Faculty Senate Impact Survey Report
February 2020

Overview

To understand how the proposed redesigned general education curriculum may impact students and departments/programs, Faculty Senate invited voting faculty members to respond to a brief online survey. A total of 43 voting members of the faculty completed the survey. As compared to the current general education curriculum, about half of faculty respondents estimated students' timeline toward graduation would remain the same with the proposed redesigned general education curriculum. Students' timeline to graduation was estimated to increase by about a quarter of respondents. When asked about the impact of the redesign proposal on the need for general education courses from their departments/programs, 40% of faculty respondents expected a decreased need and 26% estimated an increase. Equal numbers of interdisciplinary faculty anticipated a positive, mixed, or negative impact on their majors/programs. Anticipated resources needed to implement the proposed general education redesign included course development funds and opportunities, additional faculty hires, and release time to develop new courses. Details about the survey and a summary of additional specific results are provided below.

Purpose

Faculty Senate was interested in understanding how the proposed redesigned general education curriculum may impact departments/programs and their students. In particular, Senate was interested in understanding how proposed changes to the general education curriculum may impact students' progress toward graduation, the impact on departments/programs, and what type of support departments/programs would likely need to implement the redesigned curriculum.

Process

Procedure

The link to a brief online Qualtrics survey was sent to all voting members of the faculty (*N* = 183) on 11/14, 12/4, and 12/16. A reminder to complete the survey was also mentioned at the December faculty meeting on 12/11/19. Faculty members had five weeks to respond.

Survey

The survey consisted of 19 questions. Because not all items applied to all faculty members (i.e., some items were specific to chairs/directors; some items depended on responses to a previous item), the survey was functionally about 15 items long for most participants. The complete set of survey questions was provided as an attachment to voting faculty members in the emailed invitation to participate.

Faculty respondent characteristics

A total of 43 faculty responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 23%. Faculty in each academic division responded to the survey (see Table 1), and represented approximately a quarter of possible majors/programs (i.e., 21 of an estimated 80 possible majors/programs). Faculty respondents represented views from majors/programs that ranged in size from a minimum of 40 to a maximum of 96 credits (average = 53 credits).

Table 1. Academic Division Representation of Faculty Respondents

Academic Division/Area	*n*	% of respondents
Natural and social sciences	16	38%
Professional studies	15	36%
Fine arts and humanities	10	24%
Library	1	2%

All respondents had either read the revised redesigned general education proposal (81%) or read at least some of it (19%). Among faculty respondents who served as department chairs (29%, *n* = 12) or program directors (9%, *n* = 4), most had discussed the general education redesign proposal with colleagues in their department or program (yes = 63%) or at least somewhat discussed it (25%).

Results: Impact on students and majors/programs (All faculty respondents)

Impact on students: Combined (i.e., redesigned general education and major/program) credits needed to graduate

Most faculty respondents indicated the number of credits required for students in their majors/programs would likely stay the same with the proposed redesigned general education curriculum. In sum, 48% of faculty indicated a likely change in the number of combined required credits (see Table 2).

Table 2. Impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on the number of credits to students need graduate

Impact direction	*n*	% of respondents
Increase	11	26%
Stay the same	20	47%
Decrease	5	11%
Uncertain	5	11%
Not applicable	2	5%

Impact on majors/programs: Number of course sections

Most faculty estimated that the number of general education course sections offered by their major/program would decrease under the proposed redesigned general education curriculum (see Table 3).

Table 3. Impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on course sections

Impact direction	*n*	% of respondents
Increase	7	16%
Stay the same	8	19%
Decrease	17	40%
Uncertain	7	16%
Not applicable	4	9%

Impact on majors/programs: Estimated new course development

Faculty most commonly indicated they would need to develop two new courses should the general education proposal be approved. Responses ranged from 0 to 8 new courses (see Table 4).

Table 4. Impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on the number of new courses that would need to be developed

New courses	*n*	*f*
0	3	111
1	7	1111111
2	11	11111111111
3	1	1
4	4	1111
5	0	
6	0	
7	1	1
8	1	1
Uncertain	8	11111111
Adapt existing	3	111

Please note: when respondents provided a range for the number of new courses, the lower number was used in a range of consecutive numbers (e.g., "1-2 courses" = 1) and the average was used in a range of non-consecutive numbers (e.g., "6-8 courses" = 7).

Impact on majors/programs: Resources needed

Respondents shared what type of resources they would need to implement the redesigned curriculum. Responses were reviewed and placed into one of nine categories. Responses that listed multiple resources were counted in more than one category (see Table 5).

Table 5. Impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on the number of new courses that would need to be developed

Resource type	*f*
Course development (e.g., funds)	9
Uncertain	9
Faculty hire	6
Course release time	6
Additional FTE	3
Implementation information	3
Team teaching allowance	2
Adjunct hire support	1
Not applicable	7

Results: Impact on majors/programs (Chair/Director respondents)

Chair/director responses (*n* = 16)
Respondents who indicated they were chairs or directors (*n* = 16) were asked to provide additional information about the impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on their majors/programs.

Chair/director characteristics (*n* = 15)
Chairs/directors represented departments/programs that offered courses in the core skills (53% of chairs/directors), signature curriculum (80% of chair/directors), and liberal arts foundation (80% of chairs/directors) components of the current general education curriculum. Chair/directors led departments/programs that contributed an average 5.75 core skill (range = 2 to 14 courses), 2.75 signature curriculum (range = .5 to 8), and 8.42 liberal arts foundation courses (range = 1 to 15 courses) to the current general education curriculum. ("Course" referred to the equivalent of a 4-credit course offering).

Chairs/directors most commonly reported that adjunct faculty taught between 20-39% of the general education courses offered by their department/program each year (see Table 6).

Table 6. Percent of current general education courses offered by adjunct instructors

Percent range	*n*	% of chairs/directors
0-19%	4	26%
20-39%	7	47%
40-59%	3	20%
60-79%	0	0%
80-100%	1	7%

Impact on departments/programs: Full-time faculty FTE (*n* = 7)
Seven chairs/directors indicated there would likely be an increased demand for general education courses from their department program in the proposed redesigned general education curriculum. As a follow-up, these chairs/directors were asked two additional questions.

If the proposed redesigned curriculum would likely increase demand for general education courses, and assuming additional sections would be taught by full-time faculty, the likelihood of having ongoing full-time faculty still available to cover major/program course sections varied by department/program (see Table 7).

Table 7. Availability of ongoing full-time faculty to teach major/program courses, assuming increased demand for general education courses in the redesigned curriculum

Availability	*n*	% of chairs/directors
Yes	2	29%
Maybe	1	14%
No	3	43%
Uncertain	1	14%
Not applicable	0	0%
(i.e., increase in general education courses is not expected)		

If the proposed redesigned curriculum would likely increase demand for general education courses, and if there was an increase in the number of proposed Entry-Level Skills and/or Liberal Arts Perspectives (LAAP) general education course sections needed from their department/program, the likelihood of having ongoing full-time faculty still available to cover AUG courses varied by department/program (see Table 8).

Table 8. Availability of ongoing full-time faculty to teach proposed AUG courses, assuming increased demand for general education courses in the redesigned curriculum

Availability	*n*	% of chairs/directors
Yes	3	42%
Maybe	2	29%
No	2	29%
Uncertain	0	0%
Not applicable	0	0%
(i.e., increase in general education courses is not expected)		

Results: Impact on interdisciplinary majors/programs (Interdisciplinary respondents)

Interdisciplinary faculty (*n* = 15)

To understand the potential impact of the redesigned general education curriculum on interdisciplinary majors/programs, faculty in these programs were invited to respond to additional questions. Results in this section are based on responses from 15 faculty members in interdisciplinary programs.

Interdisciplinary fit in proposed redesigned general education curriculum

Interdisciplinary faculty were asked to list where in the proposed redesigned general education curriculum that courses in their major/program could fit. Respondents could list more than one aspect of the curriculum. The Liberal Arts and Perspectives requirement was most frequently listed (see Table 9).

Table 9. Fit for interdisciplinary majors and programs in the proposed general education curriculum requirements

Fit in proposed curriculum	*f*
LAAP courses	4
Signature courses (i.e., AUGs)	2
Themes: Sustainability	2
Entry skills	1
Fit not apparent	2
Uncertain	3

Interdisciplinary faculty were also invited to indicate their impression of the overall impact of the proposed redesigned general education curriculum on their majors/programs. An equal number of interdisciplinary respondents indicated a positive, mixed, and negative impact on their programs (see Table 10).

Table 10. Impact on interdisciplinary majors/programs

Impact	*n*	% of interdisciplinary faculty respondents
Positive	4	25%
Mixed	4	25%
Negative	4	25%
No impact	2	12.5%
Not applicable	2	12.5%

Results: AUG and Global Engagement proposed requirements (All faculty respondents)

Proposed signature curriculum: Interest in teaching an AUG course

If a reduction in general education courses in the redesigned general education curriculum in one's major/program was expected, the majority of faculty indicated they would "maybe" be interested in teaching an AUG course (see Table 11).

Table 11. Interest in teaching an AUG course in the redesigned curriculum

Impact direction	*n*	% of respondents
Yes	8	19%
Maybe	10	23%
No	8	19%
Unclear	6	14%
Not applicable (i.e., decrease not expected)	11	25%

Global Engagement: Major/program preparedness

Faculty were asked to indicate the preparedness of their major/program to offer courses in the proposed Global Engagement requirement, a requirement that requires immersion or community-based

courses or building intercultural knowledge and skills, for example. The majority of respondents indicated their majors/programs were “very” or “somewhat” equipped to offer courses in this proposed requirement (see Table 12).

Table 12. Readiness to offer courses in the proposal Global Engagement LAAP

Readiness	*n*	% of respondents
Very equipped	14	33%
Somewhat equipped	14	33%
Not yet equipped	4	10%
Uncertain	4	10%
Not applicable	6	14%

Results: Additional feedback

In the final question, faculty were offered the option to provide additional thoughts about the general education proposal. Responses centered on 11 different themes. When a response listed multiple themes, each theme was counted (see Table 13).

Table 13. Additional comments about the general education redesign proposal

Response theme	*f*
Request for additional clarification	111111
Support for the proposal	1111
Concern about impact on sciences	1111
Concern about impact on transfer students	111
Questions about implementation	11
Questions about course approval process	11
Concern about impact on humanities	11
Questions about the financial impact	11
Like flexibility of proposal/LAAPs	11
Wellness category is too broad	1
Fit of interdisciplinary majors/programs	1