

General Education Design Committee

CHARGE 2020

DESCRIPTION

The General Education Design Committee is charged to devise a new general education program for BYU. The committee should build on the work of the first design committee, take into account feedback from individual faculty and university units about that committee's recommendations, and propose a new structure for GE at BYU. The committee should seek a balance between attending to the vision and recommendations of the first committee while not being constrained by them.

FOUR ELEMENTS

We reiterate the four elements of the charge given to the first committee, with some additional clarification:

1. Identity. The new GE program at BYU should reflect an unambiguous sense of our institutional identity and values, as expressed by the principles in BYU's Mission and Aims. This begins with and necessarily engages the religious mission of the university, but it does not exclude other core competencies or values for which we are known (or to which we may aspire).
2. Simplicity. GE at BYU should a) enable students to chart an intentional course through GE, b) expect students to recognize and articulate the values embedded in a liberal education, and c) be comprehensible and easily explained to and by students, advisors and faculty.
3. Commonality. GE programs typically land on a continuum ranging from a reduced and discrete common core to a distribution model with little or no commonality. Our current GE program is a distribution model with few common threads that connect the entire experience. A new GE program may benefit by more commonality, while retaining some of the flexibility that comes with a distribution model.
4. Efficiency. A new GE program must not add credits or time required for the completion of a degree. However, the distribution of credits between GE and the major needs not be static.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The committee should identify a small suite of learning outcomes that articulate and summarize the purposes of GE at BYU.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Research on the conditions that allow students to thrive (not just survive) on college campuses emphasizes the following elements: engaged learning; academic determination; positive perspective; diverse citizenship; social connectedness; and, for BYU, spiritual confidence. That same research points to the importance of sustained attention to advisement, faculty development and curriculum. The new model should consider how general education can contribute to student thriving via faculty development and a well-crafted general curriculum.

CONSTRAINTS

The first GE Design Committee pursued its task without being asked to account for constraints. The second committee is charged with the more difficult task of proposing a model that is feasible in terms of limitations on budget, FTE, space and professional development.