The General Education and Baccalaureate Reform Symposium was held on January 29, 2014. Quantitative and qualitative summary results include opinion polling of 69 workshop participants regarding 24 possible solutions organized into five critical curricular reform value areas identified by the PLUS Task Force. More information may be found at: http://www.niu.edu/plus.

### Quantitative Results at a Glance

Table 1. Rank order of average scores for each of the 24 possible solutions posited at the General Education and Baccalaureate Reform Symposium. Approximately 69 alumni, current students, faculty, and staff completed the worksheet. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Possible Solution</th>
<th>Qualitative Ranking of Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Increase the number of Gen Ed courses (solution 4.1)</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Allow more upper division (solution 4.2)</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Expand courses in experiential learning (solution 5.3)</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Place HIPs on transcripts or in an e-portfolio (solution 5.1)</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Ensure courses develop progress in SLOs (solution 1.2)</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Increase in-course writing requirements (solution 2.1)</td>
<td>Moderate to Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Create a 3rd year writing requirement (solution 2.3)</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Add a 4th year writing requirement (solution 2.4)</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Domains of knowledge mapped by SLOs (solution 3.2)</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Course Clusters (solution 3.3)</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Departments to tailor a curriculum (solution 4.3)</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Allow HIPs to document SLO achievement (solution 5.4)</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Map degree programs to SLOs (solution 1.1)</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Add a writing intensive general education seminar (solution 3.2)</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Archive products in an e-portfolio (solution 4.2)</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Distributional areas according to SLOs (solution 1.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>UNIV and SLOs (solution 1.4)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Broader, themed-based distributional areas (solution 3.1)</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Remove course-for-course requirements (solution 4.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Add a co-curricular requirement for graduation (solution 5.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>General education minor (solution 3.4)</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>E-portfolio and SLOs (solution 1.5)</td>
<td>Weak to Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Results at a Glance

Table 2. Most frequent qualitative comments about curricular value areas (1.0 = Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs); 2.0 = Enhanced Writing; 3.0 = Content Exposure; 4.0 = Curricular Flexibility; 5.0 = High Impact Practices (HIPs)).

1. SLOs
   - The task force needs to pay extra attention to transfer students so they are oriented in SLOs. (x5)
   - Make sure that students and faculty have enhanced conversations about SLO tracking and degree progress so as to see larger picture. (x5)
   - We need rubrics from the 8 SLO’s (x3)
   - Confusion between SLO’s and the 8 outcomes and program SLO’s as they appear to be connected. (x3)
   - Is it possible to combine e-portfolio activities with UNIV courses? (x2)
   - Expand UNIV course to all students. (x2)
   - Coordinate major SLO’s and gen-eds and connect to community colleges- we must keep transfer students. (x2)
   - Use SLO’s instead of gen ed goals-merge with major goals. (x2)
   - The school needs to provide tutoring in professional writing styles (x2)
   - Would this change transfer student acceptance? (x2)
   - What is the resistance to making UNIV 101/201 a requirement? (x2)
   - There is confusion about the actual target is-is it the three goals or all 8 SLO’s? (x2)

2. Enhanced Writing
   - Who will evaluate extra writing requirements? (x6)
   - How effective are increased course writing requirement for communication? (x2)
   - Integrate writing across the curriculum. (x2)
   - Logistically I see this as an issue: course size, instructor-writing assessment competency, depth, and definition. (x2)

3. Content Exposure
   - Theme based distributional areas may make it clearer to students why they take these classes (and perhaps make it clearer to their professors and advisors as well)- SLO’s on syllabi’s need to be clear as well. (x3)
   - Themes more accurately reflects real life and will be more beneficial to students after their undergraduate studies (x3)
   - Replacing the existing disciplinary areas will give students a chance to assess the more important SLO’s and course that will allow them to feel more engaged and hands on with their learning. (x2)
   - What are the benefits of a general education minor? (x2)
   - What if the student changes Majors and they are taking a Minor? (x2)

4. High Impact Practices (HIPs)
   - HIPs incumbent on student? (x3)
   - How will HIPs be documented? (x3)
   - If we require a summer internship at the end of the junior year, how are we going to ensure that there are enough of such positions for every student to satisfy that requirement? (x2)
   - How will a HIPs requirement be accomplished? What counts? (x2)
   - HIPs are great and should be measured and advertised as major thing done by our institution. (x2)
1. The Baccalaureate Goals and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

**Background:** In its 2010 report, the Baccalaureate Review Task Force identified the “Three C Baccalaureate Goals” (Critical Thinking, Creativity and Communication) and eight Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as cornerstones of an NIU undergraduate education. Together, these goals and SLOs articulate what an NIU graduate should know, value, and be able to do.

**Goal:** To consciously integrate university-wide learning goals throughout the entire program of study leading to the Baccalaureate

**Possible Solutions:**

1.1 Map each set of degree program outcomes to the SLOs
1.2. Ensure courses explicitly develop student progress in a primary SLO
1.3. Configure General Education course distributional areas according to all eight SLOs
1.4. Modify and enhance current UNIV courses to ensure student awareness of and progress in the SLOs
1.5. Implement an e-portfolio package to facilitate student reflection and track student SLO achievement

### Student Learning Outcomes (n = 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5. E-portfolio and SLOs</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. UNIV and SLOs</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Distributional areas according to SLOs</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Ensure courses develop progress in SLOs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Map degree programs to SLOs</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average worksheet scores for each possible solution. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.
Alumni Comments

1.1 • Degree performance should be taught to enhance SLO achievement
1.2 • If course doesn’t contribute to achieving a SLO why bother?
1.3 • Students should be aware of how every course they take aligns with SLO’s - gen ed turned major
1.4 • SLO becomes secondary objective of the university-critical competency.
1.5 • The mechanics of who reads, documents, and collects advertisement data needs to be addressed.
   • Set an example for education so that in 2-3 years community colleges adapt SLO management.
   • How to manage transfers in? Ensure skills are there.

General Comments/Questions

• Manage graduation based on general education class base on content they find interesting.
• Focus students on personal growth, not just time in a seat checking of boxes of things to do.
• Assessment concerns- everyone is already doing a lot.
• Require methodology/research course for program capstone.
• E-portfolio is structured towards life beyond undergraduate as either a professional or a graduate student.
• As I heard more about e-portfolios the more I like it’s meaning

Current Student Comments

1.4 • Maybe require freshman transfer course or research methodology course in each department.
• Is it possible to combine e-portfolio activities with UNIV courses? (x2)

General Comments/Questions

• I do not believe changing the UNIV course will ensure student awareness/progress in SLO’s because the course is designed to smoothen students transitions instead I believe if the university reconstructs the course it will not reflect that and will add pressure on students in a one credit hour course.
• Is a e-portfolio possible for all degree programs?
• Whose responsibility is it to apply SLO’s-students of faculty?
• I like the idea of extending UNIV but restructured. All gen ed courses should work on and reflect at least one SLO.
• UNIV 101 needs to be over 2 semesters.
• Program outcomes-need more specific SLO’s for each program separate from gen ed/ general SLO’s-their 8 SLO’s are too broad to assess program outcomes.
Faculty Comments

1.1
- Needs to descriptive not prescriptive.

1.2
- If there is an expectation that every undergrad course must address one of the 8 SLO’s then there is an implied assessment for each course on campus. This could mean a dramatic escalation of assessment and reporting.
- Not all courses will be able to meet SLO’s- liked the idea of meeting 1 SLO.
- Not all course but ones that programs identify.

1.3
- Really explain these distribution areas to students.
- Too many areas-too complex to monitor and understand and communicate.
- I prefer this to a disciplinary selection as is currently in place.

1.4
- Need to increase value, but consider impact for transfer students
- Does UNIV coursework result in student success?
- I think this is a good idea, but ranked less important because I wouldn’t want all students to be required to take UNIV 101.
- Expand UNIV course to all students. (x2)

1.5
- Requirement? If a student doesn’t complete this do they not graduate?
- Who will read and evaluate these portfolios?
- Cost is a problem, and will it work?

General Comments/Questions

- If we really mean for the SLO’s to drive the curriculum then 1.1 and 1.2 are essential.
- I’m concerned about the loss of breadth that would occur if we implemented 1.3.
- I’d rather see progress embedded throughout the curriculum rather than 1.4.
- Should be more explicit about a student’s facility with facts or content within a discipline.
- Coordinate major SLO’s and gen-eds and connect to community colleges- we must keep transfer students. (x2)
- Concerned about cost to students of adding UNIV courses.
- Confusion between SLO’s and the 8 outcomes and program SLO’s as they appear to be connected. (x3)
- Who reads and evaluates these portfolios?
- We need rubrics from the 8 SLO’s (x3)
- We have concerns about the nature of e-portfolios- do not like canned programs, like those in education; do we need e-portfolios at all?
- Why electronic?
- Use SLO’s instead of gen ed goals-merge with major goals. (x2)
- These options come down to feasibility.
Curricular Worksheet

Results (January 29, 2014)

- I think it’s important to map SLO’s to each course. Also communicate this to the students so they know why they need gen eds.
- The students should be informed of our goals.

Staff Comments

1.1
- Stress the value of SLO’s to students. (x2)
- Use as steering point-good for students to know the strengths of the program.

1.2
- In my experience it is difficult to get faculty to comply beyond surface level/ box ticking mentality.
- Rubrics for SLO’s?
- Language is confusing

1.3
- More comprehensive degree audits.

1.4
- This should only be an option if it is made a requirement for all students.
- Is it possible to combine e-portfolio’s activities with UNIV courses?

1.5
- Portfolios of this nature in my experience are not taken seriously. The importance of this portfolio must be stressed by each course to keep their work.
- Needs to be a requirement and focus on transfer students vs. traditional students

General Comments/Questions

- The school needs to provide tutoring in professional writing styles (x2)
- Would this change transfer student acceptance?(x2)
- How are faculty prepared to measure technical writing as opposed to creative approaches?
- What is the resistance to making UNIV 101/201 a requirement?(x2)
- The task force needs to pay extra attention to transfer students so they are oriented in SLOs.(x5)
- Concern about impact to licensure requirements.
- Less focus on UNIV-require 2 hips by the end of the freshman year.
- Make sure that students and faculty have enhanced conversations about tracking and degree progress so as to see larger picture (x5)
- Concern that appropriation of e-portfolio would not be reflective of ongoing cumulative learning experience— Limited scope.
• There is confusion about the actual target is it the three goals or all 8 SLO’s? (x2)
2. A Core Curriculum with Enhanced Writing Requirements

**Background:** Developing mechanisms to increase writing aptitude, both general and within one’s discipline, was identified by all colleges as an area for improvement in the Baccalaureate. Numerous national studies demonstrate that strong performance in more intensive writing classes enhances student retention and success.

**Goal:** Increase writing requirements across the curriculum beyond the Core Curriculum

**Possible Solutions:**

2.1 Increase in-course writing requirements  
2.2 Add a writing intensive general education seminar  
2.3 Create a third-year writing requirement  
2.4 Add a fourth-year writing requirement  
2.5 Archive some or all of these products in an e-portfolio

### Core Curriculum and Writing (n = 68)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Archive products in an e-portfolio</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Add a 4th writing requirement</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Create a 3rd writing requirement</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Add a writing intensive general education seminar</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Increase in-course writing requirements</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average worksheet scores for each possible solution. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.
Alumni Comments \((n = 2)\)

\underline{2.2}
- Do you mean course?
- Work within major counts to satisfy general education.

\underline{2.3}
- Enable integrating writing skills organizing message into major area of study to ensure approach is applicable
- Within major.

\underline{2.4}
- Within major.

General Comments/Questions

- Writing should be used to effectively communicate the usage.
- The challenge is balance, as an English H.S. teacher told me. Too much writing is hard to grade, you can’t give proper time, constructive feedback when there is too much content.
- Approach- write, oral presentation and feedback on presentation on effectively communicated the message= all students provide feedback. So, not writing for reading but writing to gauge how effectively message is communicated.
- For all of these points resource availability is the issue requiring more resources for both teachers and students.
- Do students understand the importance of writing comprehension regardless of major?
- Explicitly state how gen ed coursework can apply, if not aid, future professionals.
- Use technology to facilitate writing analysis.

Current Student Comments

\underline{2.1}
- Yes, but must allow for more time for instructors to provide feedback on written work submitted or reduce class size.
- Depends on the degree.
- All disciplines.

\underline{2.2}
- This may be good but hard to transfer between departments.
- I do not think students will want to take writing intensive courses if they are not part of their major curriculum. This could be implemented in the first two years, but to make students take additional courses on things that they may feel are less useful for their targeted careers is unfair.

General Comments/Questions
Curricular Worksheet
Results (January 29, 2014)

- Need dedicated faculty
- Lots of work to provide critical feedback
- Writing center help?
- Would the additional writing requirements be discipline specific?
- Writing specific courses beyond freshman composition.
- Major capstones should be writing intensive and required.

Faculty Comments

2.1
- How effective are in course writing requirements for communication? (x2)
  - Simply increasing amount alone may do little. A coordinated incentivized program could be effective.

2.2
- Is this a seminar course? Have you considered the added student expense?
  - Probably doesn’t meet the need.
  - Yes, writing intensive courses (at least one) as a gen ed requirement irrespective of discipline.

2.3
- There currently is no 1st year requirement. Students can delay core writing gen-eds requirements until end of academic career?

2.5
- Archive for what purpose?

General Comments/Questions

- Writing should include broader reading such as research-information processing of internet, writing applied materials (memos, newsletters, translating research into easy to understand materials for layperson).
- Integrate across the curriculum. (x2)
- All of these are good, but may require slightly different implementation.
- 2.3 and 2.4 should be condensed because there is going to be a lot of variation between majors.
- English language instruction needs to be integrated: reading, writing, and speaking. Students need to learn to write clearly and forcefully based on reading in sources. Hence they must read before they write. They must learn to be articulate in writing and speaking.
- The devil is in the details. The general concept of raising the bar for writing proficiency, and for distributing that across the curriculum is a worthy one. But, there have been WAC programs for 20+ years, and there’s a knowledge base out there effective for students, what’s logistically manageable.
- I like the idea of a writing equivalent but it needs to be a separate class or could it be something like a benchmark assessment in identified cases. These assessments would have to be recognized and advertised to students as part of gen ed requirements and sculpted to some university wide evaluation (as part of the course evaluation process).
- This is one of the most important changes that will affect students. The teaching of writing must come out of the disciplines that have training i.e. The Humanities.
- Have students peer review other students writing.
• Designate major courses with writing components as general education so students can take them and fulfill their gen ed requirement.
• Already happening in 1st year compositions courses- we are inviting students to include writing from other courses.
• Can the third year writing courses be better served in smaller classes within major?

Staff Comments

2.1

• Logistically I see this as an issue: course size, instructor-writing assessment competency, depth, and definition. (x2)
• How will these impact students who transfer to NIU at the junior or senior level?
• To refine without instruction will not work.

2.2

• Write within college.

2.3

• In writing an intensive majors I see this as busy work, but for others quite difficult
• Who will evaluate? (x3)

2.4

• How will this affect international students?
• How will this effect student retention?
• Could be scheduled by purpose rather than discipline.
• Who will evaluate? (x2)

2.5

• Refinement connected to their major.

General Comments/Questions

• What second year writing requirements are there?
• Label intensive writing courses and require a certain number of courses before graduation.
• ENGL 303 requirement for GMAT/GRE/LSAT prep.
• Implication for intensive writing courses are huge requiring more peer mentors, writing center, TA’s, software etc. to provide resources for students.
• Maybe require upper level undergrad English majors to serve as TA’s for intensive writing courses.
• We absolutely need and intensive writing course at NIU, but that does not necessarily mean and 18 page paper. These would not necessarily reflect the writing necessary in corporate or personal writing necessity.
• Consider a capstone component with writing towards graduation related to major OR college.
• Have more core writing requirements, but I wouldn’t make them tied to any specific year. At least one writing intensive course in the major. (Brianno suggests a model based on Washington State program).
• Concerned about too many requirements no choice in gen-ed.
• Incorporate MLA/APA styles into 3rd and 4th year.
• Define intensive writing more clearly.
• Who will be grade and give feedback on the writing requirements? Major Colleges? An expanded UNIV faculty?
• Terminology from English gen-eds needs to be in the courses-this will help students make the connection.
• Have designated classes that are marked for more intensive writing.
3. Content Exposure and Course Breadth

**Background:** General Education is the appropriate domain for encouraging academic breadth in specific domains of knowledge. A baccalaureate education that incorporates both depth and breadth reflects NIU’s traditional practices, national trends of reform, and the existing definition of general education put forward by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

**Goal:** To enhance curricular flexibility while ensuring that students receive an education that is both broad (often achieved through General Education courses) and deep (typically achieved through the major).

**Possible Solutions:**

3.1. Replace the existing disciplinary distributional areas with broader, themed-based distributional areas
3.2. Assure that students achieve breadth in both content related to general domains of knowledge and skills as mapped out by the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
3.3. Organize thematically linked course clusters, which would likely cross traditional departmental and college boundaries
3.4. Allow students to earn a general education minor in specific themes

**Content Exposure (n = 61)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Solution Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Broader, themed-based distributional areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2. Domains of knowledge mapped by SLOs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Course Clusters</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 General education minor</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Average worksheet scores for each possible solution. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.
Alumni Comments

General Comments/Questions
- I think that it makes college more interesting but may not contribute to SLO. I am thinking themes based on subject i.e. Italy-class from art department that has extra content on Italian art history, literature/english with a comparison of Italian authors vs. American.

Current Student Comments
3.1
- Need to make sure each course demonstrates a SLO
3.3
- Themed learning communities.

General Comments/Questions
- Replacing the existing disciplinary areas will give students a chance to assess the more important SLO’s and course that will allow them to feel more engaged and hands on with their learning.(x2)
- What are the benefits of a general education minor? (x2)
- TLC’s are beneficial can be gen ed or discipline- or both?

Faculty Comments
3.1
- Yes, and in some cases a single course might be listed in more than one area.
3.2
- Again confusion between SLO’s (program-level) and 8 SLO outcomes
3.3
- To what purpose? Sounds like the TLC we already have.
  - If not in lieu of distribution.
  - The thematically linked clusters are a good idea in any event even if the model does change.
3.4
- If there is a purpose of 3.3, this would be less focused than a minor I presume.
- Could this be an expansion of the current TLC’s?

General Comments/Questions
- Students will learn when faculty teaches the disciplines that they practice.
- Disciplines are ways of knowing topics.
- As a mirror it might be easier to assess. Theme based may be more difficult to coordinate.
- Themes just don’t just happen on paper because you put them on paper- They happen because people are invested in them-faculty need to be committed and rewarded for their commitment-for example there is no mechanism for team teaching at NIU, nor any reward or mechanism for curriculum sharing, reviews, or syllabi development as a team. Other schools have this as a value-added.
- Theme based distributional areas may make it clearer to students why they take these classes (and perhaps make it clearer to their professors and advisors as well)- SLO’s on syllabi would need to be clear as well. (x3)
- With a 12 hour core requirement, then allow student to major/minor w/courses that count towards his specific SLOs.
- Missing physical literacy with SLOs!
Curricular Worksheet
Results (January 29, 2014)

- Will theme based replace the diversity of choice?

Staff Comments

3.1
- Similar to 1.3
- Replacing doesn’t increase flexibility it reduces it. If you add and option then it is a strong solution.
- How do we keep themes up to date? Do themes change each year trending with current issues?

3.2
- Shouldn’t this come from the mapping of classes and their approved theme?
- Shouldn’t these go hand in hand?
- Measure and track these.

3.3
- Course blocks lack flexibility that many students demand-logistics?
- The course clusters should be loosely linked not literally linked so that students have the flexibility in scheduling

3.4
- What if the student changes Majors?(x2)
- Would this be documented on the student’s transcripts?
- Good for transfer students.
- Minor would have to offer upper division courses in gen-ed.

General Comments/Questions
- We absolutely need more gen-ed courses to enhance student choice and interest. We are imprisoned in our disciplines—we need to cross discipline lines and teach students that they live in a large system instead of discrete disciplines.
- General education minor would only be good if thematically labeled.
- Need to consider how our current structure for faculty teaching would reward integration (team teaching).
- Themes more accurately reflects real life and will be more beneficial to students after their undergraduate studies(x3)
- I think that these changes would encourage students to see the relevance of their gen-ed courses to the rest of their college/professional career.
- Expand these ideas especially in sophomore year.
- How has this worked for other universities?
- We want to prepare students to have a broader skillset, we must also prepare our faculty.
- It makes sense to reorganize to make the course work more meaningful and relatable to every day.
4. Curricular Flexibility

**Background:** Responses from the curriculum committees of all of NIU’s colleges indicated a need for greater flexibility in the General Education curriculum. Our aim is to streamline a student’s path to graduation. The NIU General Education curriculum currently consists of 144 courses, compared to a median value of 239 courses at 20 benchmarked programs from across the county.

**Goals:** *Expand options that make it easier for students to satisfy general education requirements*

**Possible Solutions:**

- 4.1. Increase the number of courses that satisfy General Education requirements
- 4.2. Allow some upper division courses to fulfill general education requirements
- 4.3. Allow departments to tailor a portion of the General Education curriculum to address the specific needs of each discipline
- 4.4. Remove the course-for-course requirement for transfer credit

**Curricular Flexibility (n = 67)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Increase the number of Gen Ed courses</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Allow more upper division</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Departments to tailor a curriculum</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. Remove course-for-course requirements</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average worksheet scores for each possible solution. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.
Alumni Student Comments

- If each and every class is mapped for several SLO’s as long as all SLO’s are met.

Current Student Comments

4.2

- Does this ensure breadth? Would need to ensure that the number is limited.

4.3

- Could be strong depending on how it’s implemented.

4.4

- Unacceptable
- Show competency before entering NIU

General Comments/Questions

- Ensure relevancy! Either increase the number of relevant coursework or make them more relevant in general.
- Content vs. skills for evaluation.
- Build programs and support/access to developmental courses from traditional admissions.
- Lifting transfer restrictions is not a good idea.

Faculty Comments

4.1

- Don’t they already?
- There are 200 level classes that could be offered but where is the money to do this?
- This all depends on the model.

4.2

- Require this point!
- Upper division gen-eds should be required and they should be required in residence.
- Does this mean a portion of a large general education for the whole university or just a different department?

4.3

- Not sure what this means. Still prefer students to use Coms courses for gen-ed+major education. However, I do think departments could be encouraged to identify courses outside depts. that will enhance major experience while meeting gen-ed goals.
- Need clarification it would depend on how it would work.
Curricular Worksheet
Results (January 29, 2014)

4.4
• I think we do this already? If not, then there should be a transfer substitution indicator that allows course X to meet gen-ed requirement, especially if they are organized around the 8 student outcomes.

General Comments/Questions

• Limit required courses to 12 hours to meet SLO with courses elected by student.
• International partnership do not want their students in Gen-eds-this hurts our marketing.
• Phoenix has all coursework be relevant to major.
• The most important change that can be made is smaller class size. Good teachers focusing more attention to smaller numbers of students is crucial.

Staff Comments

4.1
• It’s harder to develop targeted gen-eds if you increase the number.
• Unless the quality is increasing, requiring more of the same won’t accomplish SLO’s.

4.2
• Yes, we need more undergraduate gen-eds- it really bites that transfers can come up short in their undergrad hours in their BA program.

4.3
• Seeing less courses transferring as course by course.
• Courses that “meet the spirit or intent” could be used more.
• Major Coursework should count towards gen-ed requirements, and only in some instances shouldn’t.

4.4
• Holy smokes what a logistic nightmare for an institution with such a large portion of transfer students-think an articulation handbook the size of Britannica or reliance on human assessors.
• Guaranteed course- IAI to course articulation is a strong point for recruitment.
• Would articulation be assessed at the department level by each course?
• Too much of a demand upon time of faculty and staff- burden on limited resources.
• So frustrating for transfers to have a course that clearly fits a gen-ed course at home institution not count at this school.
5. High Impact Practices (HIPs)

**Background:** A great deal of critical learning occurs outside of the traditional lecture hall or classroom. Some “high impact practices” are conducted for credit, such as independent research papers or projects guided by faculty mentors. Also of great value are non-credit bearing or “co-curricular” HIPs, such as internships in one’s anticipated career field, volunteer work, or life experiences that directly lead to attainment of various SLOs. Finally, national data indicates that HIPs contribute strongly to student retention, an increased graduation rate, and career success.

**Goal:** *To formalize student participation in high impact practices such as co-curricular practices and engaged learning opportunities.*

**Possible Solutions:**

5.1. Place HIPs on transcripts or in an e-portfolio  
5.2. Add a co-curricular requirement for graduation  
5.3. Expand credit-bearing course offerings in experiential learning  
5.4. Allow HIPs to document SLO achievement

### High Impact Practices (n = 64)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Place HIPs on transcripts or in an e-portfolio</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Add a co-curricular requirement for graduation</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Expand courses in experiential learning</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4. Allow HIPs to document SLO achievement</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average worksheet scores for each possible solution. A score of 1.0 = Unacceptable; 2.0 = Weak; 3.0 = Moderate; 4.0 = Strong.
Alumni Comments

General Comments/Questions

- Demonstrated HIP’s will look good on student’s resume.
- Setting expectations and communications are essential to success.

Current Student Comments

5.1

- Incumbent on student? (x3)
- Simply listing HIPs on transcripts is weak-using it on e-portfolio would be stronger.

General Comments/Questions

- Get students involved! (oh cruel irony)
- Increase communication and awareness on why HIPs are important and how they can help students succeed.

Faculty Comments

5.2

- If we require a summer internship at the end of the junior year, how are we going to ensure that there are enough of such positions for every student to satisfy that requirement? (x2)
- This is a great idea, and is part of why I suggested a curricular component. However, requiring this many disadvantage transfer students and students whose lives do not afford time for this opportunity.
- Include student teaching in engaged learning.
- Also geographical limitation.
- This would be a huge problem for certain segments of the student population.
- How is this accomplished? What counts? (x2)
- Great idea, but what about people with families and jobs?

5.3

- I don’t know what this means.
- How do we establish authenticity/originality and uniformity in grading of experiential learning?
- Experiential learning and engaged learning need to be institutionally defined so that we are all on the same page about what counts here. Given a clear understanding and strategies for purpose-level expansion of credit bearing courses for experiential learning, I’m all for it.

5.4

- How would assessment work?
General Comments/Questions

- How are we going to ensure SLO conformity if we decide to adopt it?
- Easiest approach to implement smaller changes in gen ed education and larger changes in pedagogy.
- They need to reach more than the “talented tenth”.
- Can relevant experience be counted towards HIP?
- Outside organizations are looking for this experience.
- Some students may not like this as a requirement- we have to open a dialogue with them.
- I have had some concern for some time that we tend to talk about HIPs and engaged learning student engagement at the same time.
- I’m strongly supportive of documenting and validating engaged activities such as research, community-based learning, internships, cooperatives, but I don’t want other HIPs on the same level.
- They need to reach more than the “talented truth”
- Make HIPs replace gen ed requirement. Be aware of non-traditional students may not be able to do all these things.
- Will we have enough offerings to ensure everyone can fulfill this requirement? How will it be assessed?

Staff Comments

5.1

- How is this connected to gen-ed?
- Prefer e-portfolio for this point.
- This seems a bit subjective in nature. Would need to make sure it was administered fairly across the entire institution.
- Students can talk about HIPs on resume

5.2

- I understand the importance, but if it’s in major than why require it in a gen-ed?
- As long as existing coursework is considered progress that already required an internship, clinical, or practicum.
- NIU would need to market co-curricular options strongly to students if co-curricular options are required.
- I’m not sure about this because it might have significant implications to the university.
- Another degree requirement? I can hear the students say “really?”
- Implications on resources and staffing are huge.
- How do we allow for students working full time; those with extra-curricular commitments that are binding?

5.3

- Push internships and give credit for them in major- internship or study abroad- and allow s/u grading.

5.4
• How will it be documented? (x3)
• 5.2 must be further integrated into 5.4 and the SLO’s.

General Comments/Questions

• This is common sense and very much needed at NIU in a meaningful basis.
• This is great and should be measured and advertised as major thing done by our institution. (x2)
• I would very much like to see that all freshman be required to participate in 1-2 HIPs in the first semester and perhaps 3 by the end of their first year- include UNIV 101, TLC’s, LLC’s, Research Rookies, etc.
• This would help make gen-eds more flexible.
• Could life experiences including military service, work, or other relevant experiences be incorporated into the HIP practices?
• Very concerned of how these new opportunities may impact prospective students.
• Flexible to all college/depts./programs. (x2)
• Higher level of learning→ analysis and synthesis required.
• Make sure that students who change majors or are transfers have time to do HIP without attending more time here.
• Why wouldn’t you do more of the things that are proven to be most successful at supporting students’ lives after NIU?
• How is this connected to general education?
• I understand the importance- but for 5.2 if it’s in the major, why require this in a gen ed.