EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Report on the General Education Program:
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Compiled by the
General Education Review Committee
(GERC)

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*Criteria are based on expectations of EMU’s accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html).
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction
The General Education Review Committee (GERC) implemented an analytical model for gathering information and examining data about Eastern Michigan University’s “General Education Program: Education for Participation in the Global Community” for the purposes of compiling the current status of the program. This report is the result of work that began in December 2013 and concluded in April 2015, and contributors included the current and past committee members. The committee met biweekly throughout the four semesters it carried out its charge.

The committee uncovered numerous strengths of the program and areas for improvement, including opportunities that can support EMU’s development of the program. The GERC’s task, required by the program’s implementation document and by the Provost’s Office, was to engage in assessment and reflection of (at least) the following:

- An evaluation of supporting processes;
- Instructor suggestions regarding the program itself and potential enhancements;
- Comparisons with peer institutions and best practices;
- Employer feedback on program content and student outcomes;
- Effectiveness of the program with respect to the partnerships EMU maintains with other institutions.

Implementation
The GERC divided into subcommittees that focused on different components (described below), including one subcommittee devoted to examining data from the office of Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM). The process for reviewing the General Education Program included the four following actions that helped to provide a structured and analytical process.

1. Linking to Accreditation Criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. In order to thoroughly review the program and address the above task, the GERC used the Higher Learning Commission’s five criteria for accreditation, a model also used by EMU’s College of Arts and Sciences for program review. (For HLC’s “The Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components,” go to: https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html.) The criteria assessed include: (1) Mission; (2) Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct; (3) Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support; (4) Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement; and (5) Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.

2. Conducting Analyses of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The accreditation model also provides a list of questions and suggested data sources for each criterion, and the committee conducted a SWOT analysis for all criteria except for Criterion 1 (“Mission”).

3. Designing, Distributing and Analyzing Results from Instructor Questionnaire. During Winter 2013 an ad hoc committee of the General Education Program drafted and distributed an initial questionnaire to elicit feedback on questions about an example aspect of the program. In Fall 2014, the committee designed a more comprehensive instructor questionnaire that was distributed, and the results analyzed in Winter 2015. The feedback from instructors generated a number of insights regarding the particular successes of the program as well as under-explored opportunities.

4. Comparing EMU’s General Education Program to Representative Institutions’ Programs. As recounted below in Criterion #1, the GERC analyzed General Education programs from representative universities for purposes of comparison and contrast.
Note on “Employer Feedback”: The committee did not directly solicit representative employer feedback, although the report does so indirectly, addressing selected employer concerns and needs at several points in the review.

Timeline

- **Fall 2013** – Initial committee meeting to discuss its charge and the nature of the program review.
- **Winter 2014** – The committee gathers resources and considers various benchmarking possibilities; the committee decides on the Higher Learning Commission framework, used by EMU’s CAS to evaluate programs.
- **Summer 2014** – The committee’s co-chairs continue to collect and analyze data.
- **Fall 2014** – The committee divides into subcommittees to adapt the HCL Program Review Rubric for a General Education Program; subcommittees use the rubric to pursue additional data sources and begin SWOT analysis; additional data sources are sought, considered, and reviewed. The committee drafts and administers Instructor Questionnaire.
- **Winter 2015** – The subcommittees draft their respective sections of the review; a new subcommittee addresses Digital Literacy and Technology; the committee evaluates and suggests revisions and additions to the subcommittee drafts; a complete draft is developed.

Themes

**Flexibility and “High Impact Practices” and Need for Addressing Digital Literacy, Information Literacy, and Technology.** The General Education Program, Education for Participation in the Global Community lines up very well with benchmark institutions. In 2007, EMU’s General Education Program received an award from the Association for General and Liberal Studies for its improvements to General Education. The General Education Program’s focus on options and exploration across a number of critical dimensions, as well as High Impact Practices, such as a focus on Learning Beyond the Classroom, mark it as a high-quality program. While the General Education Program has many strengths, the program has yet to provide an innovative or comprehensive way to address Digital Literacy, Information Literacy, and Technology, and especially its role and impact on citizenship and personal relationships.

**Opportunities to Explore a Range of Disciplines and Branches of Inquiry.** The General Education Program offers a robust selection of courses, providing students with the opportunity to explore a wide range of courses and disciplines on their path to graduation. The program provides students with critical opportunities to learn about many branches of inquiry and methodologies through an approach that critically connects these skills to course content. Further, the program inventively connects students to critical learning that extends beyond the classroom context.

**Challenge of Student Credit Hour Production and Misconceptions of the General Education Program.** The Instructor Questionnaire (distributed in Winter 2015) associated with this review revealed a number of concerns, opportunities, and helpful suggestions regarding the future of the General Education Program. However, it also revealed a number of misconceptions of the program, primarily in its goals and requirements. Two major threats to the program’s success were also revealed, as follows: (1) The use of Student Credit Hour (SCH) models for the evaluation of programs leads to (actual and potential) political battles over the General Education Program, which houses a large number of SCHs. Attempts to track students into particular courses in order to improve SCH production is antithetical to one of the program’s main virtues – flexibility. (2) The General Education program suffers from a public relations challenge. The program is not well understood by EMU instructors. The General Education Program has a well-maintained website, complete with critical information, but this appears insufficient to the task of informing instructors of the goals and processes associated with the program. These difficulties suggest opportunities to address instructors’ needs and for understanding of the program, as well as outreach to connect instructors across the General Education Program.
Assessment of Student Learning in the General Education Program. The current iteration of the General Education Subcommittee on Assessment (GESA) has worked this past year to build on the efforts of the previous subcommittee. Although there are numerous challenges, the GESA early efforts have proven to be auspicious.

The Need for Macro-Level Support and Resources. There is need for greater support and resources at the macro-level of the General Education Program. There is insufficient top-level staffing for innovation, creative problem solving, and programmatic decision-making; in part, this is due to the fact that the program did not receive the initially proposed staffing. Related issues include a need to strengthen and enhance the communication between the program's top level and the departments that make staffing and scheduling decisions for the program. There are unrealized opportunities due to the paucity of macro-level structure, including, but not limited to, the support of interdisciplinary work, the coordination of resources for instructors, professional development for instructors, and the integration of new ideas about General Education into the standing program.

The General Education Program is in the Process of Achieving its Goals and Purposes. The program continues to enroll and attract students and to connect EMU students to critical ideas for participation in a global community. Threats and opportunities abound, but the program remains committed to supporting students as they prepare for more innovative global and local communities.

Recommendations
The review presents numerous recommendations. As prioritized by the General Education Review Committee, five are highlighted. The committee urges readers of the report to strongly consider addressing all recommendations listed for each criterion, but the following are the most critical.

1. Form and Support a Committee to Explore the Technology Needs of the General Education Program. In particular, a committee on technology must address professional development for instructors in all areas relevant to technology, including, for example, "literacy technology," instructional digital tools, modification of course selection to include digital instruction as outlined by national bodies.

2. Enhance Macro-level Coordination of the General Education Program. This recommendation includes coordinating the program's vision with the needs of stakeholders, supplying necessary resources to meet the program's mission and goals, and negotiating the tension between necessary credit-hour production and the designed purposes of the program.

3. Develop and Ensure Quality of Instruction. Turnover among instructors who teach EMU's General Education courses, as well as the natural development of syllabi over time, poses a challenge to the General Education Program. In addition to the initial course vetting, there is a need for continued communication between those who oversee the program and those who teach for it. There are unexploited opportunities to connect instructors with each other and with the program's Director. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, creating informational modules for new instructors, creating venues for instructors to share innovative pedagogies and content, and for developing useful assessment strategies (especially ones related to the General Education Program's Student Learning Outcomes).

4. Continue to Build a High-Quality and Sustainable System for Assessing Student Learning. Continue to support and help the subcommittee on assessment to work with instructors and departments across the university to design and implement a cyclical system of assessment (i.e., from planning assessments, employing them, analyzing student work, and making instructional changes based on findings).
5. *Generate a More Dynamic Public-Relations Campaign for the General Education Program.* EMU must maintain an effective web presence and develop ways to improve communication to all stakeholders about the efficacy and opportunities of the General Education Program.

**CRITERION 1**

**Mission of the General Education Program**

1.1. Does the General Education Program rationale reflect the program’s current activities and goals?

The General Education Program rationale, stated in the General Education Program document, adopted by the Board of Regents in 2005, reads:

*General education is the core of an undergraduate education. It is general in that it provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for study within their major. General education teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively; it provides an introduction to the methodologies and practices of the academic disciplines; it promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning.*

The rationale appears in the university’s Undergraduate Catalog with the following sentence added:

*General education is the heart of an EMU education and a source of institutional pride.*

([http://catalog.emich.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=1933](http://catalog.emich.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=1933))

We find evidence that the General Education Program’s current activities and goals are indeed reflected in the General Education Program rationale. A detailed analysis follows.

*General education is the core of an undergraduate education.* Every undergraduate degree program at EMU requires a student to complete all requirements of the General Education program. It is *general* in that it provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for study within their major. The program consists of the following:

- courses in English composition, oral communication and quantitative reasoning;
- a course in US Diversity and a course in Global Awareness;
- Two courses in each of the four areas: Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences;
- Learning Beyond the Classroom experiences; and
- a Writing Intensive course in the major.

The breadth of the program provides students with a comprehensive educational experience. The required writing, speech and quantitative reasoning courses reinforce and build upon effective communication and quantitative skills that will be needed in major degree programs at EMU. The knowledge of the disciplines courses ground students in the intellectual practices and methodologies that underlie most of the majors at EMU. As evidence, a survey of the majors listed in the Undergraduate Catalog shows that nearly 100% of the 166 majors currently listed in the Undergraduate Catalog require at least one course from the General Education Program (other than the required Writing Intensive course).
General education teaches students to think critically and communicate effectively; it provides an introduction to the methodologies and practices of the academic disciplines; it promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning. Each General Education requirement is defined by a set of outcomes. Following are examples of outcomes that address the various parts of this statement.

**General education teaches students to think critically:**
- [Students] will learn to analyze the situation using arithmetic, geometric, algebraic, and probabilistic or statistical methods. (Quantitative Reasoning)
- Students will analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources to make informed decisions regarding global issues. (Global Awareness)

**General education teaches students to ... communicate effectively:**
- Students will make explicit choices about the form and content of their writing. (Written Communication)
- The Student is able to communicate oral messages intended for public audiences. (Oral Communication)
- [Students] will learn to share the findings in oral or written reports using appropriate mathematical language. (Quantitative Reasoning)

**General education provides an introduction to the methodologies and practices of the academic disciplines:**
- Students will learn how knowledge is developed and disseminated in particular disciplines. (Knowledge of the Disciplines)

**General education promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning:**
- Students will recognize how the humanities cultivate aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and empathic understanding of others. (Humanities)
- [Students will] engage in informed discussions about the validity of the conclusions from reports in the media relating to the natural sciences. (Natural Sciences)

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**1.2. How is the General Education Program rationale aligned with the University mission and strategic plan objectives?**

The General Education Program focuses on student learning outcomes, whereas EMU's strategic plan focuses on designing an environment that supports faculty and student inquiry and research within and beyond the university, as well as local and national borders. The General Education Program focuses on ensuring that EMU students develop the knowledge, skills, and competence to engage in the world in an ethical and responsible manner, which will enable EMU to be regarded as a premier public university that is recognized for student-centered learning and high quality programs and engagement with the local community.

EMU fosters an environment that focuses on giving students the greatest opportunity to engage in purposeful learning and involvement, so that they can maximize the value of their education. The ideal environment is one in which students are engaged in purposeful inquiry and research inside and outside the classroom, and receive the academic, social, physical and emotional support services that will enable them to be valued members of the university community and become engaged citizens.

The instructors who teach in the General Education Program focus on ensuring that students have opportunities to personalize learning and to engage in inquiry and research of complex problems and issues, and to develop proficiencies such as error detection, integrative knowledge, human unity and diversity,
environmental sustainability, tolerance for uncertainty, understanding of each other, social justice, and ethics of democracy.

EMU’s core values—excellence, respect, inclusiveness, responsibility, and integrity—are realized in an integrated manner as students develop proficiencies in (1) effective communication (written composition, oral communication, rhetoric); (2) quantitative reasoning; (3) perspectives of a diverse world (global awareness, U.S. diversity, and understanding of each other); (4) knowledge of the disciplines (the arts, humanities, foreign language, social science, and the natural sciences); and (5) learning beyond the classroom.

While EMU supports the design and development of academic and research programs, the instructors strive to support students in developing verbal, written fluency and quantitative reasoning skills; and they provide opportunities for students to enhance their understanding of societal differences by learning and interacting with people from different backgrounds in the classroom, and to expand their intercultural awareness by exploring global issues. Those proficiencies are at the heart of student-centered learning, according the Association of American Colleges and Universities (see below).

EMU has systems and processes in place that foster innovation, diversity and ethical conduct in the workplace. The allocation of resources, professional development, and the activities on campus are aimed at ensuring that students receive an excellent education. The General Education Program was designed to ensure that the students are career ready and civic minded. With regards to “career ready,” however, see the next section.

1.3. Consider how national criteria for General Education might be appropriate for supporting the program’s educational goals.

A. AAC&U Principles and LEAP Principles of Excellence

Eastern Michigan University’s values are nearly aligned with the Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U] Principles. EMU values excellence; AAC&U urges making excellence inclusive. EMU values respect; AAC&U encourages colleges and universities to engage students in asking big questions, connecting knowledge, choice and action and assessing students’ ability to solve complex problems. EMU values accountability and individual and team commitment; AAC&U suggests giving students a moral compass and teaching the arts of inquiry and innovation. EMU values inclusiveness; AAC&U urges fostering civic intercultural, and ethical reasoning and emphasizing personal responsibility. EMU values integrity and transparency; AAC&U encourages creating a campus climate that fosters ethical and academic integrity to promote civic responsibility and perspective taking in order to develop informed decision-making.

The Eastern Michigan University General Education program is somewhat aligned with the principles and essential outcomes of the Liberal Education Academic Programs (LEAP) campaign organized by the AAC&U. The LEAP Program is a research-based program that has been developed over the time EMU has implemented the General Education Program, so EMU can learn from the national initiative. The AAC&U generated principles for learning and three broad categories of learning outcomes that undergraduates develop as they encounter coursework in undergraduate programs: (1) intellectual and practical skills; (2) personal and social responsibility; and (3) integrative and applied learning. In addition, AAC&U developed rubrics that programs can use to assess the extent to which learning experiences and tasks enable students to achieve the desired outcomes. These can be found on AAC&U’s website: http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm.

This following table summarizes the LEAP categories of learning outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual and Practical Skills</th>
<th>Personal and Social Responsibility</th>
<th>Integrative and Applied Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Inquiry and analysis</td>
<td>• Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global</td>
<td>• Integrative and applied learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Intercultural knowledge and competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written communication</td>
<td>• Ethical reasoning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Oral communication</td>
<td>• Foundations of skills for lifelong learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reading</td>
<td>• Global learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Quantitative literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Information literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Problem solving</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

EMU's General Education Program's outcomes focus on subject matter content objectives and outcomes, whereas the LEAP program focuses on cross-cutting performance outcomes (http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/leap_vision_summary.pdf). The General Education Program’s learning outcomes are organized by specific disciplinary outcomes, as indicated in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Quantitative Reasoning</th>
<th>Perspectives of a Diverse World</th>
<th>Knowledge of the Disciplines</th>
<th>Learning Beyond the Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>A model for problem solving in quantitative contexts</td>
<td>Global Awareness</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Self and Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>U. S. Diversity</td>
<td>Humanities &amp; Foreign Language</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Community Service, Citizenship and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in the major discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Cultural and Academic Activities and Events</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Career and Professional Development</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>International and Multicultural Experience</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Undergraduate Research</td>
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</table>

While the outcomes are stated as the “students will...,” the program outcomes do not address many of the dimensions that are related to personal and civic outcomes as defined by AAC&U, such as student attitudes. While each syllabus that is reviewed by the General Education Vetting Subcommittee contains information about how the outcomes will be assessed, there is no mechanism in place for the review committee to evaluate the extent to which the program achieves the desired outcomes (see Criterion #4). Some of the program outcomes are most likely evaluated using the standards of professional organizations. Currently, there are, however, no shared and public program assessment rubrics that can be used to evaluate the extent to which the program and courses enable students to achieve those outcomes. (However, the General
Education Subcommittee on Assessment recently completed a phase of program assessment toward these goals. See Criterion #4 for an update on assessing student learning.)

One area that is not represented in the General Education Program is that of technology. In “The Way Forward for Assessment,” on the AAC&U website (http://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/way-forward-assessment), Carol Geary Schneider states:

To stay competitive in the global knowledge economy, employers now actively seek graduates who possess broad knowledge in areas such as science, the global context, and diverse cultures. They also look for graduates with sophisticated analytical, quantitative, and technological skills; excellent communication and intercultural capacities; and the ability to apply their knowledge creatively to real-world challenges and settings.

The General Education Program provides a starting point for all the areas listed here other than “technological skills.” Furthermore, the authors of the LEAP Vision for Learning (2011)² state:

Today, in an economy that is dependent on innovation and global savvy, these outcomes have become the keys to economic vitality and individual opportunity. They are the foundations for American success in all fields—from technology and the sciences to communications and the creative arts. (p. 9)

The authors go on to note that 70% of employers want colleges to place more emphasis on the “essential learning outcomes” of science and technology (emphasis added), (p. 26).

In contrast to this, the GERC notes that the recommendation on technology contained in the General Education Program document adopted by the Board of Regents in 2005 was not implemented. See Appendix 1.1 for the wording of this recommendation, and see also Appendix 1.2 for an excerpt from the Faculty Senate report of October 2004, in which Faculty Senate makes the case for a technology requirement in the General Education Program.

B. PCAST Recommendations
The current General Education Program requirements do not reflect the recommendations of The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) for the inclusion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in higher education. PCAST is an advisory group of the nation's leading scientists and engineers appointed by the President to augment the science and technology advice available to him from inside the White House and from cabinet departments and other Federal agencies³.

According to this group, “economic forecasts point to a need for producing, over the next decade, approximately 1 million more college graduates in STEM fields than expected under current assumptions. Fewer than 40% of students who enter college intending to major in a STEM field complete a STEM degree. Merely increasing the retention of STEM majors from 40% to 50% would generate three-quarters of the targeted 1 million additional STEM degrees over the next decade” (PCAST, 2012, p. 7).

The General Education Program includes the “Science” and the “Mathematics” of STEM, but not the “Technology” or the “Engineering.”

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C. Other Universities

Given EMU’s mission and vision to be a highly respected and nationally recognized public university, it is worthwhile to examine how other universities are reviewing and presenting their programs. Stanford University’s review of its general education program (http://web.stanford.edu/dept/undergrad/sues/SUES_Report.pdf) focused on requirements for graduation, sequencing a liberal education, opportunities to learn outside the classroom, institutional support for advising, general education and innovation, and the appendix contained the committee charge, members, stakeholders surveys, comparison of general education courses with peers. EMU has gathered similar data, but the organization is different.

EMU won the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) Award for an exemplary program in 2007 for fostering students’ abilities to integrate and apply what they learn over time, across courses, and between academic, personal, and community life (http://www.agls.org/exemplaryprogram.htm). James Madison University won the award in 2009 for communicating with stakeholders about the university (http://www.jmu.edu/gened) and Wofford College was the award winner for 2012 for communicating with stakeholders, especially students, about the values (student focused) and resources (http://wwwwofford.edu/). The Wofford College website utilizes connectionist principles and accessible design elements to focus students on the services that the college provides that support students and the student experience—both practical, beyond the classroom and academic, the Dean’s list. The page can be expanded and prospective and continuing students and faculty easily access to relevant information. The 2011 winner was George Mason University. They earned the award by designing an evidence-based general education program (http://www.agls.org/documents/2011ExProgGeorgeMasonU.pdf).

A number of other universities have recently revised their programs in light of the shift from program and course outcomes to student learning outcomes. University of Southern California has done this well (http://dornsife.usc.edu/general-education-program), and the website is student focused and student friendly. Pennsylvania State University provides a link on the website to the bulletin (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergrad/generaleducation/skills2) to ensure that students and faculty and other stakeholders have access to information that is consistent, coherent, and comprehensive.

One other way that the national comparison is helpful is in addressing the new literacies and the new technologies of the Internet. EMU’s General Education Program initially had technology outcomes, but these were never fully incorporated into the program. While most General Education programs promote the importance of information literacy and academic honesty, they do not address how to help students use technology to achieve personal, professional, or civic purposes. There are a few exceptions. One notable exception is the inclusion of the Information Technology program at the University of South Carolina (http://www.hrsm.sc.edu/iit/undergraduate/). In addition, the University at Albany provides an overview of the new requirements for general education. There is information about the review process and information for students and faculty about student planning and transfer course policies. The review resulted in the creation of a category of courses related to “Challenges of the 21st Century” (http://www.albany.edu/generaleducation/).

National comparisons can lead to helpful insights about how to make EMU’s program, program review, and program assessment practices public. This is the essence of research and evidence-based best practice. EMU can learn from other universities. For example, Appalachian State University does a good job publicizing the general education review process (http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/program-review-process), including clarification of the integrative methods (http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/integrative-methods-appalachian) and campus resources (http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/integration-resources-appalachian), including ones off campus resources (http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/integration-resources-campus), and providing faculty with tips for multidisciplinary collaboration (http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/toolbox-integrative-studies). ASU also provides an advising toolkit that describes updates on resources that students and advisors need to use in planning, and it includes
equivelancy agreements between the university and community colleges ([http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/advisors](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/advisors)).

Many universities across the nation are sharing their efforts to plan and implement student-centered, outcome-based, performance-oriented General Education Program reforms. EMU can benefit from considering their approach. Several used the National Survey of Student Experiences to identify the rationale for reform and the conditions that promote and hinder the shift from course and subject matter content to student-centered approaches to teaching and learning. Employer and student surveys provide a good rationale for revising programs. The University of Pittsburgh produced a 29-page report on its research process and planning that went into the design and implementation of an innovative competency-based model of student-centered education, calling attention to the benefits and challenges. Lake Forest College provides a model of program revision that utilizes the AAC&U outcomes as a springboard for planning. The University of Virginia demonstrates how it analyzed and planned its shift to student-centered learning. The writing center at the University of Pittsburgh did research on a one-credit writing intensive course that was offered in each of the disciplines, gathering data on planning, implementation and professional development, and including course data, surveys, focus group discussions and interviews with faculty and students.

### CRITERION 2
**Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct**

**2.1 How does the General Education Program fit within the university? Does the administration of the program ensure fairness, transparency, and proper allocation of resources?**

**Strength 2.1a. Support from University.** The Provost's office supports the General Education Program as part of a broader effort to improve student success and is fully supportive of this General Education Review process. General Education academic outcomes are supported financially in various department and college budgets.

**Strength 2.1b. Oversight of program.** The General Education Advisory Committee oversees the program; minutes of meetings are available upon request. A procedure has been developed for changes to outcomes and to the program. The General Education Director keeps a detailed list of all exceptions made for students.

**Strength 2.1c. Course vetting.** The General Education Vetting Subcommittee, made up of faculty from all colleges, uses agreed-upon criteria for vetting proposed General Education Program courses. The subcommittee works with faculty in any department to help them improve a proposal. Subcommittee minutes and procedures are available upon request. As a result, there are General Education Program courses in all colleges and in nearly all departments.

**Strength 2.1d. Availability of information.** All General Education requirements, together with information about advising, course substitution and waiver policies, transfer student requirements, and Learning Beyond the Classroom requirements, are published online in the university catalog. The General Education Program website provides information about the student learning outcomes that define each General Education requirement; about comparisons with General Education requirements at other universities; and offers an extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions. General, college and departmental advising on General Education Program requirements are available to all students.
**Strength 2.1e. Support from the University Library.** The annual report for EMU Library shows support for the General Education Program in the vision, mission, and allocation of resources for collections, reference and instruction programs.

**Weakness 2.1a. Resource allocation.** Resources are allocated essentially by student demand. Use of student credit hours (SCH) as a measure of department performance can pressure departments to increase General Education offerings. It is not clear to faculty that there are adequate resources to support the General Education Program.

**Weakness 2.1b. Technology component.** While there are trends toward supporting the IT infrastructure on campus, there is no clear indication that there are sufficient resources in the budget to achieve 21st-century technology and learning outcomes within the General Education Program. Indeed, the computer-skills proficiency item in the 2005 proposal was not funded.

**Opportunity 2.1a. Schedule for review.** A schedule could be created for review of the program and its procedures.

**Opportunity 2.1b. Coordination with community colleges.** Coordination between EMU and the community colleges that serve as feeders to the university can provide better advising and coordination of programs of study.

**Opportunity 2.1c. Coordination with stakeholders.** There may be opportunities to coordinate with stakeholders outside of the university both nationally and internationally to build the networks and to provide expertise and technical assistance needed to empower faculty and students to communicate, coordinate, and work collaboratively through the Internet to achieve 21st-century outcomes.

**Threat 2.1a. Overlap with majors.** Some General Education courses are required by many majors, such as Math 120 (required by 31 majors), SPGN 251 (required by 28 majors) and CHEM 121/122 (required by 26 majors). This may mean that some courses will always make adequate enrollment simply because they are required, and that other courses that are not required may not make adequate enrollment.

### 2.2. Are there procedures and processes in place that pursue integrity of scholarship and teaching, ethical use of information and academic honesty within the General Education Program?

**Strength 2.2a. Scholarship of teaching and learning.** There are incentives through the Faculty Development Center to do "scholarship of teaching and learning," and this can apply to General Education courses.

**Strength 2.2b. Ethical use of information and academic honesty.** EMU informs department heads and faculty about FERPA and ethical use of student information. EMU has published standards of conduct for students, available on the University website. Statements on academic honesty appear in the Student Code of Conduct on the University’s website. Over 50% of instructors of General Education courses include statements on academic honesty on their syllabi (based on a random selection of syllabi). The University has a subscription to TurnItIn software ([http://turnitin.com/](http://turnitin.com/)) so that instructors may check student work for text matches. The EMU Library Faculty have created a guide on plagiarism for instructors ([http://guides.emich.edu/plagiarism](http://guides.emich.edu/plagiarism)) and a variety of online guides and tutorials for students including the "Research 101" and "Understanding Plagiarism" tutorials. Additionally, support is offered to all students in the Academic Projects Center and by Library Faculty through research consultations on citation practices and ethical use of information.
Weakness 2.2a. Who teaches the courses? According to the Instructor Questionnaire, it is not clear to everyone exactly who are the instructors that are teaching the general education courses.

Opportunity 2.2a. Starting Point for Discussions on Academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is a general challenge across campus and not specific to the General Education Program; however, the program provides a starting for the critical discussions and suggested practices.

Opportunity 2.2b. Share research and teaching strategies. Perhaps there are more ways to bring together faculty who teach in the General Education Program to share research and teaching strategies that support student achievement of the program’s learning outcomes, and to do some focused research on the interdisciplinary outcomes of the General Education Program. There is opportunity for department-level discussion on how to provide evidence of student learning outcomes in general education. There may be a way to develop an interdisciplinary assessment of the General Education Program. The university needs to be able to share information related to the effectiveness of programs and to advertise best practices.

Opportunity 2.2c. Evidence of excellence. Working with faculty, students and practicum supervisors, EMU needs to continue to remove barriers, whether actual or imagined, so that the university can use information as evidence of excellence and of impact on EMU’s faculty and students. For example, is there a streamlined process for faculty and/or students to obtain informed consent to share research, evidence-based best practice and student work samples at regional, national and international conferences, at undergraduate and graduate symposiums, and student presentations within community settings?

Opportunity 2.2d. Online learning and citation resources. EMU could take advantage of the many free or low-cost resources by working with the EMU Library faculty to select and promote tools that encourage and make transparent their inquiry, research and thinking processes. In addition to the Library guides and tutorials mentioned in strength 2.2b, EMU Library faculty could further develop Research Guides or research support materials for ENG 121 and similar General Education courses (for example, see http://guides.emich.edu/fywp). Assignment calculators (http://library.missouri.edu/guides/assigncalc/) and Zotero (http://guides.emich.edu/zotero) could be more widely used and supported. Finally, EMU Library faculty could be invited to engage with General Education program to explore how the ACRL Information Literacy standards and frameworks are being addressed (http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/infolit/standards).

Threat 2.2a. Michigan Transfer Agreement. The Michigan Transfer Agreement allows students to transfer to EMU with a general education program that may be somewhat different from that required of students who start at EMU as freshmen (FTIACs).

Threat 2.2b. Sampling of faculty views. Instructor Questionnaire responses provide a sampling of faculty views on the integrity of the scholarship and teaching in the General Education Program. Some concerns were:

- Lack of effective writing after students complete the initial Written Communication course.
- Concern that math requirement is too weak.
- Concern that General Education Program courses are not sufficiently rigorous.
- View of General Education as remediation.
- Concern about lack of assessment of courses previously approved—quality control after vetting.
- Concern that students are not being made aware of the benefits of General Education.
- Overlap between General Education Program courses and required courses in a major.
- Perception that the program is a credit hour grab without academic foundation.
- Faculty are unclear as to the purpose/value of General Education—this includes the purpose/value of the diversity and global awareness requirement.
Threat 2.2c. *Maintaining academic integrity.* The Internet enables students to find answers to their questions and to locate information with a click. New applications enable them to cut and paste, remix, recycle and reuse information. New practices are emerging. How will the General Education Program help students navigate the various practices while maintaining the academic integrity of their product?

2.3. How are we engaging with the world outside of the university to ensure that our students and faculty are networked to resources that will enable them to be responsible and global citizens?

**Strength 2.3a. Global citizenship and community engagement.** Many courses have been developed specifically for the US Diversity and Global Awareness requirement, in addition to the many already existing courses that fit this category. And there are Learning Beyond the Classroom options that involve community engagement in the Community Service, Citizenship and Leadership category, the Career and Professional Development category, and the International and Multicultural Experience category. As a related note, EMU has earned the Carnegie Foundation 2015 Community Engagement Classification.

**Weakness 2.3a. Need for experiential component.** There is a perception that there is not enough of an experiential component to the US Diversity and the Global Awareness courses.

**Weakness 2.3b. Relationship with outside entities.** There is a need to formalize and advertise our corporate partnership, service learning, and school partnership networks. There is a need for a clear and accessible path for faculty and students to pursue an ongoing dialogue with entities outside the university.

**Opportunity 2.3a. Alignment with program standards.** The departments that house the General Education Program courses align their programs with the standards of their professional organizations; therefore, there are opportunities to systematically develop, revise and renovate General Education Program courses and to create trans-disciplinary courses that engage students in authentic encounters.

**Threat 2.3a. Alignment with content standards.** Curricular discussions generally take place at the departmental level; departments are asked to align programs with content standards, which can be a problem for courses that are required in a program but are also General Education Program courses.

**Threat 2.3b. Global and intercultural competencies.** EMU has not developed a consistent understanding of what is meant by global and intercultural competencies. EMU also does not have a way for faculty to communicate with the organizations that provide our practicum experiences in a way that would enable us to ensure that our students are globally competent.

2.4. Implications and Recommendations

**Recommendation 2.4a. Schedule for review of program.** A schedule should be set up for review of the General Education Program and its procedures.

**Recommendation 2.4b. Coordination with community colleges.** Improve coordination between the EMU and its community college partners, in order to provide for better advising and coordination of student programs of study.
**Recommendation 2.4c. Coordination with stakeholders.** Seek opportunities to coordinate with employers and stakeholders outside of EMU, both nationally and internationally, to build the networks and to access the expertise and technical assistance needed to empower faculty and students to communicate, coordinate, and work collaboratively.

**Recommendation 2.4d. Digital tools for learning.** Develop a robust professional development program for faculty and lecturers to explore and apply instructional technology for active, life-long learning. Ensure that General Education Program instructors all have access to an array of appropriate digital tools for teaching and learning, such as software that supports note-taking, citation and bibliographic management, brainstorming, collaboration, coordinating group projects, and similar.

**Recommendation 2.4e. Alignment with professional discipline-based organizations.** The standards of professional organizations may help departments to systematically develop, revise and renovate General Education courses and to create trans-disciplinary courses that engage students in authentic encounters.

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**CRITERION 3
Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

**3.1. Credentials of instructors.** *Discuss issues pertaining to the academic credentials of instructors in the General Education Program.*

**Threat 3.1a. The majority of General Education Program sections are taught by non-tenured or tenure track faculty.** Since its inception, the new General Education Program has seen a decrease in the percentage of course sections taught by tenure-track faculty members and an increase in the percentage of course sections taught by part-time lecturers and graduate assistants. As shown in Appendix 3.1, the percentage of sections taught by faculty members has decreased from 41% in Fall 2008 to 35% in 2011 to 26% in Fall 2014. Meanwhile, the percentage of sections taught by part-time lecturers has increased over the same period from 35% in 2008 to 38.8% in 2011 to 45% in 2014. Furthermore, the percentage of sections taught by graduate students has ballooned from 2% in 2008 to 5.9% in 2011 to 11% in 2014. The percentage of sections taught by full-time lecturers has remained relatively stable, going from 17% in 2008 to 15% in 2011 to 17% in 2014. Part-time lecturers and graduate students together therefore now account for over half (56%) of all General Education Program course sections while faculty members account for only about a quarter of all sections.

There is nothing inherently wrong with part-time lecturers teaching General Education Program sections; many part-time lecturers are gifted instructors who do a fine job teaching their classes. However, because of the part-time nature of their positions, these instructors are typically not well integrated into the culture of the department in which they teach. Therefore, they are less likely to comprehend how their class fits within the General Education Program, and may not even be aware of the overall structure of the General Education Program as a whole. As a result, these part-time lecturers may not be aware of the specific student learning outcomes that must be met by a course to qualify it for General Education Program credit. Therefore, students may not be receiving the “general education” promised by a course, regardless of how well the course is taught. Some department heads/school directors may educate their Part Time Lecturers regarding General Education Program requirements, but it is not currently known whether this is done consistently across all departments/schools.
The teaching of General Education Program courses by graduate students is more troubling. Again, some of these graduate students may be capable instructors, but they are likely to have far less experience overall than part-time lecturers, and suffer from the same possible disadvantages as the Part Time Lecturers with regard to understanding of the General Education Program. Moreover, for a university that markets itself as valuing education, and that claims it does not use graduate students as lead instructors in courses, the fact that over 10% of all General Education Program course sections are currently taught by graduate students is problematic.

This is perceived as a threat to the General Education Program because program quality may suffer due to the teaching of more than half of the classes by instructors who are not sufficiently familiar with General Education Program and its requirements. It is not known exactly why there has been this increase in the use of part-timers and graduate students, but it is likely that departments/schools do not have a sufficient number of tenure-track faculty members to staff an increasing number of General Education Program course sections as well as courses in the major programs.

**Opportunity 3.1a.** Develop a mechanism or strategy to inform and educate part-time lecturers as to the nature and specifics of the general education program. Such education (especially the student learning outcomes for each type of course) could reduce section-to-section variability in how well outcomes are met, and make the program much more effective and robust.

**3.2. General Education and Major Programs.** Describe the role of General Education in degree programs.

Of the General Education Program courses offered in the Fall 2014, which the GERC was able to assess along the following dimension, 139 were part of a major program, and 90 of those were part of more than one major program (see Appendix 3.2).

**Strength 3.2a.** Having General Education Program courses in degree programs creates efficiency. Having such a substantial proportion of General Education courses also serve as part of major programs allows students to proceed through their major curriculum and complete their general education requirements more easily.

**Threat 3.2a.** Programs with too many prescribed General Education courses limit freedom of choice for students. Some programs prescribe too heavily which General Education courses students must take, which limits the breadth of the educational experience for those students. Some programs must do this due to requirements for program accreditation, but other programs are restrictive in an attempt to maximize retention of student credit hours within the department/school.

**3.3. Resources, Academic Advising, and Community Engagement Opportunities.**

Describe how the General Education Program guides students in effective use of resources and provides academic advising, community engagement opportunities, and overall educational opportunities.

During their first two years on campus students can receive advising on the General Education Program from academic advisors in the University Advising and Career Development Center (UACDC). In addition, the Francine Parker CAS Advising Center offers General Education Program advising for students in the College of Arts and Sciences; and students in other colleges can get General Education advising in their respective college advising centers. The University offers a variety of academic support for students, such as the Academic Projects Center, the Holman Success Center, the Math Tutoring Lab, and the University Writing Center.
**Strength 3.3a.** *Community engagement is integrated into the General Education Program.* Students are directed to community service, citizenship, and leadership opportunities, which comprise a required element of the Learning Beyond the Classroom portion of the General Education Program.

**Weakness 3.3a.** *There is insufficient communication between the General Education program and Academic Advising.* The lack of communication negatively impacts both parties. Departmental stakeholders (administrators and instructors) in the General Education Program generally don’t know what advisors are telling students about the General Education Program and, therefore, cannot be proactive about addressing any issues that may arise. Scheduling of General Education courses can be unpredictable at times (e.g., a course offered in a certain semester this year may not be offered the same semester next year). This makes it challenging for Academic Advising to formulate advising plans and help students plan ahead for courses they wish to take.

This weakness has been ameliorated somewhat by the recent advent of the “Big Bang” advising events involving the CAS science departments and advisors from the Francine Parker CAS Advising Center. During the event, major program advising for all science departments is done by faculty members in one room, with advisors from the Parker Center on hand to do General Education advising. This allows rapid communication between faculty advisors and academic advisors. This type of advising strategy could serve as a model for other disciplines.

**Opportunity 3.3a.** *A placement system would improve communication course selection.* Currently students self-select into courses that fulfill the Effective Communication component of the General Education Program. It is unclear how effective this has been in meeting students’ communication instruction needs. It may be worth exploring something like the ACT guided placement used for Quantitative Reasoning.

**Threat 3.3a.** *University academic support resources are insufficient to support all of the students who need help, and General Education should not be viewed as a “fix” for this issue.* Despite the existence of some excellent resources for students, they are insufficient to ameliorate the challenges faced by the many underprepared students admitted to EMU every year. Very often, the deficiencies exhibited by these students are blamed on the General Education Program. For example, criticism of students’ writing abilities appeared numerous times in the “Open Comments” section of the General Education survey given to instructors: “The writing component seems to do nothing to prepare my students for college-level writing” and “It is not effectively providing students with the writing skills they need to perform well in upper level courses” reflect the opinion that the writing-intensive courses do not sufficiently develop writing skills in the students. However, if, as is often the case, students with below-par writing skills are admitted to EMU, then WRTG 121 and one writing-intensive class cannot fix the problem. The same case could be made for mathematical skills.

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**3.4. Student Scholarly and Creative Activity.** *How are undergraduate research and creative endeavors supported by the program?*

**Strength 3.4a.** *The General Education Program helps to promote student research and creative activities.* Research and creative activities are a required element of the Learning Beyond the Classroom component of the General Education Program. EMU has a long and rich history of providing opportunities for student research and creative activities, and the General Education Program has further reinforced this undertaking by providing credit for these activities.
3.5. Interdisciplinary Collaboration. How are interdisciplinary courses supported by the General Education Program?

It can be challenging to discern, from all of the General Education courses listed, which are interdisciplinary. Obvious interdisciplinary courses are those that are cross-listed with multiple prefixes. There are seven such courses within the General Education curriculum; they are listed in Appendix 3.3. Beyond these courses, however, there appear to be no other interdisciplinary courses.

Weakness 3.5a. No specific mechanism exists to promote interdisciplinary course offerings within the General Education Program. This may be due in part to the disciplinary structure of the General Education Program system; for example, dividing the "Knowledge of the Disciplines" portion of the program into discipline-specific areas (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities) works against interdisciplinarity, instead of promoting it. Alternatively, or additionally, the issue may be more endemic to the university as a whole, in which there has always been an inertia regarding the development of interdisciplinary courses and/or programs. The two possibilities are not mutually exclusive. Despite there being no overt support for interdisciplinary General Education courses, a number of interdisciplinary courses have been developed, as described above.

Opportunity 3.5a. The development of interdisciplinary course offerings should be promoted. This would require identifying the barriers to interdisciplinary courses at EMU, and developing a mechanism to overcome those barriers.


EMU's General Education Program is in line with the analogous programs at regional peer institutions. A table of other regional institutions and their general education requirements is presented in Appendix 3.4. As can be seen in the table, EMU's General Education Program requires that approximately 13 courses be taken to complete the requirements. This compares to a range of 7 to 14 courses at other institutions. All programs require at least one course in written composition and courses in the arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Most of the other institutions require a course in quantitative reasoning and at least one course in global awareness. Some universities have additional requirements, such as additional writing courses, courses in interdisciplinary studies, knowledge application, wellness, and the principles of thinking. Several universities include a computer literacy class, typically as an option.

Strength 3.6a. EMU’s General Education Program is strongly aligned with the requirements of the Michigan Transfer Agreement (see the Table in Appendix 3.4). This facilitates the transfer of general education credits completed elsewhere, making it easier for students to transfer to EMU and have their completed coursework count.

Strength 3.6b. The General Education Program offers a robust selection of courses. This gives students plenty of choice to satisfy their requirements. The number of different courses offered in the General Education Program was 211 in Fall semester 2008, 241 in Fall semester 2011, and 234 in Fall semester 2014 (see Appendix 3.5). Moreover, there were 886 sections of General Education courses offered in Fall 2008, 1154 sections in Fall 2011, and 1126 sections offered in Fall 2014, indicating that students have numerous opportunities to find course sections that fit their schedules. The General Education survey given to EMU instructional staff (faculty members, full-time lecturers, and part-time lecturers) supports this assessment of programmatic offerings; in the “Open comments” section on the survey, 32% of respondents commented...
that the selection of courses was a strength of the program. This was the second most-frequently cited strength of the program. Moreover, in the 2013 EMU Graduating Senior Survey, 94% of seniors said that they were satisfied with the variety of general education courses.

There is a minority opinion among instructors who responded to the questionnaire that the program is too broad, and therefore the education that students receive is too diffuse and lacking in depth to be of any value. However, the purpose of the General Education Program is to introduce students to a variety of disciplines, give them a set of basic skills, and offer them different perspectives and experiences in preparation for life beyond the university, and the available data indicate that the program is successful in offering those opportunities. There was never intended to be any depth on the program; depth comes in a student’s chosen major.

The diversity of courses offered as part of the General Education Program is underscored by the fact that General Education courses are offered by departments and schools in every college in the university. This belies a belief among some faculty members (and echoed in some comments in the Instructor Questionnaire) that the General Education Program is simply a “credit hour grab” by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Certainly, CAS offers the majority of course sections in the General Education Program; this is understandable based on the nature of the college. However, other colleges offer an increasing number of General Education sections. Non-CAS sections comprised 12.9% of total section offerings in 2008, which increased to 13.9% in 2011 and to 14.5% in 2014.

**Weakness 3.6a. EMU Students need more support for digital literacy.** There is a growing technological divide between those with computer skills and computer access and those without. Because EMU has such a diverse student population, the digital divide also exists on campus. Students have access to computers on campus, but if they do not possess basic computer skills, that access is meaningless.

**Opportunity 3.6a. Dispel persistent misconceptions about the General Education Program.** Dissemination of this General Education review would be a start to that process, but an effort should be made to identify other ways to inform the university community of the benefits of general education. Enhancing campus-wide support for the program would make the program more effective and successful.

**Opportunity 3.6b. Allow students to broaden their exposure to STEM.** The President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recommends the inclusion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in higher education as part of the General Education Program. The committee noted that the “Science” and “Mathematics” components of STEM are already part of the General Education Program. By including an Engineering/Technology/Computer component EMU can fully satisfy the Council’s recommendation.

**Opportunity 3.6c. Introduce a digital literacy component to the General Education Program.** Digital literacy includes concepts, skills and practices for living in an online world with expansive communication technologies and advanced information networks. It is not just computer literacy, but critical and ethical approaches to digital information practices. Employers regularly express concern (see [http://aacu.org/leap/public-opinion-research/2015-survey-falling-short](http://aacu.org/leap/public-opinion-research/2015-survey-falling-short)) that college graduates do not have effective Internet research skills and lack an understanding of genres and ethical practices online. EMU has the opportunity to lead by directly and explicitly addressing this broad social need.

**Threat 3.6a. Many instructors continue to have misconceptions about the General Education Program.** Ideas such as “there are too many Gen Ed courses” and “Gen Ed is just a credit hour grab by the College of Arts and Sciences” are pervasive (as indicated by their frequency in the open comments section of the instructor questionnaire). This causes some instructors to be dismissive of the program. As outlined above, these beliefs are not supported by the data. This is largely a public relations issue; by making the EMU community
more aware of the strengths and benefits of the General Education Program, such misconceptions may be overcome.

### 3.7. Implications and Recommendations

**Recommendation 3.7a.** To ensure consistency in general education course offerings, a formal mechanism should be developed for educating General Education course instructors who are new to the program about the philosophical and practical considerations of the General Education Program. Development of such a mechanism should begin with a survey of which departments currently educate their General Education instructors about the program, with a focus on what the department practices are.

**Recommendation 3.7b.** Infrastructure should be put in place that supports the development of interdisciplinary course offerings in the General Education Program. Part of such infrastructure might include devising a special prefix for interdisciplinary courses so that they are perceived as being truly interdisciplinary and not associated with any one department, school, or program.

**Recommendation 3.7c.** Implement a strategy to do a better job educating the EMU community (including faculty, full-time and part-time lecturers, staff, and students) about the benefits of the General Education Program.

**Recommendation 3.7d.** Form a committee to consider modification to the General Education Program to include a technology/engineering/mathematics-intensive disciplines option as a second course selection under the Natural Science area. The recommendation is to revisit General Education requirements consistent with the recommendations of AAC&U, The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and the Faculty Senate for the inclusion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Science (STEM). This could be done by including a revision to the Natural Science area to include a Science and Technology area.

**Recommendation 3.7e.** A mechanism should be established whereby major programs are evaluated to determine if they are too restrictive in the General Education courses they allow majors to take. This is a complex issue, and an appropriate mechanism might prove difficult to devise, but any mechanism should involve opening a dialogue between the General Education director and program coordinators about reducing rigidity in General Education course options for major programs.

### CRITERION 4
**Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement**

#### 4.1. Process for Assessing Student Learning

Describe the General Education assessment of student learning process, including student learning plans, reports, and feedback from the General Education Subcommittee on Assessment.

**Brief History of Assessment of Student Learning in the Revised General Education Program**

It is important to first note and briefly describe previous efforts to assess student learning for the revised General Education Program (2007). According to the program's "Five-Year Plan" (2012), which was
compiled after the initial efforts of assessing student learning and developing a process for constructing assessments: “As a result of curriculum development that began in 2002, EMU launched a new outcomes-based General Education Program in Fall 2007. By design, the new outcomes-based curriculum removed one of the largest barriers to assessment; i.e., creating a structure that was assessable. Assessment of the new General Education Program was a planned part of the infrastructure and implementation process, and thus established a conceptual commitment to assessment” (p. 1). (See Appendix 4.1 for “Five-Year Plan.”) The efforts described below demonstrate the challenges—and strengths and weaknesses—of designing and implementing a system of assessing student learning for a large, comprehensive General Education program. Michael Tew, previous chair of the General Education Subcommittee on Assessment, described three main achievements that the current subcommittee will continue to learn from as it works to prepare the next phases of assessing student learning.

First, in 2008-09 “initial assessments (e.g., of ENGL/WRTG 121 and CTAC 124) generated a procedure for reporting assessment results to the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC), including a description of assessment project, identification of GE outcomes being assessed, assessment methods, data summary, conclusions (regarding student achievement, the learning outcome itself, and the assessment method), and recommendations for GEAC consideration.” In 2008-10, an assessment of MATH 110 conducted by the Mathematics Department led to a reorganization of the Quantitative Reasoning outcomes, which were approved by all departments teaching GEQR courses, by Faculty Senate, and by the GEAC. During this period the outcomes for the Oral Communication requirement were also rewritten based on the “initial assessments” mentioned above.

Second, the General Education Multicourse Assessment Project (GEMAP), initiated in 2009, created faculty “working groups for the assessment of outcomes in Area III (U.S. Diversity, Global Awareness), and Area IV (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences),” and a “member of the GEMAP team was assigned to coordinate and facilitate each group.” Although the groups met regularly from Fall 2009 through Winter 2011 and “sought to develop an assessment tool that would identify indicators of learning for a selected outcome (or outcomes) common to student achievement independent of course type, course discipline, or assignment type,” the process “proved to be sufficiently complex as to require long-term commitment from faculty working committees, which, by necessity, would need to have membership continuity.” Tew stated, although the team agreed that the process was “conceptually sound,” the process became unsustainable because of the amount of time required and the long-term faculty commitment the project demanded. The team attempted to work at the process with U.S. Diversity in Winter 2012. Chemistry and Biology, part of the Natural Sciences work group chaired by Chris Gardiner, both carried out initial assessments of their General Education courses and outcomes (Maria Milletti and Jamin Eisenbach, respectively, were leaders of these areas).

The final project, designed for the AQIP process in 2011-12, sought “to assess the “experiential” methods of satisfying Learning Beyond the Classroom outcomes,” particularly by assembling “student focus groups to examine student learning.” Tew briefly described the process: “The assessment committee (along with a representative from the LBC Sub-Committee and other select faculty and staff) developed a focus group interview protocol and a rubric of indicators of learning in LBC experiences.” However, the committee recognized that “LBC outcomes lacked the clarity and focus necessary to make meaningful and implementable assessment possible, and this led to an issue of “maintaining faculty interest and involvement.” Yet, the committee agreed that the project had a “generally sound assessment design.”

This brief history demonstrates the opportunities and challenges to developing a systematic approach(s) for assessing student learning for the General Education Program. However, it also demonstrates that the General Education Program has recognized the need for such a system, and many faculty and administrators have worked to design and sustain one. Because of the lessons learned from the efforts of the previous subcommittee on assessment, and from Michael Tew and other faculty and department heads who contributed, the current subcommittee on assessment recognizes the need to create a humane and doable
system that builds on these efforts, continues to generate faculty input, and provides useful data that will improve the General Education Program and the opportunities for students to learn and benefit from the program.

**Overview.** Currently, the General Education Subcommittee on Assessment (GESA), which was reconstituted during this past school year (2014-15), developed “Phase One” of a system designed to evaluate student learning from a programmatic perspective (i.e., assessing how well students are meeting the General Education programmatic learning outcomes). Phase One (2014-15) focuses on assessment of student learning in courses in the category of General Education Effective Communication (GEEC) (i.e., CTAC 124, ENGL/WRTG 121, and ESLN 412); and, in addition, an assessment protocol for Quantitative Reasoning (GEQR) was piloted in multiple sections of three courses, MATH 110, 110E and 170. During this academic year, GESA worked with coordinators of the GEEC programs to support the latter’s efforts in preparing assessments and reports that demonstrate how they are meeting expectations of the Higher Learning Commission, particularly “closing the loop” in their assessment processes. The three programs (CTAC 124, ENGL/WRTG 121, ESLN 412) submitted assessment reports and GESA reviewed all reports and sent responses to the coordinators. Similarly, the Math Department submitted a report on its efforts to develop the assessment protocol and evaluate student learning; the GESA reviewed and responded to the report.

After a recent all-day retreat (March 13), the GESA drafted plans to address learning outcomes in all main categories of the General Education program (Effective Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Knowledge of the Disciplines and Application of Core Requirements). To continue designing the plans, committee members will attend the University Assessment Institute (April 30-May 1, 2015) and organize a one-day General Education Assessment Institute in June 2015.

**Phase One (2014-15)**

*General Education Effective Communication*
- CTAC 124 (Doris Fields);
- ENGL/WRTG 121 (Derek Mueller & Kate Pantelides);
- ESLN 412 (Kimberly Anderson);

*General Education Quantitative Reasoning*
- MATH 110, 110E & 170 (Chris Gardiner & Stephanie Casey)

**Phase Two (2015-16)**

*Perspectives of a Diverse World* (representative courses)

*Knowledge of the Disciplines* (representative courses)

*Writing Intensive courses* (Ann Blakeslee) are beyond the scope of the GESA, for this phase; however, the committee will continue to coordinate efforts to assess student learning toward meeting the WI learning outcomes in representative courses.

*Learning Beyond the Classroom* (Decky Alexander). The LBC is beyond the scope of the GESA, for now; however, the committee will continue to coordinate efforts to potentially demonstrate student learning through LBC credit opportunities.

**Phase Three (2016-17)**

*General Education Effective Communication*

*General Education Quantitative Reasoning*

*Perspectives of a Diverse World* (representative courses)
Knowledge of the Disciplines (representative courses)

**Strength 4.1a. Efforts of previous General Education Subcommittee on Assessment.** First, learning outcomes were established for all categories of revised General Education Program (2007). The previous subcommittee on assessment orchestrated an important initial phase of assessing student learning—analysis of the outcomes for GEEC and a reorganization of the outcomes for GEQR. Furthermore, there are faculty and department heads across campus with critical institutional memory about the purposes for the changes in General Education Program and the potential role of assessing student learning in strengthening the program over time. This capacity has assisted members of the current subcommittee by offering insights and suggestions.

**Strength 4.1b. General Education Subcommittee on Assessment (GESA) recently reconstituted.** Next, the GESA has reconstituted and is represented by faculty from four colleges (David Gore, College of Technology; Stephanie Casey, College of Arts and Sciences; Sun Hae Jang, College of Health and Human Services; Matt Hammond, College of Business; and Doug Baker, College of Arts and Sciences), and representatives from College of Education and the EMU Library are planned for fall 2015. The committee members are in the process of helping to build capacity among faculty to lead assessment efforts.

**Strength 4.1c. IRIM support.** Finally, there is data available through IRIM and the Graduating Senior Surveys that can assist in the analysis of student learning; at least the data might offer indicators of success.

**Weakness 4.1a. Confusion over what counts as assessment.** One key weakness is that many stakeholders confuse assessment of student learning with assessment of General Education as a program. Next, the input and reporting systems need clarification (e.g., templates for reporting used this year will be revised as needed for subsequent phases). Although members of the GESA bring diverse disciplinary backgrounds to bear on the process, many are in their first year of this essential collaborative work, and it will take time to build the necessary knowledge and institutional capacity.

**Weakness 4.1b. Lack of capacity to further organize and manage the General Education assessment system.** As the GESA strives to design a sustainable and manageable—humane and doable—system of assessing student learning, committee members recognize the need for additional support (e.g., released time, support for conferences, and training of faculty and lecturers). Currently, there is not enough capacity to adequately complete the planned assessment processes for the 2015-16 year. However, the GESA and the Director of the Program are working with the Provost's office to meet the demands.

**Weakness 4.1c. Training across diverse programs and departments.** As noted by reviewers of the General Education Assessment Report for 2013-14, the program must demonstrate that it is in the process of “closing the loop” (i.e., demonstrating that findings from assessment efforts are used to inform curricular decisions). In order for this to occur, more training of part-time and full-time lecturers, as well as faculty, will be required. Another challenge is that General Education has a large number of courses from programs across the university, and there is no norm for assessing student learning. An implication is this: if faculty are unclear as to what is needed, then they will not privilege programmatic assessment, which is especially needed for continuous improvement.

**Opportunity 4.1a. Building a sustainable and doable assessment system.** The key opportunity is to build an assessment system little by little. Because of work by the previous subcommittee, by the former Office of Instructional Effectiveness and Assessment, and current college assessment systems, many faculty are aware of the need to assess student learning from programmatic perspectives. The incoming course management system, Canvas, offers another potential opportunity because it includes an assessment portal. Similarly, IRIM has continued to offer support, especially through availability of data and timely return of requests.
**Threat 4.1a. Sustainability of subcommittee and workload.** The main threats concern sustainability of the subcommittee, support for the committee, particularly efforts toward building capacity across campus. The workload appears to be greater than a typical standing committee (especially in terms of creating the system, managing it, and choosing and initiating technological resources to archive, etc.). If assessment of student learning is not part of the decision-making for General Education, EMU will be missing a key component for continuous improvement and for demonstrating the efficacy of General Education as a viable academic program.

**4.2. Student Success Indicators.** Describe the General Education Program’s student success indicators (e.g., research and creative accomplishments, community engagement, co-curricular learning, or other achievements).

Four categories of student success indicators have been identified:

- **Assessment Data from Phase One (2014-15):** Reports from the above groups in the categories mentioned (GEEC & GEQR) will be summarized and described in the annual report sent to the University Assessment Committee.

- **Student Public Performances** (e.g., Celebration of Student Writing, organized by ENGL/WRTG 121 coordinator and instructors; and the Undergraduate Research Fair). The GESA, or other committee, could potentially gather a list of student participants in Celebration of First-Year Writing, and other similar types of student performances relevant to General Education. Related, LBC lists of students participating in service learning, or other community projects will be collected also.

- **Grades,** particularly the percentage of students passing General Education Program courses; however, as the GERC has discussed, analysis of the data has multiple implications.

- **IRIM Data** on the percentage of students who continue beyond General Education Program courses.

**Strength 4.2a. Multiple performance indicators.** Through conversations with faculty, department heads and deans, the GERC learned that there are multiple performances that demonstrate that students are learning, or have learned through General Education Program experiences. IRIM has data that can be mined for success indicators (e.g., grades, completion rates, etc.).

**Weakness 4.2a. Recognizing and gathering evidence of indicators.** Probably the main challenge to gathering data that indicate success is time for GESA members to conceptualize the sources and begin and sustain the process for collecting and analyzing data. For example, although ENGL/WRTG 121 orchestrates the Celebration of Student Writing, does the program compile lists of students who participated and provide some type of rubric for how well students contributed? What data sources actually indicate student success? Right now the GESA has only five members and the time presumably required to gather and analyze data that suggests success appears daunting.

**Opportunity 4.2a. Conceptualize system for charting indicators.** The main opportunity is for the GESA, along with members from the GERC, to conceptualize sources of success indicators and to plan how to collect and analyze data.

**Threat 4.2a. Consequences of not demonstrating that students are benefiting from the General Education Program.** If these opportunities are not realized the General Education Program will potentially be unable to demonstrate how it knows students are succeeding, except by an aggregation of grades or some large-scale data points that only suggest success. Of course, what constitutes "success" should be agreed upon, at least at committee level.
4.3. Links among Grades, Retention and Completion. Describe trends in the General Education Program evidenced by grading practices, student retention rates, and time to degree completion.

Overview. Most of the GESA and University Assessment Committee efforts center on student learning, not retention and completion. This category will demand planning, particularly to determine what will constitute evidence of trends, or how phrases such as “grading practices” are defined. The following will need to be collected, analyzed and summarized:

- Cumulative grade totals for General Education courses, especially for purposes of analyzing the totals for inferential purposes.
- Retention rates (IRIM)
- Years to completion rates (IRIM)

Strength 4.3a. IRIM has data available to analyze relating to these criteria (see, for example, “2007-2014 Trend Data: General Education Course Grades,” compiled by Konnie Kustron & Peggy Liggit—see Appendix 4.2 & 4.3). Four trends are evident in regard to course grades and enrollment in General Education Program courses over the last seven years:

1. The number of students enrolled in General Education Program courses has increased by 20% (55,099 in 2007; 67,173 in 2014).
2. The number of course sections offered has increased by 46% (1,686 in 2007; 2,470 in 2014).
3. The number of unique courses offered per year has increased (from 283 in 2007 to 378 in 2014), and 907 courses were approved during that period—the number includes 567 Learning Beyond the Classroom courses.
4. As the number of students enrolled in courses has increased (up 46%), the number of students receiving a course grade lower than a C has steadily decreased from (from 20% in 2007 to 5.7% in 2014).

Weakness 4.3a. Time and resources required to mine and analyze data. The time needed for GESA members to select and analyze data might demand more time than current members have to devote to this. For example, seven-year trend data reveal specific General Education Program courses consistently having unusually high pass rates (100% of students passing the course with a C or higher) or unusually low pass rates (40-60% of students enrolled receive course grades of C- and lower). It will take time to investigate these observations. In other words, more released time for faculty may be necessary, or other types of committees might be needed. However, there are university committees working on the strategic plan, which includes retention; therefore, coordination of the different committees might be the wisest answer to this dilemma.

Opportunity 4.3a. Distribute workload systematically. Faculty and department heads could begin gathering the above types of data and analyze by department. This would distribute the workload and potentially benefit departments as well as the university and its quest to provide useful information to the Higher Learning Commission, among others.

Threat 4.3a. Consequences for lack of coordination. If the committees working on assessment of student learning, retention and completion are not coordinated, duplicate work may be done across campus—and it will not necessarily be effective or productive.
4.4 General Education & Degree Completion. *Describe any roadblocks in the General Education Program that appear to impede students’ time to degree completion.*

Through analysis of links among grades, retention, and completion, evidence will be provided that signals roadblocks. In particular, based on analysis of data, a survey might be necessary to gather further information from department heads, General Education Program advisors, and students, among others.

4.5. Implications and Recommendations

*For example, consider building a process for assessing the efficacy of the General Education Program learning outcomes—how the General Education Program improve.*

**Recommendation 4.5a.** Through the website and training of instructors, distinguish definitions of “assess General Education.” For example, assessing student learning toward meeting outcomes is different from evaluating the efficacy of the program as a whole.

**Recommendation 4.5b.** Increase support of GESA.

**Recommendation 4.5c.** Coordinate committees that address assessment of students (this is done through the University Assessment Committee), retention and completion (the latter two are presumably addressed on other university committees).

**Recommendation 4.5d.** Bolster training of instructors in approaches to analyzing trend data and assessing student learning based on the General Education learning outcomes.

**Recommendation 4.5e.** Clarify and select what constitutes “student success indicators” so a common language is designed for purposes of evaluating overall program efficacy.

**Recommendation 4.5f.** Generate a sustainable approach to analyzing data on “student success indicators.”

**Recommendation 4.5g.** Select representative data points for evaluating effectiveness of the General Education Program in preparing students for upper level academic work and to support retention efforts.

**Recommendation 4.5h.** Separate indicators of “roadblocks” to completion for purposes of more accurately locating and analyzing data (e.g., assessment of student learning vs. “success indicators” outside of the class).
CRITERION 5
Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

5.1. Evaluate the program trends most relevant to program planning—for example, range of course offerings, number of courses, enrollment, investments in faculty development and support, student academic needs and demands.

Strength 5.1a. The program exhibits the flexibility and sensitivity to changes in student needs upon which it was premised. The General Education Program was designed with an eye to the program’s flexibility in terms of student academic needs and demands. A set of learning outcomes were constructed for the various kinds of courses in the program, but content is (mostly) open; as a result, faculty and departments can introduce courses that will serve student and program needs alike. Since the General Education Program’s inception, 907 courses have been introduced (mostly for Learning Beyond the Classroom), including the following categorized by the Banner Codes:

- Effective Communication (GEEC) - 4
- Quantitative Reasoning (GEQR) – 15
- Knowledge of the Disciplines (GEKA (25), GEKH (62), GEKN (28) & GEKS (22) – 137
- Perspectives on a Diverse World (GEGA (44) & GEUS (24) – 68
- Learning Beyond the Classroom (GELB) – 567
- Writing Intensive (GEWI) – 116

This listing demonstrates the General Education Program’s intentional design in the service of student needs and demands. In fact, students in the Graduating Senior Survey report being ‘Satisfied’ with the General Education Program’s offerings at a rate of 94%, up 2% from 2012. The instructor questionnaire provided a more mixed picture of this, with some praising the variety of courses and others concerned that there were too many course offerings. That said, the instructor questionnaire also demonstrates that most instructors (greater than 51% of respondents agree or strongly agree) believe that the various General Education Program components meet the stated goals for said component; it is also noteworthy that few believe the various components do not meet the set goals (fewer than 27% disagree or strongly disagree). (See Appendix 5.1 – Instructor Questionnaire Results.)

Strength 5.1b. The program has relatively stable enrollments over its lifespan. The enrollment in the General Education Program has been steadily increasing since 2007, with 55,560 students in 2007 and 67,173 in 2014. Additionally, the number of courses per semester remains stable, with an average of 360 unique courses being offered per year. It is safe to say that the program continues to offer students a comprehensive education, and that the various departments that support the General Education Program continue to offer the services of their faculty in this regard. This result also addresses some misperceptions that there are too many courses being offered as part of the General Education Program. Additionally, this result suggests that the program retains and/or attracts students to EMU’s General Education Program’s offerings, rather than losing them to neighboring schools.

Weakness 5.1a. There is little predictability to the rotation and scheduling, making student advising challenging. Some courses in the General Education Program are offered very rarely or inconsistently. University Advising notes that this kind of course scheduling makes it very difficult to advise students.
Courses that might fit a student’s academic goals but are offered inconsistently prove challenging for advising and can cloud a student’s perception of the program.

**Weakness 5.1b.** *There is no macro-level quality control and oversight for the General Education Program.*
There is currently no quality control or oversight, at least at the level of the General Education Program as a whole, after courses are initially vetted. With faculty turnover in the teaching of General Education Program courses, and the increasing employment of part-time lecturers in the teaching of the courses, the lack of oversight is troubling. That said, the Graduating Senior Survey indicates that this concern is not particularly pressing, with 89% of graduating seniors reporting that they are satisfied with the quality of General Education Program courses (up 3% from 2012), and 83% of reporting that they were satisfied with the intellectual challenge of the courses. The Instructor Questionnaire provides a slightly different picture, with a number of instructors voicing concerns regarding the rigor of particular courses within the General Education Program. The concern raised in the questionnaire may be mediated by the fact that nearly 1 in 4 respondents to the questionnaire have never taught a General Education course – further inquiry may be warranted here. We note, with pleasure, that this weakness is (at least partially) addressed by the reconstitution of the General Education Subcommittee on Assessment (GES).

**Opportunity 5.1a.** *Comprehensive Education, represented by the General Education Program, presents an excellent marketing opportunity for EMU and meets employer needs.* Comprehensive Education, which has been a hot topic this year, is a potential selling feature for EMU. Harnessing the General Education Program’s commitment to Comprehensive Education and its focus on Global and Civic Engagement may be a way to help EMU’s students reach their employment and career goals. A recent survey conducted by Hart Research Associates demonstrates that 91% of employers agree that students should have educational experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own, 87% agree that students should learn about ethical issues and public debates in their field, 82% agree that all students should take courses that build knowledge, judgment, and commitment to communities, and ensure the integrity and vitality of democracy, and 80% agree that all students should acquire broad knowledge in liberal arts and sciences (2013 Hart Research Associates Employer Survey). These are all outcomes to which the General Education Program substantially contributes. We recommend highlighting the General Education Program and its critical contribution to Comprehensive Education, as well as the benefits of Comprehensive Education, wherever and whenever possible.

**Opportunity 5.1b.** *Changing instructional staffing demographics presents an opportunity to revitalize support for General Education related professional development.* There is an opportunity to provide the General Education Program with specific development and teacher training, and to cultivate a spirit of interdisciplinarity, engagement, and an appreciation for comprehensive education at the instructional staffing level. Currently, a large number of General Education Program sections are taught by part-time lecturers, new faculty, and on a rotating basis by standing faculty. This provides an opportunity for various kinds of professional development. We suggest looking into web-based training and resources for faculty teaching General Education Program courses, workshops, and/or a forum on General Education, which would provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary and pedagogic development and research focused around Comprehensive Education.

**Opportunity 5.1c.** *The General Education Program’s formative documents suggest some unrealized goals, in particular the need for a technology component.* The Instructor Questionnaire and the initial program documents suggest a desire for a technology element to the program. There are others, including expanding language offerings, but this is clearly among the more pressing in the minds of faculty. The GERC suggests investigating the following option: initiate a ‘technology intensive’ component to the program that mirrors the ‘writing intensive’ component, complete with a ‘technology across the curriculum,’ a ‘technology center,’ and remediation in the form of technology help. The 2002 General Education Reform Committee was adamant that there be no single course, or simple ‘computer basics,’ to fill the technology component, and we note that the concept of technology includes the introduction of concepts for living in an online world, with
expansive communication technologies, and advanced information networks. The GERC strongly recommends forming a committee to look closely at the idea of implementing the 'technology intensive' component for the General Education Program that remains true to the notion that different disciplines engage technologies and the understanding of technology in helpful and divergent ways.

**Threat 5.1a.** While students continue to take our General Education program courses, rather than the competition’s, the latter still represents an ongoing potential threat. Students can, and do, take courses at other institutions that satisfy EMU's General Education Program requirements. As a result, students can graduate from EMU having had little exposure to General Education Program. If the program has value to employers, EMU as an institution, and to EMU students, this threat requires further investigation.

**Threat 5.1b.** Further investigation regarding the writing component and the needs of faculty and students is required. A number of faculty members note a concern about the writing requirement. It is especially noteworthy that there is little agreement about whether the writing requirement is serving our students and faculty or whether it is enhancing student learning. This committee acknowledges that the nature of writing varies greatly among disciplines, varies greatly in its goals and scope, and should be understood as much more than simple writing skills or grammar. Understanding the nature of writing and its role in communication, and whether or not the General Education Program should be the place for addressing “remediation,” are complex questions. New assessment initiatives undertaken by the writing program could serve to allay concerns and reveal strengths. We recommend this for future inquiry.

**Threat 5.1c.** The Student Credit Hour Model creates incentives that may threaten the General Education Program and creates a negative impression of the program among faculty. Faculty, by way of the instructor questionnaire, have given voice to some concerns regarding the number of courses in the program, the “poaching” of student credit hours and political nature of the distribution of courses, and concerns about fairness within the program. As noted above, the concern about the number of courses in not borne out by the data. The open nature of course proposals for the program should reduce, rather than expand, concerns about the political nature of the distribution of courses – course offerings are not entrenched in our General Education Program. The issue regarding student credit hour poaching is not a General Education Program issue; rather, it is an issue in how departments are evaluated at the managerial level of the university. As a result, we are disinclined to the idea that there is a threat here that goes beyond a misperception of the program (and its results) and misdirected concerns.

5.2. **Does the University have the fiscal and human resources, and the physical and technological infrastructure, to support the delivery of the General Education Program?**

**Strength 5.2a.** The program has access to first-rate instructional staff. The General Education Program has at its disposal an instructional staff capable of providing a diverse, robust, and deep program from year to year. As noted above, students are satisfied with the quality and diversity of program offerings. Of course, as also note above, there is still a need for more staffing, support and training for new faculty and development for experienced faculty, and support for coordinating new initiatives and taking advantage of existing opportunities.

**Weakness 5.2a.** Macro-level staffing for the program is insufficient for planning, innovation, and coordination. There is little staffing and support at the macro-level of the program. This makes it difficult to make strategic plans, take advantage of opportunities, or even just manage the program as it stands. The General Education Implementation Documents suggest staffing that has been unrealized; we address this weakness further in Weakness 5.3.b. (below).
**Threat 5.2a.** The program is at the mercy of the Departments that make staffing and course decisions with no mechanism for addressing potential issues in scheduling and staffing, nor mechanisms for coordinating, planning, or managing initiatives. As it stands, the General Education Program’s paucity of macro-level staffing, and its complete and utter dependence on department level decisions for course offerings and staffing, put the program at the mercy of decisions that are not guided by an overall vision or plan. The GERC recommends investigating a different organizational design for the implementation and oversight of the General Education Program. A greater investment in the General Education Program’s macro-level (as noted in Weakness 5.2.a) might be a good place to start.

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**5.3. Consider whether the General Education operating budget, and other allocations, as well as the associated departments’ instructional budget targets, are adequate for maintaining and strengthening the General Education Program.** Examples of other allocations include graduate assistantships, secretarial support, professional and technical support, and equipment. Also, consider whether the faculty staffing necessary for programmatic delivery is appropriate.

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**Strength 5.3a. Outstanding Instructional Staff.** There is little doubt that the General Education Program has at its disposal an outstanding instructional staff, and departments have been providing sufficient resources to maintain the program.

**Weakness 5.3a.** The sufficiency of the budget is difficult to assess, since the program is maintained by many departments and with no coordinated budget or schedule. Since program delivery is mostly confined to the departments, it is very difficult to assess and control program delivery in terms of costs, staffing, and support. Further inquiry is required to assess whether or not there are hidden strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats here. We might begin by having departments report their budgetary allocations for the General Education Program.

**Weakness 5.3b. Resources.** The current resources for the General Education Program in terms of budget and allocations is as follows: (a) 100% teaching release for the Director, (b) one graduate assistantship (GA), (c) $20,000 for personnel, which includes summer stipend for the GA, honoraria for faculty involvement (FYS, assessment, GEAC, summer institute, etc.), (d) $19,260 SS&M. This may be sufficient to maintain the program, but it is insufficient for the purpose of opportunity and threat management, initiatives, and innovations to the Program. The GERC recommends (at least) the creation of an Assistant Director position, as well as increasing the support staff allotments (beyond one GA), and additional monies for the purpose of planning (of the sort noted in (c) above). The committee also recommends reviewing, for sustainability and composition, the General Education Advisory Committee. Additionally, the committee recommends the assignment of an Assistant (professional employee), as suggested in the General Education Implementation Documents. Further, the committee strongly recommends two 50% releases for faculty to work on projects, such as assessment, high impact practices, Comprehensive Education initiatives, and so on. Finally, the committee strongly recommends making the Director, and possibly the assistant director, AP appointments.

**Opportunity 5.3a.** The General Education Program provides an outstanding venue to pilot programs that facilitate and increase interdisciplinary, integrative pedagogies, learning communities, portfolio-based learning and evaluation, and other innovative practices that come from comprehensive education. For example, LEAP frameworks might get a start in General Education, or problem-based course groupings, integrated seminar classes, provide feet for interdisciplinary programs, or faculty team based activities (e.g. research groups), might be formed to address questions that cross disciplinary boundaries, and so on.
5.4. Sustainability initiatives in which the General Education Program has participated during the review period.

Strength 5.4a. Several new programs have been recently implemented.
- Launched Advisor Professional Development Series, which focuses on the value of liberal arts education.
- Participated in AAC&U High Impact & Student Success Summer 2015 Institute

5.5. Recommendations

Recommendation 5.5a. Enhance Public Relation Efforts. Highlight the General Education Program and its critical contribution to Comprehensive Education, as well as the benefits of Comprehensive Education, wherever and whenever possible.

Recommendation 5.5b. Design Professional Development of Instructors. Begin implementing web-based training and resources for instructors teaching General Education courses, workshops, and/or a forum on General Education, which would provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary and pedagogic development and research focused around Comprehensive Education.

Recommendation 5.5c Form a committee to investigate and implement the following: initiate a ‘digital literacy intensive’ component to the program that mirrors the ‘writing intensive’ component, complete with a ‘digital literacy across the curriculum,’ a digital literacy center,’ and remediation in basic computing skills. The GERC notes that the concept of digital literacy includes the introduction of concepts for living in an online world, with expansive communication technologies, and advanced information networks; that is, not just computer literacy, but critical and ethical approaches to digital information practices. The committee recommends forming a committee to look closely at the idea of implementing the ‘digital literacy intensive’ component for the General Education Program that remains true to the notion that different disciplines engage online technologies in creative and divergent ways.

Recommendation 5.5d. Coordination of Writing. The program should open a sustainable line of communication with the First-Year Writing Program’s Assessment team (WRTG 121). This communication should serve to improve the community’s understanding of the writing program, and to ensure that the community’s writing needs are being served.

Recommendation 5.5e. Coordination among Department Heads and General Education Program. Departments should report their budgetary and staffing allocations for the General Education Program courses they offer. A sustainable line of communication should be established between Department Heads and the Director of the General Education Program for purposes of planning and innovation.

Recommendation 5.5f. Increase Resources for Staffing. The GERC recommends (at least) the creation of an Assistant Director position, as well as increasing the support staff allotments (beyond one Graduate Assistant), and additional monies for the purpose of planning (of the type noted in (c) above). Additionally, the committee recommends the assignment of an Assistant (professional employee) as part of the General Education Advisory Committee, as suggested in the General Education Implementation Documents. Further, the committee strongly recommends two 50% releases for faculty to work on projects, such as assessment, high impact practices, Comprehensive Education initiatives, and so on. Finally, the committee strongly recommends making the Director, and possibly the assistant director, AP appointments.
Appendix 1.1: “Additional Expectation”

The following was an “Additional Expectation” of the General Education Program document adopted by the Board of Regents in 2005:

Computer skills are important to students’ success in the classroom and in the workforce. We are recommending that the university provide a venue where students will have the opportunity to address deficiencies in computer skills through self-paced units and/or workshops.

Appendix 1.2: “2004 Executive Summary”

The following excerpt is from the Faculty Senate October, 2004 Executive Summary of Suggestion of Science/Technology Improvements to Proposed General Education Requirements:

The provost’s original charge to the general education reform committee was to “modernize” the general education program. Do we honestly feel that science and technology are less relevant today than they were in 1987? Over and over again we have heard industry spokespeople, the media, and our elected officials decry the state of scientific and technological education in our country. We are constantly told that US students compare very unfavorably with students of other countries in terms of their science and math skills. In a speech in Detroit last December, 2003, Governor Granholm stated that:

“Our economic growth is linked inextricably to education. If this country is to maintain and increase its manufacturing base, its work force must be skilled and steeped in innovation and entrepreneurship... We’ll give tomorrow’s work force the skills it needs by improving math, science and reading ability.”
In March of last year, the Governor created the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, chaired by Lieutenant Governor John Cherry. The primary goal of the committee is to improve the training of the citizens of Michigan to allow them to better compete in the modern economy. The Governor charged the committee to:

“Ensure that Michigan's system of higher education furnishes our citizens with the general and specific skills they need to embrace the jobs of the 21st century.”

During the commissioning, the Lieutenant Governor explained:

“The demand for college educated labor over the next 10 years necessitates that we do everything we can now to strengthen our higher education system and maximize its connection to economic growth. Michigan is projected to have shortages in many skilled and technical labor fields, which will make it difficult to create and retain good-paying jobs in advanced manufacturing, engineering, and high-tech sectors.”

The state is investing millions of dollars into the life sciences complex in Ann Arbor. The Pfizer Corporation and other biotechnology firms are large employers in our area. The automobile and other regional manufacturing industries are constantly griping about how under-prepared college graduates are. The need for technologically savvy graduates is greater now than it has ever been.

It must be noted that two of the biggest proponents of science and technology on the reform committee retired in the spring. Consequently, of the 14 remaining committee members, only one was from a scientific or technical discipline when the final report was completed. It could well be that without those two dissenting voices it was harder for the committee to see the need to incorporate more science and technology into the curriculum when the final report was completed.
Appendix 3.1: General Education Course Instructors by Type

General Education Sections - Instructor Type All Departments - 2008

General Education Sections - Instructor Type All Departments - 2011
Key: AC - ?; AP – Administrative Professional; CP – Campus Police; FA – Faculty; GS – Graduate Student; LE – Full-time Lecturer; LL – Part-time Lecturer; PT – Professional technical
### Appendix 3.2: General Education Courses that are Part of Major Programs

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### Appendix 3.3: Dual-listed Interdisciplinary Courses in the General Education Program

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<tr>
<td>HLAD 390</td>
<td>PLSC 390</td>
<td>Poverty, Human Rights, and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 226</td>
<td>WGST 226</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 214</td>
<td>SOCL 214</td>
<td>US Racial and Cultural Minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGST 205</td>
<td>BMMT 205</td>
<td>Women in Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGST 260</td>
<td>CTAC 260</td>
<td>Gender Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGST 265</td>
<td>CTAC 265</td>
<td>Communication &amp; the LGBT Community</td>
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### Appendix 3.4: General Education Program Comparison to Regional Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Institution</th>
<th>Core Courses</th>
<th>Elective Courses</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC University</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
<td>20 credits</td>
<td>50 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEF College</td>
<td>28 credits</td>
<td>22 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHI University</td>
<td>32 credits</td>
<td>18 credits</td>
<td>50 credits</td>
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**Core Courses**
- English Composition
- Calculus
- Introduction to Computer Science
- Psychology

**Elective Courses**
- Introduction to Environmental Science
- Introduction to Business Administration
- Introduction to Art History
- Introduction to World History

---

*Note: The above table is a simplified example for demonstration purposes.*
Appendix 3.5: General Education Program Sections by Department

2008

- Comm, Media & Theatre Arts: 14.2%
- Chemistry: 7.1%
- English: 12.4%
- Physics and Astronomy: 3.2%
- Marketing: 0.3%
- Police Science: 0.2%
- Economics: 2.0%
- Mathematics: 6.7%
- History & Philosophy: 9.1%
- Foreign Lang/Bicult Studies: 8.1%
- Geography & Geology: 4.6%
- Sociology/Anthro/Criminology: 2.6%
- Africology & African Amer Studie: 1.5%
- Women's and Gender Studies: 3.0%
- Special Education: 1.5%
- Art: 2.6%
- Biology: 1.7%
- Foreign Lang/Bicult Studies: 8.1%
- School of Health Sciences: 0.5%
- Psychology: 1.7%
- Physics and Astronomy: 3.2%
- Political Science: 4.3%
- School of Hlth Prom/Human Perf: 6.1%
- School of Social Work: 0.1%
- School of Technology Studies: 0.5%
- Management: 2.0%
- Leadership & Counseling: 0.2%
- Marketing: 0.3%
- University - General Studies: 1.7%
- Africology & African Amer Studie: 1.5%
- Sociology/Anthro/Criminology: 2.6%
Academic Affairs Division 0.1%
Africology & African Amer Studie 1.6%
Art 3.7%
Biology 0.7%
Chemistry 5.2%
Comm, Media & Theatre Arts 14.4%
Computer Science 0.3%
Economics 1.9%
English 11.7%
Geography & Geology 4.7%
History & Philosophy 8.6%
Interdiscip Arts & Sciences 0.1%
Leadership & Counseling 0.1%
Management 1.5%
Marketing 0.5%
Mathematics 6.0%
Music and Dance 1.4%
Political Science 3.7%
Physics and Astronomy 4.3%
Psychology 4.2%
School of Health Prom/Human Perf 7.5%
School of Engineering Tech 0.1%
School of Social Work 0.3%
School of Health Sciences 0.6%
Special Education 1.5%
University - General Studies 1.0%
World Languages 6.4%
Women's and Gender Studies 3.6%
Academic Affairs Division 0.1%
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
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<td>Africology &amp; African Amer Studie</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comm, Media &amp; Theatre Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geography &amp; Geology</td>
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<td>History &amp; Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>University - General Studies</td>
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Appendix 4.1: "Five-Year Plan"

**Note:** This plan was drafted in 2012; however, the subcommittee on assessment, in consultation with administrators and faculty involved, determined that the plan was not sustainable. Yet, this document provides important information and history of EMU's efforts to assess student learning in the General Education Program. Furthermore, the current General Education Subcommittee on Assessment (GESA) has gathered insights from the previous committee’s process and from discussions with selected members of that committee—especially Michael Tew (Faculty Chair), Chris Gardiner (Math Department Head), Ann Blakeslee (WAC and Writing Center Coordinator), and Chris Foreman (Director of General Education). (See pages 20-21 for a fuller explanation.)

**General Education Program**

**Education for Participation in the Global Community**

**Overview of Gen Ed Assessment**

The General Education Program presents a unique, albeit challenging, opportunity to assess student learning. With the exception of the Written Composition (ENGL 121) and Oral Communication (CTAC 124) courses, all other categories of the program are comprised of multi-disciplinary-based courses, all achieving the category outcomes in unique and varied ways. Additionally, it is important that departments and schools retain autonomy over the assessment of student learning at the course level. Given these complexities, the approach taken to assess student learning in the General Education Program will be undertaken at the program - or outcomes - level.

As with most assessment initiatives comes the “natural” inclination to resist “assessment.” However, as we’ve begun working through the process we believe Eastern Michigan University is an ideal candidate for assessing – and improving – student learning because of its historical commitment to students. Many more faculty are realizing the integral role that assessment has in course and curriculum development, and as a result more faculty are now interested in helping to establish a culture of assessment at EMU. The ultimate goal of Gen Ed assessment is to establish a model for making wise assessment choices for various aspects and levels of participation in the General Education Program (e.g., content models, process strategies).

**Gen Ed Assessment - 2005 to 2007**

As a result of curriculum development that began in 2002, Eastern Michigan University launched a new outcomes-based General Education Program in Fall 2007. By design, the new outcomes-based curriculum removed one of the largest barriers to assessment; i.e., creating a structure that was assessable. Assessment of the new General Education Program was a planned part of the infrastructure and implementation process, and thus established a conceptual commitment to assessment.
An **AQIP General Education Team** was formed in 2006 to identify framing principles for assessing the General Education foundation courses; e.g., Written Composition (ENGL 121), Oral Communication (CTAC 124), and Quantitative Reasoning (MATH 110).

The team formulated a three-phase process, experimenting with models of ongoing, continuous improvement. When the team was convened, the **Written Composition (ENGL 121)** group was in the midst of a two-year, community-based assessment that involved gathering systematic input from campus stakeholders about qualities of "good writing," then using that input to construct a rubric used to rate portfolios from EMU's second semester course. This project was incorporated into the AQIP one.

The **Oral Communication (CTAC 124)** group has developed the central elements of its approach to a performance based, assignment embedded assessment of speaking and listening. They have identified an appropriate assessment instrument, developed an assessment rubric, created a locally develop instrument and rubric for the assessment of listening. A pilot assessment was undertaken during the Fall 2007 semester and data is currently being tabulated in order to identify a series of effective practice questions to be addressed. In **2011 a Proposal to revise CTAC 124 Course Outcomes** was submitted to the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) for consideration. According to a process established by GEAC, an ad hoc committee consisting of the chairs of the Assessment and Course Vetting subcommittee, along with one faculty member from each subcommittee, met and reviewed the proposal. It was recommended by this ad hoc committee that GEAC approve the proposed revisions, which was then submitted for approval through the Provost's Office.

After their first year, the **MATH 110 (Quantitative Reasoning)** group determined that it was too early in the life of the course, which was developed as a part of the new general education requirement, to implement the assessment that they initially designed for the course; they have returned to the more preliminary work of creating materials and assignments (including a textbook) to support the course.

**Gen Ed Assessment - 2007 - 2009**

In 2008, the General Education Program applied for, and was accepted into, the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. Our goal for participation in the Academy was to provide us with direction, expertise, and examples for realizing the potential for a cultural shift towards continuous improvement, with an emphasis on genuinely improving student learning. By engaging in genuine dialogue among and between faculty and assessment experts, we hope to develop good assessment practices that are valid, reliable, and discipline based. This will lead to a process by which we collect that data – and act on that data – to improve learning by improving teaching and/or improving the curriculum.

During the **Fall 2008** semester, a seven-person team (Chris Foreman, Linda Adler-Kassner, Michael Tew, Diane Winder, Shawn Quilter, Steve Pernecky, and Akosua Dow) from EMU attended HLC's Conference for the Assessment of Students and Programs. Upon their return from the HLC Conference for the Assessment of Students and Programs, the "HLC Team" discussed strategies for implementing the goals established - most notably, determining the degree to which students are achieving the outcomes in the Gen Ed Program Inherent in most any General Education Program is the difficulty of assessing student learning in multiple courses across different disciplines. Even with common learning outcomes, the question remains: "Can we understand student learning in common ways when learning is manifested in different ways/in different performances?" Given this complexity, the "HLC Team" developed a multi-phase process referred to as the General Education Multicourse Assessment Project (GEMAP).

**GEMAP (General Education Multicourse Assessment Project)**

Central to the GEMAP process is an underlying commitment to developing an ongoing process of assessment of student learning. The overarching goal of GEMAP is to develop a faculty-driven assessment process that will focus on improving teaching and learning in the General Education Program.
The GEMAP Process - 2008 - 2012
The GEMAP process is designed to bring together faculty teaching in each of the primary Gen Ed areas, and ask them to share with others what they did in the classroom to help students achieve the outcomes; in other words what they did and had students do (e.g., lecture, discussion questions, readings, etc.) and what they did to determine if the students had learned it (e.g., test, writing assignment, speaking assignment, project, etc.).

Faculty engaged in these initial phases of the GEMAP Process include:

- **Quantitative Reasoning** - Gisela Ahlbrandt, Donna Selman, Kim Rescorla, Jeff Bernstein, John Preston, Chris Gardiner, Carla Tayeh, and Chris Gardiner
- **Global Awareness** - Margaret Crouch, Solange Simoes, Victor Okafor, Kelly Burke Victor, Salima Saman, and Ron Delph
- **U.S. Diversity** - Michael Tew, Doris Fields, Lori Burlingame, John McCurdy, Deanna Mihaly, Mark Higbee, Kathyrn Ziegler, and Adrian Lottie
- **Arts** - Susan Badger Booth, Decky Alexander, Henry Aldridge, Leslie Atzmon, and Brooke Dagnan
- **Humanities** - Annette Wannamaker, Joe Csicsila, Melissa Jones, Anita Rich, Jim Egge, Jill Dieterle, John Staunton, Amy Johnson, and John Koolage
- **Natural Sciences** - Ernie Behringer, Jim Carroll, Stephen Jefferson, Christine Clark, Maria Milletti, Cara Shillington, Bob Winning, Patrick Koehn, and Dave Nickell
- **Social Sciences** - Sam Shen, Rob Orrange, Sharon Erenburg, Bruce Carroll, Russell Jones, Jessica Elton, and Brian Mitchell
- **Writing Intensive** - Ann Blakeslee, Aaron Liepman, Joe Ramsey, Elizabeth Schuster, Greg Mitchell, David Pierce, Ben Keller, and Kristi Judd
- **Learning Beyond the Classroom** - Decky Alexander, Marty Schichtman, Deedra Springgay, Michael Tew, Melissa Ginotti, and Sarah Kersey Otto

The initial phase of the multi-phase assessment project, the General Education Multicourse Assessment Project (GEMAP), has been completed and has resulted in a number of decisions being made about what can be done to enhance student learning in each Area of the Gen Ed Program.

**Quantitative Reasoning** - Based upon the initial work of the Quantitative Reasoning faculty focus group, and additional meetings held with representatives from each of the departments with QR offerings, a proposal to modify the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Outcomes was submitted to the General Education Advisory Council for consider. Attached to this overview is a copy of the proposal submitted to, and approved by, the Faculty Senate at its February 14, 2012. It was then submitted to, and was approved by, Provost Kim Schatzel, on March 23, 2012. The new outcomes have been implemented and the Math Department is establishing a plan to assess their QR courses beginning with the Winter 2013 semester.

**Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences** - It was determined to table further assessment plans until three years out.

**Global Awareness and U.S. Diversity** - What was clearly evident in the Global Awareness and U.S. Diversity categories was that the current learning outcomes presented a consistent barrier to the assessment of student learning. As we proceeded towards collecting “evidence” (e.g., assignments, student artifacts, etc.) we learned that we could not do this because there was no common understanding of the outcomes and no shared sense of how the outcomes should/could be achieved. Upon further review of the transcripts from the initial GEMAP faculty focus groups, it was determined that the direction we needed to take was to increase our overall understanding of each of these categories by exploring external and internal bases of knowledge.
During the Winter 2012 semester, all departments/schools with GA or USD offerings were asked to identify a liaison – a faculty, full-time lecturer, or part-time lecturer – who will serve on newly established ad hoc committees to begin the review process. Externally, these liaisons will examine the current academic perspective on “global” or “diversity” teaching. Internally, these liaisons will examine current practices for teaching “global” or “diversity” courses. In essence, if the current learning outcomes don’t prompt assessment of student learning, then these groups will be charged with developing unique, relevant, and assessable outcomes.

Global Awareness faculty liaisons: Margaret Crouch, Patrick Pieh, Solange Simoes, Tom Suchan, Gina Boldman, Brooke Dagnan, Mehmet Yaya, Kelly Victor Burke, Zach Moore, Mary Strasma, Lisa Laverty, and Erik Lokensgard

U. S. Diversity faculty liaisons: Michael Tew, Bob Perry, Heather Neff, Doris Fields, John McCurdy, Barry Pyle, and Deanna Mihaly

General Education Program Assessment Plan - 2012 - 2017

2012-13
- Continue work on Global Awareness and U.S. Diversity categories
- Develop a plan for assessing Written Composition (ENGL 121) and Writing Intensive (WI)

2013-14
- Implement plan for assessing Written Composition (ENGL 121) and Writing Intensive (WI)
- Develop a plan for assessing the Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC) requirement, both course and non-course

2014-15
- Implement plan for assessing Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC) requirement
- Develop a plan for assessing the Humanities and Natural Sciences categories

2015-16
- Implement plan for assessing the Humanities and Natural Sciences categories
- Develop a plan for assessing the Arts and Social Sciences categories

2016-17
- Implement plan for assessing the Arts and Social Sciences categories
- Continue the process

‘CTAC 124 Course Outcomes Revision

Background:
As part of the General Education Program Reform process, CTAC 124-Fundamentals of Speech was submitted as a required course for students in the Effective Communication learning area. CTAC 124 has a long history as a required course for students at Eastern Michigan University demonstrating institutional investment in students’ ability to express themselves in public settings. A requirement for inclusion in the new General Education Program was a review of course outcomes by the Course Vetting committee. Additionally, the General Education Program required that student learning in included courses would be regularly assessed.

The following five outcomes, based on National Communication Association standards for Competent Speaking, were submitted and accepted by the General Education Advisory Council:

Outcome 1: Research, plan, prepare, adapt, and deliver oral messages that clearly and succinctly communicate information to public audiences;
Outcome 2: Critically evaluate and respond to arguments made by others;
Outcome 3: Use appropriate evidence and/or ethical communication strategies to persuade and/or
Outcome 4: Develop the ability to critically analyze and evaluate public/oral communication; 
Outcome 5: Learn to use appropriate language to different audiences and occasions.

An assessment of CTAC 124 was conducted in 2007-2009. Upon completion of data analysis, a series of Focus Group Dialogues were held to interpret the results. Focus groups consisted of faculty, lecturers, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants involved in course delivery. The summary recommendation of the focus groups included a reconsideration of the language of the learning outcomes as presented above.

Proposed Outcomes:
Following are the proposed outcomes for CTAC 124. The learning outcomes are accompanied by indicators of student learning.

1. The Student is able to communicate oral messages intended for public audiences
   a. Appropriate speech content for audience, occasion and purpose
   b. Appropriate organization for audience, occasion and purpose
   c. Appropriate language for audience, occasion and purpose
   d. Appropriate delivery for audience, occasion and purpose

2. The Student is able to analyze oral messages presented to public audiences by others
   a. Critical description of the elements of the communication context
   b. Critical interpretation of the strategies of the speaker
   c. Critical evaluation of the effectiveness and impact(s) of the speaker and speech

3. The Student is able to craft oral arguments intended for public audiences
   a. Appropriate argument construction
   b. Appropriate use of evidence

4. The Student is able to manage communication apprehension as related to the presentation of oral messages to public audiences
   a. Awareness of the general sources of communication apprehension
   b. Awareness of the student specific sources of communication apprehension
   c. Implementation of a personal plan to manage communication apprehension

5. The Student is able to articulate the relationship between public oral communication and democratic life in historical and contemporary contexts
   a. Understanding of basic classical and contemporary theories of public communication
   b. Understanding of the role of public communication in public decision making

6. The Student is able to demonstrate the principles of ethical oral public communication
   a. Appropriate use and documentation of sources for speech content
   b. Appropriate use of information and influence appeals
   c. Appropriate audience-centered intentions and purposes

Rationale:
Christ and Blanchard (in Assessing Communication Education, 1994) argue for the construction of course outcomes which include:
1. Communication Competence
2. Critical Thinking
3. Contextual Competence
4. Aesthetic Sensibility
5. Professional Ethics
6. Adaptive Competence
7. Historical Awareness
8. Theoretical Understanding

Additionally, Christ and Blanchard (supported by an extensive array of assessment scholarship) assert that broad course outcomes should address learning in four general domains:
1. Cognitive Domain (knowledge, comprehension, application, synthesis, evaluation)
2. Behavioral Domain (psychomotor ability, performance, and skill)
3. Affective Domain (attitude, sensitivity, motivation)
4. Ethical Domain (values, standards, relationships)

The proposed outcomes address those considerations and respond to the data from the initial course assessment. Data suggested that students perform at or above benchmark expectation in cognitive and ethical domains of learning about speech communication. Student performance, however, did not meet benchmarks in behavioral domains. Learning in the Affective domain is not accounted for in the present outcomes. Focus groups concluded that the original outcomes were cluttered, repetitive, and unclear as to course expectations. In addition to pedagogical recommendations to address student-learning issues, the groups pointed to the course outcomes as a possible intervention and improvement area. The proposed outcomes address these limitations and have been expanded to explicitly include student learning in the areas of Historical Awareness and Theoretical Understanding.
**General Education Program - Outcomes**

In the **Global Awareness** course, students will:

- Explore specific global issues influencing diverse nations and/or cultures, along with their interrelations within the global community.
- Explore their own culture and cultural practices and how these relate to the cultures and cultural practices of others in the global community.
- Explore the social and historical dynamics that create and influence nations, governments, global alliances, and global conflicts.
- Explore the causes and consequences of social, cultural, and racial intolerance in the world.
- Analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources to make informed decisions regarding global issues.

In the **U.S. Diversity** course, students will:

- Examine the complexity of their own cultural identities and how these relate to the cultural identities of others in the U.S.
- Explore the causes and consequences of social intolerance in the U.S.
- Examine the differences between social intolerance and institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion in the U.S.
- Explore how diversity has affected and continues to affect income distribution, economic mobility, political access, and the democratic process in the U.S.
- Develop an awareness of alternative values, views, and communication styles in the U.S.

In the **Arts** courses, students will:

- Acquire basic knowledge and skills in the use of the vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods in an arts discipline.
- Examine the relationship between creative and critical thinking.
- Learn the relationship between content and form.
- Begin to understand historical development in an arts discipline.
- Develop ability to evaluate work in an arts discipline.
- Learn to define and solve artistic problems.

In the **Humanities** courses, students will:

- Recognize how the humanities cultivate aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and empathic understanding of others.
- Demonstrate basic competency in reading and understanding literary, philosophical, or religious works both in their original historical context and as they inform debate and dialogue today.
- Analyze and write about literary, philosophical, or religious works.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the history of literary works, or religious or philosophical ideas.
- Become familiar with the discursive practices particular to the study of the humanities.
- Begin to recognize how society influences humanistic thought and how the humanities transform society.
- Become practiced in the interpretation and generation of ideas.

In the **Foreign Language** courses, students will:

- Communicate at a basic functional level in a language other than their own native language.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationship between culture and language.
- Use basic forms and structures of a language in communicating in that language.

In the **Social Science** courses, students will:

- Acquire an understanding of social science methods and of how they are used to engage in the systematic study of society and culture.
- Understand and compare formal and informal social and political structures, organizations, and institutions.
- Explore and understand power relationships and the impact of social change on different groups and on society in general.
- Develop an appreciation of different interpretations of contemporary issues, institutions, or structures.
- Use social science methods and content to interpret and analyze data and reports in the media and to make informed decisions regarding local, national, and international issues.
- Use basic social scientific research techniques to examine and present information in a clear and concise manner.
- Understand the relation between qualitative and quantitative research.

In the **Natural Science** courses, students will:

- Apply the scientific method and its assumptions to pose and answer questions.
  - Make observations, develop appropriate classifications, and infer trends.
  - Gather original data to verify the validity and reliability of accepted scientific principles.
  - Analyze and solve a scientific problem by drawing conclusions based on original data gathered using appropriate experimental techniques.
  - Use the processes and methods of science to demonstrate how reproducible experimental observations give rise to fundamental laws and theories.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which theories may evolve with time.
• Analyze and solve problems by identifying and utilizing appropriate data and methodology.

Attain a basic knowledge of current scientific understanding of the universe and the laws that govern it.
• Demonstrate a core knowledge base of facts and information.
• Demonstrate a working knowledge of the hierarchical structure of natural science.

Become a scientifically literate citizen.
• Acquire and apply an appropriate technical vocabulary.
• Interpret, analyze, and critically evaluate data and reports in the media relating to the natural sciences.
• Engage in informed discussions about the validity of the conclusions from reports in the media relating to the natural sciences.
• Employ available resources to find relevant scientific or technical information.
• Make informed decisions about scientific issues in daily life.

In Writing-Intensive courses, students will...
• Develop and employ successful, flexible writing and reading strategies that support sustained inquiry in a discipline.
• Use writing strategies that achieve the purposes(s) for writing and address the expectations of audience(s) within a disciplinary context.
• Formulate research questions and employ strategies for researching and responding to those questions.
• Use discipline-specific genres to communicate information.
• Understand conventions for communicating, disseminating, and interpreting information within a discipline.

Learning Beyond the Classroom - Outcomes
Students who complete experiences in the Self and Well-Being area will…
• Learn to achieve a balance between education, work, and leisure.
• Choose behaviors and environments that promote health and reduce risk.
• Develop skills and habits that aid in future life and career pursuits.

Students who complete experiences in the Community Service, Citizenship, and Leadership area will…
• Participate in the development, maintenance, and/or change of community standards and norms.
• Participate in service/volunteer activities.
• Develop leadership skills.
• Develop skills and habits that aid in future life and career pursuits.
• Develop and practice empathy for others.
• Acquire skills for working cooperatively with others.

Students who complete experiences in the Cultural and Academic Activities and Events area will…
• Understand and appreciate the relationship between curricular and co-curricular activities.
• Experience and feel part of the campus community.
• Appreciate campus activities and events that broaden their academic experiences.

Students who complete experiences in the Career and Professional Development area will…
• Consider their careers and futures as professionals in reference to what they have achieved already, what they are doing currently, and what their interests and goals are.
• Explore various career and professional opportunities through structured channels.

Students who have international experiences in the International and Multicultural Experience area will…
• Appreciate cultures outside of the U.S.
• Understand how different cultures approach social problems.
• Acquire the perspective of a cultural minority.
• Acquire the skills necessary to function in another culture.

Students who have multicultural experiences in the International and Multicultural Experience area will…
• Understand and appreciate cultures within the U.S.
• Appreciate various forms of cultural expression.
• Communicate effectively across cultures within the U.S.

Students who have experiences in the Undergraduate Research area will…
• Learn to carry out self-directed or independent learning projects.
• Collaborate with or be mentored by a faculty member.
- Appreciate the value of learning for self-understanding and actualization.
- Appreciate the value of intellectual and critical engagement with local and global issues.

### iii Proposal to Modify the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Outcomes

As we enter the fifth academic year since launching EMU's General Education Program, *Education for Participation in the Global Community*, we reflect upon the impact on student learning, and begin the process of making any recommendations and/or adjustments to learning outcomes and/or teaching practices.

A group of faculty teaching courses in the Quantitative Reasoning category have met at various stages over the past three years to discuss the outcomes, review current external benchmarks, review internal assessments of student learning, and discuss possible ways to enhance teaching and learning in QR courses. For the purposes of better clarifying the QR outcomes and simplifying the assessment process, the following regrouping and modifications are being recommended. In addition to faculty focus groups and dialogues, data from a two-year assessment of MATH 110 courses is also referenced. NOTE: The modified outcomes indicate the original outcome being addressed. With the exception of the deletion of the original outcome #7, there are no significant changes other than a clustering of the original outcomes into four (4) outcomes with indicators of learning.

This recommendation has been reviewed, and approved, by the General Education Assessment subcommittee, the General Education Course Vetting subcommittee, and the General Education Advisory Council.

Additionally, the proposal was submitted to all departments with QR offerings and has been reviewed and endorsed by the following departments: Mathematics, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, and School of Technology Studies.

In accordance with Article XIII (388), and given that this involves “credit producing areas and instructional matters … affecting more than one (1) college,” the General Education Advisory Council is requesting the Faculty Senate to review the “Proposal to modify the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Outcomes and provide applicable recommendations to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

**Proposal to modify the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Outcomes**

Listed below are four (4) QR outcomes with indicators of learning. Please accept these four outcomes as defined as replacing previously articulated outcomes for Quantitative Reasoning.

Students will learn to solve real-life problems using a mathematical modeling process. They will learn to:

1) Build an appropriate model.
   a) Estimate an answer to the problem [5]
   b) Identify important components of the model [1]
   c) Collect or generate appropriate data [3]
   d) Analyze the situation using arithmetic, geometric, algebraic, and probabilistic or statistical methods. [4]

2) Use the model to solve the problem.
   a) Propose a solution [6]
   b) Evaluate the reasonableness of the solution. [6]

3) Communicate the results of their analysis.
   a) Share the findings in oral or written reports using appropriate mathematical language. [9]
   b) Write summaries to explain how they reached their conclusions. [10]
   c) Communicate quantitative relationships using symbols, equations, graphs, and tables. [8]

4) Evaluate the model.
   a) Draw other inferences from the model. [11]
   b) Identify the assumptions of the model [2]
   c) Discuss the limitations of the model. [12]

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**Appendix 4.2: General Education C to A Data Summary (see attached)**

**Appendix 4.3: General Education C to A Data (see attached)**

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About the Survey

The General Education Program survey was administered online during Fall 2014 to part-time lecturers, full-time lecturers, and full-time faculty. This report aggregated the results from these faculty members to represent their knowledge and opinion of EMU’s General Education Program. The survey consisted of five sections: (1) General Education teaching experience, (2) General Education program services, (3) Discipline subject area requirements, (4) General Education program knowledge, and (5) item responses and feedback. There were a total of 272 respondents, for a 20% response rate. However, due to a sampling error, respondent count data from the preceding two tables does not accurately represent those who completed the survey. The distribution only of instructors who provided their email addresses is summarized below.

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<th>Full time lecturer</th>
<th>Part time lecturer</th>
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Note: Because some faculty members’ department is not in a designated college, population data per college does not equal the total faculty population.

*This excerpt is page one of the survey report (15 pages). For complete survey results, please contact Chris Foreman.