

## GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES PROPOSAL

We would like to begin by thanking you for taking the time to review this proposal -- a proposal that is timely and important to our accreditation, yet nonetheless comes to you in the midst of everything else you are doing to keep the work of the University moving forward during this unprecedented time. We are grateful for your thoughtful review of this proposal and for the online discussion/vote that follows.

The proposed general education learning outcomes (GELOs) represent an opportunity to strengthen program-level assessment in general education. Identifying program-level learning outcomes is a necessary initial step toward creating a more robust assessment of our general education curriculum, a charge the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) issued in their August 2019 report.

Specifically, we seek faculty approval on four proposed general education learning outcome *domains* and *statements*: Communication, Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Values (see Table 1 on page 2). The proposed general education learning outcomes were designed to summarize student learning in our current general education curriculum.

To better fit with your time availability, we offer three levels of detail for your review. Please select what works best for you.

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### HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW

#### WHAT THIS PROPOSAL IS:

--**Four general education learning outcomes** that **summarize the 90 approved learning objectives in our current general education curriculum** (see Table 1 on page 2 for the proposed general education learning outcomes; see the Appendices on pages 6 - 9 for the 90 learning objectives and the corresponding general education learning outcome).

--**Important and relevant to accreditation.** This proposal is in part a response to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) charge to create a more robust assessment of our general education curriculum and to do so in a timely fashion.

--**Manageable.** When conducting program-level assessment of student learning in our general education curriculum, it is more feasible to assess 4 learning outcomes than to assess 90 learning objectives.

--**Supported.** The Assessment Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and Faculty Senate support this proposal.

#### WHAT THIS PROPOSAL IS NOT:

--**The redesigned general education proposal.** There are two separate proposals related to general education under review this year.

--**Change.** Voting yes on this proposal has no impact on what courses are taught in general education, what future courses are approved in general education, or what faculty are teaching in general education courses. To reiterate, the proposed learning outcomes summarize existing learning objectives as a necessary step toward program-level assessment of our general education curriculum.

--**Perfect.** The learning outcomes do not include everything that happens in general education courses. The outcomes were designed to be broad, flexible, manageable, and include the most salient features of existing learning objectives. To include everything would ultimately bring us back to the original 90 learning objectives.

--**Institutional assessment.** This proposal represents learning that may only occur in general education -- it is not intended to include everything we hope students will learn in their time at Augsburg University.

### VOTING

**A yes vote** indicates you support the proposed four general education learning outcomes (i.e., domains and statements). If approved, an expanded program-level assessment of general education can quickly move forward, as the HLC recommends.

**A no vote** indicates you do not support the proposed four general education learning outcomes (e.g., the outcomes neither adequately align with nor sufficiently summarize the 90 existing learning objectives in our existing general education curriculum.) If this proposal is not approved, program-level assessment in general education will be delayed and consequently we will need to redouble our efforts to make progress on general education assessment in time for an interim report due to the HLC in April 2022.

### OUR THANKS

Thank you for reviewing this proposal. We would also like to thank our colleagues who provided feedback on earlier versions of the proposed learning outcomes: 18 faculty/staff disciplinary/general education consultants, 35 faculty who provided feedback in an online survey, and the 27 faculty/staff who provided feedback at the Assessment Workshop. Please continue reading for more detailed information about the proposal and/or contact Stacy Freiheit, Ben Denking, or Dave Matz with questions.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the Higher Learning Commission's recommendation in August 2019 to create a more robust assessment of our general education curriculum, faculty approval is requested on four proposed general education learning outcome *domains* and *statements* listed below (see Table 1): Communication, Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Values.

The proposed general education learning outcomes are intended to **summarize existing learning objectives** ( $n = 90$ ) in the general education curriculum, to represent requirements that may only occur in general education (i.e., students' only exposure to the content and skills is in general education courses), and to map to the University's mission and institutional learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are an important aspect of program assessment; this proposal is an initial step toward strengthening assessment in general education.

The four proposed general education learning outcome *domains* and *statements* were designed in ways that could be assessed, contained one verb, and represented the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy expected in the general education curriculum. To capture learning across multiple disciplines, the *statements* are intentionally broad, flexible, and represent the most salient feature(s) common across existing relevant learning objectives.

The four proposed general education learning outcome *domains* and *statements* were approved by the Assessment Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and Faculty Senate, and reviewed by Student Government. Though a faculty vote is not requested on the *subdomains*, please note that these were approved by the Assessment Committee and Academic Affairs Committee. Information on the *subdomains* was provided to illustrate how elements in the current general education curriculum map to the Values domain (please see the [learning outcome map](#)).

Additional information about the impetus, process, and rationale for this proposal continues on page 3.

**Table 1. PROPOSED GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES**

DOMAIN	(SUBDOMAINS)	STATEMENT
COMMUNICATION		Demonstrate effective expression of ideas
INTEGRATIVE LEARNING		Identify, evaluate or design solutions based on knowledge, skills, and values from multiple disciplines
QUANTITATIVE REASONING		Apply mathematical concepts to understand and solve problems
VALUES		Appraise one's own beliefs in relation to other value systems
	VOCATION	Evaluate what vocation means for oneself and one's future
	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Demonstrate knowledge of and involvement with people in local to global communities
	WELLNESS	Apply knowledge related to individual, group, and/or environmental health

*Note.* Please refer to the linked [learning outcome map](#) for additional information. The linked document has tabs for both the current and proposed redesigned general education curriculum. Information contained in the draft learning outcome map is provided for additional context and illustration (i.e., we are not seeking approval on the entire map; we seek approval only on the four "domains" and their accompanying "statements").

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/FAQs

### Why do we need general education learning outcomes?

It is important to understand student learning in our general education curriculum. Though some assessments of the general education curriculum have occurred, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) determined the assessment of general education was “met with concern” in August 2019. Relevant statements in HLC’s report include:

*However, evidence is lacking in the analysis and evaluation of these rubrics [referring here to VALUE rubrics] and there is no evidence of mapping general education courses to the learning outcomes. The current assessment plan for the general education curriculum does not include all the courses within the curriculum.*

*(from “Evidence” in section 3.B of the August 2019 HLC report)*

*If the faculty approves a new general education program in the fall of 2019, this report should proceed from that perspective. However, if no changes are approved in the fall or if the changes are delayed, Augsburg should not let this deter them from aggressively designing assessment practices, creating links with outcomes for each course in the general education program, and providing evidence that changes have been made or actions affirmed based on assessment activities.*

*(from section 4.S of the August 2019 HLC report)*

*By April 2022, submit an Interim Report on the Progress of Assessment of General Education. This report should include two important elements:*

*--Mapping all courses to the undergraduate learning outcomes*

*--Including all courses in the assessment of each undergraduate learning outcome*

*(from section 4.S of the August 2019 HLC report)*

In response to the HLC report, and in consultation with Kristen Chamberlain, Assessment Director (fall 2019), it was determined that the first step in creating a more robust assessment of the general education curriculum was to identify a set of general education learning outcomes.

### How were the proposed general education learning outcomes developed?

The proposed general education learning outcomes were created based on an internal review of the 90 learning objectives listed for the current general education curriculum and on an external review of general education learning outcomes at peer and local institutions. and on a review of the redesigned general education proposal, currently under faculty review.

**Internal review of current general education outcomes.** Documentation for learning outcomes in the current general education curriculum were gathered from the [Academic Affairs website](#), and when not available there, were requested from department chairs/program directors. A review of these documents yielded a list of 90 individual learning objectives. Combined with the fact that there are currently 470 approved courses in the general education curriculum, it was important to create a manageable set of general education learning outcomes.

An analysis of the 90 documented general education learning objectives indicated overlap among many of the statements. When similar learning objectives were combined, the following learning objective categories emerged.

- Disciplinary Knowledge, Attitudes/Values, Skills ( $n = 25$ )
- Skills: Writing, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Communication ( $n = 35$ )
- Values: Vocation/Meaning ( $n = 13$ ), Wellness ( $n = 8$ ), Community Engagement ( $n = 9$ )

**External examples of general education outcomes.** In addition to the internal review, examples of general education learning outcomes from external institutions were gathered. A review of websites from a list of peer/regional/aspirant (the choice of institutions was generated by a consultant for a prior initiative) and local institutions was conducted. Seven institutions listed learning outcomes for general education (i.e., Saint Xavier University (IL), Mt. St. Mary’s University (CA), Pacific Lutheran University, Le Moyne College (NY), University of St. Thomas (MN), Bethel University (MN)). Results indicated:

- The number of general education learning objectives at the seven institutions ranged from 3 to 15 objectives
- An examination of named high-level learning objectives (i.e., sub-points within objectives were not included) indicated that critical thinking, integrative learning, distribution requirements, and diversity were the most commonly named objectives in general education (see Table 2).

Table 2. The frequency of general education learning outcomes at external institutions ( $n = 7$ )

Learning outcome	<i>f</i>	Distribution
Critical Thinking	6	111111
Integrative Learning	5	11111
Distribution Requirements	5	11111
Diversity	5	11111
Institutional Value	4	1111
Ethics	3	111
Quantitative Reasoning/ Math	3	111
Communication	3	111
Writing	3	111
Global Understanding	2	11
Information Literacy	2	11

The number of institutions in this analysis was small and yet indicated there are a range of ways to effectively articulate general education learning outcomes.

### **What was the rationale for the proposed general education learning outcomes?**

In consultation and collaboration with the Assessment Committee, and based on feedback on earlier drafts of general education learning outcomes, it was determined that an effective set of general education learning outcomes would have the following characteristics:

- the domains would be broad, flexible, non-overlapping, and capture outcomes for which students' only exposure could potentially be in the general education curriculum
- the learning outcome statements could be assessed, contain one verb, and represent the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy expected in the general education curriculum across courses in that domain
- applied to the current general education curriculum and could potentially apply to the proposed general education curriculum design, should that be approved

### **How do the proposed general education learning outcomes map onto the institutional learning outcomes?**

Please refer to the linked [general education learning outcome map](#) for information about how each proposed general education learning outcome maps onto institutional learning outcomes.

### **If the general education redesign proposal is approved, will we need to create a new set of learning outcomes for general education?**

The general education learning outcomes could be applied to the proposed redesigned general education curriculum, should it be approved (please refer to this [table](#) for an example: the first tab applies to the current curriculum; the second tab applies to the proposed redesigned curriculum).

### **What is the process for creating and approving the general education learning outcomes?**

- September 2019 -- Initial consultation with Assessment Director and Deans
- October 2019 -- Conduct internal and external review of general education learning objectives
- November 2019 -- Assessment Committee reviewed and recommended revision to first draft
- December 2019 -- Assessment Committee unanimously approved the current general education learning outcomes
- December to January 2019 -- Disciplinary consultants provided feedback
- January 2020 -- Full faculty invited to offer feedback via online survey
- February 2020 -- AAC review, Student Government, Assessment Workshop feedback
- March 2020 -- Senate review
- April 2020 -- Faculty first reading, second reading, and vote
- May 2020 -- Board of Regents review and vote

### **What is the process for revising general education learning outcomes in the future?**

Consistent with the process sought with the current proposal, it is recommended that for any future revision to the general education learning outcomes:

- revision to the *domains* and *statements* would be proposed by General Education, approved by the Assessment Committee, and then approved through the shared governance process.
- revision to *subdomains* and their accompanying *statements* would be proposed by General Education and approved by the Assessment Committee.

This proposed process is intended to maintain the integrity of the four general education learning outcome *domains* while and at the same time support flexibility and innovation within them (i.e., the *subdomains*).

## Appendix A

### COMMUNICATION

The proposed learning outcome and relevant current existing learning objectives are provided below.

#### Proposed Learning Outcome

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COMMUNICATION: Demonstrate effective expression of ideas

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#### Existing Learning Objectives

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##### **Effective Writing learning objectives**

1. Use a variety of methods to generate ideas
2. Discover and develop a thesis statement
3. Organize material using the methods appropriate to purpose, content, and audience
4. Use basic methods of coherence and transition
5. Write papers relatively free of errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar
6. Complete a research assignment
7. Demonstrate an increasing ability to evaluate their own writing
8. Read, analyze, and write about one substantial literary work

##### **Core Skills: Writing learning objectives**

1. Write for a variety of audiences in several forms relevant to their discipline
2. Use their research, analytical, and other critical thinking skills effectively in their writing
3. Revise, edit, and proofread their writing
4. Structure, organize, and document their writing and arguments effectively in accordance with the conventions of the discipline
5. Tailor their writing to a variety of audiences and communicate through several forms relevant to particular disciplines and audiences
6. Use writing to develop effective research, analysis, and critical thinking
7. Revise and edit their writing, individually and in collaboration with others
8. Structure and organize their writing effectively and use documentation and styles of argumentation suitable for a particular audience of discipline.

##### **Core Skills: Speaking learning objectives**

1. Content: students are able to clearly state the purpose of communication, choose content and level appropriate to audience, present sufficient and relevant detail, credible evidence, and visual aids as appropriate, and present info such that the audience understands the purpose and key ideas of the communication.
2. Organization: Students are able to emphasize key ideas, use clear structure including strong transitions, use time appropriately, present info such that the audience can follow the flow of communication.
3. Verbal delivery: Students are able to modulate their voice in a manner that is appropriate to the occasion and positively engages the audience, use respectful language, use appropriate grammar, pronunciation and articulation, and use proper fluency and a pace of presentation that is appropriate to the purpose and audience.
4. Non-verbal delivery: Students are able to use gestures, posture, mannerisms, and movement that enhance the verbal presentation, use eye contact and proximity to maintain engagement, use visual aids and demonstrations effectively, if appropriate, and engage an audience in the presentation.

##### **Modern Languages learning objective [map](#)**

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## Appendix B

### INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

The proposed learning outcome and relevant current existing learning objectives are provided below.

#### Proposed Learning Outcome

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INTEGRATIVE LEARNING: Identify, evaluate, or design solutions based on knowledge, skills, and values from multiple disciplines

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#### Existing Learning Objectives

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##### **Keystone learning objectives**

1. Students will reflect on their Augsburg education, including curricular and co-curricular experiences.
2. Students will reflect on the components of the Augsburg mission statement
3. Students will reflect on the concept of vocation.

##### **Augsburg Experience learning objectives**

1. Describe the goals, mission, and needs of the external organization (defined elsewhere more broadly - people, organizations, communities, activities or travel)
2. Stating how their coursework in their major field and in general education applies to the Augsburg Experience
3. Identifying specific linkages between concepts and practices in courses they have taken with the Augsburg Experience.
4. Articulating the value and advantage of linking what is learned in their major or another area of their Augsburg education with the external audience or situation.

**Liberal Arts Foundation (i.e., Natural Science & Mathematics, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Fine Arts, Humanities)** breadth learning objectives and **Critical Thinking Skill** learning objectives also map up to this general education learning outcome.

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**Appendix C****QUANTITATIVE REASONING**

The proposed learning outcome and relevant current existing learning objectives are provided below.

**Proposed Learning Outcome**

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QUANTITATIVE REASONING: Apply mathematical concepts to understand and solve problems

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**Existing Learning Objectives**

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**Core Skills: Quantitative Reasoning learning objectives**

1. Know and apply mathematical relationships (graphical, symbolic, numerical, proportions, percents, estimation)
  2. Know and apply statistical relationships (data analysis, graphical analysis, elementary probability)
  3. Know and apply algebraic relationships (modeling, functions, algebraic representations)
  4. Know and apply logical analysis (deductive reasoning, fallacies, arguments, counter examples)
  5. Recognize implicit and explicit quantitative claims in discourse and evaluate and test such claims critically
  6. Pose quantitative questions
  7. Make and communicate reasoned choices as to applicable quantitative methods for the questions posed and the data considered
  8. Apply quantitative methods to quantitative data
  9. Use the results of applied quantitative methods to reason and articulate answers to a question.
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## Appendix D

### VALUES

The proposed learning outcome and relevant current existing learning objectives are provided below.

#### Proposed Learning Outcome

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VALUES: Appraise one's own beliefs in relation to other value systems

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#### Existing Learning Objectives

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##### ***Search for Meaning I & II* learning objectives**

1. Explain why religion matters and how it functions
2. Remember and comprehend some of the Bible's key stories and texts
3. Explain what "vocation" means
4. Describe several of the central faith claims of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam
5. Converse respectfully about their own beliefs or values in relation to the claims of others
6. Learn and use basic religious and biblical vocabulary
7. Describe how religious and philosophical claims are involved in contemporary issues.
8. Gain an understanding of the impact of religion on culture
9. Recognize ways that religion contributes to human self-understanding
10. Examine the place of religion in your own experiences

##### ***Wellness* learning objectives**

1. Students will be aware of the components and benefits of lifelong physical fitness and how they relate to lifestyle of health and wellness.
2. Students will gain the necessary skills to design and maintain a lifestyle of fitness and wellness.
3. Students will learn to see exercise as play, fun, and a means to reduce stress.
4. Students will have the knowledge to be motivated to make proactive choices that lead to a healthier lifestyle.
5. Students will learn to implement goal setting as a beneficial technique to help insure personal fulfillment in health and wellness.
6. Students will be able to identify the dimensions of wellness and incorporate them into their daily choices.
7. Students will be able to identify the relationship of stress to health and wellness.
8. Students will have the knowledge of basic everyday nutrition.
9. Students will review the components and benefits of physical activity.
10. Students will learn the knowledge and skills needed to participate in \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Students will enjoy recreational exercise in the form of \_\_\_\_\_.

##### ***Engaging Minneapolis* learning objectives**

1. Student critically reflect upon their orientation to and experience with the resources and opportunities of Augsburg's urban location
2. Students understand and appreciate the diversity and interconnectedness of Augsburg's urban community.

##### ***AugSem* learning objectives**

1. Encounter the community
2. Engage the learning process
3. Explore the self as a scholar

***Augsburg Experience* learning objectives (see Appendix B) also fit here**

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