



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Final Recommendation Report from the General Education Redesign Task Force

Submitted January 26, 2024

Table of Contents

Final Recommendation Report from the General Education Redesign Task Force	1
Task Force Members	6
Executive Summary	7
Why Revise General Education at East Tennessee State University?	8
Process	10
Key Concept for the Task Force’s Work	11
Vision Statement and Competencies	12
Summer Work	13
The Proposal	17
Compass: General Education for ETSU	17
<i>Strengthening Foundations (15-16)</i>	17
<i>Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10-11)</i>	18
<i>Exploring Connections (9)</i>	18
<i>Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)</i>	18
<i>Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3-4)</i>	18
Details	19
<i>Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen</i>	21
Additional Features of the Proposal	22
<i>Focus Points</i>	22
<i>Student Choice</i>	22
<i>High-Impact Teaching Practices</i>	23
<i>Benefits of the Proposal</i>	24
<i>Feedback</i>	26
Decision Point	28
Compass Proposal Including FYE and no Oral Communication Requirement	28
<i>Strengthening Foundations (15-16)</i>	28
<i>Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10-11)</i>	28

<i>Exploring Connections (9)</i>	29
<i>Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)</i>	29
<i>Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3-4)</i>	29
Compass Proposal Including Oral Communication and no FYE0 Requirement.....	29
<i>Strengthening Foundations (15-16)</i>	29
<i>Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10-11)</i>	29
<i>Exploring Connections (9)</i>	29
<i>Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)</i>	30
<i>Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3-4)</i>	30
Strengths of Compass Proposal that Includes FYE in Foundations.....	30
Weaknesses of Compass Proposal that Includes FYE.....	32
Strengths of Proposal that Includes Oral Communication in Foundations.....	33
Weaknesses of Proposal that Includes Oral Communication in Foundations.....	33
<i>How will students develop adequate oral communication skills without a required course?</i>	34
Recommended Implementation Strategies	35
Recommendation 1: Three-Phased Approach.....	35
Recommendation 2: Assignment of Faculty Liaisons.....	37
Recommendation 3: Program-Level Review.....	37
Recommendation 4: Review by University Advising.....	37
Recommendation 5: Creation of a Director of General Education Position.....	37
Recommendation 6: Development of an assessment plan for general education.....	38
Recommendation 7: Routine Re-Affirmation.....	38
Recommendation 8: Support from the Center for Teaching Excellence.....	38
Recommendation 9: Continual Improvement.....	38
Other Recommendations Outside the Charge	39
Appendices	41
Appendix A: What is the Purpose of General Education?.....	41

Appendix B: How Will Students Benefit from General Education?	42
<i>Think Critically</i>	42
<i>Communicate Effectively</i>	43
<i>Understand Social and Natural Worlds</i>	44
<i>Cultivate Artistic Awareness</i>	44
<i>Collaborate and Build Community</i>	45
<i>Grow as a Responsible and Productive Citizen</i>	45
Appendix C: Approval Process Sub-Committee Report	47
<i>Membership</i>	47
<i>Primary Charge</i>	47
<i>Old Courses Process</i>	47
<i>New Courses Process</i>	48
<i>Timeline</i>	48
<i>Additional Charges</i>	49
Appendix D: First-Year Experience Subcommittee Report.....	52
<i>Membership</i>	52
<i>Charge</i>	52
<i>Proposed Model and Structure</i>	52
<i>Requirement Limitations</i>	53
<i>Versions of the Course</i>	53
<i>Learning Goals</i>	54
<i>Shared Representation and Management</i>	55
<i>Memorandum of Understanding</i>	56
Appendix E: Badge/Focus Subcommittee Report.....	63
<i>Membership</i>	63
<i>Charge</i>	63
Appendix F: Comparison of required SCHs within current and proposed general education curricula	64
Appendix G: The Relationship Between Competencies and Categories	66
<i>Competency: Think Critically</i>	66
<i>Competency: Communicate Effectively</i>	66

<i>Competency: Understand Natural and Social Worlds</i>	66
<i>Competency: Cultivate Artistic Awareness</i>	67
<i>Competency: Collaborate and Build Community</i>	67
<i>Competency: Grow as a Responsible and Productive Citizen</i>	67
Appendix H: Guidance for Specific Categories and Subcategories	68
<i>First-Year Experience Courses</i>	68
<i>Written Composition</i>	68
<i>Oral Communication</i>	69
<i>Quantitative Reasoning</i>	69
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	69
<i>Natural, Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>	70
<i>History</i>	70
<i>Humanities (Outside of History)</i>	71
<i>Cultivating Artistic Awareness</i>	71
<i>Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen</i>	71
References	72

Task Force Members

- Dr. David Harker (co-chair); Professor and Chair of Philosophy and Humanities
- Dr. Sharon James McGee (co-chair); Dean of the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies and Professor of Literature and Language
- Dr. Daryl Carter; Associate Dean for Community Relations and Outreach, College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of History, and Director of Black American Studies
- Matthew Desjardins; Senior Lecturer of Computing and Director of the BlueSky Tennessee Institute
- Dr. Cerrone Foster; Associate Professor of Biological Sciences and Associate Director for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities
- Bill Hemphill; Associate Professor of Engineering, Engineering Technology and Surveying
- J. Mikki Johnson; Senior Lecturer in Community and Behavioral Health and International Field Placement Coordinator
- Dr. Karin Keith; Associate Provost for Faculty and Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
- Gabby Lekhumle; replaced in January 2023 by Trent White, replaced in September 2023 by Meredith Smith; Student Representative
- Dr. Matthew Palmatier; Associate Professor of Psychology
- Paula Sarut; Academic Advisor, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Alan Stevens; Chair and Associate Professor of Music
- Dr. Amber Street; Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work
- Dr. Kimberly Tweedale; Assistant Professor of Literature and Language and Director of Composition

Executive Summary

In response to calls that general education at East Tennessee State University should be reviewed and revised as needed, Provost Kimberly D. McCorkle convened a Task Force in Fall 2022. The task force spent approximately 15 months engaging in review, proposing a redesign to general education (to be called Compass), soliciting feedback from faculty and other university constituents, and reviewing feedback and modifying the proposal as warranted.

The task force proposes revising general education at East Tennessee State University. Features of the proposal include vision and purpose statements for general education, a move away from a distribution (or “checklist”) approach to a competency approach, integration of high-impact practices, inclusion of a critical thinking course, and increased student choice.

The task force also makes recommendations for implementing general education at ETSU and includes other recommendations beyond the scope of but related to general education at ETSU.

Why Revise General Education at East Tennessee State University?

In October 2022, the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) recommended to Provost Kimberly D. McCorkle “that a process of a faculty-led redesign of general education at East Tennessee State University be initiated as soon as possible.” This recommendation was in line with previous, local strategies and ambitions, and supported by evidence that across the country general education is underperforming, thereby motivating redesigns among many institutes of higher education.

In 2018, (then) Provost Bert Bach recognized the importance of reviewing general education. In the fall of that year, Provost Bach created a committee to begin a process of general education renewal. Dr. Wilsie Bishop took a keen interest in reviewing that group’s work when she became Interim Provost in 2020. Partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the committee's recommendations were never formalized.

In 2021, the Academic Task Force Report from ETSU 125 Chapter II concluded that general education review and redesign should be ETSU’s top academic priority. The [ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II](#) recommended in spring 2022 that ETSU “[i]mplement a faculty-driven process of general education renewal that ensures every graduate of ETSU is prepared for lifelong learning and professional success” (p. 23). The Faculty Senate endorsed a review of general education.

The reasons for such wide support for general education redesign are not hard to find. One-third of a student’s credit hours are used to satisfy general education

requirements. Thus, improving the relevance, coherence, and value of general education will have a significant and positive impact on students' overall college experience.

General education is intended to prepare students for life, careers, and citizenship by developing core competencies, as well as deeper and broader understanding across all branches of the arts, humanities, and sciences. Many students, parents, and community members, however, are unclear about the purpose and values.

General education is regarded too often as an obstacle to graduation, rather than an opportunity to develop important skills. Too often, general education is regarded as a checklist of disconnected courses rather than a coherent program of study that benefits students and the communities to which they belong. General education is frequently regarded as irrelevant to a student's major field of study and their career aspirations, rather than as a complement to each (Association of American Colleges and Universities, p. v). In addition to troubling misconceptions, there is ample evidence of low graduation rates and insufficient preparation among graduates for the workplace and responsible citizenship. Improvements in general education programming can help address all these shortcomings.

Recognizing that many general education programs are underachieving, a nationwide movement is underway to improve performance through redesign. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) provides significant guidance on developing a 21st century general education program. In Tennessee alone, Middle Tennessee State University has recently undergone a redesign process, resulting in [MTSU True Blue Core](#). The [University of Tennessee at Chattanooga](#) began implementing a new general education program in fall 2023. The University of Tennessee's [Volunteer Core](#) is a result of that institution's review of general

education. The [Tennessee Board of Regents \(TBR\)](#) community college system has begun “a comprehensive review of its General Education Core.”

The General Education Redesign Task Force held three values as paramount: (1) do what is best for student learning, (2) provide students with greater flexibility and choice, and (3) maintain appropriate academic rigor in the general education program to meet student needs for the 21st century. Through judicious redesign, general education at ETSU can help convince potential students that ETSU should be their university of choice, improve the educational experience of all students, and empower students to succeed professionally and thrive on their journey of lifelong learning.

Process

Following the recommendation made by GEAC, the Provost announced the creation of a General Education Redesign Task Force on October 21, 2022. By the end of that month, members of the task force had already begun familiarizing themselves with relevant SACSCOC criteria and Tennessee state statutes surrounding general education and reviewing relevant literature.

Over the last decade, many universities and colleges have initiated redesigns of their general education curricula. Some of these institutions provide details on public websites of the processes they adopted, the decisions they faced, and the results of the research they conducted. As part of their background research, task force members reviewed this content. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) makes available a wide range of relevant sources on both liberal and general education best practices, research, and broad strategies for redesign, which was also carefully reviewed.

Background research suggested that general education redesign should focus on:

- Shifting away from a menu-driven curriculum aimed at breadth of content and toward a curriculum that places the competencies and learning outcomes as the central focus;
- Providing clear statements of essential competencies/learning outcomes for general education;
- Helping students understand why those competencies/learning outcomes are valuable;
- Articulating for students how they can develop increasing levels of proficiency with respect to such competencies;
- Integrating general education with the more specialized knowledge that students acquire within major and minor programs of study;
- Achieving greater integration within general education by avoiding a curriculum that is fragmented, incoherent, and disconnected from students' interests, goals, and aspirations; and
- Providing students with autonomy to pursue a program of study that is meaningful and relevant to their interests, ambitions, and identity, and which will motivate them to produce their best work.

Key Concept for the Task Force's Work

Early in this endeavor, the task force settled on three values as paramount to its work: (1) do what is best for student learning, (2) provide student flexibility and choice, and (3) maintain appropriate academic rigor in the general education program to meet student needs for the 21st century. These values remained central to the task force's work throughout the process. While members may have disagreed about what was in the best interest of students in the 21st century, they remained steadfast in their commitment to keep student learning as the central tenet of general education curriculum design.

Vision Statement and Competencies

By the start of the spring semester, 2023, the task force had decided to adopt a competency-based approach to general education based on background research, and thus began reviewing the competencies that have been adopted by other institutions of higher education, as well as the key career competencies identified by groups such as the National Institute of Colleges and Employers (NICE) and the Essential Learning Outcomes identified as part of the AAC&U's Liberal Education and American's Promise (LEAP) initiative.

In addition to developing clear statements concerning core competencies, it was decided that the task force would produce a statement of what it wants general education at ETSU to achieve. Such a statement, it was hoped, would provide a platform for subsequent work, give the ETSU community an opportunity to comment on the task force's vision, and provide future students, prospective students, and other community members with a snapshot of the values of general education. A draft of that statement was shared with campus in March 2023, as was a list of six core competencies. Via the task force website, the Weekly Updates email for faculty and staff, the Provost's Pen, and additional emails to Deans and Chairs, efforts were made to ensure that all faculty and staff were aware of the task force's invitation to comment.

The feedback from campus on the general vision statement and competencies precipitated some changes, but the comments were generally positive and encouraging. All comments were discussed at task force meetings. All commentators were thanked personally for their input, and most were given information concerning the decisions that the task force had reached. The final version of the vision statement can be found in Appendix A.

While these items were out for public comment, the task force began articulating more specific dimensions along which each of the six competencies would be understood, aware that changes might be required due to public comments concerning the competencies. In developing these dimensions, the task force was grateful for assistance from Dr. Alison Barton from the Center for Teaching Excellence. At the end of April, the six fully articulated competencies were shared with campus, and again a variety of avenues were utilized to alert faculty and staff to the opportunity to provide feedback.

Summer Work

The task force met every Wednesday between May 10 and July 26, 2023, except for two weeks in June. The first order of business was to discuss the feedback received. This took several weeks, and again resulted in important changes. Changes to the competencies continued throughout the remainder of the process. The final version can be found in Appendix B.

All the work completed between October 2022 and May 2023 provided critical background information but did not provide explicit guidance on what a revised general education program should comprise. Every institution is different, subject to different accreditation criteria and political statutes, serving different populations of students, and with distinct institutional resources, strengths, and identities.

To better understand what was possible, the task force spent several weeks conducting a deep dive into the general education curricula of ETSU's peer institutions, as well as the curricula of institutions that have received national attention for their innovation in general education. In the process, it became clear that a great variety exists between institutions with respect to general education requirements, even among peer institutions.

Some institutions include a first-year experience course within general education, but others do not. Likewise for wellness courses and capstone classes. Some curricula require zero hours in history, others require three or six. Spread across the 30 reviewed curricula, similar ranges could be found for requirements in the natural sciences, social sciences, and mathematics. Of course, how institutions interpret these requirements also varies, so direct comparisons were not always straightforward.

Nevertheless, evidence from peer institutions suggested that ETSU could take significant license to create the curriculum that would best serve its students. Although the task force is confident that its proposal differentiates general education at ETSU from other institutions in important and meaningful ways, this proposal aligns with best practices in general education redesign and other general education programs at the state, regional, and national levels. For example, and pertinent to the decision point discussed below, seven of ETSU's 15 peer institutions require students to take a course in oral communication as part of general education, and eight do not.

The task force's reviews of peer institutions and discussions of their perceived strengths and weaknesses provided a platform for more creative work. Every task force member was charged with developing a general education curriculum for ETSU, informed by the group's research and responsive to the competencies that campus had reviewed and critiqued. Several weeks were spent discussing these curricula, their strengths, and suitability for ETSU.

The task force became aware that it could not include everything and that not every academic unit would support every proposed change. The task force steered toward what it believed, based on the literature and institutional knowledge, would provide the greatest benefit to students and other stakeholders.

By the middle of July, as a result of many extended discussions, the task force had converged on reasonable consensus surrounding most elements of its proposed redesigned curriculum. At that time, the result was shared with Provost McCorkle, who expressed early support and enthusiasm for the work and advised that a process begin to solicit as much feedback as possible.

Between July 24 and October 13, 2023, the proposal was shared with the following stakeholders: Provost McCorkle¹; an advisory council which had been created earlier in the process with the approval of Dr. McCorkle¹; President Noland; Deans Council; GEAC; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of Communication Studies and Storytelling, and Media and Communication; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, Political Science, and Psychology; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of History and Appalachian Studies; the CAS Department of Mathematics; the College of Nursing; the Clemmer College of Education and Human Development; the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of Theatre and Dance, Art and Design, Music, the Bluegrass, Old-time, and Roots Music program, and the Creative Writing faculty; the College of Public Health; the College of Business and Technology; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of Philosophy and Humanities, and Literature and Language; a combined meeting with the CAS Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, and Geological Sciences; a combined meeting with Sherrod Library and the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies; SGA; and Faculty Senate.

While the proposal was being shared across campus, three subcommittees were created to continue developing important elements of the proposal (first-year

¹ These are individuals who weren't members of the task force, but whom were recognized as having experience and expertise that would be crucial to the success of the process. The committee comprised: Alison Barton, Cheri Clavier, Bill Flora, Susan McCracken, Catherine Morgan, Melissa Nipper, Megan Roberts, and April Rainbolt.

experience courses, approval process, focus areas). The task force also continued to meet collectively to discuss the feedback being received. Reports on the three subcommittees' work are in Appendices C, D, and E.

Meetings and spirited discussions continued throughout the fall semester. As a result of campus feedback, the task force made changes to the proposal. At a Town Hall meeting on December 8, 2023, the task force presented an updated version of its proposal and recommendations. An online forum for public comments was opened on December 11 and remained open until January 8, 2024. The task force met for the final time on January 12, 2024, to discuss that feedback and make final changes.

The Proposal

The task force proposes that ETSU adopt a model of general education that will “inspire students to fulfill their potential as socially responsible, informed, and self-aware members of society” (ETSU, General Education Redesign Vision Statement). The curriculum is designed to strengthen foundational skills; improve students’ understanding of natural and social worlds; encourage the exploration of connections between disciplines, ideas, interests, and goals; cultivate artistic awareness; and help students grow as individual and global citizens.

The task force has named the general education curriculum design “Compass.” A compass is a necessary tool for finding direction; the [National Geographic Society](#) states that a compass is “one of the most important instruments for navigation.” General education distinguishes a university education from a technical or professional education, and it sets the course for lifelong learning, for exploration beyond the major, and for humanistic, artistic, and scientific inquiry. General education serves as a Compass for students as they navigate their university experience.

Compass: General Education for ETSU

Strengthening Foundations (15-16)

- ????? (3)
- Written Composition (6)
- Quantitative Reasoning (3-4)
- Critical Thinking (3)

Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10–11)

- Natural Sciences (At Least 4)
- Social/Behavioral Sciences (At Least 3)

Exploring Connections (9)

- History (At Least 3)
- Humanities outside of History (At Least 3)

Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)

Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3–4)

The proposal does include one decision point for others to answer, reflected in the table by a string of question marks and discussed at greater length below.

The curriculum can be completed in 40 hours². Relative to ETSU's current general education curriculum, the number of required student credit hours has remained unaltered in two categories (Written Composition and Quantitative Reasoning). In other categories and subcategories, the proposal provides students with the flexibility to take more courses than they are currently able to take, or fewer, or students might choose to take the same number of courses in each category that they are currently required to take.

² Some programs might require, however, or some students might choose to take, a 4-credit-hour course to satisfy the quantitative reasoning subcategory, thereby increasing their general education program to 41 hours. Some programs might also require, or some students might choose to take, two 4-credit-hour courses in the natural sciences, thereby further increasing their general education requirements to 42 hours. Some students might choose to take a third course in the natural sciences, to satisfy the final, "Growing ..." category, thereby taking 43 hours to satisfy all general education requirements, assuming that such courses are available to satisfy that particular category.

The increased flexibility that many students will discover does not prevent undergraduate programs from satisfying legislative and accreditation requirements by requiring of their students a particular set of major specific general education courses.

Details

Many categories/subcategories within the proposal map onto blocks from the existing curriculum:

- **Written Communication** is a key career competency. The task force recommends that ETSU continue to require 6 student credit hours as part of the general education curriculum.
- **Quantitative Reasoning** is a similarly key career competency. The task force recommends that ETSU continue to require a course, 3-4 student credit hours, in quantitative reasoning.
- An understanding of the methods, concepts and principles of **scientific disciplines**, natural, social, and behavioral, is critical to becoming a responsible citizen. The task force recommends that ETSU requires 10-11 student credit hours in these areas with the flexibility to take more.
- The study of **history** develops skills that enable students to make sense of the modern world, and the events, peoples, and ideas that shape it, while learning how to empathize with those who live and think in ways that appear very different from their own. The task force recommends that ETSU require one 3 student credit hour course in history and create the opportunity for students to satisfy general education requirements by earning as many as 9 student credit hours.³

³ The task force discussed at length the possibility that students should be required to take a course in US history, specifically. Evidence was presented that high school students' understanding of US history very often falls below college expectations. The same is true for student understanding of World History, however. The task force was split on the decision, but ultimately voted narrowly in support of allowing students to take a World History course to satisfy the history requirement.

- Branches of the **humanities** beyond history, which include literature, philosophy, art history, and religious studies, deepen students' understanding of the human experience; expose them to diverse cultures, ideas, and perspectives; and in the process create better critical thinkers and more effective communicators. The task force recommends that ETSU require 3 student credit hours in a branch of the humanities other than history, with the opportunity to satisfy general education requirements by taking as many as 9 student credit hours.
- **Cultivating artistic awareness** provides novel and valuable perspectives on every aspect of the modern world, enabling students to better understand themselves and others, as well as their shared and novel experiences. The task force recommends that ETSU require 3 student credit hours in the fine arts, with the opportunity to satisfy general education requirements by taking as many as 6 student credit hours.

The proposal also includes two elements that are novel, relative to existing requirements:

The term "**critical thinking**" is employed so widely that its value can be overlooked. For some, critical thinking connotes simply the act of thinking carefully for oneself. Any cognitive activity that advances beyond mindless repetition might be thought to qualify as critical thinking. For others, critical thinking requires information literacy, good reasoning skills, and metacognitive reflection, including awareness of one's own cognitive biases.

Feedback we received from across campus indicated that improving students' critical thinking skills should be a top priority. The dangers associated with misinformation, science denial, revisionist history, echo chambers, and propagation of "alternative facts" are only becoming more apparent. Citizens cannot become well-informed if they cannot distinguish reliable information from propaganda. They are less likely to behave responsibly if they lack understanding of the ethical, social, and economic issues surrounding the use of information and evidence. Marin and Halpern (2011)

found that explicit teaching of critical thinking led to more improved knowledge transfer than implicit teaching. In other words, believing that students will “pick up” critical thinking skills implicitly seems to be much less effective than explicitly teaching students how to use critical thinking skills. In their meta-analysis, El Soufi and See (2019) found that intentional teaching of general critical thinking skills, defined as “training students to define arguments, evaluate reliability of sources, identify fallacies and assumptions, use inductive and deductive logic, synthesize information, make inferences, etc.” has the most potential for positive effects in improving students’ overall critical thinking skills.

The task force recommends that ETSU requires students to take a 3-credit course (from among a selection of suitable courses) aimed specifically at helping students develop important skills and thereby preparing them to respond to the aforementioned threats. A foundational course in critical thinking will develop skills that can be refined in other college courses, help students integrate information from distinct disciplines, and improve cultural judgment and decision-making.

Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen

The task force’s vision statement describes how “the general education curriculum at East Tennessee State University inspires students to fulfill their potential as socially responsible, informed, and self-aware members of society.” According to the proposal’s core competencies, “general education teaches us how to build communities and better understand our roles within them,” and “productive citizens are resilient and self-aware ... they strive to maximize their physical, financial, emotional, and social wellness. They look outwards as well as inward, developing awareness of the differences between diverse cultures and their significance. They interact respectfully with people from diverse communities and backgrounds and work towards creating a more equitable world.”

The task force concluded that it is important to create room in the curriculum for programs to consider how their discipline could help students achieve these important goals. Furthermore, because this competency can be profitably addressed from the perspectives of the sciences, arts, or humanities, this part of the proposal builds key, additional flexibility into the curriculum.

Additional Features of the Proposal

In the following sections, important additional features of the proposal are highlighted.

Focus Points

The task force recommends that ETSU develop **“Focus” points**, which are embedded within general education. For example, a student might take a history course on the history of Appalachia, a literature course on Appalachian literature, and a course in Bluegrass, Old-time, and Roots Music, each satisfying a general education requirement (History, Humanities, Artistic Awareness). As a result, that student would earn a “Focus” recognition, which should appear on their transcript.

Developing “Focus” points illustrates the integration of academic disciplines and the value of investigating unifying themes from distinct disciplinary perspectives. Focus points will encourage students to reflect on programs of study that fit their interests and goals, improve student engagement with course content, and motivate faculty to consider cross-disciplinary teaching collaborations.

Student Choice

The task force recommends that the same course be listed in more than one category, assuming the course meets the standards associated with every category

in which it is listed. This will provide students with greater flexibility. Rather than being forced to choose between two literature courses, for example, students might find that they can take one course to satisfy a requirement in the “Exploring Connections” category, and the other course to satisfy the “Growing ...” category. Students cannot apply the same course to satisfy multiple categories.

Giving students more choice must be balanced against the desire that they are exposed to various methods and perspectives. We recommend that students not be permitted to take more than three courses with the same prefix within general education. We also recommend that a course prefix not be represented in more than three general education categories.

In reviewing general education programs from other institutions, it was often notable how many more choices students had to satisfy a given requirement, compared with ETSU’s current options. The task force recommends that ETSU significantly **increase the number of course offerings** that students can select from to satisfy general education requirements. In some cases, we recommend that departments might collaborate to identify courses that would satisfy general education requirements in ways that benefit the majors of particular disciplines, such as a math course designed primarily for students in the biological sciences.

High-Impact Teaching Practices

The proposal features described thus far concern curriculum structure and student choice, but general education can also be improved by finding ways to improve the quality of particular courses. Reams of scholarly evidence suggests that high-impact practices improve student learning and student retention and promote equity in higher education. Mindful of the value of high-impact practices, the task force recommends that all general education courses adopt **high-impact teaching**

practices (HITPs). AAC&U identifies HITPs as one of the four primary features that a strong general education curriculum must have.

The task force understands HITPs to be active learning strategies that require students to be active participants in their learning rather than passive receivers. Active learning practices incorporate feedback and reflection; HITPs can be “high-stakes” or “low-stakes” activities, but they must be routinely part of each general education course.

The task force recognizes that requiring HITPs raises several logistical challenges, since many faculty will be unsure what constitutes a high-impact teaching practice, how such a criterion will apply to online courses, how such practices can be scaled for large sections, how adjunct faculty can be given support, and so on.

The task force is therefore grateful that the Center for Teaching Excellence has expressed enthusiasm for this part of the proposal. The Center will continue to offer workshops, resources, and advice to support all faculty. The Center has created toolkits on HITPs. The implementation phase of the redesign will provide further guidance, with respect to the role of high-impact teaching practices in the redesigned general education.

Benefits of the Proposal

The task force intended to create a curriculum that was **competency-based**, transparent with respect to expectations, capable of being profitably integrated with other programs of study, and flexible in ways that provide greater student agency.

The task force was intentional in aligning competencies explicitly with specific categories and subcategories to ensure that all competencies would be met for all students. For details, see Appendix G.

Best practices suggest that general education curricula should be **transparent** to students by providing clear statements of the expected competencies/learning outcomes and their importance. The competencies approved by the task force for all categories/subcategories can be found in Appendix H.

If first-year experiences (FYE) are included in the final proposal, the task force would recommend that all such courses incorporate extended discussions of why education matters and why general education matters, in particular. Many students who we talked to (and one or two faculty members) remained unsure why ETSU requires general education courses. The response that a general education curriculum is required for accreditation purposes is accurate but unsatisfying. A module within FYE that addresses this question explicitly would prime students to benefit more from subsequent courses (both within and outside the general education curricula), improve classroom engagement, and make students better ambassadors for ETSU.

Best practices also suggest that general education curricula should move away from models that largely involve disconnected sets of survey courses. Instead, curricula should strive to promote **integration** across disciplines, and with major and minor fields of study, career plans, and cocurricular and community-engaged learning.

The proposal seeks to advance these goals by providing students far greater **flexibility** with respect to course choices, thereby making it more likely that students can find courses that satisfy general education requirements and simultaneously cohere with their program of study, life goals, career interests, and so on. The added flexibility provides students with greater agency to pursue those educational and personal goals with which they most identify. For more on the added flexibility created by the new design, see Appendix F. Further flexibility requires departments to submit more courses for approval within general education.

Feedback

As noted, throughout the process the task force has sought feedback from the ETSU community. At every stage, this resulted in changes. Even when specific comments did not result in change, they were always given serious attention by the task force and discussed thoroughly during meetings. Where appropriate, the task force voted anonymously for or against a proposed change to ensure that decisions reflected at least the majority opinion among task force members, if not complete consensus.

Along the way, many commentators and stakeholders expressed enthusiasm and support for all aspects of the proposal. The curriculum was described as “modern,” “fresh,” and “exciting.” Some suggested that the proposed curriculum was more in line with the expectations of their accrediting bodies. People liked the action verbs used in naming categories (Strengthening, Understanding, Exploring, Cultivating, and Growing). The task force heard that the flexibility was an important strength of the proposal.

The task force received enthusiastic support for adding a subcategory in Critical Thinking and a category in Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen. Many expressed enthusiasm for the idea of focus areas within general education and hoped that these would appear on student transcripts. Across the hundreds of people spoken to, and the many emails received, the task force only heard from two people who disapproved of the work of the task force in its entirety.

Almost all of the more critical commentary received concerned the reductions in required hours the proposal includes, relative to current requirements. The details differed significantly from one case to another, however.

Some argued for a required course in global economics, others for a course in personal finance, and still others for more courses in the social sciences. Some faculty (from outside the Department of Philosophy and Humanities) suggested requiring more philosophy. Some (from outside the Department of Mathematics and Statistics) suggested requiring more math. Some suggested that requiring all students to take a foreign language course. Some (both from within and outside departments in the natural sciences) suggested requiring more natural sciences. Some suggested that a non-Western history/philosophy/religious studies requirement.

From some faculty, the task force heard that ETSU's general education should require more history than the 3 student credit hours included in the proposal. Some argued that ETSU should require U.S. history, rather than allowing students to satisfy the history requirement with a non-U.S. history course. The group heard from some faculty members that its proposal privileges history in a way that is not justifiable, since it overshadows the value of other disciplines within the humanities, such as literature, philosophy, and religious studies. Members were encouraged to consider modifying the proposal in ways that would not require a history course, thereby avoiding the appearance that ETSU regards history as more important than other branches of the humanities, and simultaneously giving students more flexibility.

Clearly, it is not possible to honor all these requests. It is neither surprising nor problematic that faculty should argue passionately for the value of their own discipline for students and society. Nevertheless, making changes was a zero-sum game. Requiring more courses in one field involves requiring fewer courses in another. The task force strived to ensure that all branches of the academy were well-represented, while also providing flexibility for students. As stated before, the task force was committed to doing what is best for students.

Decision Point

By the end of November 2023, the task force was prepared to recommend all the elements discussed above, with the addition of a first-year experience course within the Strengthening Foundations category. The task force was asked, however, to consider how its proposal might be amended to require an oral communication course. Oral communication requirements had received significant attention from the task force throughout the preceding six months.

The task force met on December 6 and considered the strengths and weaknesses of various ways that the proposal might be altered so that a course in oral communication could be required, rather than left as an option for those students who chose such a course. Ultimately, the task force voted unanimously that if oral communication is to be a required course, then the first-year experience course should be removed. The following shows some of the strengths and weaknesses of these two models.

Compass Proposal Including FYE and no Oral Communication Requirement

Strengthening Foundations (15-16)

- First-Year Experience (3)
- Written Composition (6)
- Quantitative Reasoning (3-4)
- Critical Thinking (3)

Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10-11)

- Natural Sciences (At Least 4)

- Social/Behavioral Sciences (At Least 3)

Exploring Connections (9)

- History (At Least 3)
- Humanities outside of History (At Least 3)

Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)

Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3-4)

Compass Proposal Including Oral Communication and no FYE0 Requirement

Strengthening Foundations (15-16)

- Written Composition (6)
- Quantitative Reasoning (3-4)
- Oral Communication (3)
- Critical Thinking (3)

Understanding Natural and Social Worlds (10-11)

- Natural Sciences (At Least 4)
- Social/Behavioral Sciences (At Least 3)

Exploring Connections (9)

- History (At Least 3)
- Humanities outside of History (At Least 3)

Cultivating Artistic Awareness (3)

Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen (3-4)

The task force received significant faculty and staff support for including FYE in general education and heard significant faculty support for requiring an oral communication course. Based on the feedback, it is impossible to say which would receive greater support from faculty if forced to make a choice. Many expressed the hope that both would be included. The task force's conclusion is that including both would involve eliminating a requirement of greater value to students. ETSU peer institutions are evenly divided: of ETSU's 15 peer institutions, eight do not require a course in oral communication.

Strengths of Compass Proposal that Includes FYE in Foundations

First-year experience courses are high-impact practices that can **improve retention rates, graduation rates, and academic achievement**. Such courses can be particularly impactful for first-generation students. Not all such courses are effective, of course. However, the task force learned that several units across ETSU's campus are engaged in discussions to continue improving existing FYE courses at ETSU. ETSU faculty and staff have accumulated significant expertise with respect to best practices in designing and teaching FYEs. The task force is optimistic that tapping into this knowledge can reap significant benefits for ETSU students. If FYEs are incorporated within general education, more students will benefit.

Transparency within general education is improved when students appreciate the **value of education** for lifelong learning and civic engagement, in addition to career preparation and earning potential. An FYE course represents the best place in the general education curriculum to expose students to this important material.

The task force recommends that all FYE courses incorporate instruction on **strategies for learning** and familiarize students with important ETSU resources, including the library. Beyond these core elements, there is scope for colleges, or cohorts of methodologically aligned departments, to **develop FYE courses that are tailored** to the needs of their students and the expectations of accrediting bodies. Such courses, the task force recommends, should strive to strike a balance between providing instruction that will be of value to students with particular ambitions while broadening horizons to help students feel they are valued members of the ETSU community.

FYEs can be designed for adult learners, transfer students, or online students.

The **competencies** developed by the task force, and revised in light of campus feedback, include “developing a strong sense of self to become an active, engaged citizen,” and “applying concepts of physical, mental, financial, and/or psychosocial wellness to individual and community well-being.” Without a required FYE, many students will not achieve these dimensions of the competencies. The task force was particularly mindful of evidence that **financial and mental wellness can positively impact retention rates**. A curriculum that addresses these concepts would benefit students during their time at ETSU and beyond.

ETSU’s current QEP concerns **community-engaged learning** (CEL). One of the explicit goals of that program is to increase the number of CEL-designated courses in general education. An existing FYE course has already received that designation. The task force learned that other FYE courses are already seeking it. FYE courses seem particularly well-suited, within the general education curriculum, to address this important institutional goal.

Contrary to popular opinion, many FYEs are academically rigorous. By building community, they would make students better ambassadors for ETSU. FYEs provide students with important skills that enhance the college experience and contribute directly to lifelong learning. By increasing retention and graduation rates, furthermore, such courses increase the likelihood that a given student will receive all the benefits associated with a college education.

Weaknesses of Compass Proposal that Includes FYE

Adopting this version of the proposal denies students the benefits associated with the second version of the proposal.

The teaching of FYEs at ETSU is currently spread across academic and non-academic units, complicating process, oversight, and staffing questions. Some of the recommended core content, such as instruction in financial wellness, falls outside the expertise of many instructors who would teach such courses, raising questions about how such content can be effectively delivered across all sections. The needs of student populations can vary significantly (online, first-year, transfer, adult). If appropriate versions of FYE courses are not created, some students may be poorly served if they are required to take an FYE.

The task force concluded that these obstacles were all surmountable but recognized that this part of the proposal is the most logistically challenging.

Strengths of Proposal that Includes Oral Communication in Foundations

Oral communication skills are **highly valued by employers**. The National Association of Colleges and Employers, for example, recognizes communication as a career readiness competency and explicitly includes various oral communication skills therein.

The **general education learning competencies** created by the task force include student ability to “apply written, **verbal**, and/or visual communication theories, strategies, and evidence that are appropriate for the audience, purpose, and message.” Requiring a course in oral communication ensures that students are taught the material by **content specialists**, rather than relying on instruction in oral communication from faculty whose expertise lies elsewhere.

Insofar as many students struggle with social anxieties or a fear of speaking in public, a required course can improve self-confidence.

Weaknesses of Proposal that Includes Oral Communication in Foundations

Adopting this version of the proposal denies students the benefits associated with the first version of the proposal.

Some of the advocacy the task force heard surrounding oral communication focused largely on public speaking and formal presentation skills. When employers describe the importance of oral communication skills, however, they are not always concerned with this subset. Giving students freedom of choice enables them to reflect on what oral communication skills they will need, and how their own program of study can be

tailored to ensure they develop those skills, which may or may not include a course in Public Speaking, Argumentation and Debate, or Fundamentals of Communication. Some students might feel, with justification, that courses in the major program of study, or their co-curricular or extra-curricular educational experiences, provide adequate grounding.

The task force heard many positive testimonials from current and past ETSU students concerning their oral communication courses. Members also heard from students that an emphasis on form over content in existing courses meant that students' classroom presentations could include factual inaccuracies and fallacious reasoning that sometimes went unchecked, which would erode critical thinking skills.

How will students develop adequate oral communication skills without a required course?

The task force gave this question considerable attention. Some students will still choose to take a course in oral communication. Some programs may require their students to take such a course. These possibilities will not catch all students, of course.

If the first model is adopted, we recommend that written composition courses incorporate more content in oral communication. If the first model is adopted, we recommend that FYE courses incorporate content in oral communication. If the first model is adopted, we recommend that major programs of study reflect on what oral communication skills they want their students to acquire, and how they can ensure that such expectations are met. These solutions will not be as effective as requiring a course in oral communication, but the task force concluded that the losses would be outweighed by the benefits provided by a model that requires all students to take a first-year experience course.

Recommended Implementation Strategies

The task force's charge did not include recommendations for implementation; however, given the ambitious timeline to have a new general education curriculum available to entering students by fall 2024, and as a result of members' familiarity with best practices in general education redesign, the task force became involved in conversations with various units about implementation.

In January 2024, Provost McCorkle appointed Dr. David Harker and Dr. Matt Palmatier to serve as implementation co-chairs for the spring 2024 semester. The task force makes the following recommendations regarding implementation:

Recommendation 1: Three-Phased Approach

General education redesign take place in at least three phases.

Phase 1:

- Courses that are part of the current General Education curriculum (which are being referred to as "legacy courses") are the first to be reviewed and approved by GEAC to be included in Compass.
- The task force, with the help of the Provost, will work with the Curriculum Innovation Center and GEAC to prepare for the legacy course approval process.
- Departments will align legacy courses with the Compass Competencies (CCs) for each category in which they intend the course to be listed. (Courses can be associated with more than one category; however, they must meet the CCs of each.)

- Departments will identify HITPs that will be used in legacy courses.

To meet catalog deadlines, GEAC will need to approve legacy courses by March 15.

Phase 2:

- GEAC will review and approve courses that are currently approved in the Curriculog process but that are not currently included in General Education (what are being called “new Compass courses”).
- As with legacy courses, new Compass courses will align with the Compass Competencies (CCs) for each category in which the course is to be listed. (Courses can be associated with more than one category; however, they must meet the CCs of each.)
- Departments will identify HITPs that will be used in each legacy course and provide a plan for ensuring HITPs are used in all sections regardless of instructor.

This process may begin in late spring.

Phase 3

- GEAC will review and approve new courses developed specifically for general education and develop Focus Areas for Compass.
- Newly developed courses will align with the Compass Competencies (CCs) for each category in which the course is to be listed. (Courses can be associated with more than one category; however, they must meet the CCs of each.)
- Departments will identify HITPs that will be used in each legacy course.
- Focus areas are optional for students but will be developed as part of phase 3. In a focus area, students take three courses on a common theme across three disciplines (e.g., a theme of Death and Dying might have courses associated with literature, philosophy, and art).

- Focus areas should be transcriptable.

Recommendation 2: Assignment of Faculty Liaisons

Each college, and especially the College of Arts and Sciences, will need “faculty liaisons” who can facilitate Phase 1 (and possibly Phases 2 and 3) implementation. Given the accelerated timeline for Phase 1, we recommend that faculty liaisons receive compensation to support implementation work.

Recommendation 3: Program-Level Review

Each major will need to review and revise as necessary their programs of study to align with Compass.

Recommendation 4: Review by University Advising

The Executive Director of University Advising should, in collaboration with advisors and other stakeholders across the university, review and revise transfer considerations to align with Compass.

Recommendation 5: Creation of a Director of General Education Position

The Provost should consider having a Director of General Education position. The task force recommends this be a part-time internal position filled by a current ETSU faculty member. In its review of ETSU’s peer and regional institutions, the task force found that most have someone who serves as the “shepherd” or point person for general education.

Recommendation 6: Development of an assessment plan for general education

GEAC, the Director of General Education, the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Accreditation Liaison should work collaboratively on an assessment plan for Compass.

Recommendation 7: Routine Re-Affirmation

Courses approved for Compass should undergo routine re-affirmation to ensure that CCs and HITPs are used in the courses. Likewise, department chairs should be actively engaged in reviewing SIAs for general education courses and ensuring that the courses are of high instructional quality.

Recommendation 8: Support from the Center for Teaching Excellence

The Center for Teaching Excellence should consider programming and workshops designed to help faculty adopt HITPs and active learning pedagogies that support student learning in Compass courses.

Recommendation 9: Continual Improvement

Compass can and should be revised as needed as part of continuous improvement.

Other Recommendations Outside the Charge

The task force identified several important issues that extended beyond the scope of its charge, but which are worth noting in this report, given their impact on general education.

1. The task force recommends that ETSU develop a systematic plan to convert current adjunct faculty who routinely teach general education courses into permanent lecturer lines. Across the country, Colleges of Arts and Sciences rely on a cadre of part-time, non-benefited faculty to teach, and often they are teaching general education courses. These faculty often cobble together a course schedule at several institutions, becoming what is known in the literature as “freeway flyers” (a term coined in California). These instructors are often dedicated to their students and their subject area, but freeway flyers have little time or monetary incentive to invest in re-tooling their courses as needed and to engage in professional development, such as through the Center for Teaching Excellence. After a thorough interview process, these faculty should be hired on renewable full-time appointments so that they are subject to regular faculty review and have time to engage fully in their professional role in general education.
2. The task force recommends that faculty annual review and workload policies be reviewed at the institutional, college, and department levels to support incorporation of high-impact teaching practices. The task force further recommends that all instructors, whether graduate teaching assistants or associates, non-tenure-track, tenure-track or tenured faculty, have as part of their annual evaluation teaching effectiveness.
3. During our discussions with faculty and students, we were often asked about CSCI 1100. This course is a graduation requirement, not a general education requirement, thus it is outside of the task force’s purview. Members heard enough about this course to recommend the Provost convene a task force to review whether CSCI 1100 is still needed as a graduation requirement in the 21st century.

4. If it is decided that FYE not be part of general education, the task force asks that ETSU consider making some form of FYE course (1, 2, or 3 credits) a requirement for all students. These FYE courses should be academically rigorous and address content discussed earlier in this report. These course options could be revised versions of ETSU 1010 and 1020 as well as college-specific FYE courses.
5. The task force encourages department chairs to schedule the best faculty in general education courses, and in corollary, the task force encourages the best teachers to teach general education. In their study of the best practices to encourage student engagement and success, Chambliss and Takacs found, as expected, having students interact with an institution's best faculty early in their college experience led to improved outcomes, "especially at the introductory level, where professors open new intellectual horizons and legitimize the academic enterprise" (p. 159).
6. The task force recommends that the Center for Teaching Excellence continue planning programming to support implementing HITPs and active learning for both small and large classrooms. Likewise, the task force encourages faculty to attend programming.
7. The task force recommends that Deans work with departments to determine optimum size for general education courses to promote student learning while being mindful of college resources.

Appendices

Appendix A: What is the Purpose of General Education?

The general education curriculum at East Tennessee State University inspires students to fulfill their potential as socially responsible, informed, and self-aware members of society. The specialized knowledge and skills that ETSU students acquire through their major areas of study equip them to excel professionally, contribute to the functioning of local and global communities, and pursue lives of purpose and ambition. Such competencies become far more powerful, however, when they are embedded within the broader contexts that the general education curriculum provides.

General education at ETSU provides such contexts. General education at ETSU exposes students to new ideas, scholarship, and attitudes, and demonstrates the value of approaching shared interests and concerns from the perspectives of all branches of the arts, humanities, and sciences. General education integrates learning experiences across disciplines, and as a result, students become more curious, more adept with information-driven forms of inquiry, and more capable of adapting well to complex, diverse problems and a rapidly changing world. General education at ETSU creates a cohesive program of study that adopts best practices, spanning the undergraduate experience, utilizing high-impact teaching methods, and encouraging students to take ownership of their own education, all while remaining accessible, inclusive, and equitable. Completion of this program enhances students' capacity for critical and innovative thinking, effective communication, and collaborative problem-solving. General education at ETSU empowers students both to transform their own lives and impact their communities in ways that are lasting and meaningful.

Appendix B: How Will Students Benefit from General Education?

Further developing the skills that are introduced to students long before they arrive at college, General Education at ETSU strengthens those foundational skills in ways that will enhance and inspire a lifetime of learning. General Education at ETSU enhances students' abilities to:

- Think critically
- Communicate effectively
- Understand social and natural worlds
- Cultivate artistic awareness
- Collaborate and build community
- Grow as a responsible and productive citizen

Think Critically

Critical thinking involves the use of reasoning and evidence to reach sensible judgments about methods, assumptions, and results. Critical thinkers evaluate the relevance of evidence and its significance. They can distinguish reliable from flawed information and use appropriate mathematical concepts. They are alert and responsive to the effects of their personal biases and limitations, and familiar with suitable methods for analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Evaluate sources for credibility, accuracy, and use of evidence.

- Identify cognitive biases that influence decision-making and interpretation of new information.
- Evaluate research design as well as data collection and analysis in studies that employ quantitative and qualitative methodologies and present data in various media or forms.
- Use relevant evidence, reasoning, and technological tools—ethically and legally—in the process of proposing, supporting, and evaluating potential solutions to problems.
- Identify historic, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information.

Communicate Effectively

Effective communication includes sharing ideas through appropriate oral and written forms of expression, in ways that demonstrate awareness of audience, purpose, and context. Communication takes many forms, including writing, public speaking, and conversation, and utilizes artistic expression and information design. Effective communication involves mindful interpretation along with active reading and listening.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Apply written, verbal, and/or visual communication theories, strategies, and evidence that are appropriate for the audience, purpose, and message.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate messages in a variety of forms and contexts, including those that utilize emerging technology.
- Engage in conversation as a speaker, writer, listener, and reader; ask questions to understand other perspectives; and offer productive ideas and evidence.

- Demonstrate ethical and appropriate grammar, usage, conventions, and citations selected for audience and purpose in written, oral, and visual texts.

Understand Social and Natural Worlds

Understanding the social and natural worlds requires careful observation, experimentation, reasoning, and analysis. It is achieved not only by identifying reliable sources of information and integrating evidence from a variety of perspectives, but also by cultivating a sense of curiosity, asking questions, and learning how to find useful and credible answers.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of scientific principles and methods used to conduct research.
- Apply scientific concepts and methods to solve complex problems.
- Identify how science impacts and is impacted by political, social, economic, or ethical factors.
- Analyze and evaluate the interaction between scientific discovery and human thought and behavior.

Cultivate Artistic Awareness

Studying the fine and performing arts **cultivates artistic awareness**, which is essential to the human experience, providing students with valuable forms of expression and important lenses through which they can better understand themselves, their circumstances, and the worlds they inhabit. Artistic expression is developed through creation and performance, as well as the analysis of artistic works.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Apply appropriate methods to explore how meanings are attached to artistic or creative works.
- Link artistic or creative work to culture, identity, and the broader human context (e.g., historical, social, ethnic, geographic, and economic).
- Use the creative process to express ideas, solve problems, and/or collaborate.

Collaborate and Build Community

In a world of increasing specialization, solving complex problems requires significant **collaboration** and interdisciplinary innovations. Social problems also require the ability to develop and evaluate moral arguments in ways that are sensitive to different social values and perspectives. General education teaches students how to build **communities** and better understand their roles within them.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Integrate diverse opinions through strategies that are inclusive, ethical, and evidence-based.
- Compare and contrast cultural similarities and differences in values, behavior, goals, and communication styles, for purposes of making ethically informed decisions in professional and personal contexts.
- Solve problems by working effectively with others.

Grow as a Responsible and Productive Citizen

Productive **citizens** are resilient and self-aware. They monitor their own welfare and circumstances, and they strive to maximize their physical, financial, emotional, and social wellness. They look outward as well as inward, developing awareness of the differences between diverse cultures and their significance. They interact respectfully

with people from diverse communities and backgrounds and work toward creating a more equitable world.

Students who achieve this competency will be able to do the following:

- Develop a strong sense of self to become an active, engaged citizen in a complex and diverse society.
- Identify how individual and sociocultural factors interact in the development of beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of oneself and others.
- Apply concepts that support multiple forms of wellness, including physical, mental, financial, and/or psychosocial wellness to individual and community well-being.

Appendix C: Approval Process Sub-Committee Report

Membership

Matt Palmatier (chair), Mikki Johnson, Bill Hemphill, Karin Keith, Bill Flora

Primary Charge

A redesigned General Education curriculum will involve (1) approving new courses and (2) re-evaluating old courses for inclusion within the new program. This group's charge is to develop processes and timelines for both.

Old Courses Process

The committee determined that the most urgent need was to identify a process for evaluating current courses for inclusion in the new program to speed implementation. The team identified the following strategies as optimal for approving legacy courses.

- Identify, recruit, and compensate faculty from departments with investment in current general education core to compose course proposals for legacy courses.
- Create expedited Curriculog forms for course approvals from legacy courses. Legacy course forms must include the following:
 - A map of course learning objectives to category learning objectives.
 - Examples of high-impact teaching practices (HITPs) that will be utilized in course delivery.
- Work with the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) to facilitate the transition between general education programs.

- Interface with GEAC on competencies, and evaluating course outcomes mapped to category competencies.
- Support GEAC on expectations and best practices associated with HITPs.
- Collaborate with GEAC to identify working groups for proposal review to expedite evaluation.

New Courses Process

The committee determined that the process for new courses would be comparable to that for legacy courses. In addition to mapping of course learning outcomes to competencies, new course proposals should include a brief statement of purpose or justification for their inclusion in the General Education curriculum. This statement should identify how the course contributes to the academic growth of students that extends beyond a single discipline.

Timeline

The timeline was compressed due to continued work from the task force, ongoing revisions of competencies, and the greater urgency to approve and implement legacy courses.

- The subcommittee met on September 13, October 6, and November 15, 2023, with additional meetings and homework between meetings.
- On November 1, 2023, Matt Palmatier and Mikki Johnson presented the General Education framework to GEAC and set expectations for upcoming proposals.
 - Approximately 100 course proposals (lectures and laboratory courses) could be submitted during the spring 2024 semester.
 - The GEAC has 16 voting faculty members, 1 voting student member, and additional representation from the administration with shared

interest in General Education. Based on the GEAC structure, the team recommends three working groups of five-six faculty, which will be nimble enough to meet frequently, but also have sufficient representation to make good-faith recommendations for approval to the full committee.

- The student member may choose to work with any proposal review group, but they are encouraged to work with the group tasked with proposals from their major and minor disciplines.
- Administrative members of GEAC who are part of the implementation team will serve an advisory role in working groups.
- Working groups will make recommendations to the full committee for a final approval vote.
- On November 15, 2023, Dr. Alison Barton from the Center for Teaching Excellence at ETSU facilitated a called GEAC meeting to discuss HITPs, expectations for HITPs included in General Education proposals for new and legacy courses, and shared resources for instructors, including a website with HITP recommendations.

Additional Charges

Facilitating Active Engagement in the Creative Process

The Task Force concluded that courses in “Cultivating Artistic Awareness” should be more than art appreciation and that students in such courses should be more actively engaged in the creative process. How do we explain and evaluate this criterion?

Process

Several discussions of this charge were incorporated into regular meetings. To further explore the issue with faculty from current Fine Arts departments, Matt

Palmatier and David Harker met with the chairs of Music (Alan Stevens), Art and Design (Tao Huang), and Theatre and Dance (Karen Brewster) on November 7, 2023.

- There was some discussion of how to operationally define what it means to "engage in the creative process." The subcommittee consensus was that active evaluation of artistic expression was itself a creative process.
- Dr. Huang indicated that students in ARTA 1030 (Art Appreciation) already engage in the creative process with an active learning assignment that includes a selfie photograph and some evaluation/manipulation.
- Professor Brewster discussed including/adding performance components to THEA 1030/DANC 1500.
- Dr. Stevens suggested that performance-based courses included in the Music curriculum might satisfy the engagement component.
 - There was some concern that the SACSCOC requirements might prohibit courses that are exclusively performance-based from inclusion in General Education.

Outcome

Legacy courses from the Fine Arts category that will transition to the Cultivating Artistic Awareness competency were not considered to be a major concern to the subcommittee. Some existing courses already have a creative component, and others may be adapted with minor alterations to course curricula.

Addressing Courses in Multiple Categories

The team expects that some courses might appear in more than one category, although taking such courses can be used to satisfy at most one. The process will need to allow for proposed courses to appear in more than one category, assuming they might meet the criteria for each. Does this create any particular challenges?

Process

During meetings of the subcommittee, this issue was addressed. Dr. Flora indicated that there would not likely be any technical challenges to creating approval forms for courses to meet learning objectives from more than one category. There also do not appear to be administrative challenges to having a course meet one competency for some students and another competency for other students.

Discussion of Microcredentials

Discussion of badges/microcredentials/focuses was tabled as a less urgent component of the redesign. Future discussion of microcredential approvals will be needed when a microcredential framework is identified.

How many dimensions of a competency must be met by a course to be included with a specific competency?

Process: The subcommittee discussions surrounding this issue evolved as the competencies evolved and more dimensions were added for writing courses, first-year experience courses, and the development of alternative models. This is a conversation that continues to evolve. Although the subcommittee was unable to reach a consensus on this issue, it is essential to the approval process. GEAC will need guidance on criteria for course proposals or a rubric to evaluate their fit within one or more competencies. A single programmatic solution may be inappropriate based on the categorical curriculum that is superimposed on a set of competencies.

Timeline: The subcommittee recommends that this issue be considered further by the implementation team.

Appendix D: First-Year Experience Subcommittee Report

Membership

Kimberly Tweedale, Mathew Desjardins, Timothy Lewis, Heather Levesque, Cerrone Foster, Rebecca Tolley, Leah Adinolfi, Lynn Williams, Jillian Alexander, Mohammad Uddin, Jamie Sproles

Charge

Develop the first-year experience (FYE) model further for potential integration into the revised General Education Curriculum. The General Education Redesign proposal includes an FYE course. Being better prepared for challenges both inside and outside the classroom, both on campus and off campus, increases retention and graduation rates. Being better-prepared means that students will benefit more from their time at ETSU. A better appreciation for the values of education, and general education in particular, primes them to succeed and makes them better ambassadors for higher education in general and ETSU in particular. First-year seminar courses are not uncommon among general education programs, including among peer institutions, and this subcommittee was charged with developing a more complete model for a required FYE course at ETSU.

Proposed Model and Structure

This committee recommends keeping the name “First-Year Experience,” abbreviated in this report to “FYE,” for these courses. Members further recommend that this requirement is placed within the “Strengthening Foundations” category of the newly proposed General Education model. FYE classes are foundational, and these courses will prepare students to transition into the learning community of ETSU. Team

members believe these courses have the potential to support retention and persistence to graduation. Given the scope of content and goals for this course, they recommend a three-credit course that students would take during their first semester at ETSU. Several versions of FYE currently exist at ETSU, ranging from one to three credits. However, the subcommittee does not believe that a one-credit course can adequately meet the proposed learning goals for this as a required General Education course. Existing and newly proposed courses would need to be modified to meet the FYE learning goals (listed below) and maintain a three-credit class structure.

Requirement Limitations

The proposed FYE course is designed to aid students in their transition to ETSU, focusing on students in their first year. Given this focus, the subcommittee recommends waiving this required course for students transferring to ETSU who have already passed first-year status (with 30 credits or more). Members do, however, still believe this course should be required for students enrolling in completely online degree programs. An online version of this course will need to be developed for these students.

Versions of the Course

Existing versions of FYE should be updated to clearly map onto the newly proposed learning goals (listed below). These courses would need to be admitted to General Education in the same expedited manner that existing General Education courses are being renewed. This committee agrees that ETSU students would benefit from individual programs being permitted to develop their own versions of FYE, as long as these courses are assessed and approved by experts in this subject area. For example, Communications might develop a version of this course that would be housed and taught in its program. This committee is proposing a new standing

committee for FYE to manage this process. A draft of an MOU for this standing committee is attached at the end of this subcommittee report.

Learning Goals

This subcommittee was provided with the following list of learning goals for this course:

- Cultivate a strong sense of self to become an active, engaged citizen in a complex and diverse society.
- Understand how individual and sociocultural factors interact in the development of beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of oneself and others.
- Apply concepts of physical, mental, and psychosocial wellness to individual and community well-being.
- Develop a general understanding of financial concepts and the tools and resources used to improve financial wellness for an individual and community.

This subcommittee suggested the following modifications to these goals:

- Cultivate a strong sense of self to become an active, engaged citizen in a complex and diverse society.
- Understand how individual and sociocultural factors interact in the development of beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of oneself and others.
- Apply concepts that support multiple forms of wellness, including physical, mental, financial, and/or psychosocial wellness to individual and community well-being.

While the content is largely the same, the team suggests that financial literacy is another dimension of wellness that is better represented alongside the other forms of literacy that will be addressed in these courses. This subcommittee recognizes

that these General Education learning goals will be addressed by all FYE courses, but these courses are not limited to addressing just these goals. Course-specific learning goals and student-facing language that will appear in syllabi will be managed and approved by the proposed standing committee before courses are presented to GEAC for approval.

Shared Representation and Management

Many academic units and Student Life and Enrollment have a shared interest in FYE courses. This subcommittee was made up of members from several academic departments and representatives from Student Life and Enrollment. This partnership would need to continue as these courses are developed and managed. The following is a draft Memorandum of Understanding for this continued partnership.

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (this “MOU”) is made and entered into this ____ day of _____, 20__ (“Effective Date”) by and between:

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) - Academic Affairs

and

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) - Student Life & Enrollment

1. Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between Academic Affairs and Student Life and Enrollment at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) related to the collaborative administration and continuous enhancement of first-year experience (FYE) courses, and the setting of minimum general education requirements for all FYE courses offered within the university's various colleges and departments.

2. Purpose

This MOU aims to outline the cooperative efforts required to maintain the high academic and supportive standards of FYE courses. It establishes a framework for defining minimum general education requirements that all FYE courses, irrespective of the offering department, must meet to ensure consistency, quality, and the holistic development of students across the university.

3. Scope of Collaboration

A. FYE at ETSU

ETSU’s FYE Committee, consisting of representatives from both Academic Affairs and Student Life and Enrollment, will oversee the curriculum and assessment of all FYE courses at ETSU.

B. Establishing Minimum Requirements for FYE Courses

While various colleges and departments may offer their own FYE courses, this committee will set forth minimum general education requirements based on the standards established from the Foundations of Student Success Course (ETSU 1020) and the General Education Redesign Task Force. These requirements will ensure that all FYE courses across the university maintain a consistent quality and adhere to the objectives of ETSU's general education goals, maintained by ETSU's General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC). Any course not housed within an academic unit will be academically sponsored by this committee.

Student Life and Enrollment will maintain oversight of ETSU 1020: Foundations of Student Success.

C. Curriculum Changes

The committee will collaborate on proposing enhancements to first-year experience courses and establishing the minimum standards required to move forward. The committee will have representatives from each college to ensure all university FYE courses have representation.

D. Curriculum Modification Process

A first-year experience course not housed within an academic unit will have academic support from this established committee. The Academic Affairs Co-Chair will formalize and submit these changes through ETSU's curriculum modification processes, ensuring they align with both university policies, accreditation guidelines, and higher education best practices.

E. Assessment and Continuous Improvement

The committee will engage in regular evaluation of first-year experience courses and periodic review of courses to ensure they are in alignment with the established

minimum requirements. This evaluation will involve analyzing various feedback and performance metrics to inform continuous improvement.

4. FYE Committee Membership

The FYE Committee is an essential collaborative body responsible for the oversight, continuous improvement, and strategic direction of the FYE courses. To maintain a comprehensive, inclusive, and academically sound approach, the committee comprises members from various sectors within the ETSU community:

A. Co-Chairs

Academic Affairs and Student Life and Enrollment will both have representatives chairing the FYE committee. These co-chairs will serve for a two-year commitment elected by the representatives described in Section IV B and C. The co-chairs will have alternating service completion time to ensure continuity between each academic year. Co-chairs can be re-elected any number of times.

Academic Affairs Co-Chair

A representative from the university's full-time faculty, typically someone involved in academic planning or curriculum development. If a college's faculty representative becomes co-chair, the college will appoint another representative to account for the missing representative.

Student Life and Enrollment Co-Chair

A representative from Student Life and Enrollment, preferably an individual with experience in student affairs and first-year engagement initiatives. If a Student Life and Enrollment representative becomes co-chair, Student Life and Enrollment's Vice President or designee will appoint another representative to account for the missing representative.

Addendum A will have a dictated membership list for the inception of this new University committee.

B. Faculty Representatives: (Voting)

Academic Affairs will have representatives establishing minimum standards for all ETSU's FYE courses.

- One faculty member from each of the university's eight colleges, except the College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy, will serve on the committee. These representatives will be current or former instructors of FYE courses or those with a strong understanding of the goals and methodologies of the FYE curriculum. Their role is to bring diverse academic perspectives, contribute to curriculum development, and ensure that the courses meet the educational objectives of their respective colleges.
 - Selection of Faculty Representatives: Each college's dean or designee, excluding the College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy, will be responsible for selecting their representative. This process should be guided by the individual's experience, interest, and expertise in first-year education.
 - If a college does not send a representative, the Provost or designee shall appoint an at-large member to represent the college.
- One representative from Sherrod Library
- GEAC's Faculty Senate representative
- Zero at-large representatives appointed by the Provost or designee
 - Modifications to at-large positions may occur to ensure equal representation for both divisions. The committee co-chairs will modify the membership roll each Academic Year.
- All representatives will serve for a three-year term with the ability to renew indefinitely.

C. Student Life and Enrollment Representatives: (Voting)

Student Life and Enrollment will have representatives establishing minimum standards for all ETSU's FYE courses.

- Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of Admissions or designee
- Director of New Student and Family Programs or designee
- Dean of Student Engagement and Director of Assessment or designee
- Dean of Students or designee
- Six at-large Student Life and Enrollment staff representatives appointed by the Vice President of Student Life and Enrollment or designee
 - One of the six at-large members can be a representative from the university's Student Government Association (SGA).
 - Modifications to at-large positions may occur to ensure equal representation for both divisions. The committee co-chairs will modify the membership roll each Academic Year.

D. Ex-officio Members: (Non-voting/Advisory)

- SGA or Student Representative
- Curriculum Innovation Center Director
- Academic Affairs
- Center for Teaching Excellence

E. Decision-Making

Decisions will be made on a consensus basis where possible. If voting is necessary, each member holds one vote, with the co-chairs only voting in case of a tie.

5. Resource Allocation

Both parties commit to allocating the necessary resources, including personnel, funding, and materials, for the effective oversight of the FYE initiative. These commitments will be reviewed and agreed upon annually.

6. Communication and Decision-Making

To maintain effective collaboration, representatives from both departments will convene regularly to discuss progress, challenges, and strategies. The committee will regularly update all stakeholders, including faculty, administrative departments, and student groups, about any changes or initiatives related to the FYE program.

A. Regular Meetings

The committee will meet at least once a month during the academic year or as deemed necessary by the co-chairs.

B. Subcommittees

Subcommittees may be established for specific tasks and report back to the main committee.

7. Term and Termination

This MOU is effective upon the date of signature by both parties and will continue in perpetuity.

8. Modification and Review

While not legally binding, this MOU signifies a mutual agreement that can be modified or extended with written consent from both parties. An annual review by the committee's co-chairs and the division's leadership will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration and to make necessary adjustments to this MOU.

9. Signatures

By signing below, the parties agree to uphold the cooperative relationship and responsibilities outlined in this MOU.

Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
East Tennessee State University
Date:

Dr. Joe Sherlin
Vice President Student Life and Enrollment
East Tennessee State University
Date:

Appendix E: Badge/Focus Subcommittee Report

Membership

Tom Donohoe, Paula Sarut (Chair), Daryl Carter, Alan Stevens, Amber Street

Charge

Develop the Badge/Focus concept further, for potential integration into the revised General Education curriculum.

The Badges Subcommittee met twice (September 20 and October 25, 2023) to discuss its charge and potential obstacles, considerations, benefits, etc. The subcommittee identified several obstacles surrounding naming, intent, and transcriptability.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that this task force's general recommendation was worth exploring and developing. However, it was also agreed that the idea would be better addressed after the redesigned general education curriculum was approved.

Appendix F: Comparison of required SCHs within current and proposed general education curricula

	Current General Education Required (SCH)	Proposal (SCH)
Written Composition	6	6
Quantitative Reasoning	3-4	3-4
Oral Communication	3	0-9
		3-9
History	6	3-9
Literature	3	0-9
Humanities (outside Literature and History)	3	0-9
Fine Arts	3	3-6
Natural Sciences	8	4-12
Social and Behavioral Sciences	6	3-9

- With respect to SCHs, there are no changes for written composition or quantitative reasoning.
- With respect to oral communication, history, literature, humanities (beyond history and literature), natural sciences, and social/behavioral sciences, the proposal introduces significant flexibility in student credit hour accumulation. Some students will take more courses in some of these areas than they could on the existing curriculum, some students will take fewer, and some students will *choose* to take the same number of courses in a given area as they are currently *required* to take.
- In order for students to take 9 credit hours in oral communication, history, literature, humanities (other than history and literature), and social/behavioral sciences, or to take 6 credit hours in fine arts, or to take 12 credit hours in natural sciences, there would need to be courses offered in those areas that satisfy the “Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen” category.
- The critical thinking subcategory and Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen category are not included here, since the purpose of the table is to help illustrate how existing categories are affected under the proposal.
- That there are two ranges for oral communication reflects the unresolved decision point.

Appendix G: The Relationship Between Competencies and Categories

It is important to maintain the conceptual distinction between the competencies and the categories. The competencies are the expected outcomes of the curriculum. The categories create structure for the curriculum.

Although the task force regards the categories and subcategories as providing the **primary** means by which students will acquire the associated competencies, other courses within general education will also play a critical role. Courses throughout the curriculum can be expected to significantly refine, enforce, and improve those skills that are developed in the foundational courses.

Question marks reflect the unresolved decision.

Competency: Think Critically

Categories:

- Critical Thinking

Competency: Communicate Effectively

Categories:

- Written Composition
- Oral Composition?

Competency: Understand Natural and Social Worlds

Categories:

- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences

Competency: Cultivate Artistic Awareness

Categories:

- Cultivating Artistic Awareness

Competency: Collaborate and Build Community

Categories:

- First-Year Experience?
- History
- Humanities (Outside of History)
- Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen

Competency: Grow as a Responsible and Productive Citizen

Categories:

- First-Year Experience?
- Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen

Appendix H: Guidance for Specific Categories and Subcategories

The six key competencies provided significant guidance on what the various categories and subcategories would address. However, the competencies did not always provide sufficient specificity. The competencies shared with campus in March 2023 said almost nothing about courses in quantitative reasoning, for example. During the fall semester of 2023, the task force rounded out the competencies to fill in these gaps. Suggested course-level student learning outcomes that align with the Compass Competencies are as follows:

First-Year Experience Courses

- Cultivate a strong sense of self to become an active, engaged citizen in a complex and diverse society.
- Understand how individual and sociocultural factors interact in the development of beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of oneself and others.
- Apply concepts that support multiple forms of wellness, including physical, mental, financial, and/or psychosocial wellness to individual and community well-being.

Written Composition

- Apply written, verbal, and/or visual communication theories, strategies, and evidence that are appropriate for the audience, purpose, and message.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate messages in a variety of forms and contexts, including those that utilize emerging technology.
- Engage in conversation as a speaker, writer, listener, and reader; ask questions to understand other perspectives; and offer productive ideas and evidence.

- Demonstrate ethical and appropriate grammar, usage, conventions, and citations selected for audience and purpose in written, oral, and visual texts.

Oral Communication

- Apply verbal, and/or visual communication theories, strategies, and evidence that are appropriate for the audience, purpose, and message.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate messages in a variety of forms and contexts, including those that utilize emerging technology.
- Engage in conversation as a speaker and listener; ask questions to understand other perspectives; and offer productive ideas and evidence.
- Identify, evaluate, and apply different styles of presentation utilizing effective delivery techniques in public speaking.
- Demonstrate ethical and appropriate grammar, usage, conventions, and citations selected for audience and purpose in oral and visual texts.

Quantitative Reasoning

- Explain information presented in mathematical forms (for example, equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables).
- Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (for example, equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables).
- Use quantitative methods (for example, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics) to solve problems.
- Draw valid and meaningful inferences and conclusions from data using appropriate methods.

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate sources for credibility, accuracy, and use of evidence.

- Identify cognitive biases that influence decision-making and interpretation of new information.
- Use relevant evidence, reasoning, and technological tools—ethically and legally—in the process of proposing, supporting, and evaluating potential solutions to problems.
- Identify historic, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information.
- Solve problems by working effectively with others.

Natural, Social and Behavioral Sciences

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of scientific principles and methods used to conduct research.
- Apply scientific concepts and methods to solve complex problems.
- Identify how science impacts and is impacted by political, social, economic, or ethical factors.
- Analyze and evaluate the interaction between scientific discovery and human thought and behavior.
- Evaluate research design as well as data collection and analysis in studies that employ quantitative and qualitative methodologies and present data in various media or forms.

History

- Integrate diverse opinions through strategies that are inclusive, ethical, and evidence-based.
- Compare and contrast cultural similarities and differences in values, behavior, goals, and communication styles, for purposes of making ethically informed decisions in professional and personal contexts.
- Solve problems by working effectively with others.

Humanities (Outside of History)

- Integrate diverse opinions through strategies that are inclusive, ethical, and evidence-based.
- Compare and contrast cultural similarities and differences in values, behavior, goals, and communication styles, for purposes of making ethically informed decisions in professional and personal contexts.
- Solve problems by working effectively with others.

Cultivating Artistic Awareness

- Apply appropriate methods to explore how meanings are attached to artistic or creative works.
- Link artistic or creative work to culture, identity, and the broader human context (e.g., historical, social, ethnic, geographic, and economic).
- Use the creative process to express ideas, solve problems, and/or collaborate.

Growing as an Individual and Global Citizen

At least three of the following:

- Identify and explain the historical, cultural, linguistic, economic, political, scientific, moral, and/or social interconnections and experiences that characterize the contemporary world.

Note: Each course approved must include at least two areas; one can be primary. For example, a course on cultural geography would include cultural and scientific areas. A foreign language course would include linguistic, cultural, and political. A microeconomics course could cover economic and social aspects.

- Analyze and reflect on the ways in which historical, cultural, linguistic, economic, political, scientific, moral, and/or social interconnections and experiences affect people individually and as groups.

Note: Each course approved must include at least two areas; one can be primary. For example, a course on cultural geography would include cultural and scientific areas. A foreign language course would include linguistic, cultural, and political aspects. A microeconomics course could cover economic and social aspects.

- Apply concepts of physical, mental, psychosocial, and/or financial wellness to develop a strong sense of self to become an engaged citizen in a complex society.
- Solve problems by working effectively with others.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2015). General education maps and markers: Designing meaningful pathways to student achievement.

Chambliss, D.F., and Takacs, C.G. (2014). *How college works*. Harvard University Press.

East Tennessee State University. (2021). *Academic task force report: ETSU 125 chapter II*. ETSU 125 Chapter II Strategic Vision for East Tennessee State University. <https://www.etsu.edu/125>.

East Tennessee State University. (n.d.) *Committee for 125, chapter II*. ETSU 125 Chapter II Strategic Vision for East Tennessee State University.

<https://www.etsu.edu/125>.

El Soufi, N., and See, B.H. (2019). Does explicit teaching of critical thinking improve critical thinking skills of English language learners in higher education? A critical review of causal evidence. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 60(1), 140-162

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2018.12.006>.

Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High impact educational practices*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Marin, L.M., and Halperin, D. M. (2011). Pedagogy for developing critical thinking in adolescents: Explicit instruction produces greatest gains. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 6(1), 1-3.
