Students and General Education
A Pyramid of Learning

Synthesis

Core

Foundation

Where Innovation Is Tradition
Building Blocks of Gen Ed

Foundation Areas
• Writing, Speaking, Quantifying, Computing

Core Areas
• Arts, Literature
• World History/Western Civilization
• Natural Science
• Social and Behavioral Science
• Global Understanding

Synthesis
• Critical thinking, written and oral expression, interdisciplinary problem-solving.
Current Challenges

- Students take courses as they can fit within their schedule.
- Many transfers end up with waived gen ed requirements.
- Students have difficulty understanding the “logic” of these requirements.
- Gen ed courses provide important resources for local units.
Proposed Changes

The Mason Core

- Gen ed categories
- Writing intensive requirement
- Other desired outcomes for students that map to strategic planning
- Shift in metaphors/shifts perspectives
Proposed Changes

Synthesis → Capstone Experience

• Current challenges with synthesis category
• Why Capstone?
• Culminates with major.

Defining Senior Capstone Experiences

“The senior capstone experience is defined as a culminating course or project that is discipline-based or interdisciplinary; the course and/or experience concludes during the final year of study and is reserved for senior students (senior status is typically defined by credit-hours obtained).”

(National Survey of Senior Capstone Experiences, 2011)
Proposed Changes

Double-counting for Categories

• Currently, all discrete categories
• Allow possibly six credits to count in two categories.
• Would require ability to meet learning outcomes.
• Provides more options for students.
Proposed Changes

Pathways

• Engagement pathways
• Co-curricular opportunities
• Graduation recognition
• Examples: sustainability, global engagement, well-being
Next Steps

• Today-
  • O & O resolution to modify Gen Ed Committee name and charge;
  • Gen Ed Committee resolution to change synthesis to capstone experience.

• Spring, 2014-
  • AP committee will present a resolution regarding the double counting of six credits.

• Fall, 2014
  • Approved changes to take effect (with phase-in for capstone experience).