



REPORT  
**TRANSFORMING  
GENERAL EDUCATION**

UPDATE TO FACULTY SENATE  
ON CORE GEN-ED CAPACITIES

**Transforming General Education Task Force Co-Chairs**

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# RECAP

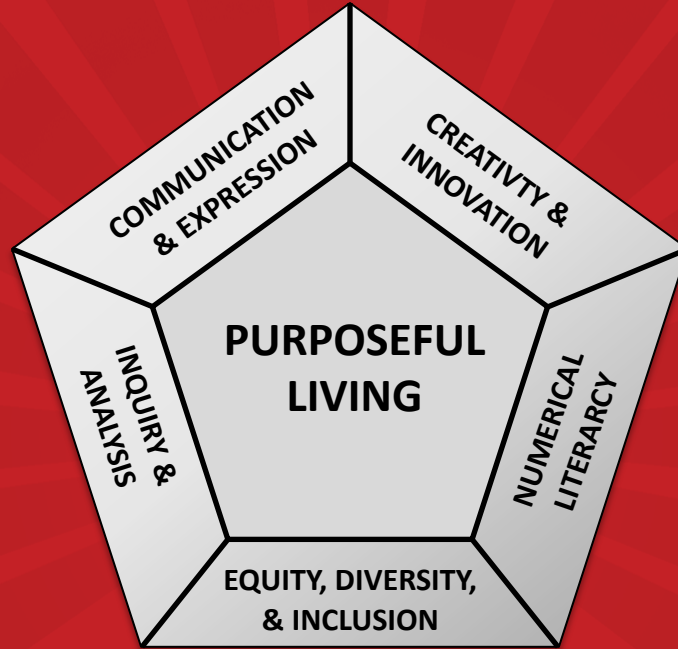
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- On 16 November 2020, the SOU Faculty Senate gave provisional approval by majority vote to move forward on the six core capacities proposed by the Transforming General Education Task Force.
- The Senate also charged the Task Force with the creation of six interdisciplinary capacity subcommittees to develop details and learning proficiencies around each proposed capacities.
- The subcommittees worked through February 26 and presented their recommendations to the Task Force. Their work is summarized here, but their full worksheets have been added to the Senate drive for faculty review.
- Please note that the information that follows is presented largely unchanged, and because each subcommittee worked independently, there will be some stark differences in the ways the capacity proficiencies are expressed.

# The First-Year Experience & ePortfolios as High Impact Practices

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- While the subcommittees have worked on capacity proficiencies, the larger Task Force has focused on research and discussion of our first-year experience and the adoption of a GenEd ePortfolio.
- Both first-year cohort experiences and ePortfolios have been categorized as high impact practices by AAC&U, and research supports their value.
- In particular, the Task Force views the implementation and integration of an ePortfolio throughout all GenEd courses, in which students metacognitively reflect on their capacity development, as central to the success of any new model of general education at SOU.
- For this reason, it may be most productive to view the Purposeful Living capacity as the glue that connects our other five capacities and makes them meaningful to students.



# PURPOSEFUL LIVING

(foundation of GenEd ePortfolio)

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*This capacity supports students in building skills for personal and professional development. The learning outcomes bridge higher education to broader goals related to self, community, and career. The proficiencies offer a practical and purposeful approach to self-reflection, connection with others, communication of purpose, and adaptation in an ever-changing world.*

# PURPOSEFUL LIVING

(foundation of GenEd ePortfolio)

## **PROFICIENCY 1: Reflection**

*Students will learn to:*

- a) Identify personal values, strengths, and interests
- b) Align behavior with personal values, beliefs, meaning, and purpose including the barriers and successes in order to achieve goals.
- c) Investigate a wide variety of academic fields and career opportunities to explore best fits between purpose and paths to attain it.
- d) Reflect on how the student's purpose(s), can transfer to multiple contexts (formal academic, professional, and personal).

## **PROFICIENCY 2: Connection**

*Students will learn to:*

- a) Build and sustain meaningful relationships with people of varying backgrounds, roles, and perspectives who provide guidance and support (connect with peers, informational interviews, join clubs, meet with professors, site visits, job shadowing and internships)
- b) Engage in civic, social, and communal institutions to expand connections beyond the academic setting and to co-create communities of mutual

support.

- c) Effectively balance autonomy and interdependence

## **PROFICIENCY 3: Personal Storytelling**

*Students will learn to:*

- a) Create verbal and visual stories to communicate accomplishments to different audiences (through written documents, online presence, and skillful interviews, resume, cover letter, digital platforms)

## **PROFICIENCY 4: Adaptive Planning**

*Students will learn to:*

- a) Understand and plan for future educational and professional pursuits (graduate school, professional credentials, professional development, etc.)
- b) Seek and implement feedback to achieve professional and/or personal goals
- c) Optimize emotional and physical health, including the ability to persevere through setbacks and disappointment constructively.
- d) Practice adaptability and transferring skills to different contexts

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

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*The capacity for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion prepares students to engage in a lifelong, intentional, and continuous process of learning culturally affirming ways of being, interacting, and behaving that contribute to equitable living outcomes in both global and local communities. EDI prioritizes the critical awareness of historical and contemporary structural inequity and its causes; encourages the development of empathy, respect, and skills for communicating across differences (including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, body size, age, sexuality, social class, religion, linguistic background, and nationality); and develops tools in service of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive society. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion involves the active combination of each of these frameworks; it is not to be interpreted as equity, diversity, or inclusion.*



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

*Students will be able to:*

1. **Define** concepts and conceptual frameworks fundamental to EDI (e.g., diversity, equality v. equity, inclusion, bias, stereotype, race, racism, anti-racism, colonization, decolonization, intersectionality, privilege, oppression, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, ableism...); **articulate** how race is a social and cultural construct and not a biological category; and **describe** places as Indigenous peoples' land and the unique relationship between Sovereign Tribal Nations and the United States. (knowledge)
2. **Recognize...**
  - a) *specific examples* of bias, stereotypes, prejudice, privilege, omission, and erasure;
  - b) *systemic patterns* of oppression (e.g., racism, ethnocentrism, settler colonialism, sexism, cissexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and so on);
  - c) the *intersectional* impacts of multiple systems of oppression (e.g., racism, ethnocentrism, settler colonialism, sexism, cissexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and so on) in shaping societal, group, and individual experiences of privilege and oppression; and
  - d) *evidence* of equity, diversity, and inclusion. (knowledge)
3. **Self-actualize:** identify intersecting factors (e.g., race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender identity and expression, sexuality, ability, class, nationality, and so on) that affect one's own identities and how one is perceived by others, and how systems of privilege/power impact one's personal experiences and shape one's perceptions of the world and of others. This proficiency includes the disposition of humility -- cultural humility, openness, self-awareness, self-critique, and an awareness of 'not knowing. (knowledge and disposition)
4. **Communicate and collaborate** effectively across social differences and cultures (e.g., race, ethnicity, language background, Indigeneity, gender, sexuality, disability, class, nationality, etc.); actively seek out cross-cultural experiences from which to learn; and value and learn from perspectives of historically marginalized communities, scholars, activists, and artists. This proficiency includes the valuing of diverse and historically marginalized perspectives and voices. (skill and disposition)
5. **Advocate with and work in solidarity with** diverse perspectives and experiences; amplify diverse voices and historically marginalized perspectives in service of greater equity, diversity, inclusion and deeper understandings; and engage in global, regional, and local-community issues using an equity-and-advocacy lens that contributes to rectifying historic injustices and promotes decolonization and anti-racism. (skill)

# COMMUNICATION & EXPRESSION

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*The capacity for Communication and Expression equips students to create, develop, and convey ideas with an audience in mind (e.g., using writing, speaking, listening, dialogue, sound, visual images, media, embodied expression, movement, and/or networked digital tools) and to receive, appreciate, and analyze those ideas.*

# COMMUNICATION & EXPRESSION

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*Students will be able to:*

## **SELECT AND DEVELOP IDEAS**

- a. Adapts to the needs of individuals, groups, and diverse cultural contexts
- b. Identifies and targets multiple audiences
- c. Locates, evaluates, and uses evidence relevant to the context (including genre, goals, audience, purpose, platforms, and modalities)

## **EXPRESS IDEAS**

- a. Uses appropriate conventions for clarity and precision
- b. Uses genre and style appropriate to purpose and audience
- c. Demonstrates strong and purposeful organizational structure
- d. Uses media and technologies in meaningful and innovative ways

## **RECEIVE IDEAS**

- a. Engages in active, sender-centered reception
- b. Comprehends simultaneous modes of expression
- c. Accurately identifies, interprets, and synthesizes meanings embedded in multimodal expressions
- d. Mindfully responds to reach mutual understanding

## **ANALYZE AND APPRECIATE IDEAS**

- a. Distinguishes intent, influence, and impact of expressions
- b. Analyzes relevant components and structures in expressions
- c. Evaluates the ethical elements of an expression
- d. Critically reflects on one's own expressions
- e. Articulates historical contexts and cultural influences of and on expressions

# CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

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*The Creativity and Innovation capacity equips students to devise original approaches to creative projects or complex problems. Students are afforded the opportunity to produce original work that expands or transforms existing approaches and methods, towards the goal of engaging an audience with work that possesses meaning and value. Creativity is an ongoing and iterative process, whereby students strive to improve their work by considering and incorporating feedback. This capacity fosters the self-confidence and imagination necessary to innovate boldly and bring a product or solution to fruition.*

# CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

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*Students will be able to:*

1. Identify and contextualize exemplars or existing approaches,
2. Plan an original approach,
3. Create an original artifact or solution,
4. Communicate the intention and value of their work, and
5. Integrate critique and revision.

# INQUIRY & ANALYSIS

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*The capacity for Inquiry & Analysis enables students to pose meaningful questions; gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize relevant information; and articulate how the information cycle (the iterative process by which information is understood, consumed, & produced) contributes to an understanding of the world and shapes decisions, actions, and conclusions.*

# INQUIRY & ANALYSIS

*Students will be able to:*

## **1. ASK RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSE HYPOTHESES OR THESES**

- a. Asks research questions that are focused, interesting, feasible, and appropriate to the area of study.
- b. Presents sufficient relevant background information and context
- c. Proposes hypotheses that are testable, or thesis statements that are arguable

## **2. DEVELOP AND UTILIZE A RELIABLE METHOD TO GATHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

- a. Recognizes how a discipline's information should be gathered
- b. Utilizes the method efficiently to gather information
- c. Articulates the method and reliability of the method in a skillful manner

## **3. ANALYZE AND EVALUATE INFORMATION**

- a. Deconstructs information using multiple perspectives as warranted by the inquiry
- b. Assesses information for credibility using criteria appropriate for the inquiry

- c. Determines relevance of information for the purposes of the inquiry
- d. Explains how the discipline's information is produced and consumed

## **4. DRAW AND ARTICULATE APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS FROM INFORMATION**

- a. Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints
- b. Related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified
- c. Clearly communicates the related implications and consequences of the analysis
- d. Objectively reflects upon own assertions

## **5. RELATE KNOWLEDGE GAINED TO A LARGER CONTEXT**

- a. Understands that the knowledge exists in a wider context
- b. Draws connections between the knowledge and the wider context
- c. Synthesizes their primary analysis with discoveries in previous scholarship
- d. Acknowledges shifts in cultural understanding
- e. Situates their findings in a nuanced way

# NUMERICAL LITERACY

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*The capacity in Numerical Literacy develops a student's ability to reason and solve quantitative problems situated within a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts. Students learn to ask mathematical questions about their world, identify appropriate methods to interpret data, and clearly communicate their results in a variety of formats.*



# NUMERICAL LITERACY

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*Students will be able to:*

1. ...show proficiency with number systems, mathematical operations, mathematical properties and logical arguments/proofs.
2. ...describe where data comes from, describe and differentiate types of data, show an understanding of the limitations and analysis of both data and sampling.
3. ...communicate concepts through mathematical notation, mathematical methods, logical reasoning, visual representations, or algorithmic procedures.
4. ...analyze and interpret the results of their mathematical inquiries and make decisions based on quantitative data.
5. ...communicate concepts and findings associated with proficiencies 1-4, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

# Looking Forward to Models

# Open Questions About A New Model

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- **Target Credits:** How many? No fewer than 40; no more than 48.
- **1-to-1 or Mapped Connections:** Will each capacity get its own course in the model, or will capacity connections be mapped to more traditional disciplinary courses?
- **Liberal Arts:** While exploring our Core Capacities, will students be required to draw some minimum number of credits from traditional disciplinary branches (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, STEM), or do students decide how much liberal arts exposure they get?
- **Curricular Pathways:** Should GenEd courses be offered in themed groupings connected to “Wicked Problems”?
- **Portfolio:** how will students get meaningful feedback and assessment of their portfolio?
- **What professional development is needed to support transition to new model?**



*The End*