

Longwood University

Melissa Rhoten, Larissa Ferguson, and Emily Heady of Longwood University: *“Building on Pockets of Success: General Education Reform as a Catalyst for Institutional Change”*
Their University: Small public university in Virginia—5000 students

Excerpts from their timeline:

2011 Strategic Plan calls for gen ed reform

2013 White paper on gen ed goals

2014 Guiding Principles defined

2016 Three different models presented to university for a vote

2017 Slowed down implementation process to deliver more professional development to faculty—implemented in parts, not all at once

2019—still not fully implemented—lesson: slow implementation is better because it allows time for buy-in

Process and Design:

- Gen Ed Committee has 13 members, which included Faculty Senate rep to build trust
- Held lots of meetings with fac/staff/students to “help people feel better”
- They moved from a “distributive” philosophy intended to create “well-rounded” students by introducing lots of subjects to an “integrative” philosophy intended to help students make intentional connections among different disciplines
- Integrated language and culture classes built into curriculum
- First-year experience included peer and faculty “coaches” (\$900 stipends); engagement requirements broadly defined, not just joining clubs; student-directed engagement and coaching, not required but encouraged (students who met with coach at least once had higher retention rates)—challenge: can’t require something without a penalty

Their model is called the Civitae Core—“creating citizen leaders”

<http://catalog.longwood.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=215#civitae-program-requirements>

Three levels:

Foundations level: first year classes in citizenship and writing plus 1000 and 2000 level pillars:

- Historical and Contemporary Insights (3 credits)
- Human Behavior and Social Institutions (3 credits)
- Global Citizenship (3-4 credits)
- Aesthetic Expression (3 credits)
- Quantitative Reasoning (3 credits)
- Scientific Reasoning (3 credits)

Perspectives level (12 credits): upper division courses intended to create connections across disciplines. Can be taught by a single disciplinary professor or professors from multiple disciplines

- Historical/Contemporary Perspectives OR Behavioral/Social Perspectives (3 credits)
- Global Perspectives OR Aesthetic Perspectives (3 credits)
- Quantitative Perspectives OR Scientific Perspectives (3 credits)
- World Languages Perspectives (3 credits) (these are integrated language and culture classes)

Symposium level: one interdisciplinary course; culminates in campus-wide public Symposium Day

- CTZN 410: Symposium on the Common Good. Students will prepare to serve the common good by applying the knowledge, skills, and perspectives gained throughout their core curriculum, major classes, and extracurricular activities. In relation to a common theme and a specific community issue, students will synthesize and analyze information from multiple disciplines and generate a product for public consideration. Can be repeated for credit as CTZN 420 when the theme or topic changes.

Funneling Faculty Dialogue: Juniata's General Education Reform (see handouts for specifics)

- Handouts available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5uqz5sh>

Juanita Used Three Themes to Develop Their General Education Reform

- Theme 1: Grounded in our Values
 - Knowing that all the stakeholder see the issues from their own perspective, how do we determine how to “see” general education reformat?
 - What role should the institutional values play?
 - To develop a common vision, you can't over engage!
 - Theme 2: Everyone Together
 - How might you get faculty to imagine a new general education program and engage them in the process?
 - Bring stakeholders in early—be intentional and accessible
 - Start Big! Be Creative—use examples as inspiration
 - Theme 3: Student Focused
 - Starting with assessment and the big picture helped clarify the how/why for revising and design classes
 - Students joined in and got a vote—students can help curriculum match population and vision better
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historical and contemporary insights, cultural norms and societal institutions, world languages and culture, the arts and quantitative and scientific reasoning. All Pillar courses provide students with opportunities to practice at least one mode of communication: writing, speaking, or artistic expression. Students gain knowledge and skills in Pillar courses that provide a foundation for informed citizenship and for coursework at the Perspectives level and in their major.

Foundations Objectives: As they complete the Foundations, students will:

1. Investigate foundations of citizenship, which include ethical reasoning, critical thought, and civil discourse.
2. Describe and analyze continuity and change in one or more cultures.
3. Evaluate cultural norms, societal institutions, and implicit and explicit assumptions about themselves.
4. Develop skills for global citizenship through study of world languages and cultures.
5. Explore and/or engage in creative and artistic expression.
6. Analyze which quantitative reasoning methods best address different types of questions and apply them to various problems in context.
7. Use scientific reasoning to address a variety of questions in context.
8. Analyze and use writing conventions appropriate to different audiences. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses in their own writing in order to improve.
9. Analyze and use speaking conventions appropriate to different audiences. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses in their own speaking in order to improve.

At the Foundations level, students take 24-25 credits comprised of the following:

First Year (6 credits)

Pillar Courses (18-19 credits)

Perspectives

Definition: At the Perspectives Level, students develop and articulate informed perspectives essential to participation in civic and global life by integrating knowledge and skills across disciplines.

Perspectives courses are disciplinary-based integrative learning experiences, intentionally designed to make explicit connections between courses, fields, and disciplines or between interdisciplinary knowledge and its application outside the classroom. These courses challenge students to master upper-level academic content, to develop the ability to understand issues from a variety of perspectives, and to practice the skills necessary to address those issues as an informed citizen. Perspectives courses are taught by a single instructor in a discipline or by multiple instructors from different disciplines. Research methods and modes of communication are further refined.

Student Learning Outcomes: As they complete the Perspectives Level, students will:

1. Locate, evaluate, and organize information from multiple disciplines to develop, refine, and address questions.
2. Use valid data and evidence from multiple disciplines to construct well-framed and well-supported arguments.
3. Articulate how different cultural perspectives influence an understanding of civic and global issues.
4. Collaborate with other to develop an informed perspective on a civic or global issue.
5. Reflect on the process used to develop perspectives and reach decisions.

At the Perspectives level students take 12 credits, by choosing one course from each of the following categories:

Perspectives Courses (12 credits)

[ARCHIVED CATALOG]

Civitae Core

- Civitae Core
 - Foundations
 - Perspectives
 - Symposium
- Civitae Program Requirements
- Civitae Communication Infusion

This section is for FTF and FYS students. A First-time Freshmen (FTF) is any Longwood student with a high school diploma (earned traditionally, through a home school program, or GED) who has not attended or earned credit from a college or university after high school graduation or GED completion. Students with an Associate's degree earned in high school via dual enrollment are also classified as FTF. A First-Year Student (FYS) is any Longwood student who attended and earned 1-24 credits from a college or university after high school graduation, home school completion or receiving a GED.

The Civitae Core Curriculum experience, combined with students' disciplinary study in the major, fulfills Longwood's institutional mission to develop citizen leaders. A citizen leader is someone who is academically and personally transformed by knowledge of fundamental modes of inquiry and informed civic engagement and who then applies the virtues of a Longwood education to serve and transform communities.

The Civitae Core affords an extensive, intellectual vision for every Longwood graduate. Foundations courses that span the liberal arts and sciences - with a focus on effective communication, fundamental knowledge, and informed citizenship - form the pillars of the curriculum, providing each student with the broad horizons and scholarly curiosity characteristic of all educated citizens. Perspectives courses, which build on the Foundations, are a series of visionary, integrative experiences that offer up-to-date, practical lenses facilitating more nimble, reflective thinking. The Civitae Core culminates in a Symposium on the Common Good that asks students to reflect upon and activate the skills and perspectives developed throughout their undergraduate career. Through the Civitae Core, every Longwood student develops the imagination, forethought, discipline, confidence, and empathy required to make positive contributions to society. A total of 39-40 credit hours is required for the Civitae Core. Students may take more than the required 39-40 credits as part of the Civitae Core, either because of major requirements or student choice. In such cases, the additional credits will be included in the credit totals for the major requirement or general electives, respectively.

Foundations

Definition: At the Foundations level, students engage in creative inquiry, cultivate curiosity, and develop foundational knowledge and skills.

First-year and Pillar courses, which comprise the Foundations, introduce students to the nature of college-level academic work and disciplinary modes of thinking. Students take two required First-Year courses, Inquiry to Citizenship and Writing and Rhetoric, which inspire their curiosity and equip them with skills necessary for college success. Students exercise intellectual agency by choosing from a variety of Pillar courses to explore

Symposium

Definition: In the Symposium, students prepare to serve the common good by applying their cumulative knowledge, skills, and perspectives from the whole of their university experience.

The Symposium on the Common Good is the culmination of the Core Curriculum experience. The course is designed to engage students in critical deliberation of citizenship and the issues citizens face in their communities. The Symposium will support students' investigation, discussion, and advocacy of a position on a civic issue.

The Symposium is organized around a broad theme, rotated on a regular basis, ideally three to six years. The Symposium creates a common shared experience across sections of the course. Faculty design their Symposium section to support students' exploration of issues and challenges relating to the broad theme. The Symposium experience results in a public, campus-wide Symposium Day to move students from discussion to action and to highlight the Symposium course as a common experience for Longwood citizen leaders.

Student Learning Outcomes: As they complete the Symposium, students will

1. Examine the ethical consequences of their own decisions, so as to be responsible citizens.
2. Examine the implications for themselves and others of decisions made in local, regional, or global contexts.
3. Advocate for, and respond to criticisms of, a position while practicing civil discourse.
4. Explore collaboratively how the complexities of a community issue require a variety of disciplinary approaches.
5. Reflect upon how the Civitae core curriculum, their major, and their extracurricular activities have played and will continue to play a role in their transformation into citizen leaders.

Symposium Courses (3 credits)

Civitae Core Program Requirements

To complete the Civitae Core Curriculum, all students must complete one course from the humanities or the arts; one course from the behavioral or social sciences; and one course from mathematics or natural sciences (See list under Additional Degree Requirements).

Each major or minor program may offer courses in no more than two of the following categories: Historical & Contemporary Insights, Human Behavior & Social Institutions, Global Citizenship, Aesthetic Expression, Quantitative Reasoning, and Scientific Reasoning. Interdisciplinary majors and minors are exempt from this policy.

Courses may be offered by a single department or may be cross-listed in different categories when the course is co-taught. If a course is cross-listed in different categories, students may count it toward the completion of only one requirement.

Civitae Core Communication Infusion

Improving communication skills takes practice in a variety of settings. As such, communication will be infused in all Civitae Core courses.

In Writing-Infused courses, students will regularly engage in written exercises and assignments while working to achieve course objectives and Civitae Core outcomes. Faculty will provide feedback and allow opportunities for students to improve their writing skills throughout the course.

In Speaking-Infused courses, students will regularly engage in speaking opportunities, exercises, and/or assignments while working to achieve course objectives and Civitae Core outcomes. Faculty will provide feedback and allow opportunities for students to improve their speaking skills throughout the course.

In the Arts-Applied courses, students will regularly engage in creative and artistic expression. Faculty provide feedback and allow opportunities for students to improve their artistic expression skills throughout the course.
