

Recommendation 3

3.3.2: The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it has the institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP in its current version.

Onsite Committee's Concerns

“Over the course of the visit, the discussions with students, faculty, and staff demonstrated a clear enthusiasm and excitement about the plan and its possibilities. The VCU community is proud of the success of its previous QEP and is excited about achieving further success. The institution has crafted a multi-dimensional plan that spans across the institution and addresses some of the most challenging issues in higher education: general education, advising, online learning, and career development. However, details regarding the implementation of the plan do not seem to be fully decided and articulated.

A consistent theme emerging from the conversations during the onsite visit was a lack of clarity about the overall process and plan that would be used to implement the goals in the QEP. While members of the campus who were interviewed could speak to broad concepts, and could cite the four pillars when probed, they were not familiar with specific implementation details beyond their particular connection to the QEP. There was uncertainty about how decision-making will work when the QEP is fully implemented, and who will have authority and oversight over resource management and other key decisions.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was further concerned about the breadth of the plan and the ability of the Institution to be successful given this breadth. The institution would benefit from having a renewed look at the plan's scope and coordination. A more coordinated leadership and organizational structure could better support the success of the plan. As currently described, the organizational structure of the plan's leadership involves three different reporting units in the Provost's Office: the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success (who is also one of the QEP co-directors); the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs; and the Vice Provost for Student Affairs. This reporting structure, in relation to the QEP leadership, was not well explained by those interviewed, and it was not clear who would have ultimately sufficient authority to lead this plan and manage the resources dedicated to it.

The financial resources as described in the proposed budget (p. 63) and the additional budget documentation provided by VCU do not appear to be sufficient to achieve the goals of the project. For example, the budget for expanded professional development for all advisors is \$3,000, an amount which seems inadequate as professional development will be a key element to the success of revising its academic advising system. While it was assumed by some interviewed that other funding sources for advising professional development likely existed, there was no direct knowledge, discussion, or documentation of such funds. Further, there are no funds dedicated to course redesign for the proposed Tier II restructuring. If new courses are to be developed or existing courses redesigned, some consideration to faculty time for curriculum development might be considered.”

Response

The SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Committee provided valuable feedback for the improvement of the VCU Quality Enhancement Plan. Recommendation 3 from the Committee covers four key areas related to institutional capacity: a) scope and rationale, b) implementation plan, c) oversight and roles, and d) financial resources. VCU's response is organized accordingly.

A. Scope and Rationale

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was concerned about the "breadth of the plan" and recommended a "renewed look at the plan's scope." The initial VCU QEP was university-wide, spanned four "pillars"¹ to support a generalizable education, and was intended to benefit undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The refined focus distills and unites the essence of two pillars, "Discovering Connections" (Pillar I) and "Contributing to a Networked World" (Pillar II), and aligns directly with VCU's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, Theme I, Goal IB.

Theme I	Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high-quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global environment.
Goal IB	Provide students a quality education through rigorous and innovative academic programs that support and prepare students for civic engagement and careers in a 21st-century global environment.

The revised QEP retains the emphasis on building a culture of generalizable education and is narrowed considerably to revitalize the general education of undergraduate students.² A *generalizable education*, VCU submits, is education that has substantial and lasting impact beyond any particular course, major or degree. General education at VCU will be redesigned intentionally around emergent paradigms in 21st century learning that prepare students to live and work in a connected, global environment. It will also be redesigned inclusively, with faculty representation from all undergraduate schools and colleges.

In the revised QEP, the institutional and student learning goals are:

Institutional Goal

- Establish a redesigned university-wide general education program that incorporates emergent 21st century connected learning experiences³

¹ Pillar I Discovering Connections: Tier II of the VCU Core Curriculum; Pillar II Contributing to a Networked World: Digital Engagement; Pillar III Mapping Your Learning Journey: Academic Advising; Pillar IV Finding Your Vocation: Career Planning and Professional Development.

² The VCU undergraduate population of 23,657 is 76% of the total student population of 31,288.

³ For an overview of "connected learning" and research methodologies associated with this paradigm, see Kumpulainen, K. and Sefton-Green, J., "What Is Connected Learning and How to Research It?", *International Journal of Learning and Media*, MIT Press, Spring 2012 (4:2), pp. 7-18. Note that the emergent paradigm of "connected learning" is a specific, recent area of educational research and practice. The 2004 Core Education Program document (Appendix 1, below) uses the phrase "connected learning" in a general sense, not in the much more specific sense in which it is used in this QEP.

Student Learning Goals

- Students are integrative thinkers
- Students are digitally fluent

VCU wants its undergraduates to have a general education curriculum that offers opportunities to explore the rich variety of the university's programs and that will conduce to integrative thinking in an environment of curricular innovation and digital engagement. At the same time, the revised QEP addresses concerns within VCU and observed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee that both the terminology around and the structure of the general education program need to be clarified.

Current Structure of VCU's General Education Curriculum. The momentum of the 2004 QEP and the impetus of the earlier strategic plan, VCU 2020, led to vigorous conversations and work to create a learning-centered undergraduate experience, one part of which was the redesign of the thirty credit hour general education program. What emerged in 2007 was a core of twenty-one general education credit hours with an additional minimum of nine credit hours determined by individual academic units that offer undergraduate degree programs.⁴ This core of twenty-one became known as the VCU Core Education Program. (The full document entitled "VCU Core Education Program: A Shared Search for Meaning" is in Attachment 1. The document sets forth the alignment with the previous strategic plan, the structure of the curriculum, the learning competencies to be addressed, and the program's administrative structure.) The program is summarized below.

The core of twenty-one credit hours is drawn from two tiers of courses:

Structure of VCU Core Education Program		
Tier	Curriculum Area	Required Semester Credit Hours
I	Focused Inquiry courses (2); a two-semester sequence, with a common theme (UNIV 111, UNIV 112)	6
II	Research and academic writing course ⁵ (UNIV 200)	3
	Quantitative literacy course	3-4
	Natural/physical sciences course	3-4
	Social/behavioral sciences course	3-4
	Humanities/fine arts course	3
	Core Total	21-24

The core of twenty-one credit hours commences with a two-semester six credit hour foundational sequence (Tier I) for all incoming freshman students, followed by the additional fifteen credit hours of approved core courses (Tier II). The two-semester six credit hour

⁴ More of the history of the general education program's development is described in VCU's response to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee's Suggestion 4. Note that three Tier II areas include courses that can be taken for three or four credit hours, with the potential for a twenty-four credit Core.

⁵ The research and academic writing course is the third "focused inquiry" course – UNIV 200. The first two in the series are the two-semester Focused Inquiry sequence in Tier I – UNIV 111, UNIV 112.

foundational sequence is taught by faculty in the University College and is to be completed by students by the end of the first year.⁶

In order to be approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC)⁷ as a Tier I or Tier II course, the course must provide students with experiences to develop and practice at least three of the following six competencies⁸:

- Writing Proficiency
- Oral Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Information Fluency
- Ethical and Civic Responsibility
- Quantitative Literacy

The schools/colleges that grant undergraduate degrees have accepted the twenty-one credit hour Core as partial fulfillment of the thirty credit hour general education requirement. To complete the remaining minimum nine credit hours of general education, the student's choices are from courses designated by the major department. There are 64 baccalaureate majors at VCU in ten schools/colleges. In some instances, the courses designated by the major department are courses within the major discipline. For example, the BFA in Dance and Choreography in the School of the Arts requires three three-credit hour dance courses:

- DANC 103 Survey of Dance History (Ballet)
- DANC 104 Survey of Dance History (Modern Dance), and
- DANC 313 Dance in World Cultures or DANC 413 African American Presence in American Dance

In other instances, the courses designated by the major department are not from within the discipline. For example, the B.S. in Computer Engineering requires these four courses:

- CHEM 101 General Chemistry
- CHEZ 101 General Chemistry I Laboratory I
- ECON 205 The Economics of Product Delivery and Markets, and
- SPCH 321 Speech for Business and the Professions

⁶ The University College (UC) is a direct result of the 2004 QEP that focused on student engagement. Three required courses in the VCU Core Education Program are now taught almost exclusively by UC faculty—UNIV 111, UNIV 112, and UNIV 200, the latter brought into the UNIV curriculum in 2009 and now called “Inquiry and the Craft of Argument.” Within UC, there are centralized services for all first-time freshmen, including academic advising, tutoring, writing assistance, supplemental instruction services, and other programs and courses introducing students to the demands of a university education.

⁷ The approval process is currently three steps: first to the curriculum committee in faculty member's department, then to the University College Academic Committee, and then to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

⁸ Some curricular information on the VCU website suggests a seventh competency in collaborative work, a competency listed in the initial QEP VCU submitted to SACSCOC. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee noted this inconsistency. The issue will become moot as we move toward revising the VCU general education curriculum.

The general education courses designated by the student's major department complete the VCU general education program (core of twenty-one plus the minimum of nine designated by the major department).

VCU's Core Education Program also has a capstone experience requirement that does not count toward the thirty credit hour general education requirement. The capstone experience may take the form of a service-learning project, a research project, a study abroad program, a senior thesis paper, a practical internship, or a capstone course. In VCU vernacular, the required capstone experience is referred to as Tier III of the Core because it is a "common" type of concluding experience, undertaken in the senior year, through which students connect their learning from the Core Education Program with a practical application in their major.

The structure and the language used to describe VCU's general education curriculum contribute to confusion among VCU constituents about the relationship between the "core" and "general education." Faculty teaching courses in the core of the general education program in spring 2013 were surveyed to gauge their understanding of the relationship between general education and the core. Of the 56 respondents, 25% did not know or did not think that any of the classes they were teaching were in the core. More favorably, only about 8% thought that the core was separate from general education. Still, there should be no confusion on this point. As noted by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee, there are also some inconsistencies between VCU publications in the terminology and descriptions of general education at VCU that need to be addressed. (See VCU response to Suggestion 4.)

The 2004 vision for building out Tier II, which would obviate the need for the contribution of nine hours by the individual academic units, was not realized, in part due to the economic downturn in 2008. The original vision of small classes with shared learning experiences in a Tier II that uniformly reinforced the competencies introduced in Tier I was not feasible. While the general education curriculum that eventually came into being (Core plus academic-unit-based) is workable and in some respects laudable, the resulting structure of the general education curriculum has raised some lingering practical and intellectual concerns for students, faculty, and administration. For example, for first-time freshmen who change majors after the fourth or fifth semester, complications can arise if three or more of the nine credit hours do not meet the requirements of the major program into which the student is transferring. This situation can impede progress toward graduation because the students need additional credit hours to satisfy the general education requirement. While the data⁹ we have suggest that very few students have been harmed in this way, best practice would be to minimize or eliminate potential obstacles where possible. And of course we do not know whether students have been discouraged from switching majors because of this structural issue. We do know that students are excluded from some courses that satisfy general education requirements because they are not majors in that discipline. As a result, students do not have the opportunity to be exposed to all of the academic disciplines when selecting or affirming their choices of majors, nor do they have access to the full variety of VCU's intellectual breadth at the undergraduate level. Such exclusion works against the goal of providing our undergraduates with the fullest possible scope of learning experiences in support of integrative thinking. This QEP addresses and rectifies these lingering concerns.

⁹ A data analysis of first time freshman who started at VCU in 2000 and graduated from VCU (19,875 students) shows that the mean number of credit hours for grade point average at the time of graduation for students with no change of major is 124. The mean number of credit hours for grade point average at the time of graduation for students with one change of major is 126 and for two changes of major is 130 credit hours (or the equivalent of two three-credit hour courses more than no change in major).

As noted in VCU's initial 2014 QEP submission, a major accomplishment of the 2004 QEP was an intensive first-year experience for incoming freshmen. VCU's first-year retention rate rose from 83 percent to 87 percent over a five-year period following these changes. While similar rates of progress were achieved in second- and third-year retention, the current absolute levels still lag considerably at 74.6 percent and 69.6 percent, respectively. There is considerable concern over these lagging rates, especially because they form a *de facto* ceiling on progress in raising graduation rates. These institutional outputs, while they are not directly tied to student learning, also led to a decision to re-examine the core curriculum, particularly Tier II of general education, the point at which students transition into work within various disciplines and their forms of inquiry.

VCU believes it is critical to address the structure and shared purpose of general education and proposes to make this effort the centerpiece of its revised QEP. The VCU thirty hour general education curriculum has not been re-envisioned since 2007. Through the 2014 QEP, faculty will be engaged to develop and implement a remedy to the structural issues. Although this process will begin with a focus on Tier II and the minimum of nine credit hours that are defined in the major by the undergraduate units, it will not stop there; its greater goals are driven by the learning goals of integrative thinking and digital fluency by means of emergent learning paradigms.

Emergent Paradigms in 21st Century Learning. Equally important to addressing the structural issues in general education is VCU's intention to enhance students' learning by emphasizing learning goals in integrative thinking and in digital fluency. VCU's selection of these goals aligns with the leadership on learning for the 21st century provided by organizations such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Lumina Foundation, the Connected Learning Alliance, and the Teagle Foundation. This re-engagement with 21st century learning is where we unite the "Discovering Connections" (Pillar I) and "Contributing to a Networked World" (Pillar II) from the initial QEP submission. The framework for the student learning goals is integrative thinking on a digital platform.

In this refined QEP, we retain the intention to re-design the Tier II core curriculum to include pathways to discovery and integrative thinking not limited to the "competency" model in the Core Education Program. The General Education Task Force will be charged with the work of developing these new pathways over the first year of its work, including pilot versions of courses that will model possibilities for achieving the learning goals of this QEP.

As one example, pilot courses could be structured around "forms of inquiry" that address intellectual histories and grand challenges unique to specific disciplines. A general education program offers students a vital opportunity to frame their growing intellectual competence within more complex and specific forms of inquiry, while simultaneously situating those specific forms of inquiry within the larger context of human intellectual endeavor. By asking faculty teams within each discipline to design these courses, the intent would be to engage faculty in this same intellectually rewarding pursuit. And by asking students to produce and share work reflecting their deeper learning both within and among their general education courses, the intent would be to provide rich and exciting "connected learning" opportunities for integrative thinking within and among the disciplines. This is but a single example of the kinds of courses the General Education Task Force might imagine as it considers the learning goals outlined in this QEP.

For digital fluency, a vital element of the emerging learning paradigms we seek to engage with this QEP, VCU's intent is for undergraduate students to learn how to use technologies for working in a digital ecology of texts, audiences, networks, and exigencies. VCU recognizes the rapidly changing, globally connected world and seeks to prepare students for full and effective participation in digitally mediated environments. New media literacies and Internet-based participatory cultures are increasingly important as avenues for creative, integrative learning. The benefits of digital fluency support integrative thinking—specifically, the potential to make new syntheses and forge new connections with audiences both internal and external to the university.

Students will have opportunities to explore and use emerging forms of Web-based scholarly and professional communication. Students must be not simply Web users but also Web makers — “systems administrators” of their own increasingly complex digital lives. Full, creative discovery and use of personal learning networks, indeed personal cyber-infrastructures (Campbell, 2009), will equip them for effective citizenship in a networked world. Digital affordances such as blogs, e-portfolios and related curatorial spaces for learning and reflection, personal cyber-infrastructures, and “a domain of one’s own” can provide vital integrative opportunities for students throughout the university (see Yancey, McElroy, & Powers, 2013; Campbell, 2009; Groom et al., 2013). While not every student participates in online or digital culture to the same degree, it is crucially important that students be empowered to learn in this new medium as well as to participate within it effectively, in personally satisfying and civically responsible ways (see Jenkins, 2009).

Institutional and Student Learning Goals. Through the 2014 QEP, the general education program will be redesigned into a mutually agreed upon thirty credit hour structure that represents the variety of academic offerings at VCU and will be intentionally enhanced to develop the integrative thinking and digital fluency of VCU's undergraduate students. To become integrative thinkers and digitally fluent is essential for a truly generalizable education, with substantial and lasting impact beyond any course, major or degree.

As noted, the institutional and student learning goals are:

Institutional Goal

- Establish a redesigned university-wide general education program that incorporates emergent 21st century connected learning experiences

Student Learning Goals

- Students are integrative thinkers
- Students are digitally fluent

This commitment to re-envision general education is also a key step in rectifying the situation observed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee: that VCU faculty, staff, and students were confused about the current general education curriculum (including the core). There are eight schools and two colleges at VCU with bachelor degree programs.¹⁰ All of the deans of these units are being asked to participate in the re-envisioning of general education, and the student

¹⁰ The eight schools with bachelor degree programs are the schools of Allied Health Professions, Art, Business, Dentistry, Engineering, Life Sciences, Nursing, and Social Work. The two colleges with bachelor degree programs are the College of Humanities and Sciences and the University College.

learning goals reflect the essence of two pillars in the first version of this QEP: “Discovering Connections” (Pillar I) and “Contributing to a Networked World” (Pillar II).

In Recommendation 4, VCU sets forth the plan to assess the achievement of these goals.

B. Implementation Plan

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee noted a “lack of clarity about the overall process and plan that would be used to implement the goals in the QEP.” The implementation plan for the revised QEP is grouped into three major initiatives to support the achievement of the QEP’s institutional and student learning goals. (The QEP Implementation Timeline is Attachment 2.) The strategies are:

- Curricular Innovation
- Pathways to Participation
- Digital Engagement

Curricular Innovation. As a necessary starting point, VCU will build the foundation for curricular change by energizing a university-wide conversation about a distinctive, innovative, effective general education curriculum supporting the institutional and student learning goals. Effective curricular change must begin with a sense of shared mission and purpose, with intellectual stimulation, and with conspicuous institutional commitment to faculty development focused first on *thinking* and only then on *deliverables*. To that end, there will be the following key programmatic and faculty development initiatives:

- General Education Task Force
- Grand Challenges and Wicked Problems Series
- University Seminar on General Education
- Curricular Innovation and Digital Engagement Faculty Workshops and Learning Communities, with additional support and incentives for faculty participation
- Postdoctoral Fellowships in Learning Innovation to support work in both general education and digital engagement
- Annual “Excellence in Connected Learning” award to reward and recognize an exemplary faculty member’s work in general education curricular innovation and digital engagement

A General Education Task Force of faculty representatives will be convened in October 2014 by the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success, who is also the QEP Executive Director. The majority of the Task Force membership will be faculty – recruited through recommendations from the deans and self-nominations – from the ten schools and colleges that offer undergraduate degrees at VCU. The General Education Task Force will convene monthly, October through May. The Task Force will organize its work, including how it will elicit, collect, and synthesize faculty input, with initial recommendations for the revision of general education curriculum proposed in May 2015. These recommendations will include specific strategies for curricular revision in support of this QEP’s goals for student learning. Ongoing meetings of the General Education Task Force will be convened and facilitated by the QEP Co-Directors, who will also arrange for all necessary staff and administrative support for the work of this Task Force. The work of the Task Force will yield a proposal that covers structure, curricular governance, and administration for the re-envisioned general education curriculum supporting the learning goals of this QEP. The Task Force also will advise on other programmatic

initiatives, such as the Grand Challenges and Wicked Problems series, as well as other concerns related to the ongoing plan (e.g., transfer students, new student programs related to general education, etc.).

An annual “Grand Challenges and Wicked Problems” themed series of events will model integrative thinking across multiple disciplines as well as showcase the work of students as integrative thinkers across their general education classes. Guest speakers, symposia, and digital engagement activities (initially but not exclusively through the Rampages.us WordPress affordance, see below) will be key elements in each year’s programming. For the first year, which will begin in the fall of 2015, the General Education Task Force will have primary programmatic responsibility; in later years as the series becomes part of the institution’s ongoing culture, an advisory group will assume responsibility. We envision this series will also stimulate further curricular innovation, including inter- and transdisciplinary courses bringing multiple disciplines together to address a grand challenge or wicked problem. During this initial year and in following years as well, the systems-oriented, integrative nature of “grand challenges and wicked problems” will stimulate, model, and provide opportunities for integrative learning among VCU undergraduates in particular. Digital engagement/connected learning opportunities on Rampages.us as well as other open web-based platforms will also constitute powerful avenues for participation by the Richmond community as well as a potentially global audience. As with VCU’s first connectivist Massive Open Online Course (cMOOC), our digital engagement pilot of UNIV 200 during the summer of 2014 (see the website at <http://thoughtvectors.net>), open, connected-learning digital engagement will help showcase student work and thus stimulate greater self-directed, integrative learning in the context of real audiences beyond the boundaries of classroom and courses, even beyond the boundaries of the institution itself. Some of the themed events will feature panels of undergraduate students discussing their research and innovation within inter- or transdisciplinary frameworks. Some events will ask undergraduates to interact with faculty mentors and community leaders to address questions emerging from “grand challenges and wicked problems.”

A summer University Seminar on General Education will support up to twenty-five faculty for a week of intensive study, reflection, and planning to build leadership and facilitate an ongoing conversation around general education at VCU. The seminar will also emphasize integrative thinking within a connected learning paradigm, and will thus both model and advance the goals of this QEP. This seminar will meet each summer for one week. The curriculum will focus on reflection and cross-disciplinary engagement to renew the intellectual passion that led faculty into their professional lives in the first place, to create an environment in which the heart of the university, its faculty, can connect to and learn from each other. Each of the annual cohorts of this seminar will reconvene in mid-spring of the following year for an opportunity to review their development as faculty and curricular innovators over the previous year, especially in the light of general education. Seminar participants may be chosen in a number of ways, depending on the General Education Task Force recommendations: deans’ nominations, applications, direct recruitment, etc. The General Education Task Force will be responsible for overseeing this program. The Learning Innovation Center, under the executive leadership of the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success, will be responsible for designing and delivering the program itself, in collaboration with the General Education Task Force as well as other university leadership and stakeholders. The first of these University Seminars on General Education will be held in the summer of 2015.

Other faculty development opportunities, including faculty workshops and learning communities¹¹ to stimulate innovative curricular thinking within growing fluency in learner-centered digital engagement, will be designed and implemented by the Learning Innovation Center. These faculty development opportunities build on the strengths of the Center for Teaching Excellence as well as Online Academic Programs at VCU, two organizations now integrated into a comprehensive Learning Innovation Center. Two specific fellowship opportunities will expand the Learning Innovation Center's capacity for agile, inventive, and creative leadership in faculty development. One is a General Education Fellows program, a release-time opportunity for two VCU faculty to be liaisons between the Learning Innovation Center and the University's academic units. In addition, the Postdoctoral Learning Innovation Fellowships, beginning in 2015-2016, will bring freshly-minted Ph.D.'s (or other recent terminal degree earners) into the VCU academic community as catalysts and advocates of fresh ideas and new perspectives. These postdocs will be an important opportunity for ongoing innovation and institutional renewal.

The expectation across all these programs for faculty is that faculty will contribute new or redesigned courses that a) stimulate and support students' integrative thinking and b) incorporate the use of digital technologies aimed at learner-centered digital engagement.

Pathways to Participation. To expand the participation of all undergraduate academic units in general education and to ensure clarity on both the general education requirements and opportunities for students, the QEP has three initiatives with which to start the process, with others to follow based on the ongoing work of the General Education Task Force:

- Pilot general education courses (the example of "Forms of Inquiry" is discussed above, but this is only one example of the type of course that might be considered)
- Faculty Incentives for Innovative Courses
- Student Supports Alignment

In the general education redesign, the Tier II course work will guide students in their second year toward an integration of learning and exploration that also points toward the selection and affirmation of majors and shaping of postgraduate aspirations. Our goal is that by the end of this QEP's fifth year, 75% of Tier II of the general education curriculum will consist of new or redesigned courses supporting the learning goals of the QEP.

Faculty incentives for the development of innovative new courses, or the redesign of existing courses, in Tier II will be offered. While curricular innovation can be fostered and encouraged by senior academic leadership, VCU will stimulate and support the ideation, planning, and implementation of a new general education curriculum from the "bottom up" primarily. An incentive structure will be created to support the development of innovative courses such as, for example, the "forms of inquiry" courses outlined above. These incentives will include course releases, participation stipends for professional development, recognition via the Excellence in Connected Learning award, etc. as described above.

¹¹ A Faculty Learning Community is a cross-disciplinary group of 6–10 faculty who engage in an active, collaborative exploration of a teaching and learning issue. Participants immerse themselves in a prolonged exploration of an issue as "expert" learners in an attempt to (1) better understand the issue, (2) make modifications to their teaching practice based on what they have learned and (3) promote better teaching and learning across the institution by sharing what they have learned with a wider audience.

Student supports will need to be aligned with these efforts. Faculty and students must understand and have access to current and consistent descriptions of the general education curriculum. VCU will conduct an institutional review and alignment of the information published in print and online. Coordination with academic advising services is critical to ensure that curricular developments and changes in general education are communicated to the university's advisers.¹² Finally, as logistical support for the new general education curriculum as well as for curricular innovation generally, VCU will purchase and implement new software to facilitate the submission, review, and approval of new courses and for managing the publication of the general education program in the university's catalog.

Digital Engagement. Our third implementation strategy is aimed at increasing digital fluency and leveraging digital engagement to stimulate and support learner-centered integrative thinking.¹³ The Learning Innovation Center in consultation with general education faculty will develop integrative "connected learning e-portfolio" platforms to support students and faculty, with a particular focus in this QEP on learner-initiated connections among general education courses. Vice Provost Campbell's work as a master instructor within the Connected Courses Initiative, a Connected Learning program sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation's Digital Media and Learning Research Hub, will provide important leadership for this effort. The "open education" movement, an area of growing importance in the international discussion around higher education, will be also be a key influence in this regard (Weller, 2013). Clay Shirky (2008) has noted that "we are in the middle of the largest increase in expressive capability in the history of the human race." VCU is committed to providing distinctive, high-engagement opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in this e-learning revolution.

The primary web platform established for integrative thinking and digital fluency is VCU's Rampages.us WordPress platform. This platform provides a rich-media content management environment combining blogs with flexible, extensible website construction that can also support a variety of embedded and syndicated content from other social media such as Flickr, Twitter, and wikis—indeed, anything that generates an RSS feed. Analytic affordances such as the Twitter TAGSExplorer developed by Martin Hawksey of the UK's Open University, used within the UNIV 200 digital engagement pilot in the Summer 2014 term, can also be embedded with a WordPress platform. (As an example, see <http://thoughtvectors.net/twitter-explorer/>.) Such affordances, together with site statistics provided by the WordPress "Jetpack" plugin as well as other social network analytics engines such as Google Analytics and NodeXL, will not only empower institutional assessment of student work and its impact, but also, and even more importantly, be available to students themselves as self-assessment affordances. Students will be empowered to track and thus accelerate their own growing influence as knowledge creators and Web makers, not just Web users.

As noted above, VCU's Learning Innovation Center will offer varied and comprehensive development opportunities to faculty, staff, and students to further develop their digital fluency.

¹² VCU has a separately funded advising initiative, aligned with the VCU strategic plan Quest for Distinction and part of the original QEP, that will be led and implemented by the Associate Vice Provost for University Undergraduate Advising Services.

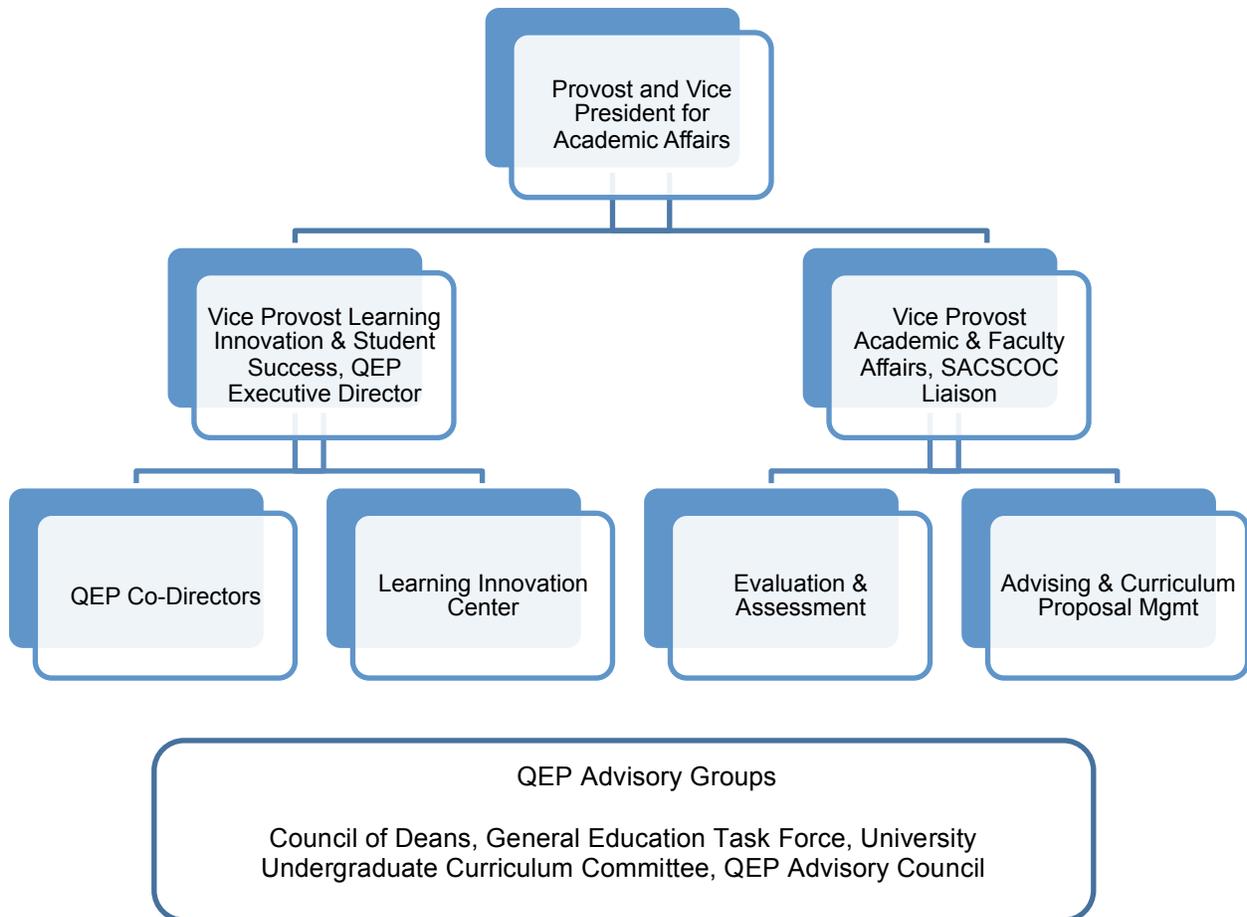
¹³ VCU's online initiative, originally established in 2012, is under the leadership of Dr. Gardner Campbell, Vice Provost of Learning Innovation and Student Success, as well as Dr. Jon Becker, Director of Online Academic Programs and Learning Innovation. Online Academic Programs and the former Center for Teaching Excellence are in the process of becoming a single Learning Innovation Center with the mission of "connected learning for a networked world." This new entity emphasizes faculty development, student engagement, communities of practice, and technology-enhanced active learning (TEAL), and will play a central role in the institutional and student learning goals of this QEP.

The Learning Center emphasizes faculty development, student engagement, communities of practice, and technology enhanced active learning within its mission of “connected learning for a networked world.” These development opportunities, including participation in conferences such as the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative and the New Media Consortium, will develop campus-wide leadership in the effective integration of digital technologies in generalizable education, integration that involves the use of technology to discover, construct, and share knowledge, including knowledge represented by creative expressivity and performance emerging from VCU’s nationally prominent School of the Arts.

C. Oversight and Roles

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was concerned that “it was not clear who would have ultimately sufficient authority to lead this plan and manage the resources dedicated to it” and recommended a “more coordinated leadership and organizational structure.” This observation and the revised QEP led to a reconsideration of the organizational structure and roles to support the initiative.

The organizational structure of the revised QEP is depicted in this chart:



Provost. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will have ultimate authority to ensure that the QEP is resourced properly and has institutional support. VCU's Interim Provost is John Wiencek, Ph.D., previously VCU's Senior Vice Provost for Administration and Strategic Initiatives.

Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success. Gardner Campbell, Ph.D. is the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success (VP-LISS) and the Executive Director for the QEP. Vice Provost Campbell will be responsible for ensuring that the plan is executed, controlling the budget and resources, overseeing the work of the two QEP Co-Directors and the Learning Innovation Center, and coordinating with the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs. In addition, the University College reports to the VP-LISS. Vice Provost Campbell will lead the re-envisioning of VCU undergraduate general education, working closely with the Council of Deans and the General Education Task Force.

QEP Co-Directors. The two QEP Co-Directors, Dr. Danielle Dick and Prof. Jeff South, both of whom are tenured faculty, will have implementation responsibilities for the QEP. The co-directors will facilitate and ensure support of the work of the four advisory groups, engage in on-going communications with faculty and students, and coordinate efforts with the Learning Innovation Center and the Evaluation Team. The co-directors will have reassigned time from their normally assigned courses/projects and a summer stipend to work on the QEP.

Learning Innovation Center. As noted above, the VCU Learning Innovation Center, formerly the Center for Teaching Excellence, has as its mission "connected learning for a networked world." To accomplish that mission, the Learning Innovation Center includes four main program areas: Faculty Development, Student Engagement, Communities of Practice, and Technology-Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL). The Center's leadership is under the executive direction of the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Success / QEP Executive Director. The distinctive, intertwined program areas of the Learning Innovation Center will be responsible for the development and delivery of varied and comprehensive programming in curricular innovation, integrative thinking, and digital technologies.

Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs (VP-AFA). Laura Moriarty, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, VCU's SACSCOC Liaison, and co-chair of the QEP Advisory Council, will oversee the QEP Evaluation Team and the units responsible for advising services and curriculum management/approval processes. The work of the Evaluation Team will be coordinated by a direct report, Linda Birtley, Ph.D., Special Assistant. Vice Provost Moriarty will ensure coordination of changes in general education with advising services through her direct report Seth Sykes, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for University Academic Advising Services. Dr. Sykes will be responsible for reviewing proposed changes to the curriculum for potential ramifications on student advising services and for transmitting changes in general education programming to the university's advisers. James Wiznerowicz, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the Vice Provost, will ensure that changes to general education are synced with the university's print and online publications. Dr. Wiznerowicz also serves as chair of the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC), one of the QEP advisory groups, and will oversee the transition to new catalog management and curriculum management/approval software systems.

QEP Evaluation Team. The Evaluation Team, reporting to the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, consists of five faculty members with expertise in student learning outcomes assessment and program evaluation. The Evaluation Team will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the revised QEP and its evaluation, including the review and

communication of evaluation and assessment results to the QEP Advisory Council and the QEP Executive Director and Co-Directors. The members are Linda Birtley, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs; Henry Clark, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean, School of Education; Kathleen Ingram, J.D., Ph.D., Assistant Dean, College of Humanities and Sciences; Scott Oates, Ph.D., Director, Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness; Carol Scotese, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Economics, School of Business. The work of the Evaluation Team will be coordinated by Dr. Birtley, who reports directly to Vice Provost Moriarty. The Evaluation Team will be supported by members of the assessment office, under the direction of Dr. Scott Oates. These two individuals, Ms. Janice Babb and Ms. Connie Peyton, possess expertise in student learning outcomes assessment and survey administration and analysis.

Council of Deans. The Council of Deans will provide implementation guidance and ongoing communications support at their bi-monthly meetings chaired by the Provost. The deans will also nominate faculty to serve on the General Education Task Force and provide in-kind support for their faculties' participation on the Task Force.

General Education Task Force. The General Education Task Force, under the executive direction of the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success / QEP Executive Director, will be charged with overseeing the revisions to general education. The Task Force, comprising primarily faculty from the ten schools and colleges that have undergraduate programs, will engage in the re-envisioning of general education at VCU. The work of the Task Force will yield a proposal that covers the structure, curricular governance, administration, communication plan, and implementation timeline for the redesigned general education curriculum. The Task Force will also advise on other programmatic initiatives, such as the Grand Challenges and Wicked Problems series, the annual summer University Seminar on General Education, the pilot courses to support the QEP student learning goals, as well as other concerns related to the ongoing plan.

University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC) is responsible for course and program issues that affect undergraduate instructional programs of the university. The UUCC meets monthly during the academic year and reviews, approves, and denies proposals for new courses and programs, as well as changes in existing programs. This includes changes in modalities. Accordingly, proposals for new or modifications of existing courses and programs that emerge from the revised QEP will be reviewed and approved or denied by the UUCC.

QEP Advisory Council. The QEP Advisory Council, an outgrowth of the Steering Committee responsible for overseeing the initial QEP's development over the last two years, is co-chaired by Vice Provost Laura Moriarty and Vice Provost Gardner Campbell, the QEP Executive Director. The QEP Advisory Council, comprising students, faculty, and administrators, will continue to represent key constituencies in the QEP process and provide advice and communications support during implementation. The Advisory Council will be convened bi-annually by the co-chairs, unless additional special meetings are called.

D. Financial Resources

The SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Committee stated that the "financial resources as described in the proposed budget ... and the additional budget documentation provided by VCU do not appear to be sufficient to achieve the goals of the project." The resource commitment for the revised QEP is presented below.

QEP Budget Summary

	<u>FY15 (Year 1)</u>			<u>FY16 (Year 2)</u>	
	<u>Base Budget</u>	<u>Additional Allocation</u>	<u>Permanent Budget</u>	<u>Additional Allocation</u>	<u>Permanent Budget</u>
Curricular Innovation	300,000	168,025	468,025	120,680	588,705
Pathways to Participation	-	20,000	20,000	2,500	22,500
Digital Engagement	-	56,975	56,975	-	56,975
Evaluation	373,550	-	373,550	26,820	400,370
Leadership/Administration	271,088	5,000	276,088	-	276,088
Total	944,638	250,000	1,194,638	150,000	1,344,638

The QEP budget consists of base and new budget allocations. In FY 2015 (Year 1), the total base budget is \$944,638 with an additional new approved allocation of \$250,000 for an overall permanent budget of \$1,194,638. In FY 2016 (Year 2), a budget request of \$150,000 will be made and added to the current base budget once approved for a total of \$1,344,638. By FY 2017, the QEP budget will be permanent in the amount of \$1,344,638. The QEP budget is framed around programmatic initiatives with five broad categories that include Curricular Innovation, Pathways to Participation, Digital Engagement, Evaluation, and Leadership/Administration. Below is a more detailed assessment of the budget resources.

Curricular Innovation: \$ 588,705

In Year 1 (FY 2015) there is \$468,025 dedicated to curricular innovation to support the General Education Taskforce (\$26,820 for meeting logistics, summer stipends), General Education Fellows (\$26,820 for course buy-outs), Curriculum Development (\$51,385 for course release, participation stipends for professional development), General Education Summer Seminars (\$50,000 per year), Connected Learning Award (\$10,000 per year) and purchasing of new systems to support curriculum development, catalog development and Wordpress/RAMPages (\$303,000). In Year 2 (FY2016) an additional \$120,680 is added to the budget for two additional initiatives: Grand Challenges and Wicked Problems Series (\$30,000) and Post-doc Fellows in Learning Innovation (\$90,680). At the end of Year 2, the budget is permanent with \$588,705 dedicated to curricular innovation.

Pathways to Participation: \$ 22,500

In Year 1 there is \$20,000 devoted to Faculty Development Travel (\$15,000) and marketing and communication (\$5,000). In Year 2, an internship for a Mass Communications student is added (\$2,500) bringing the permanent budget to \$22,500.

Digital Engagement: \$ 56,975

In Year 1 there is \$56,975 committed to Faculty Learning Communities (\$25,000) and Learning Innovation Center Staff and operations (\$31,975) for a permanent five year allotment of \$56,975.

Evaluation: \$ 400,370

In Year 1 there is \$373,550 dedicated in personnel time to the evaluation of the QEP. An additional \$26,820 for faculty assessment work is added in Year 2 for a permanent budget of

\$400,370. Most of the personnel cost associated with the evaluation process is in-kind contributions of faculty/administrative salaries.

Leadership/Administration: \$ 276,088

In Year 1 there is \$271,088 committed to leadership and administration. Here too most of the personnel costs are in-kind. However, \$5,000 is allotted for logistical meeting expenses associated with the QEP Advisory Council, General Education Task Force, and Evaluation Team meetings. The logistical expenses include food, drinks, room rentals, supplies, etc. The leadership/administration 5-year permanent budget is \$276,088.

Conclusion. VCU fully accepted Recommendation 3 by narrowing the scope of its QEP to one institutional goal and two student learning goals with an implementation plan, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and adequate financial resources committed to its achievement.

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Attachment 1

VCU Core Education Program: A Shared Search for Meaning (2004)

Highlights

- The Core focuses on a set of learning competencies which contribute to life-long learning. These skills areas include written communication, oral proficiency, critical thinking, information fluency, ethical and civic responsibility and quantitative literacy.
- The Core includes 21 credit hours that all undergraduate students at VCU will complete across all programs of study, including:
 - A two-semester sequence of Focused Inquiry courses with a common theme (6 credit hours). These are first tier courses.
 - A quantitative literacy course (3 credits hours), a research writing course (3 credit hours), and one course each in the sciences (3 credit hours), social sciences (3 credit hours), and humanities (3 credit hours). These are second tier courses.
 - The third tier is a culminating experience in the major that reflects work in the Core Program.
- All courses should adhere to the guidelines of the Core Curriculum to be included in the Core.
- The Core Curriculum will be reviewed by the University College Academic Committee comprised of representatives from all schools/college with an undergraduate program

Rationale

VCU's commitment to undergraduate education has always been a top priority for many of its faculty and administration. Over the past three decades we have maintained both flexibility and a willingness to adjust our curriculum to the needs of a changing student body and an evolving educational setting. Both phases of earlier strategic plans called for the creation of a cohesive and integrative university-wide general education program. VCU's Core Education Program establishes a Core Curriculum which is shared by all students throughout the campus.

We are not alone in experiencing the need to re-envision general education curricula. We join ranks with the most prestigious as well as more humble institutions in attempting to convert general studies requirements into cohesive programs of liberal education that enhance and support all programs of study. Providing a quality learning experience that responds to the needs of today's VCU students demands all-embracing institutional transformation. Confronting these changes requires innovation and flexibility. We took the first step by declaring our intentions in VCU 2020 – Theme II, Initiative 2. This vision was brought to life by implementing the VCU Core Education Program.

Theme II: Achieve national recognition as a learning-centered research university that embraces a world-class student experience.

Initiative 2

Establish a compact with VCU's students and their parents that ensures all graduates have the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for lifelong success. The VCU Compact will create a University-wide shared experience for all undergraduates that focuses on the foundations necessary to enable and ensure lifelong learning. VCU will commit itself to a higher level of engagement between

faculty and students while raising the performance expectations of the entire University community through this Compact.

General Description

The VCU Core Education Program is a well-articulated compact between VCU and its students. The university pledges to provide opportunities for students to improve their oral and written communication competency, to develop their critical thinking abilities, to improve their ability to work collaboratively on projects, to attain information fluency, to achieve quantitative literacy, and to understand ethical perspectives and civic responsibilities in the 21st century.

Along with an emphasis on student-centered learning, the primary goals of the Core Education Program are to:

1. improve students' levels of competencies in all skill areas;
2. blend knowledge and skills from different disciplinary areas into one integrated experience; and
3. encourage and promote student engagement in present and future learning.

Mission of the Core: By providing shared learning experiences, the Core Education Program helps students develop competencies necessary for lifelong success.

The Core Education Program consists of 21 credit hours intended to be completed by the end of the sophomore year. Individual schools have control over all other curricular requirements for their programs of study.

Commitment to developing a particular competency transcends any specific course. The program of study assures that students continue to improve in all areas throughout their undergraduate study. These efforts must be reinforced and integrated in the student's major as well. Teaching better communication, critical thinking, collaborative work, information literacy, ethical and civic responsibility and quantitative literacy must be academic unit's responsibility if we expect to effectively improve our students' abilities in these areas.

What follows is the three-tier framework of the Core Education Program.

First Tier

6 credit hours: Focused Inquiry I and II, a two-semester sequence required of all first-year students, provides the foundation for the program. Students begin their core shared experiences through the summer reading program with follow-through in the FI sequence as they engage in similar assignments and projects both inside and outside of class. The FI sequence replaces English 101. The writing and thinking objectives of English 101 were incorporated into the FI series.

Second Tier

As a complement to the first tier, second tier courses across three areas reinforce the learning objectives introduced in the Focused Inquiry sequence. To insure adherence to core requirements, the University College Academic Committee periodically reviews proposed and existing courses.

Courses in the second-tier are drawn from across the university and include:

1. 3 credit hours: A quantitative literacy course. Currently Math 131 and Stat 208 target quantitative thinking and reasoning although other higher level mathematics would also satisfy this requirement. Other departments are encouraged to offer courses targeting quantitative literacy.
2. 3 credit hours: A research and academic argument course. Currently, English 200 targets academic argument, information fluency, analysis, and documentation. Designated equivalent courses may be offered through the major.
3. 9 credit hours: one course from each of these areas:
 - humanities/fine arts;
 - social/behavioral sciences;
 - natural science/mathematics.

To reinforce first tier learning, second tier courses include:

- specific learning objectives related to the above-mentioned competencies;
- activities inside and outside of class directed at improving competencies; and
- assessment regarding student performance in the competencies.

The six competency areas are defined below. Each second tier course will integrate at least three of the six competency areas.

Writing proficiency: courses provide students with substantive and sustained writing experiences to further develop their writing and thinking competencies. Students should be able to:

- Generate informal and formal writing on a variety of topics;
- Adjust writing to audience, purpose, and situation;
- Elaborate on and revise writing for depth of information and analysis;
- Write coherent and thoughtful paragraphs, developing and organizing main and sub claims;
- Construct written arguments or positions based on informed sources; and
- Write reflective papers related to personal significance of course material.

Critical thinking: courses encourage critical self-awareness, helping students apply critical thinking strategies to foster more disciplined approaches to learning. Students should be able to:

- Identify the purpose of the material;
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information;

- Interpret information from different points of view;
- Assess the cogency of arguments; and
- Construct his/her own argument.

Information fluency: courses help students navigate library-related services (on-line and on-site) as well as evaluate the legitimacy of sources of information. Students should be able to:

- Identify information needs and resources;
- Collect information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate collected information critically;
- Present information effectively and efficiently; and
- Use information ethically and legally.

Oral communication: courses provide students with opportunities to express and develop their oral capabilities. Students should be able to:

- Present ideas orally to a classroom audience;
- Make a formal oral presentation, either individually or in groups;
- Construct a logical argument and defend it to the class;
- Adjust presentation to audience, purpose, and situation; and
- Use active listening skills and engage in constructive dialog with others.

Ethical and civic responsibility: students reflect on their culturally-inherited values, thinking critically about the relationship between these values and global context. Students should be able to:

- Recognize the relationship between human rights and individual responsibilities;
- Identify the relationships between power and ideology;
- Identify theories of democracy, democratic values and beliefs,
- Critically review actions in response to global/local issues; and
- Engage, integrate and translate learning into responsible professional and civic action.

Quantitative Literacy: students have the ability to understand and use numbers and data analyses in everyday life and in the workplace. Students should be able to:

- Interpret mathematical formulas, graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences from them;
- Use probabilistic, arithmetical, algebraic, and geometric methods to analyze situations with quantitative components;
- Describe a sample or population's general qualities quantitatively and draw accurate conclusions from standardized statistical information; and
- Make use of proportion, percentages, and compound growth to make policy and financial decisions.

Second Tier Courses adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Each course places an emphasis on connected learning as opposed to insulated survey courses to help students integrate their learning in multiple disciplines and contexts. An inquiry or problem-centered emphasis guides the curriculum development of each course.

2. Each course incorporates collaboration. This may be done through group/team projects inside and outside of class. Larger classes may utilize virtual or online teams.
3. Each course is regarded as self contained. Rather than serving as an introductory or building block course, the course should be viewed as the last class a student might take in a particular area.
4. Each course leads to an integrative framework and a holistic understanding of its primary questions/problems. The curriculum clearly defines the relationships between student and course content leading to a stronger connection to student experience and the larger world.

Third Tier

The Third Tier culminates in an academic experience integrating the Core Education Program with the student's major. This requirement may take the form of a service-learning project, a research project with a faculty member, a study abroad program, a senior thesis paper, a practical internship or a capstone course. This requirement ties *learned experience* in the Core Education Program with a *practical application* in the major.

Administrative Structure of the Core

As charged by the Strategic Plan 2020 the Core Education Program is administered through University College. The University College Academic Committee (UCAC) is responsible for monitoring all tiers of the program. UCAC is made up of one faculty representative from each of the schools/college offering undergraduate degrees at VCU. Members are appointed by the deans of their respective schools. The Dean of the University College serves as chair of the UCAC, but is not a voting member of the committee except in situations when the committee vote is tied.

The University College Academic Committee is charged with overseeing curriculum development and matters appropriate to the maintenance and development of the University's Core Education Program. With respect to the University Core Education Program, the UCAC performs the following actions prior to submission to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUC) for final approval:

- Review and grant approval for new and revised courses in the core education program (new courses would have to be reviewed by their own respective curriculum committees).
- Ensure that courses offered for credit be of appropriate quality and prevent serious duplication of courses offered elsewhere in the University.
- Study and make recommendations concerning new rules or changes in the rules affecting the Core Education Program in respect to grades, pre- and co-requisites, and other academic policy matters.
- Review and grant final approval for any course or program description offered through the UC, no matter how minor.

- Provide representation at UUCC meetings for UC proposals under consideration.

Proposals presented to UCAC come from individual faculty, task forces, or ad hoc committees associated with the Core Education Program or University College. All course proposals that are included in the Core must conform to the guiding principles agreed upon by the Core Education Program Committee. Therefore, for consideration for inclusion in the University Core Education Program, the course proposal must address how the course conforms to these principles. The UCAC reviews all Core Education Program courses on a three to five year cycle.

Guidelines for proposals of courses to be included in the Core Education Program

Proposals to include a course in the Core Education Program should include the following information:

Contact Person

Course catalog description

Discussion of how the course meets the general goals of the Core Education Program.

1. Detail the general and specific learning objectives of the course.
2. The Core Education Program includes six competency areas. Identify each competency the proposed core course will address. Also, describe how the course content and pedagogy facilitates development of each identified competency.

Definitions of Competency Areas

Writing proficiency: courses provide students with substantive and sustained writing experiences to further develop their writing and thinking competencies. Students should be able to:

- Generate informal and formal writing on a variety of topics;
- Adjust writing to audience, purpose, and situation;
- Elaborate on and revise writing for depth of information and analysis;
- Write coherent and thoughtful paragraphs, developing and organizing main claims and sub claims;
- Construct written arguments or positions based on informed sources; and
- Write reflective papers related to personal significance of course material.

Critical thinking: courses encourage critical self-awareness, helping students apply critical thinking strategies to foster more disciplined approaches to learning. Students should be able to:

- Identify the purpose of the material;
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information;
- Interpret information from different points of view;
- Assess the cogency of arguments; and
- Construct his/her own argument

Information fluency: courses help students navigate library-related services (online and on-site) as well as evaluate the legitimacy of sources of information. Students should be able to:

- Identify information needs and resources;
- Collect information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate collected information critically;

- Present information effectively and efficiently; and
- Use information ethically and legally.

Oral Communication: courses provide students with opportunities to express and develop their oral capabilities. Students should be able to:

- Present ideas orally to a classroom audience;
- Work individually or in groups on a formal oral presentation;
- Construct a logical argument and defend it to the class; and
- Adjust presentation to audience, purpose, and situation.

Ethical and social responsibility: students reflect on their culturally inherited values, thinking critically about the relationship between these values and their place in the global context. Students should be able to:

- Recognize the relationship between human rights and individual responsibilities;
- Identify the relationships between power and ideology;
- Identify theories of democracy, democratic values and beliefs; and
- Critically review actions in response to global/local issues.

Quantitative Literacy: students have the ability to understand and use numbers and data analyses in every day life and in the workplace. Students should be able to:

- Interpret mathematical formulas, graphs, tables and schematics and draw inferences;
- Use arithmetical algebraic, and geometric methods to solve problems;
- Describe a sample or populations general qualities quantitatively by accurately calculating indicators of central tendency and variability;
- Calculate the likelihood of a given event from information about the probability of all possible outcomes in that situation;
- Differentiate between samples and populations; and
- Calculate proportions and percentages.

3. Describe the active learning strategies that are intended to lead to higher levels of student engagement.
4. What can students take from the course that will be useful in subsequent courses and their personal and professional lives?
5. How many sections of this course will be offered per semester?
6. How many students will this course accommodate per section?
7. Will this course require additional resources from those currently available?

Material to be submitted:

1. Copy of the proposed syllabus.
2. Submit reading lists and/or other media that will be used in the course.
3. Submit examination and assessment material to determine progress toward learning objectives.