RFY project – 2015-16; new students)

	Overall	FGEN compared to Overall	SOC compared to Overall
BIO 105	96.3%	-1.7%	-1.4%
CHM 103	93.7%	-2.4%	-2.0%
CST 110	97.6%	-0.7%	-2.8%
ENG 110	97.8%	-0.7%	-1.6%
HIS 101	92.5%	-2.0%	-9.4%
HIS 102	97.0%	-1.1%	-2.2%
MTH 145	94.3%	1.2%	-9.5%
MTH 150	89.9%	-0.8%	-8.4%
PSY 100	95.2%	-1.4%	-6.7%

Caveat: these % are based on very small Ns in some cases b/c it's one year of data

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LA CROSSE

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Office of IRAP   5/17/2017

6. Changing nature of the workplace- "expectations of employers with regard to their employees have evolved from labor (pre-industry), to skills (during the Industrial Revolution), to knowledge (from the 1940s to the 1980s), to <u>insight</u> (today). Insight requires knowledge…but insight is also able to move one beyond the known and familiar into the unanticipated and unfamiliar"

7. Challenges of citizenship in today's world

8. Changing expectations of our students ([A very relevant article.)](#)

Email from Provost Morgan to UWL students, Spring 2017:

   Dear Students,

As Provost, I oversee all of the academic units at UWL and I wanted to send you all a quick email regarding the importance of internships (and/or other professional experience) and provide some fast advice for those of you currently on the job market. Over the past couple of months, Becky Vianden (Director of Career Services at UWL), and I visited several major employers including Logistics Health (LHI), Reinhardt Foods, KwikTrip, and Trane. We asked them to reflect on the types of skills they wanted in our students as interns and employees.

FIRST – we were pleased, and not surprised, to hear each of them speak to the quality of our students. SECOND – the employers really emphasized the importance of applied experience for students - "hands-on" work experience (paid or unpaid/for credit or not) and they stressed the need for the "fit" between the person and the culture of the organization. Each individual we met with emphasized that they can teach a student a technical skill; but they expect/want for the students to have the foundational skills as shown below. Whether you want to work for a profit or non-profit organization – foundational skills wanted remain the same.

The list of skills mentioned by La Crosse area employers mirrors national [research on employers](#) and also reflects many of the goals we have for students embedded in your coursework.

*Critical thinking skills
*Communication
*Leadership
*Initiative
*Being willing to make mistakes and learn
*Effective team member
*Interpersonal skills/ conflict management
*Project management skills
*Data analysis skills

Mission and Statement of Purpose

UWL Mission

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse provides a challenging, dynamic, and diverse learning environment in which the entire university community is fully engaged in supporting student success. Grounded in the liberal arts, UWL fosters curiosity and life-long learning through collaboration, innovation, and the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge. Acknowledging and respecting the contributions of all, UWL is a regional academic and cultural center that prepares students to take their place in a constantly changing world community. The university offers undergraduate programs and degrees in the arts and humanities, health and sciences, education, and business administration. The university offers graduate programs related to areas of emphasis and strength within the institution, including business administration, education, health, the sciences, and the social sciences.

UWL - General Education

General education is the common educational experience for all undergraduates at UWL. It is uniquely concerned with the broad education of the whole person and plays a vital role in preparing students for life beyond the university.

The primary purpose of general education is to cultivate knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for independent learning and thinking. As a result of general education, students will be more knowledgeable in a wide variety of subject matter areas; and also better able and more willing to ask significant questions, seek appropriate solutions to complex problems, make sound judgments and formulate rational beliefs.