

14 February 2020

GECAP met on 27 January and 11 February to discuss and vote on the following motions. The final votes on these motions were: four in favor and one not in favor of Motion 1 and all in favor of Motion 2. GECAP is asking that this proposal be presented at the February Senate meeting and voted on at the March meeting to give time for Senators to consult with their constituents.

Introduction: GECAP has investigated the extent to which students are receiving exposure to all six Learning Outcomes at least twice in the General Education Program and the results are concerning. While completing this investigation, GECAP discovered an additional concern, that a majority of students fall into large-credit exception programs, raising questions about the integrity of the core General Education experience for students. We are calling for two changes to the General Education Program to address these concerns. Let's take each in turn.

Table 1: Percentage of Sampled Students Getting Each Outcome in Tier I, Tier II, and Both Tiers I and II

	100%	99%	99%
	85%	80%	48%
	67%	48%	36%
	99%	60%	59%
	60%	75%	46%
	99%	99%	98%

The current program requires students to take courses in each Mode of Inquiry at least twice in their Tier I and II courses. This is not what is happening in practice. In our sample, we discovered that while 88% of students took at least one course in each Mode, only 47% took at least two in each. Over half of the students in the sample were not getting two courses in each Mode! At least 40% of the students in our sample were enrolled in large-credit programs, which have nine-credit exemptions/substitutions. Other students had received other forms of waivers and substitutions. We need a program that nearly all students can complete without any such waivers or substitutions.

By replacing the Modes of Inquiry requirement with a Learning Outcomes requirement we are not looking to reduce the potential disciplinary/interdisciplinary breadth of our students' academic experiences. We are, however, recognizing that the Modes of Inquiry requirement is not achieving the disciplinary/interdisciplinary breadth we had hoped for. Students tend to gravitate towards General Education courses that keep them within their disciplinary comfort zones. History majors, for example, tend to take courses in History, Political Science, Philosophy, and English. Because any program can offer courses in any Mode it becomes possible for students to complete the program without having far-ranging disciplinary/interdisciplinary experiences. The Department of History offers courses in three of the four Modes; Political science in all of them. Some programs even require majors/minors to take anywhere between three and twenty-one credits of General Education courses in their own departments. If we measure the success of the Modes requirement on the basis of pushing students to think about the big questions from multiple perspectives, we are far from this ideal.

That is why we are urging you to support this motion. Creating a Learning Outcomes requirement does not inherently limit students' intellectual horizons. In point of fact, there are aspects of the new approach that will broaden them. Every first-time, first-year student will complete at least two courses with the CEIK outcome. This is a game-changer in terms of the University's commitment to serving the larger community and enhancing and further solidifying our reputation as being at the forefront of inclusive

teaching and pedagogy. Even though research skills are central to the academic enterprise, the General Education Program has surprisingly few ITL courses. Imagine the possibilities of posing one of the big questions and working with your students to locate and evaluate the research out there to address them. Any faculty member in any discipline can do that. There is also a tremendous opportunity to enhance our offerings in Digital Humanities.

Moreover, while we have done a good job of thinking about WC across the disciplines, we have not been as successful with QL. Imagine courses where students work with polling data, censuses, scientific data, etc., to show how non-STEM faculty use these in their research. We need not pit a skills-based program against lamentations about the death of the liberal arts. If anything, we can use the Learning Outcomes requirement as a foundation for reinvigorating our General Education Program and do so in a way that

QL and CTPS by recertifying courses to address other two-outcome combinations we can facilitate a smooth transition to the revised program. Table 2 shows the current distribution of Learning Outcomes combinations by Tier.

Table 2: Distribution of Learning Outcomes by Tier

	19
	12
	10
	5
	5
	4
	3
	3
	3
	21
	10
	9
	6
	5
	5
	4
	3
	1
	1
	1
	1

	1

As you can see, we have too many Tier I and II courses with the WC and CTPS outcomes. Courses with the following combinations would go a long way towards creating a better balance among the Learning Outcomes and ensuring students get each of them at least twice over the course of the program: OC and CEIK; ITL and QL; ITL and OC; CEIK and OC; CEIK and QL. Rest assured, we will still be able to have some courses with the WC and CTPS combination. The following hypothetical shows how much flexibility there would be for students in meeting this new outcomes-based requirement:

All-University Requirements

1. English Comp I - WC/CTPS
2. English Comp II - WC/CTPS
3. Required Math - CTPS/QL

Tier I Courses

1. CTPS/WC
2. CEIK/OC
3. ITL/QL

Tier II Courses

1. CEIK/QL
2. WC/CTPS
3. OC/CTPS
4. ITL/OC

Tier III Requirement

1. Outcomes determined in consultation with instructor.

In this example, students hit WC 4 times, QL 3 times, CEIK 2 times, OC 3 times, CTPS 6 times, and ITL 2 times.

In order to be ready for a Fall 2021 start date we have asked for and received assurances from the Provost that General Education courses can be fast-tracked to receive certification in new Learning Outcome combinations.

Conclusion: As stated in the December 2019 report to the Senate, in the 5 years since the program's inception we have much of which to be proud. We've created a smaller

program that is tiered to allow students to hone the essential skills we've identified as key to success at NJCU and beyond. We've integrated a capstone component that culminates in the opportunity for students to present cutting-edge creative and scholarly work. But not all of our aspirations have been fully realized. These reforms are meant to