American Undergraduate General Education: Why It Matters, What It Means at Clemson, & All About Crossings

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5/02/22
Game: Poll

What is the top reason students attend college?

https://heri.ucla.edu/publications-tfs/
Overview of our session on Undergraduate General Education

I. Why it matters – talking to new students and parents

II. What it means at Clemson

III. All about Crossings
What IS General Education?

- aka – “liberal education” for *liberating the mind* (not a political word!)
- adjective, not noun
  - General Education *Program*
  - General Education *Curriculum*
- knowledge, skills, and intellectual attributes for *all students, regardless of major*
  - NOT simple foundational skills that then enable students to do the “real work” in the major
  - NOT an inoculation of the basics so that students no longer have to cover them in the major
- more than a list of courses
The Baccalaureate Degree

European model

American model
Recent Global Shifts toward American Model

- Singapore
- Hong Kong
- India

National Education Policy 2020

Reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to be more interdisciplinary and multi-lingual

“If a student wants to pursue fashion studies with physics, or if one wants to learn bakery with chemistry, they'll be allowed to do so”.

Changes to grade reports to be more holistic, info about skills not just test scores

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
What colleges want from our students:

- I think critically about significant issues!
- I am broadly educated and technically skilled!
- I am intellectually and ethically developed!
- I am an informed and productive citizen!
Most Frequently Identified Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Learning

- Written communication: 90%
- Critical thinking/analytical reasoning: 87%
- Oral communication: 78%
- Quantitative reasoning: 77%
- Intercultural competence: 62%
- Information literacy: 56%
- Ethical judgment/reasoning: 55%
- Scientific literacy: 55%
- Problem-solving: 54%
- Application in real-world settings: 44%
- Creative thinking: 43%
- Ability to work effectively in teams: 37%
- Integrative learning: 36%
- Civic skills: 34%
- Digital literacy: 29%

AAC&U and Hanover Research. 2022

“On the Same Page?”

https://www.aacu.org/research/on-the-same-page
What do we want our students to know and do regardless of major? – from Clemson faculty & staff

- Develop *critical thinking, ethical decision-making*, and draw on *multiple perspectives*
- *Integrate learning* across disciplines to form *global citizens*
- *Apply intercultural competency* and *global awareness*
- *Connect disciplines*
- Honor the land grant mission and *prepare citizens* for a democratic society
- *Engage in evidence-based civil discourse*

Clemson University data & focus groups, 2017-2020
What types of academic experiences are most beneficial to you? – from Clemson students

- Coursework that is contemporary and applicable
- When it helps me find my passions
- Those that have real-world connections
- When I’m challenged in my views to analyze broad viewpoints that are not just the professors' viewpoints
- Moving beyond theory to application
- Opportunities like Creative Inquiry, CEDC, service-learning, the Global Health Certificate, and being part of teams with students outside my major

Clemson University data & focus groups, 2017-2020
## What do employers want?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not at all/Not very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work effectively in teams</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to analyze and interpret data</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of knowledge/skills in real-world settings</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital literacy</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to demonstrate complex problem-solving skills</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical judgment and reasoning</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate through writing</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why so much emphasis on the major?

Diverse educational paths often collapse into a few career functions.

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## What are the impacts of a General Education Curriculum?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Continued learning</th>
<th>Life-long fulfilment</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Short-term success</th>
<th>Financial earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Skill Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors encouraging the examination of strengths and weaknesses of one's own views.**</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions of questions to which there is not necessarily a right answer.**</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Larger perspectives and experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations with others who have very different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.**</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing issues such as peace, justice, human rights, equality, and race relations.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Span of learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of courses completed unrelated to one's major or similar fields.**</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of philosophical, ethical, and literary perspectives on the human condition in most classes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**=2-3x greater impacts for students with low socioeconomic resources

Communicating ‘Core Competencies’ To Students

- NOT soft skills – empowerment skills!
- Need intentionality, reflection

Engagement
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Leadership

Innovation
- Adaptability
- Analytical Skills
- Technology

Professionalism
- Self-Awareness
- Integrity & Ethics
- Brand

Why it matters – talking to new students and parents

https://career.sites.clemson.edu/core/
II.) General Education: What It Means at Clemson
## General Education Models & Design

**Foundation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>2nd year</th>
<th>3rd year</th>
<th>4th year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General education</td>
<td>General education</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gradually specialize**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>2nd year</th>
<th>3rd year</th>
<th>4th year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General education</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reinforce, extend, integrate, make meaning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>2nd year</th>
<th>3rd year</th>
<th>4th year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General education</td>
<td>General education</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also *General Education Essentials*. Paul Hanstedt. 2012.

Virginia Tech: [https://www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/minors/showcase.html](https://www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/minors/showcase.html)

Boston University: [https://www.bu.edu/hub/](https://www.bu.edu/hub/)
Integration: General Education Curriculum at Clemson

Why ‘Crossings’?

- skills, knowledge, and intellectual development acquired in the general education curriculum crosses with those in the major course of study
- theoretical knowledge crosses into engaged learning and practical applications
- students cross from novice to professional

Clemson.edu/Crossings
National Trend: High-impact practices (HIPs)

❖ First-year seminars
❖ Learning community
❖ Student-faculty research
❖ Study abroad
❖ Service-learning
❖ Internships
❖ Senior experience/capstone

### Required High-Impact Educational Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Required in General Education</th>
<th>Required in Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Seminars and Experiences</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Intellectual Experiences</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Communities</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Learning</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning, Community-Based Learning</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Courses and Projects</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing-Intensive Courses</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Assignments and Projects</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Research</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ePortfolios</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration of Diverse Perspectives</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UN Sustainable Development Goals – Infuse HIPs and Curricula

1. NO POVERTY
2. NO HUNGER
3. GOOD HEALTH
4. QUALITY EDUCATION
5. GENDER EQUALITY
6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7. RENEWABLE ENERGY
8. GOOD JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9. INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION
13. CLIMATE ACTION
14. LIFE BELOW WATER
15. LIFE ON LAND
16. PEACE AND JUSTICE
17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
III.) General Education: All About Crossings

A.) Your Tools
- Clemson.edu/Crossings
- Catalog.Clemson.edu
- Advising manual
III.) General Education: All About Crossings

B.) Course substitutions
- Communication & Ways of Knowing - transfer courses
- Banner attribute v. catalog year
III.) General Education: All About Crossings

C.) Courses to fulfill Global Challenges

- 6 hours ≠ 2 3-hour courses
- Don’t always try to find a course in 1st year
- Use degree map